

Haddington, Pentti – Eilittä, Tiina – Kamunen, Antti – Kohonen-Aho, Laura – Oittinen, Tuire – Rautiainen, Iira – Vatanen, Anna (eds.): *Ethnomethodological Conversation Analysis in Motion: Emerging Methods and New Technologies*. Abingdon – New York: Routledge. 2024. 265 p. ISBN 978-1-032-54441-0.

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1 Introduction

To say that each field requires periodic updates is among the most commonsensical statements one can make. However, without active implementation, this idea remains an unfulfilled ideal. The book under review exemplifies how to put this principle into practice. Specifically, it focuses on fostering innovation in both research questions and methodologies within Ethnomethodology and Conversation Analysis (EMCA).

In an era shaped by emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, robotics, and virtual environments, it is especially important to renew perspectives on membership, explore new forms of interaction, and refine methodological approaches. In this spirit, the volume offers valuable insights for a diverse readership, including sociologists, social theorists, linguists, anthropologists, psychologists, cognitive scientists, and educational researchers. I especially commend the authors for engaging with fellow scholars to understand methodological needs and practices, using these insights to shape the book's development.

Building on the seminal works of Garfinkel (1967, 2002), Garfinkel and Wieder (1992), Goffman (1955, 1963, 1983), Goodwin (1980, 1981, 2017), Heritage (1984), Jefferson (2004), Levinson (2013), Mondada (2009, 2012, etc.), and Sacks (1984, 1992), among others, the volume has three main aims: to provide solutions for studying members' private actions, to understand new members' perspectives, where "new" refers both to new members and new perspectives, and to advance EMCA methods. The volume successfully achieves all three aims.

The introductory section of the book distinguishes Ethnomethodology (EM) as a framework that employs "qualitative and descriptive tools" to analyze everyday reasoning and actions (p.1), while Conversation Analysis (CA) is defined as "a rigorous method for the study of the organisation of social interaction as it is accomplished by participants through talk and multimodal conduct" (p.1). This chapter further explains that EM draws on diverse methods, including ethnography, observation, and re-enactment, whereas CA primarily relies on audio-video recordings of naturally occurring data (p.1). Following this, the authors discuss the various ways EM and CA have been conceptualized and highlight different nuances in their relationship, but ultimately adopt the title *Ethnomethodological conversation analysis*, defining it as "a qualitative, inductive, and empirical approach that aims to uncover the ordinary practices, reasoning procedures, and methods that participants employ to accomplish activities together" (p.2).

Following the introduction, the book is divided thematically into four parts. The first part explores issues of membership by examining new types of members in emerging interaction contexts across three chapters. More specifically, Chapter 2 investigates the case of non-human animals, while Chapter 3 analyses specific excerpts of human-robot

interactions. Finally, Chapter 4 examines an ocular-centric participation framework in the context of interaction with a visually impaired participant.

Part 2, titled *Broadening the Analyst's Access to a Member's Perspective Using Various Video Materials*, consists of three chapters. This section presents up-to-date studies that incorporate new video data, particularly through the use of multi-source video data (Chapter 5), dual embodiment in virtual environments and virtual reality (Chapter 6), and 360-degree cameras for analysing a mobile gathering (Chapter 7).

Part 3 focuses on enhancing analyses of the member's perspective through multiple research methods and new technologies. Chapter 8 introduces inductive approaches and highlights the importance of accumulated ethnological knowledge alongside video-based observations in conducting ethnographies. Chapter 9 explores the use of satellite technology to analyze gestures and iconic language in conversations. Finally, Chapter 10 addresses the problem of "ontological muteness" by examining EMCA-informed experimentation in relation to two "non-accountable" interactional phenomena.

The final section, Part 4, focuses on analytical processes. This is the shortest part of the book as it consists of only two chapters. Chapter 11 introduces a new approach to analysing video data, while Chapter 12 presents recent experimental approaches to transcribing videos. This review will be structured according to the book's sections, as outlined above.

2 Part 1: Exploring "being a member"

Chapter 2, *How to Study Interactional History in Non-Human Animals? Challenges and Opportunities*, by Federico Rossano, connects animal behavior studies (ethology) with human communication studies. It argues that Conversation Analysis (CA) should be applied to animal communication research. Focusing on infant bonobo communication, specifically how they request to be carried by their mothers, Rossano analyzes seven excerpts through sequence organization and the "next-turn proof" procedure. The study concludes with two key mechanisms of behavioural change: (1) responses become initiating actions, and (2) gestures become more efficient over time through shortening and speeding up. Rossano suggests a new approach to studying behavioural development: starting with social actions and working backward to uncover how gestures evolve.

