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Epilogue

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1 Introduction

This edited volume brings together eleven original research papers¹ exploring a plethora of activities in different languages and in institutional and everyday contexts, revealing the inextricability of language and body in different face-to-face and mediated settings. Activities are courses of actions defined by coherent goals and/or topics, situated in space and unfolding in time. This epilogue seeks to discuss the findings of the eleven research papers on embodied activities in the volume.²

The activities studied in this volume are manifold: reporting to a fellow football club member, making an appointment with a friend, putting on compression stockings in a caretaking interaction, assessing a product in a telemarketing call, deciding about a pupil's promotion in a report-card meeting (all Mazeland2), introducing new objects during guided visits, filming (as research method) (both Mondada), laparoscopic gallbladder surgery (Bezemer et al.), tidying a kid's room (Gerhardt), shopping at a local farmers' market (Stukenbrock and Dao), different activities during handball timeouts (Meyer and von Wedelstaedt), enticing sequences during Prime Minister's Questions in the British Parliament (Reber), first performance and repeated instructions in musical master classes (Reed), comforting in mother-child interaction, in the classroom, and in a mediated political broadcast (Kupetz), telling in talk-in-interaction (Li), and argumentation in meeting talk (Mazeland12).

The discussion will focus on the questions of what embodied activities are (Section 2) and how they are embodied (Section 3) as two perspectives on the findings from the research papers collected in this volume. We will close with an outlook on future research (Section 4).

2 Embodied activities in interaction – what are they?

In the contributions to the volume, activities have been characterised by the following features: Activities are local achievements (2.1), can be embedded in other activities (2.2,) have different levels of organization (2.2), are shaped by extralinguistic affordances (2.4), are goal-oriented

¹ In the epilogue, the names in round brackets refer to the chapters in this edited volume; thus Mazeland2 is the second chapter, on *Activities as discrete organisational domains*, and Mazeland12 is Chapter 12, on *Position expansion in meeting talk*. All other chapters will simply be referred to by the name(s) of the author(s).

² This is a summary only. For relevant literature, please refer to the individual chapters.

(2.5), are cooperative achievements (2.6), are displays of social rights and moral obligations (2.7), are multifunctional (2.8), and can be mediated (2.9). We will flesh out these points in what follows.

2.1 Activities as local achievements

The question of whether something constitutes an activity (rather than, for example, a practice or action) cannot be predetermined; it is a local achievement by the participants, emerging in space and time through their embodied vocal and verbal conduct. For instance, 'reporting' represents a full-blown activity in the data studied here (Mazeland2), but it could also be a one-turn-action in some other activity or a linguistic practice through which some other action is achieved. The moment participants produce recognizable patterns (for themselves, but also the analyst(s)) that are oriented towards some goal, they can be said to perform some activity.

2.2 Activities as embedded in other activities

The papers suggest that activities can be embedded in other activities. The subsequent steps in some overarching activity may represent activities in their own right if they consist of courses of actions with a specific goal. The attainment of that goal (e.g. forming a huddle in handball to allow communication between coach and team members) would then represent a prerequisite for the attainment of the overall goal (a successful time-out that fulfills instructional, recreational, and motivational functions; Meyer and von Wedelstaedt). To give another example, a student must first perform a piece of music before the master can assess the student's performance. This also holds for comforting (Kupetz) where the activity analysed is not incipiently embedded in the overarching activities of the data sets (e.g. reading a book with a child or teaching), but the goal of comforting has to be achieved before the higher-level activity can resume its orderly course.

2.3 Activities with different levels of organisation

Activities consist of a number of steps, or little projects (Mazeland2, Reed), that are ordered in a way to attain the goal of the overall activity. Activities may consist of specific sequences of adjacency pairs, or talk may primarily accompany practical actions that lead to the completion of the activity (Mazeland2). One sub-task often projects the next, e.g. walking and turning both signal that a new object is being turned to in guided visits (Mondada). Putting on stockings has a clear orderly progress (Mazeland2). Tracing a structure with instruments projects cutting during laparoscopic gallbladder surgery (Bezemer et al.). 'Showing' an object during the activity of tidying a room is understood as a prompt to identify the object (Gerhardt). Gaze

shifts often project a next move (Stukenbrock and Dao, cf. below in the section on gaze). The screaming of a team's name is immediately and unfailingly followed by the last choral motivational shout in a huddle (Meyer and von Wedelstaedt). Holding a folder may project a short turn by a Member of Parliament (Reber), projecting turn-completion. In contrast, the bodily re-orientation of a student singer to the audience shapes the trajectory in indicating the imminent beginning of the performance (Reed). Head nods project closing a telling sequence (Li).

