

**The International Institute for Ethnomethodology and Conversation
Analysis (IEMCA) conference 2015 in Kolding (Denmark):
*Living the Material World***

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The IEMCA 2015 conference *Living the material world* took place from August 4th to August 7th in Kolding (Denmark). The conference was hosted by the Department of Design and Communication on the brand new campus of the University of Southern Denmark (SDU). A wide cross-section of scholarship within the field of Ethnomethodology and Conversation Analysis was present in the four day program that consisted of five to seven different parallel thematic panels and sessions at all times.

On the first day *Johannes Wagner* (University of Southern Denmark), chair of the organizing committee and *Per Krogh Hansen*, the head of the Department of Design and Communication opened the conference with a short welcome note about the conference theme *Living the material world*: On how people organize, conduct and accomplish their activities and interactions for 'living the material world'. Materiality figures, for example, as feature of the physical surround, gesture and the body, space and location, mobility, objects, and multimodality.

Johannes Wagner then introduced a new EMCA related website which contains a collection of historically significant materials highlighting the development and contribution of Ethnomethodology and Conversation Analysis (emca-legacy.info). It includes, e.g., the audio recordings and transcriptions of Harold Garfinkel's Boston seminars (1975).

The first key note speaker of the day and of the conference was *Eric Laurier*, Reader in Geography and Interaction at the University of Edinburgh. Currently he is inquiring into the maintenance and transformation of human relationships as a shared ordinary concern. Likewise his keynote entitled *When the breaching was over: Praxeologies of personal relationships* focused precisely on personal relationships.

In the talk he offered thoughts on his own re-reading of two classic studies: *The Breaching Experiments* of Harold Garfinkel in *Studies in Ethnomethodology* (1967) and the 1987 paper entitled *Notes on Laughter in the Pursuit of Intimacy* by Gail Jefferson, Harvey Sacks and E.A. Schegloff. In Garfinkel's famous breaching experiments students were asked to act as boarders in their own homes. Garfinkel then described what happened when his students attempted to restore the situation to normal appearances. Laurier focused in his re-reading on what breaching did to their personal relationships: While the re-actions of the relatives in Garfinkel's experiments usually were reactions of annoyance and disapproval - they showed the moral and enforceable character of compliance with maintaining everyday appearance - Garfinkel hinted at something more in these scenes of restoration: for some families and in some marriages the situation could in fact not be restored completely. Laurier claims that "doing being a boarder" wasn't so much "doing being strangeness" but "doing estrangement". Disturbing, what Garfinkel and his students described as common sense, the breaching procedures also threatened, it seems, the shared understanding that constitutes each particular set of persons' relationship (e.g. mother and son, husband and wife etc.). In his talk,

Laurier attempted to examine a realm of practice where actions are trying to modify, revise or transform personal relationships and where, the joint of joint-actions thereby can no longer be assumed.

Being very interested in Membership Categorization Analysis I chose to attend the thematic panel on *MCA and Mobility* on the first day. The panel focused on the analysis of categorization practices in mobile social interactions, with the goal to develop membership categorization analysis (MCA/categorical systematics) in new directions. *Paul McIlvenny* from Aalborg University, Denmark introduced the panel by pointing out that even though much of the mobility and social interaction research to date clearly involves a concern with a diversity of mediated¹ social actors, agents and objects, members' categorization practices have not received substantive analytical attention as yet. The panel set out to contribute not only to the field of interactional mobilities research, but also to recent debates on how to develop membership categorization analysis further.

The first paper I went to see – which was actually the second paper on this panel - was entitled *Categorising Mobile Actions and Mobile Actors* and was given by *Eric Laurier* (University of Edinburgh, UK) and *Pentti Haddington* (University of Oulu, Finland) and explores the link between categorization practices and sequential contexts of interaction (cf. Stockoe 2012) in relation to mobile actions on the road. They set out to re-specify Jack Katz's (1999) explanations of road rage as variously dealing with identity threats, the differences between the driver's and the passenger's embodied experience of being 'cut-off' by other cars and the work that is accomplished in swearing at other drivers. The analysis focused on situations in which drivers voice their anger or irritation with other road users through complaints (see e.g. Drew 1998; Stockoe/Edwards 2009) assessments or 'insults' with a certain degree of freedom because they are unhearable. The focus is on the sequential order of indirect insults and complaints, on how mobile actions of others generate moral responses.