On the one hand, by applying insights from CA to ethology, the study fosters collaboration between the two fields. However, the study acknowledges that it does not meet the criteria of capturing interactions longitudinally. Nonetheless, the patterns indicated are still evidenced and provide a solid basis for further studies to validate the causation between interaction and behaviour development and test the deduced mechanisms across different behaviours and subspecies.

Chapter 3 is entitled *Transcribing Human-Robot Interaction: Methodological Implications of Participating Machines* and authored by Hannah Pelikan. This chapter addresses an important and timely gap: the absence of a systematic discussion on how to transcribe human-robot interaction. It thus explores the question of robot membership and poses the question of whether robots should be treated as participants, akin to human membership, or whether they should be viewed as objects or machines. The study takes the former approach and tackles the challenge of transcribing human-robot interactions using three robots in three different settings.

The notion of robot membership will likely generate interest and debate in equal measure. I would propose shifting the question from whether robots are interactional

members to whether they function as such within human perception and engagement. That is to say, rather than focusing solely on a robot's inherent characteristics or actions, it may be more insightful to consider how humans perceive and engage with them. In reading this chapter, I found it useful to consider that humans tend to conceive of robots as interactive counterparts, albeit with different expectations than in human-human interaction. Ultimately, I leave it to the readers to form their own conclusions.

Chapter 4, *Ocularcentric Participation Frameworks: Dealing with a Blind Member's Perspective*, by Brian L. Due, examines how sighted participants adapt to the perspective of visually impaired persons (VIPs) in real-life interactions. Using EMCA, the study analyses video excerpts involving nine human agents and two non-human agents: a guide dog and a robot. It focuses on a case where a VIP is guided to a robot used experimentally as a "guide dog" and draws on four interaction fragments that incorporate images and transcriptions to capture language, spatial organization, and gestures.

Due introduces the concept of the "ocularcentric participation framework" to describe how sighted individuals assume vision as a shared resource and privilege sight over other senses. This framework highlights how sighted participants navigate interactional challenges posed by VIPs' visual limitations, revealing implicit assumptions about perception and communication. The chapter also addresses two methodological challenges in EMCA: the difficulty sighted participants face in adopting a VIP's perspective and the paradox of using visual analysis to study visual impairment. This critique raises broader questions about ocularcentric bias in EMCA research.

The study's insights are transferable and could be highly valuable to other fields, such as education, in working towards more inclusive environments. However, there remains a need to fully reveal the "taken-for-granted knowledge and practices" (p.65) referenced in the study, particularly by accounting for the manifestations of the ocularcentric participation framework in a more comprehensive manner. Furthermore, the analysis could have been further strengthened by including a table that summarizes the different manifestations of the ocularcentric participation framework, making them more 'visible' to the reader.

The prominence of ocularcentric discourse is well-documented, particularly in cognition, where perception is recognized as a fundamental domain and is deeply embedded in conceptual metaphors. As such, the findings of the study are also supported across various fields. On a different note, while the study's unique setting, which involves both human and non-human participants, is innovative, the analysis remains primarily focused on human interaction. Yet, there remains the possibility of addressing other axes of analysis that emerge from the same experiment.

3 Part 2: Broadening the analyst's access to a member's perspective by using various video materials

Part 2 introduces the reader to the challenge of gaining deeper perspectives to explain members' interactions through thought-provoking analyses.

Chapter 5, titled *Collecting and Analyzing Multi-Source Video Data: Grasping the Opacity of Smartphone Use in Face-to-Face Encounters*, is authored by Iuliia Avgustis and Florence Oloff. This chapter demonstrates how multi-source video data, specifically using wearable cameras and screen capture, can offer a deeper understanding of face-to-face interactions involving smartphone use. The excerpts presented in the chapter

highlight the complementary information (and perspectives) provided by the wearable camera and screen captures, each offering distinct insights into the interaction. The chapter is structured around three key topics: Topic 1, Understanding Smartphone-Related Multiactivity, which includes two excerpts (1 and 2); Topic 2, Investigating the Specificity of Social Actions Related to the Affordances of the Device, with two excerpts (3 and 4); and Topic 3, Understanding the Participants' Orientation Towards Wearable Cameras and Screen Capture, featuring two excerpts (5 and 6).

This study demonstrates that the most effective way to investigate mobile use in interaction requires multi-source video data. The analysis of the excerpts further supports the argument that such data is not merely an enhancement to the data collection phase, but rather an essential component; without it, the analysis is incomplete and, at best, weak, if not fundamentally flawed.