In some activities, lower-level activities or actions are recyclable, e.g. re-performances by a student musician (Reed), examining a market stall (Stukenbrock and Dao), and showing the next sortable (Gerhardt) or notable (Mondada) item can all be repeated ad infinitum from a structural point of view. In such cases, transition to the next step has to be carefully negotiated (Stukenbrock and Dao). The overall goal of the activity is not abandoned at these moments, but these recyclable steps often represent the core of the (higher level) activity. The practices in these slots are closely tied to the achievement of the overall goal, be it practical, as in the instances above, or otherwise. For instance, the frequent use of the index-up gesture in Parliament is closely tied to the hidden agenda of the speakers, a display of authority and superiority. Hence certain practices can be seen as core elements of activities, or, vice versa; some activities are marked by certain central practices. On the other hand, in some activities, the attainment of one step automatically entails the next, e.g. when putting on stockings (Mazeland2), making for a much more automated progression.

Hence, these separate steps, specific actions (or activities, cf. above) performed with the help of locally shaped practices, set constraints on the following step, or the next action, projecting it, e.g. when introducing a new object that is present (Mondada) or when answering a trap-setting uncontroversial first question in Parliament (Reber). Such local contingencies may be momentarily suspended, e.g. through position expansion (Mazeland12) or humming (Gerhardt). Clear violations of the order of the consecutive steps may be sanctioned, e.g. when a player starts shouting motivational exclamations to his teammates before the coach has addressed the team as a whole (Meyer and von Wedelstaedt).

2.4 Activities as shaped by extralinguistic affordances

Contextual affordances shape the practices chosen by the participants to perform relevant actions as meaningful tasks within an activity. For instance, the activities pertaining to time-outs are shaped by time-pressure and the noisy environment (Meyer and von Wedelstaedt). Activities in the House of Commons are shaped by the architecture (Reber). The pressure of

the organization of turn-taking in multi-person settings marks activities during meeting talk (Mazeland12). When shopping at a market (Stukenbrock and Dao) or visiting a garden (Mondada), the participants move towards relevant objects; when sorting out a room (Gerhardt), the relevant objects are moved around.

2.5 Activities as goal-oriented

Goal-orientedness does not entail that all participants have either the same goal (e.g. to buy food at a market (Stukenbrock and Dao) or to agree on an opinion (Mazeland12)) or a reciprocal goal (e.g. to comfort and to be comforted (Kupetz), to tell and to listen (Li), or to teach and to learn (Reed, Bezemer et al.)) during the communal bringing-about of an activity. Activities are emergent (Mazeland2, Mondada, Gerhardt, Stukenbrock and Dao, Meyer and von Wedelstaedt). Boundaries or delimitations have to be constructed and transitions have to be coordinated (Mazeland2, Reed, Li, Meyer and von Wedelstaedt, Mondada). While there may sometimes be institutionalized practices (e.g. the ‘critical view’ in surgery to decide whether to cut or not; Bezemer et al.), in mundane situations multiple exclusive trajectories may be incipient, e.g. to buy something or to continue to the next stall (Stukenbrock and Dao). Some activities may only be performed reluctantly by one of the participants (Gerhardt). In mediated political interaction, hidden agendas and adversarial goals seem all-prevalent and constitutive (Reber).