They draw on data from the Habitable Cars video corpus of natural driving situations, collected in Britain by Eric Laurier and his colleagues in the early 2000's. What they found in their data was that drivers' and passengers' angry outbursts at other road users involved two related forms of categorization: Firstly, the category of mobile actions in traffic in which other drivers are 'cutting in', 'speeding' or 'running a red light'. Secondly, the category work based on the analysis of other cars' actions. They also showed that the driver's categorizations of other drivers were rarely contested by passengers. Drivers were more likely to receive affiliative rather than disaffiliative responses. Categorization as practice, it seems, is a joint achievement in ways not captured by Katz. Some of the categories used by the participants were designed to be 'unhearable' to the target. Finally, the driver's and passenger's categorization work orients toward, formulates and judges claims and entitlements to undertaking courses of mobile action, and therefore it lends support to previous claims that category work – describing, inferring

¹ In this case the term *mediated* draws upon a tradition of research extending from activity theory, Wertsch, Scollon and others that argues that *all* action is mediated in non-trivial ways. Action itself cannot have effects without being mediated and/or translated. There is no pure domain of unmediated or immaterial action. Thus, social actors, agents and objects are also always mediated; they do not exist prior to, or separate from, their forms of mediation or mediational means (see Scollon 2001).

and judging others – is pervasive in everyday life and embedded in a moral order (Jayyusi 1984). Therefore, membership categorization analysis brings with it ethnomethodology's orientation to social order as, not only locally intelligible but also, establishing a local moral order. In this case, it is a moral order of the road generated by its mobile members. The car is a special kind of space for the judgement of others.

The next paper was given by *Lena Levin* and *Mathias Broth* (Linköping University, Sweden) and was entitled *Showing Where You're Going: Teaching and Learning Self-Categorisation in Live Traffic*. They looked at how student drivers are taught to make the car accountable in live traffic, in order for other road users to be able to relevantly categorize it and to estimate where the car is about to go. They referred to that accomplished skill as "self-categorization" and claimed that it constitutes a crucial aspect of competent driving. The authors took an EMCA multimodal interaction analysis approach. The analysis was based on video recordings from the Project *Driving Training in Practice* located at Linköping University. It consists of approximately 83 hours of recordings from about 120 lessons in a driving school in Sweden. Driver training is a complex activity and consists of at least two simultaneous participation frameworks, namely that of inside the car and that in traffic. Often there are also multiple time constraints related to participation within those two frameworks. One of the self-categorization activities that was taught concerned activating the indicator after having been told to make a turn. The driving student should be able to activate the indicator by him- or herself in order to allow other traffic participants to categorize their intentions accordingly. The instructional work to achieve this took several forms according to the different steps of the learning process: Very early the student is instructed on how to operate the indicator and told that the indicator is an important means in order to communicate with the surrounding traffic. Once the students have learned how to use the indicator, the driving instructors may repeat their instruction to turn or use open questions about what should be done, in cases where the students fails to activate the indicator. Sometimes the instructors explain the reason for activating the indicator (*so that the others know where you're going*). Such explication, Levin and Broth claim, re-establishes the link between the routinely expected activation of the indicator inside the car and the car as social object for others in traffic.

The fourth paper on the panel on MCA and mobility was presented by *Christian Lincoppe* (Telecom Paristech, France) and carried the title *The Baby Smiled, the Mommy Sat: Membership Categorization Devices and Seating Arrangements in Car-pooling Situations*. The data was drawn from a video corpus of recordings made with camera glasses and a mobile audio device of naturally occurring encounters around the car before car sharing trips (lasting typically two to four hours). The paper focused on the practical management of seating orders in such car sharing trips. Lincoppe first showed us an example of how people are sometimes "dancing" around personal seating preferences ("in the front or in the back") and by doing so, making relevant a membership categorization device with differing activities bound to each of them. It turned out that the passengers - not the driver - managed collaboratively a seating arrangement. When passengers enacted themselves as individual fellow passengers, they were committed to display equal rights to particular seats in their talk. He then showed an example of how the

seating was managed, when it included the social unit of a mother and her child, which makes relevant a particular categorization device (the standardized relational pair 'baby-caregiver'). Here, the driver proposed the seating arrangement and by doing so, displayed entitlements to special seating arrangements. What Christian Lincoppe made visible in his paper was the witnessable order of the seating management in these ad hoc encounters, in the way participants orient to a particular seating arrangement through talk-in-interaction and make salient particular membership categorization devices and entitlements for particular arrangements in the car.