Chapter 6, *From Distributed Ecologies to Distributed Bodies in Interaction: Capturing and Analyzing "Dual Embodiment" in Virtual Environments*, by Laura Kohonen-Aho and Pentti Haddington, explores distributed ecologies in video-mediated interaction, where participants are represented by avatars in virtual environments. This experience is conceptualized as distributed embodiment. The chapter examines two cases of dual embodiment issues using video recordings from *Second Life* and *Rec Room*. The first case analyses a situation where a participant loses sight of their avatar (first-person perspective). The second case examines a moment when two participants orient to different bodies – the physical and the virtual – while producing and interpreting a gesture.

More broadly, the chapter highlights how new technologies create novel spaces for human interaction, necessitating new methodological approaches. In light of this, the authors offer three key methodological reflections. First, they challenge traditional EMCA principles, arguing that the "next-turn proof procedure" alone is insufficient for analysing dual embodiment. Instead, they emphasize the need to incorporate private actions and virtual embodiment recordings. Second, they advocate shifting from a third-person to a first-person analytical perspective. Third, they highlight the importance of advanced analytical tools, such as AVA360VR, which allow researchers to experience recorded interactions in 360-degree virtual reality. This point is further developed in Chapter 11.

While the chapter is somewhat technical, it remains accessible. In my perspective, dual embodiment is not only an interactional phenomenon but also a conceptual one, as it involves the conception of the self through two distinct origos. I suggest that integrating a deictic framework could complement the current analysis, as the "dual embodiment puzzle" (p. 127) primarily concerns the fragmentation of the self in spatial reference and perception. In particular, applying the notion of spatial frames of reference, with two origos (one physical and one virtual) for each participant, could provide further clarity and enhance the interpretation of these interactions.

Chapter 7, the final chapter of Part 2, *360-Cameras Used by a Team Participating in a Mobile Gathering*, by Pirkko Raudaskoski, explores the benefits of using 360-degree cameras to capture participant interactions. The study argues that "360-degree recording ... enhances an openly participatory approach" (p. 133) and employs four cameras: an eight-lens 360-degree camera, a single-lens 360-degree camera, a 2D Olympus camera on a pole, and a 2D Panasonic camera with a picture-in-picture feature.

Using a case study approach, the author analyses excerpts from a hiking trip where camerapersons also participate in the activity. This dual role is central to understanding the recordings, as they engage both as researchers and videographers. The author notes

that camerapersons' actions "can be analysed as having a double orientation" (p. 137), balancing subjective perception, temporality, self-engagement, and interaction. This interplay highlights how recording shapes immediate experience, social interaction, and memory creation.

A proto-analysis of different footage types and cameraperson engagement reveals aspects of participation often overlooked with traditional cameras. The findings emphasize how 360-degree cameras, with their unrestricted perspective, offer greater flexibility and inclusivity in participatory research.

The author also reflects on how recording itself becomes part of the data and enables new analytical possibilities for studying researcher-participant collaboration. Practically, this method could extend to larger camera crews and improve both research and videography without disrupting events. The camera serves as a central tool in this study, functioning both as a means of perceptual experience allowing participants to experience reality through its lens and as a tool for creating memories. As a result, the study intersects multiple constellations of epistemic modalities, linking immediate experience, recorded memories, and perceptual access through camera angles and perspectives. Many of these intersections open up avenues for a systematic analysis of the configurations of camera and participant positions to optimise the process of data collection.

4 Part 3: Augmenting analyses of the member's perspective with multiple research materials and methods

Chapter 8, *Inductive Approach in EMCA: The Role of Accumulated Ethnographic Knowledge and Video-Based Observations in Studying Military Crisis Management Training*, authored by Antti Kamunen, Tuire Oittinen, Iira Rautiainen, and Pentti Haddington, explores the often overlooked role of contextual knowledge, field experiences, and researcher-participant relationships in EMCA research. The chapter addresses the gap in EMCA literature regarding how researchers' prior knowledge and experiences inform the research process, from defining topics to analysing data.

Using a reflective case study approach, the authors combine ethnographic insights and video-based observations to examine military crisis management training. They emphasize the iterative nature of research, where research questions evolve based on accumulated knowledge. The chapter critically engages with core EMCA principles, such as unmotivated looking and inductivity, and evaluates their relevance in dynamic real-world settings. It introduces the concept of "proto-data," which refers to ethnographic knowledge gained during fieldwork, as an essential component of the research process.