2.6 Activities as cooperative achievements

Thus, activities are local achievements that are brought about by the cooperation of the participants. Everyday activities often stand at the risk of being abandoned: for instance, the shoppers may decide momentarily that they will stop walking across the market first and instead start the actual buying project (Stukenbrock and Dao). At many moments during the recording of the father-daughter dyad, the father could potentially reframe the girl’s actions as playing, which would result in a recontextualisation of their encounter from the activity of cleaning the room into reprimanding or conflict talk. Other activities like surgery (Bezemer et al.), parliamentary debates (Reber), or musical master classes (Reed) are much more institutionalized; yet their effortless progression depends on the finely attuned cooperation of the participants and a recognition of each other’s projects.

Hence, the members monitor each other closely, signalling their recognition of the activity under way. Many chapters illustrate moments when the participants are clearly orienting to the overall organizational unit activity rather than to local contingencies. For instance, the thanks

at the end of putting on the stockings cannot be understood in its verbal sequential placement; it is only understandable as part of the closing of the embodied activity (Mazeland2). The question of which film the participants are going to see is not based on asymmetric epistemics, but it represents the next step in their joint activity of planning to go the movies together (Mazeland2). Objects that are made relevant in the environment can only be understood as noteworthy (Mondada), sortable (Gerhardt), or buyable (Stukenbrock and Dao) against the backdrop of the activity. The tracing of the triangular structure during surgery is recognized as a practice with future relevance for the activity by the surgeons and nurses (Bezemer et al.). The rebuke for a misplaced contribution highlights that an umbrella structure is in place (Meyer and von Wedelstaedt). Bodily repositioning signals awareness of and creates transitions in music classes (Reed) or guided visits (Mondada) (cf. below).

2.7 Achievements as displays of social rights and moral obligations

Since participants assume specific roles during activities, an array of social rights and moral obligations are constructed and displayed for and by the participants: social values that are intricately tied to the assumed roles and the goal-orientedness of such coherent courses of action. Participants can display their entitlement to specific verbal or embodied actions, for instance, the gardener in the botanical visits (Mondada) or the coach in handball time-outs (Meyer and von Wedelstaedt). Moreover, epistemic authority may be assumed: for example, the gardener in his expert position as guide (Mondada), the girl as authority over the objects in her room (Gerhardt), and politicians displaying claims of their superior knowledge through the index-up gesture (Reber). We can also witness the interactional construction of morality, e.g. when the father makes his child join him in the activity of cleaning her room (Gerhardt) or a teacher comforts a child (Kupetz). However, it can also be the goal of such asymmetric activities to challenge the adversary's authority, such as in the pairing of the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition of the British Parliament (Reber). In mediated contexts, activities are marked by the embedded participation framework of political broadcasts (Reber, Kupetz). Even though the primary interaction may be between the co-present interlocutors, the goal of the participants is geared towards the non-present overhearers, e.g. politicians are not trying to convince the oppositional party of their opinion, but the general public (Reber).

2.8 Activities as multifunctional

Finally, activities are multifunctional. Similar to language functions that have been described for different text types or genres, activities as complex human encounters cannot be reduced to a simple mechanical input–output scheme. For instance, the hand-ball timeouts not only allow

communication between the coach and the team for tactical orientation, they also serve as little breaks for the players. For this reason, drinking water is regularly done by the players (Meyer and von Wedelstaedt). In the interactions in a nursing home, the activity of putting on stockings serves the additional purpose of also representing a social encounter for the participants (Mazeland2). Activities may be recognizably shaped by their goal-orientedness and the function that is associated with a particular goal, however, concurrently, as social encounters, they usually also re(create) social ties, inform about different inner states or stances of the participants.

2.9 Activities and mediation

Screens may be used to make an activity more visible and to enhance or allow mutual monitoring (Bezemer et al.). Furthermore, the observability and hence visual accountability can also be seen in the behavior of the camera person recording an activity for research purposes (Mondada). The use of data generated by mobile eye-tracking glasses, worn by participants guide the analysts' vision in their analysis. The use of such tools, too, mirrors the trajectories of the emerging progression of the activity at hand. Moreover, these kind of settings and data constitution push the boundaries of what is treated as "mediated setting". Perhaps most radically, all video data deployed for embodied analysis are mediated in that their constitution is intrinsically tied to the filming practices of the researcher. On the other hand, the recent technical progress has meant that activities which would have been a prime example for face-to-face interaction only some decades ago, e.g. operations, have been transformed to interactions, where co-present participants interact based on a shared vision mediated by cameras.