The last paper of the first day was presented by *Paul McIlvenny* and *Laura Bang Lindegaard* (Aalborg University, Denmark) entitled *Doing being an e-bike rider: assembling agency, morality, technology and mobility in everyday practices*. They looked at what sorts of category work goes on when participants themselves are mobile and more specifically *e-mobile*. They posed the question if mobility affords specific categorical resources for members? They drew on data from diverse practices, such as a focus group with e-bike commuters, ride-alongs with both experienced and novice e-bike riders, and a walk-along with a mobility scooter rider. They tried to show how members make themselves morally accountable at what they call "the intersection of exercise, comfort and convenience". Some e-bike riders make accounts for them riding e-bikes talking about "windy conditions" or "having to be very punctual at work". In one example the novice rider expresses her joy about the easiness of overtaking a normal bike rider. Her co-rider doesn't accept the ascription of any invoked membership of "being inactive". The co-rider even makes a point of claiming that you do exercise on an e-bike as well, even though it has motor-assisted pedaling.

The second day started with *Ken Liberman's* (University of Oregon & University of Southern Denmark) plenary talk on *Studying Objectivation Practices*. Ken Liberman has a long research career in many different environments, from his early research among aboriginal people in Australia to many years of engagement with Tibetan philosophical culture. For many years he has also been interested in how coffee tasters establish objectivity in their description of taste, working with coffee tasters all over the world.

Ethnomethodology sets out to identify and describe how social organization emerges from the mundane local details of everyday life. Garfinkel claims that events are self-organizing and that society consists of endemic orders. His recommendation for ethnomethodologists was to turn their attention to the neglected practical objectivity of social facts as they operate in a course of events, because these practical objectivities are the very tools with which these events set up their orderliness. Liberman focused in his talk on the neglected objectivity of social facts: Garfinkel was interested in investigating the "ongoing" aspect of reciprocal stimulations by elucidating what is "developingly objective" (Garfinkel 2002: 189). He said that work-site practices are "developingly objective" and "developingly accountable". In our efforts to tame our data, Liberman states, we must not lose *the site* of this "developingly". We have yet to fully appreciate the flux of natural affairs, or what Aaron Cicourel used to call the always emerging character of ordinary events. Liberman claims that members are interested in orderliness and in turning the flux of affairs into something predictable. But in most cases they are unsure how to do that and end up stumbling into any ready-at-hand solu-

tion that presents itself serendipitously in the course of their affairs. People have to pay close attention to ordinary affairs. Members, as Garfinkel explained, pick up a method for organizing local affairs, and then *display* how others can use such a method to accomplish the orderliness. Thus, ethnomethods are instructable matters. However, Liberman states, in most cases these methods are *stumbled upon*. "Intersubjective order is achieved relentlessly at the *surface* of communicative actions" (Lynch 2000:529). Participants become entangled in the surfaces of these self-organizing, emerging ethnomethods; the result is that those ethnomethods *lead the participants*, rather than the people having full control of the ethnomethods. Every line of communication becomes an entanglement. Liberman then outlined a model of objectivation practices in four different stages: He starts by looking at accounts. In the first stage, accounts can be confirmed or disconfirmed. He explains that - in a second stage - accounts that have been confirmed become an adopted version of affairs. His special interest however lies in the third stage, namely the objectivation. He claims that there is a point at which the accounts that get confirmed need to be elevated in importance so that they stand almost apart from people's production. By the time you get to the fourth stage - social amnesia - they are a social fact. People will have forgotten that they have produced them. Liberman explains these practical objectivities in detail by looking at them in a number of settings - games with rules, Tibetan debaters and professional coffee tasters - where order is found and sense is discovered and developed as the partial concerted work of local practices of objectivating social action.