The study makes several key contributions, particularly by highlighting the researcher's role, which is typically kept implicit in EMCA to maintain neutrality. It also challenges the traditional top-down approach to research, proposing a more transparent view that acknowledges the interplay between the researcher's prior knowledge and the data. This type of study could serve as a valuable model in methodology coursework and be replicated across disciplines to further understand the role of researchers in data-driven inquiry.

Chapter 9, titled *A Satellite View of Spatial Points in Conversation*, is authored by Joe Blythe, Francesco Possemato, Josua Dahmen, Caroline de Dear, Rod Gardner, and Lesley Stirling. The chapter addresses the lack of GPS-informed studies on spatial referencing strategies in interaction and argues that "geospatial data may add to the analyses of talk

and embodied conduct” (p. 172). Building on previous research (Possemato et al., 2021), it applies these methods to a different set of data for an EMCA audience.

Drawing on the work of Levinson (2003) and Levinson and Wilkins (2006), who identify spatial frames of reference, the chapter defines a simple vector for a pointing action. Specifically, the vector originates at point O, passes through an anchor point A (such as a hand or object), and extends toward the target location T.

The chapter presents various forms of geographically enriched interactional data, including pictures, recordings, and satellite images of conversations recorded in Australia, conducted in three Aboriginal languages (Gija, Murrinhpatha, and Jaru) as well as English. The studied communities are known for their mastery of the geospatial aspects of their surrounding landscapes. By incorporating GIS and GPS technologies, the chapter demonstrates how researchers can reveal the remarkable accuracy of pointing gestures. While the spatial geographical skills of many tribes, including these, have been acknowledged for some time, this study pioneers the empirical testing of this accuracy using advanced technology, combining absolute spatial frames of reference with global technological tools. The findings thus demonstrate that “superimposed graphics” serve as a useful tool for “multimodal transcriptions of talk and embodied behaviour, particularly when determining the direction and accuracy of points” (p. 192). Finally, not only is this study innovative and cutting-edge, but it is also reader friendly. It is particularly noteworthy that the video recordings of the excerpts in this chapter are accessible through Figshare.

Chapter 10, titled *EMCA-Informed Experimentation as a Way of Investigating (Also) “Non Accountable” Interactional Phenomena*, authored by Melisa Stevanovic, addresses the issue of “ontological muteness” in EMCA research and introduces two phenomena that require empirical investigation: pre-reflective mirroring mechanisms (bodily mirroring) and physiological synchrony (the physiological underpinnings of interaction). These phenomena play a crucial role in structuring interactions, yet they are often overlooked in traditional EMCA methods.

The chapter also discusses the challenge of inducing naturalistic data in laboratory settings. Stevanovic poses the question: *How should one best induce the interaction phenomena of interest in the distinctive context of the laboratory?* This highlights the tension between controlling variables in experimental design to ensure validity and obtaining naturalistic data that reflects the complexity of real-world interactions.

Despite these challenges, the chapter advocates for expanding EMCA through the adoption of empirical and quantitative paradigms. It also proposes a methodology that bridges the gap between the experimental methods of the natural sciences and the inductive approach of EMCA, traditionally focused on naturally occurring interactions. To further support this proposed methodology, the chapter outlines a five-step research process, ranging from theorizing the interactional target phenomenon to conducting quantitative analyses of the results (p. 206). Readers are encouraged to consult the book for a detailed explanation of each step.

The chapter also acknowledges the challenges of EMCA-informed experimentation, such as distinguishing between basic and non-basic interactional patterns and managing data noise. These points in particular make this chapter a valuable resource for methodology courses and researcher training programs.

5 Part 4: Enhancing transparency of analytical processes

Chapter 11, titled *Beyond Video: Using Practice-Based VolCap Analysis to Understand Analytical Practices Volumetrically*, is authored by Paul McIlvenny and Jacob Davidsen. The chapter introduces Practice-Based Volumetric Capture Analysis (PBVCA), a new approach that uses Virtual Reality (VR) to study how scholars collaborate in analysing complex events recorded from multiple cameras. PBVCA is a VR-based method that allows scholars to immerse themselves in data and capture their own analytical processes. The chapter explores whether this approach enhances EMCA research or just adds technological complexity without clear benefits.

The authors emphasize the need to go beyond simply analysing video recordings. They outline a four-step process that begins with VolCapping the task and ends with a re-evaluation of the initial VolCap. This process includes replays and a meta-analysis conducted by an external analyst, who examines the performance of the primary analyst or trainee.