3 The embodiment of activities in interaction

By turning to the embodiment of interaction, by adding the seeable to the hearable, one realises that visibility is not a given, but that it is constructed, both by the participants in the data and by the researcher during the recording. The relevance of this observability can be seen in the positioning of the bodies in space in that they are finely attuned to the other participants, to relevant objects in the world, and to the progression of the activity under way. Such constitutions of visibility often go hand in hand with a construction of interactional space. Drawing on the findings assembled in the volume, we argue that embodied activities are visible activities (3.1), accomplished through multimodal gestalts (3.2). Apart from the use of linguistic

resources, these involve bodily positioning (3.3), gestures (3.4), gaze, head movements, and facial expressions (3.5), prosody (3.6), and (written) objects (3.7).

3.1 Embodied activities as visible activities

In a guided tour, it is the guide and the visitors who continuously have to rearrange themselves with regard to the observable objects and the other participants as the tour and the interaction unfold (Mondada). The practice of ‘seeing aloud’ describes moments where participants name relevant objects in their surroundings, such as when a participant spots an item during shopping (Stukenbrock and Dao). During the activity of cleaning a room, the father places himself strategically to make his actions observable to the daughter, a positioning that acts as an incitement to cooperate (Gerhardt). During time-outs in handball, teammates arrange themselves into an F-formation, visibly orienting to each other’s co-presence by leaving gaps for arriving players (Meyer and von Wedelstaedt). In addition to the positioning of the body, gaze behavior and gestures are likewise relevant semiotic means used by the participants (see below).

Often such practices of visibility manipulate and shape the physical context and create the very objects that are fundamental to the activity at hand: this includes the ‘critical view’ in laparoscopic cholecystectomies displaying a triangle of tissue (Bezemer et al.), the huddle that allows communication under time-pressure in a larger group (Meyer and von Wedelstaedt), ‘sortables’ during the activity of cleaning a child’s room (Gerhardt), ‘learnables’ as those parts that are repeatedly studied in music class (Reed), and relevant ‘buyables’ during shopping at a market which turn ‘walk-by-able’ stalls into relevant shopping sites (Stukenbrock and Dao).

3.2 Embodied activities as accomplished through multimodal gestalts

The plethora of differently natured activities illustrates the abundance of semiotic resources used by the participants. It becomes clear that these resources are not arbitrary, but are finely attuned to the specific constraints and goals of a given activity (Bezemer et al., Meyer and von Wedelstaedt). The body cannot be schematized a priori (neither by the participants nor by the researcher) into fixed categories such as head or hand (movement), but its conduct is made locally relevant by participants (Mondada) and demonstrably oriented to, creating meaningfulness against the backdrop of the unfolding activities.

The papers bear witness to the observation that the use of language and bodily behavior are intertwined in complex ways in the activities studied. For instance, standing up and sitting down in the British Parliament is synchronized with turn-taking in a very formal way in this

institutional setting (Reber). In musical master classes, the master leaning forward or getting up introduces the verbal teaching sequence after the performance (Reed). As a further example, head nods occur at potential closings of tellings (Li). Hence, the different resources discussed below should not be thought of as being newly assembled by the participants either in using them or in understanding them. Instead, they seem to come in complex semiotic packages where the meaning of the whole gestalt cannot be reduced to the meaning of its separate parts: a tour in a garden (Mondada), handball timeouts (Meyer and von Wedelstaedt), practices like showing (Gerhardt), and actions like responding (Reber) are analysed as multimodal gestalts or sign complexes. It is important that the labels we (or the members) attach to them are verbal glosses only that do not and cannot represent the full meaning-potential of the actual gestalts in the data. Their meaning often goes beyond semantics, for instance when touch forms an integral part of the activity (Kupetz, Meyer and von Wedelstaedt, see below).