Having been a former student of Stephen Hester - a well published and respected figure in the EMCA community who had taught at the University of North Wales in Bangor - who died in April 2014, I decided to attend a panel which was put together especially in memory of *Stephen Hester* on Membership Categorization Analysis (MCA). The first paper on this panel was given by *Dave Francis* (Manchester Metropolitan University, UK) and *Sally Hester* (Edge Hill University, UK) entitled *Stephen Hester on the Problem of Culturalism*. In this paper, which presents thoughts that Stephen Hester was working on right up to his untimely death, Francis and Hester consider the problem of culturalism in MCA and illustrate through the discussion of data, Stephen Hester was working on, the thoroughly contextual nature of the approach that he took. Francis started by considering the problem of culturalism and Stephen Hester's alternative approach. The problem of culturalism had been most emphatically set up by Schegloff (2007:471):

In CA work - with its commitment to getting at the practices by which the world we see and hear gets produced [...] we need [...] evidence that the participants' production of the world was itself informed by these particular membership categorization devices. And so if we want to characterize the parties to some interaction with some category terms, we need in principle to show that the parties were oriented to that categorization device in producing and understanding - moment-by-moment - the conduct that composed its progressive realization. In doing so, we will need to be alert to the ways in which the parties make accessible to one another these orientations, because that is the most serious and compelling evidence of their indigenous-to-the-interaction status. If we can show that, we can neutralize the equivocality that otherwise subverts category-based inquiry.

The problem arose mostly however with self-reflective MCA. The less MCA was grounded in displayed members' understanding it would have been lacking in external authorization².

Sally Hester took over the second part of the paper by introducing the data Stephen Hester had been working with for years. At his death he left behind a manuscript of a book entitled *Descriptions of Deviance*. In this book he takes an MCA approach investigating how categorical formulations of deviance are interactionally constructed and negotiated in talk in educational settings. The data comprises transcriptions of pupil review meetings involving teachers and educational psychologists in an education authority in North England. In analyzing this data, Stephen Hester stresses the occasionality of categorical formulations. The paper tried to give a brief outline of some concerns with MCA that motivated Stephen Hester. His primary focus throughout his work was working with conversational data. In this respect Stephen Hester was a committed empiricist. If an issue did not impact on how one deals with data, then, for him, it was of secondary relevance. The problem of culturalism is worthy serious consideration, in Hester's view, precisely because it has implications for the analysis of data. This point is a crucial one, since the problem of *culturalism* in MCA, as well as other conceptual and theoretical issues, was, for him, *only* of importance in terms of how it impacted on the analysis of the data. Hester saw Ethnomethodology, MCA as the only sociological position with a rigorous empirical approach. The book – *Descriptions of Deviance* – will be available on the internet in the near future.

The next paper on that panel was given by *Elizabeth Stokoe* (Loughborough University, UK) entitled *On Prospective and Retrospective Categorization: The Systematics of Categorical Analysis*. Stokoe set out to find gender in interaction by looking at the use of categories in talk-in-interaction. She drew on a wide range of spoken and written discourse data, from everyday conversations between friends, clips from TV shows (*Friends*) as well as from institutional settings. She talked about the idea of inference-rich as a participant's resource, pointed out categorical accounts in response to wh-questions (*it's a male thing*), category-based denials (*I'm not a pervert*) and the categorical practices and their component features. Stokoe then analyzed examples in which people use description and categorization. She demonstrated how those practices – description and categorization – get used retro- and prospectively, as part of sequential practices, in order to do certain kinds of inferential work. She found conversations about early romantic dating especially fruitful for that kind of phenomenon. She gave the example of two women talking with each other, one woman describing the other's action with *he never calls up*. That description could then be treated by the same party or by the recipient, i.e. the other woman, as category-relevant. Consecutively, either woman may then offer a category in response like "that's men for you". Thus, Stokoe claimed categorical work may be considered an essentially sequential phenomenon. The paper considered the implications of these findings for methodological debates in MCA and even more generally about analysis, inference and context in discourse and interaction analysis.

² The expression *external authorization* here, refers to the view that *displayed members' understandings* (as can be seen in e.g. conversational data) provide a firm grounding for analytic descriptions.