The study also tests volumetric data with a proto-analysis of student interactions during a project. The authors argue that the scenographic approach to video analysis opens new possibilities for collaborative reflection and deeper engagement with complex data. VolCap and RePlay allow analysts to create unique, context-sensitive interpretations while staying true to the original event. This is especially important since some phenomena are only visible through 360-degree video. Finally, the chapter reflects on the philosophical underpinnings of these techniques and emphasizes the need to reflect on the relationship between the following: the original event (the initial interaction), the recordings of the event, the replaying of these recordings, the reactivation (RePlay) of VolCaps, and the reflexive practices of analysis itself.

Chapter 12, titled *Recurrent Problems and Recent Experiments in Transcribing Video: Live Transcribing in Data Sessions and Depicting Perspective*, is written by Eric Laurier and Tobias Boelt Back. The authors begin by discussing the history of transcription conventions, referencing Jefferson's (1978) and Mondada's (2018) systems, and highlighting recurring issues in EMCA transcription: *hiding*, *estranging*, and *formulating*. These issues include the *problem of detail in transcription*, the *problem of categorizing and formulating members' actions* (influenced by participants' identities), and the challenge of transcribing non-verbal actions like gazes and gestures. The final issue, *granularity of embodied actions*, suggests that transcription precision should match the action's context. The authors summarize these paradoxes by stating, "As with any type of transcribing, there is a meeting between the need for under-appreciated detail and the potential of imagination in depicting that detail" (p. 252).

The chapter then explores whether graphic transcription, inspired by comic strip conventions, could address these transcription issues. While the authors acknowledge that graphic transcripts do not solve these problems, they offer alternative responses. For example, graphic transcripts can lose the relative timing of actions and may be perceived as overly simplistic. Additionally, the analyst must make informed choices about which part of an action to depict in the comic strip.

Ultimately, the chapter introduces Live Graphical Transcribing as a complementary tool in transcription practices. This method, tested in data sessions, involves participants creating rapid three-panel comic strips (trptychs) to capture key moments in a video. These triptychs serve as sketches for analysis, which, in turn, allows analysts to focus

on the embodied, visual, and spatial aspects of interaction, illustrated through the case of Seat Selection on Public Transport during COVID-19.

Although it is understandable that the chapters in this part present preliminary analyses, it is important to acknowledge that further testing of the proposed methods is required. More importantly, considerations of time and cost need to be addressed. Furthermore, it is crucial to identify when such rigorous analyses – like the volumetric analysis and transcription methods proposed in Chapter 12 – are truly necessary, and when more traditional methodologies would suffice. By “when,” I refer to both the types of data and the phenomena being studied.

6 Conclusion

The book features high-quality prose and well-structured sections that explore carefully chosen themes. It is well-organized and easy to navigate, and, from a reader’s perspective, it is relatively easy to follow, though it varies in complexity and technicality. The volume also effectively integrates theory with analytic insights and addresses questions at the intersections of ontology, methodology, and technology. Additionally, it empirically identifies ways to obtain converging evidence by combining multiple data sources and analytical approaches.

The volume arrives at a particularly relevant moment when notions of membership and the role of the human are evolving in light of advancements in robotic technologies, and when the nature of interaction and language are being re-examined with the emergence of Large Language Models. The themes it engages with are thus both central and timely.

On a more critical note, the volume primarily uses a single case analysis alongside a variety of proto-analyses. This has two implications: first, the findings are contextualized and substantiated with real evidence, which makes the methodological propositions more reliable; second, readers are cautioned that many findings require further testing for validation. Some insights, such as those related to virtual reality, are time-sensitive and may evolve as humans conceptually adapt to VR and robotic environments.

Regarding the titles of the four parts, Parts 2 (*Broadening the analyst’s access to a member’s perspective by using various video materials*) and 3 (*Augmenting analyses of the member’s perspective with multiple research materials and methods*) are thematically similar and could have been merged into one. The title of Part 4 (*Enhancing transparency of analytical processes*) could also be improved. As it stands, the section focuses on analytical processes by addressing challenges related to accessing a member’s perspective (Chapter 11) and transcription issues (Chapter 12). The current title does not reflect these methodological concerns. Moreover, enhancing the transparency of analytical processes could arguably be seen as the aim of the entire volume, not just this part.

Overall, researchers in Ethnomethodology and/or Conversation Analysis will find this volume highly relevant, as will those interested in human interaction with artificial intelligence, robotics, and creative empirical methodologies across the social sciences and humanities. Notably, as discussed in the preceding sections, Chapters 8 and 10 offer in-depth, case-study based methodological reflections and propose innovative research processes, which make them useful for EMCA methodology coursework.

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