3.3 Bodily positioning

The positioning of the (whole) body/bodies seems relevant in all data sets (cf. above for the construction of visibility), in that the body necessarily has to be positioned in a specific manner in space. It can be used to create joint attention (Mondada, Stukenbrock and Dao, Meyer and von Wedelstaedt, Gerhardt), activity space (Mondada, Gerhardt), or mutual alignment and orientation (Meyer and von Wedelstaedt). Different postures constitute visible displays of orientation to the activity and changing participation or stance (Mazeland2, Mondada, Gerhardt, Meyer and von Wedelstaedt, Reber). For instance, in comforting, specific postures seem to represent a vital element of the meaning (Kupetz). The body may also be used for reenactments of embodied actions, here fouls, or in choral productions a whole group can create meaning together (both, Meyer and von Wedelstaedt). Also, in the British Parliament, members of each party (the audience) act as one body (Reber).

3.4 Gestures

Gestures are prototypically produced with the hand, e.g. pointing and showing to mark the relevance of an object for the activity (Mondada, Gerhardt, Bezemer et al., Stukenbrock and Dao, Meyer and von Wedelstaedt, Reber), or waving to attract the attention of other participants and invite them into the (upcoming) participation framework (Meyer and von Wedelstaedt, Reed). Pointing often incites gaze (Mondada, Gerhardt, Stukenbrock and Dao). Touching is another important means in interaction: it may be used to display different stances, to console or enact comforting (Kupetz), to attract attention and construct relevance (Mondada), to construct participation frameworks (Mondada, Meyer and von Wedelstaedt), or to indicate that

a participant is finishing a sub-task within an activity (Mazeland2). Gestures can also be suspended to manage interactional concerns (Mazeland12). Some gestures display inner states, such as an imploring gesture, or can be used to signal how close a team is to winning a game (both Meyer and von Wedelstaedt). The index-up gesture displays claims of epistemic authority and power (Reber). However, it may also be the sustaining of a leg when putting on stockings that is meaningful by indicating the orientation of the patient to the ongoing activity (Mazeland 2). Other practices performed primarily by the hands and arms of the participants include clapping to make teammates form a huddle (Meyer and von Wedelstaedt).

3.5 Gaze, head movements, and facial expressions

Gaze or head movements are relevant throughout. While one may choose not to gesture, gaze behavior has the property that it is ineludible, i.e. participants cannot not look. So gaze is routinely taken as a display of the participants' orientation, as a sign of the relevance of something or someone in the direction of the gaze. To mark objects in the vicinity as relevant, gaze accompanies pointing and showing in specific ways, often to construct joint attention (see above). It is also used to demarcate different participation frameworks (Reed, Mondada, Meyer and von Wedelstaedt, Kupetz, Mazeland12), a practice which is strongly connected to the positioning of the body in space (see above). Head nods seem to invite gaze withdrawal and indicate closing (Li) and they are associated with evaluation (Reed).

Of special importance for activities is that gaze (re)direction often marks transitions between different phases of an activity, often together with body realignment (Reed, Li). Hence, gaze redirection is often a marker of the next step, e.g. when the gaze is shifted from the shopping list to the first stall in the market (Stukenbrock and Dao). Mutual or reciprocal gaze is found to be an important marker of shared understanding: it may mark recognition of someone's expertise (Mondada), mutual comprehension of each other's concerns (Mazeland12), or joint attention to a story (Li). Fixed gaze on another person may represent a display of power and claim of dominance (Reber). Gaze and head movements are often analytically merged; gaze-tracking technology allows a clear differentiation between the two, indicating that pointing gestures are not quite as direct as they have generally been treated in the literature (Stukenbrock and Dao).

Meaningful facial expressions that were deemed relevant for the analysis of activities include a quizzical face, the embodiment of the difficulty of a task (both Gerhardt), and grinning and teeth-baring (Reber). In addition, laughter is a powerful resource in political debate for derision

(Reber), seemingly as complementary to the index-up gesture. Furthermore, the closings of storytellings are marked by laughter (Li).

3.6 Prosody

Prosody and intonation as unavoidable meaningful features of spoken language are often found to be relevant to the analyses of the data, for instance, rising intonation is associated with mobilising response (Gerhardt, Bezemer et al.) or signalling continuation (Mazeland12). Lowering the voice may be involved in transition and completion (Mondada), doubtfulness or reluctance (Stukenbrock and Dao), closing (Li, Mondada), or comforting (Kupetz). The coach's staccato intonation also functions as affect key (Meyer and von Wedelstaedt). Team moments are marked by rhythmicity and choral productions (Meyer and von Wedelstaedt). By participants speaking faster digressions can be highlighted (Meyer and von Wedelstaedt). Volume can be used to signal different participation frameworks (Meyer and von Wedelstaedt).