The third paper on that panel, given by *Sean Rintel* (Microsoft Research Cambridge, UK) was entitled *Technological Affordances As Categorical Resources In Video Mediated Communication: From Particularity To Omnirelevance* and focused on how participants treat technology categories and their predicates as resources in various forms of video-mediated communication. The concept of omnirelevance in MCA refers to participants invoking categories that reflexively treat the understanding of particular interactional moments as controlled by the context of the current activity. This concept is of fundamental value to the analysis of computer-mediated communication (CMC), as it relates directly to the field's fundamental interest in exploring how technology effects interaction. When interacting via technology, the affordances of that technology are materially inescapable and thus potentially contextually controlling. However, the control of technology over interaction is not absolute. The affordances of technology are materially inescapable but their relevance as a semiotic resource is a matter for participants.³ Rintel used video-mediated communication to find out how the medium in which an interaction occurs is treated as a relevant resource within an interactional activity. He used examples of how couples cope with audio and video distortions (like a frozen screen) in video calling. The data showed that in the face of distortion the couples treated the relationship and technology as omnirelevant (i.e., controlling) devices deployable in a fluid interdependence that differs with respect to how audio distortions and video distortions potentially affect conversational continuity. He also gave examples where omnirelevance is a resource for purposive categorical promiscuity in situations of asymmetry, like the use of asymmetrical physical access as a resource: In a couple's video call that showed a girl teasing her partner - who is not physically present - with a wrapped present, the girl made the fact of the technology relevant by not showing him the present, by teasing him. Rintel stressed that video-mediated communication is a very exciting field in which to examine the question of how the relevance of the medium of the interaction is treated as a resource within the interactional activity. This resource might range from a discussable topic to a controlling omnirelevant category (Rintel 2015:134):

This form of technologized interaction might be said to almost fully embrace both the enablements and constraints of the video calling into one fluid interdependence that affords mutual orientation to an omnipresent technological and relational sense of who-we-are-and-what-we-are-doing-in-this-medium.

The panel on Screens in Interaction contributed to a longstanding concern of workplace studies and the broader study of ethnomethodological studies of interaction at work. However, the phenomena of screens as such, has itself changed really fast. One just has to think about the omnipresence of smartphones, tablets or even smart watches. This of course, offers now a wide range of new interactional opportunities. Also advances in video recording technology open up new directions in research for understanding how screens become part of everyday practice.

The start on that panel made *Mathias Broth* (Linköping University, Sweden) with his paper on *Accomplishing the Invisibility of Camera Work in TV-Production*. Broth examined the situated practices through which a French TV-Crew

³ One could then argue however, that they are in fact not omnirelevant, but selectively made relevant.

makes cameras invisible and camera-work unnoticeable to viewers. His data stems from recordings of the French monthly debate show *Rideau Rouge* which is being broadcasted live on TV5 International. In 2003-2004, five different productions were video recorded, using three cameras placed in the control room. Broth found out that it is basically two aspects of camera shots that may attract attention to the camera operators that were supposed to be invisible for the viewing audience at home. The first kind were shots, in which camera operators or recording equipment became visible in another camera operator's shot. The second one were hasty, unfocused, unfinished shots, that, like the first kind, draw the attention of the audience to the fact that someone is operating the camera. The director of the show, inside the control room, avoided putting these shots on the air. Also the camera operators tried to carefully avoid shooting and being shot by their colleagues. Of course, small accidents did happen nevertheless. It was in these incidents, Broth was showing, that we were able to observe the practices through which the team collaboratively addressed the invisibility problem: In order for the operators to understand when they could safely reposition their cameras and from which position they could shoot their assigned studio guests without themselves being in the picture required them to continuously perform rather sophisticated analyses of the situation in the studio debate that was being broadcasted. To figure out which camera operator's line of shooting had to be avoided at what point in time, camera operators needed to attend both to the studio debate's current participation framework – current and projectable discourse identities, local rules for turn-taking – as well as to the spatial relations between operators and debate participants in the studio. With this paper Broth tried to show that within the broadcast crew there is a strong orientation to not showing shots that give the crew away. Broth saw this paper as a first attempt to dig out the efforts for achieving this unremarkability or invisibility.

The second paper on that panel was presented by *Christian Lincoppe* (Telecom, Paristech, France) and was entitled *Screen-Mediated Accountabilities: Orienting towards On-Screen Visibility in A Courtroom Setting with Video Link*. Lincoppe looked at courtroom settings in which remote defendants appearing through a video link from the prison are transmitted into the courtroom in the courtroom. His interest was in how defendants orient to the fact that they become visible or not on screen. Lincoppe addressed the paradoxical status of the camera work in the courtroom. Firstly, he stated, camera motion occurs all the time, however many aspects of camera motion remain mostly unseen, unnoticed.

Camera motions and image production were not treated as mere visual overlay in the judicial proceedings by the participants, but they are oriented to as interactionally meaningful and accountable in their own right. Bringing people on screen is a resource to highlight them and to involve them in the ongoing interaction. Lincoppe also showed that being an on-screen onlooker appearing close to the judge or an off-screen onlooker makes a noticeable difference and has implications with respect to participation roles in the proceedings, to which the participants display their sensitivity. Making someone visible or invisible on screen thus enacts issues of (visual) power.

I started day three with the presentation of my own paper entitled *Doing Being Local in the Lakeside Lounge*. In this paper I showed the different steps that are involved in establishing yourself in a place like the Lakeside Lounge – a bar in

Manhattan's East Village - as a series of methods for doing being local. Using my own experience and field notes I demonstrated that 'becoming a local' is thus a practical accomplishment. Looking at matters this way stands in contrast to mainstream sociology, for which 'mass society' is a pre-existing fact to be examined, or for which community, real or 'virtual' has a privileged status. Relatively little work has been done in the sociology which examines how things get to be that way. I took the path of an ethnographer using my own fieldnotes to describe the work. Coming from an ethnomethodological approach, however, the data presented were taken from fieldnotes in which my own understandings and activities provide the phenomena for analysis. I was looking at the particular location (the setting) in detail and how it shaped the interactions in question. I also focused on how regularity is being made noticeable: For example by the particular entrance ritual in which the doorman of the Lakeside Lounge stops asking for my ID. Also by being acknowledged by the bar staff, for example when I get a drink without ordering it. By doing so, the bar staff shows (this is not only observable to me but also to the other locals) that they know what my habits are. And by what I call the 'buy back' the drink on the house. But it is the presence of friends who are not familiar with the bar (the concept of the newcomer) that makes me being a local most noticeable to all participants involved. This paper was to show that becoming a local is clearly a processual matter.

The next panel I went to was the panel on *Working With and Against Materials: Self-instruction and Ethnomethodological Inquiry*, convened by Phillippe Sormani (Swiss Institute in Rome, Italy) and it built on *Ethnomethodology's Program* by Harold Garfinkel (2002), in which he emphasized the indispensable character of self-instruction in and for ethnomethodological inquiry. The panel discussed how endogenously deployed methods, rather than any formal methodology of social analysis, can be drawn upon for the reflexive explication and procedural description of the material practices that they constitute: How are "descriptions provided for and 'readable' interchangeably as pedagogies" (Garfinkel 2002)? How do such descriptions afford one with instructions? And what for – mere self-instruction? There has been recurrent scholarly criticism of autodidactic, uniquely adequate and/or the heuristic character of practical self-instruction, and/or hybrid EM. The panel in question attempts to answer this criticism by demonstrating the heuristic character of practical self-instruction, in and for the reflexive explication of a wide range of practical activities and technical domains, including sociological reasoning in various guises and contexts. The "material" aspect of the investigated practices, in turn, shall be examined as a reflexively discoverable feature of variously sustained self-instruction in those selfsame practices, in situ and in vivo – hence also the title of the panel: *Working with and against Materials*. The two final papers on that panel turned the materials and methods of ethnographic inquiry and sociological reasoning into a self-instructive topic in its own right.

In the first paper on this panel *Alain Bovet* (ETH Zürich, Switzerland) talked about *Repairing Twice (or more): A Self-Instruction Perspective of the Repetition of Repair Actions*. Bovet looked at various repair activities undertaken by caretakers and janitors. His data consisted of 24-hours-video-recordings of janitors' interventions in various residential areas in the German speaking part of Switzerland. He filmed three janitors during their entire work days. While reparative activity is

a topic in itself for an ethnomethodological inquiry of self-instruction, Bovet wants to focus on an essential but neglected aspect: Parts of our material environment not only fail once but do so time and time again. This forces us to repeat repair work. Showing video clips in which janitors do "routine instructed repairs" and self-instruction as a consequence of failure, he claims that the experience of previous repair of the same or similar material object provides the person who does the repair work with practical resources, which are different from and usually replace the resources that are provided by abstract theory, instruction or methodological advice.⁴ However, this practical skill must be reflexively adjusted to the contingent rediscovery of the object and its problem, as through "another first time" (Garfinkel et al. 1981). Looking at the video extracts he points out that the tenants can also learn from watching the janitors doing the repair work or by directly requesting some know-how. This ethnographic study of janitors at work shows the variety and complexity of situations where instructional and self-instructional properties emerge.