3.7 Use of written documents

Besides through talk, language can also come into play with the help of other means: for instance, reading a shopping list out loud can serve as pre-orientation to the upcoming activity of shopping (Stukenbrock and Dao) or the manipulation of the notes on the dispatch box in the British parliament can serve to signal transition (Reber). Furthermore, an activity may be constituted by the use of a written document, when a mother reads a book with her child (Kupetz). This is signalled by the default orientation, posture, and gaze behavior of the dyad.

Meaningful body movements may be constitutively tied to the practical manipulation of objects, such as when the father shows different items to his daughter (Gerhardt) or a surgeon points with his or her instruments (inside the patient's body), using the instruments as a semiotic resource (Bezemer et al.). During surgery, the patient's body is also being manipulated like an object, and his or her tissue turned into a meaningful structure (Bezemer et al.).

4 Outlook

More research is needed to understand the full nature of embodied activities in interaction. By shedding light on a wide range of activities, the volume has demonstrated that dichotomies like 'institutional' and 'everyday' do not seem to be helpful in demarcating differences in activities. Mazeland (2) proposes a differentiation between activities that are more oriented to the attainment of a practical goal versus those that have verbal actions as their baseline. This

summary proposes a differentiation between activities that are in principal open-ended, since different parts of them are recyclable, often constituting the core of the over-arching activity, and those where the attainment of one step projects moving on to the following. More research is clearly needed in order to understand of the different natures of embodied activities.

A further exploration of the idea of 'data' also seems necessary. Cameras are often conceptualized as recording the truth (e.g. in court, but see Mondada). They seem to provide an *Abbild*, a simple two-dimensional likeness of reality. The use of the term 'data' reinforces the idea of objectivity. However, in studies in this tradition, data are not objective, computer-generated, quantifiable, scientific hard facts. Besides the manifold issues involved in the process of transcription, the context of the recordings has to be taken into account. While most data sets are procured by researchers, other data sets exist ready-made. Mediated settings with professional cuts and changing camera perspectives (Reber, Kupetz), also the images from the laparoscopic camera (Bezemer et al.), all represent members' products, i.e. they are produced by participants who may pursue specific agendas. Mondada focuses on the recording of mobile interaction for research purposes as a practice highlighting its fabricatedness. Eye-tracking technology allows for a fine-grained analysis of gaze behavior that may not be available to the members themselves. Hence, not only the transcription of the data, but also the actual making of the images, merits further scrutiny and methodological considerations.

The interplay of different semiotic resources should be studied further. Their interconnection is clearly visible in all of the papers in this volume. Many of the activities discussed illustrate that no preconceived distinction can be made between practical and meaningful actions (Bezemer et al.) since the advancement (or non-advancement) of the practical tasks is meaningful for the achievement of the goal, for the completion or advancement of the activity, and can hence be displayed for and observed by the participants (cf. the discussion of the different semiotic resources used below). Similar to the classic "next-turn proof procedure" in Conversation Analysis, it is the ensuing behaviour of the participants that indicates whether something can be interpreted as having semiotic force. For this reason, the findings in this volume suggest that it would be a fruitless endeavor to use fixed categories to draw a schematic framework of the resources used in embodied activities for future research.

Even though a taxonomic approach does not seem fruitful, the exact workings of the different resources need much more scrutiny. Furthermore, some modalities, especially relating to the face, are completely understudied. While many papers point out the relevance of facial expressions, studies of their use in interaction seem scarce. Those papers in the volume that do

discuss facial expressions deemed relevant for the interactions seem to do so based on intuition and general cultural knowledge. While this does not preclude a correct assignment of meaning, empirical studies are badly needed. Finally, the findings from other disciplines may be fruitfully integrated in this move from language only to embodiment and multimodality in interaction.