The final paper of that panel was given by *Philippe Sormani* (Swiss Institute in Rome, Italy) and addressed the question of *Why Bother? Self-Instruction, Video Analysis and "Analogies of Practice"*. For EM, technological self-instruction - in or as practical domain - is crucial. If an ethnomethodological study of mathematical work is to be conducted, mathematical work has to be engaged in. This apparently had also been Harvey Sacks' policy, at least according to Mike Lynch's description of EMCA's early experimental spirit of the 1970's. "Technical action came first, scholarly readings afterwards" (Lynch 1999:216). In his paper Sormani discussed the relationship between the EM emphasis on self-instruction in material practices, on the one hand, and prevalent forms of video analysis of situated interaction, on the other. Not taking Garfinkel's emphasis on practical self-instruction too serious, many video analytic studies tend to instruct their readers on general features of social interaction (e.g. its multifaceted character) rather than on the identifying details of the technical practice under scrutiny. In the first part of the paper Sormani poses the question of how to recover a "phenomenon as the interior course of its own production?" (Garfinkel 1967). His suggestion was to engage in a practice-based video analysis as a hybrid study of a work/tutorial three-step procedure. He described the three steps as follows:

1. In the case of the of the physicists in the lab, film the physicists at work.
2. Re-enact whatever they did (or re-reading the transcript as a script).
3. Use that as a resource to recover what might have been the ethnomethods involved in the production of the phenomenon.

Sormani used video data from his time at a lab of experimental physicists (Sormani 2014) and from a *Go*⁵ teaching situation. He then showed video data of a re-enactment of the practices of interest. He pointed out several things that he had missed out on, by watching the original or the video-recorded situation and that he noticed in the video-data of the re-enacted situation. More recently, Sormani has tried to extend this idea to the analysis of familiar activities, such as conversation: What happens when one starts to not only use the transcript to do

⁴ This refers probably to repair and instruction manuals used by janitor in order to repair for example a broken dish washer or cooker.

⁵ *Go* is an abstract strategy board game - originating in China - for two players, in which the aim is to surround more territory than the opponent.

analysis in the course of interaction, but use the transcript as a script to re-enact the interaction? Sormani set out to show just how the video analyst's practical self-instruction may and, in the examined cases, does augment his (or her) acumen, insofar as it makes possible not only the embodied reenactment of any filmed practice under scrutiny, but also the technical reanalysis of a previously disengaged mode of analysis. Sormani clarified that by "disengaged" he means the sense of bypassing any explicit first person involvement by the analyst. So, the envisaged demonstration takes the form of a "practiced-based video analysis" and insofar as it homes in on filmed episodes from different technical domains, also opens up a discussion of comparative perspectives, first vs. "third person" involvement, and "analogies of practice" more broadly.

Apart from the wide range of very interesting and exciting papers and discussions on offer - about 180 individual papers and five plenary talks were given throughout the four days - the IEMCA 2015 conference also benefitted from various excellent extracurricular activities: Ranging from a games of Kubbs, a BBQ lunch and a conference dinner which featured food served in different materials and was set up in some kind of speed dating manner. About 200 participants from 23 different countries attended the conference and a lot of new topics emerged, among others around epistemics. Macbeth had organized an invited panel – in particular reacting to Heritage's 2012 special issue in ROLSI (Research in Language and Social Interaction). Another topic of special interest, not entirely new, but definitely very present at the conference could be found in the human body as a resource for sense-making practices: 'embodiment', 'multimodality' and 'bodily conduct'. Also the topic of the conference – objects and materiality – was addressed in many or most papers at the conference in one way or another. All in all, the IEMCA 2015 was a great opportunity to reunite with old friends and colleagues and to make new contacts with likeminded academics.

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