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Social Interaction

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Capturing multisensoriality: Introduction to a special issue on sensoriality in video-based fieldwork

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1. Introduction

Within the field of Ethnomethodology and Conversation Analysis (EMCA) there is a burgeoning body of research focused on sensoriality, which has emerged as part of the growing interest in the senses within the social sciences more generally (e.g., Howes & Classen, 2014; Stoller, 2010). The EMCA approach to the study of sensoriality is unique in that investigations are located within moments of situated interaction to study how people use their sensory access to engage with each other and the world (e.g., Cekaite & Mondada, 2020; Gibson & vom Lehn, 2021; Goodwin & Cekaite, 2018; Meyer & Wedelstaedt, 2017; Meyer et al., 2017; Routarinne et al., 2020). This special issue contributes to research on sensorial interactions by 1) illustrating how sensoriality is made intelligible, accountable, and perceivable to others within a variety of "perspicuous settings" (Garfinkel, 2002, pp. 181-182), and 2) explicating how the authors were able to capture sensoriality through their video-based fieldwork.

Up until recently, there had been only limited research that focused on sensoriality in interaction. The earliest research (not subsumed under a sensoriality perspective) focused on the deployment of gaze and practices of seeing in interaction (e.g., Goodwin, 1980, 1981; Kendon, 1967, 1990; Kidwell, 2005; Rossano, 2012; Stivers & Rossano, 2010). In recent years, there has been a rapid growth of research across the senses. This has included sight (e.g., Mondada, 2018b; Nishizaka, 2013; vom Lehn et al., 2013), hearing (Avital & Streeck, 2011; Egbert & Depperman, 2012), touch (e.g., Cekaite, 2010, 2016; Cekaite & Kvist Holm, 2017; Cekaite & Mondada, 2020; Goodwin, 2017; Goodwin & Cekaite, 2018; Iwasaki et al., 2019; Katila, 2018; Kuroshima, 2020; Meyer & Wedelstaedt, 2017; Nishizaka, 2007, 2016; Routarinne et al., 2020; Raia et al., 2020), taste (Fele, 2016; Fele & Liberman, 2020; Liberman, 2013; Mondada, 2018a; Wiggins & Keevallik, 2020), smell (Fele, 2019; Mondada, 2020a), and kinesthesia (Meyer & Wedelstaedt, 2017; Streeck, 2013). In addition, there is increasing work on the interaction between multiple senses (Cuffari & Streeck, 2017; Due, 2020; Meyer, 2017; Mondada, 2020b; Mondada et al., 2020; Mortensen & Wagner, 2019; Nishizaka, 2011, 2017, 2020; Salvadori & Gobo, 2020).

As research on sensoriality has expanded, two approaches that are emerging are multisensoriality and intersensoriality. "Multisensoriality", which "refers to the multiplicity of sensorial experiences of participants" (Mondada et al., 2021/this issue) has emerged from the multimodal tradition (Mondada, 2018a, 2019, 2020; Nishizaka, 2011, 2017, 2020). This research is concerned with the organization of sensorial practices as they are made interactionally relevant among participants within moments of situated interaction through multimodal displays. Other studies have emphasized the intercorporeality of our sensing bodies (Merleau-Ponty, 1962; Meyer et al., 2017), i.e., that in embodied communication the participants' bodies are constantly sensing and being sensed by each other through their whole bodies (and

hence through multiple senses) (e.g., Cekaite, 2010; Guo et al., 2020; Meyer et al., 2017; Meyer & Wedelstaedt, 2017; Streeck, 2013). Intercorporeal lenses to (multi)sensoriality imply an idea of "*inter*sensoriality" (Goodwin & Cekaite, 2018; Katila & Turja, 2021/this issue), which highlights the embodied and experienced aspect of sensoriality in interaction.

Contributing to the growing interest in sensoriality within EMCA, the articles in this special issue share a focus in addressing sensoriality as participants manage intersubjectivity in interaction. In most of the interactional extracts that the authors examine, the participants experience asymmetries in their sensorial access to objects relevant to the interaction (e.g., only one individual within the surgical team is performing the invasive surgery with the surgical equipment–see Kuroshima & Ivarsson, 2021/this issue). In their articles, the authors explore gaps that arise in intersubjectivity between participants when various senses are at play, including touch, taste, kinesthesia, and vision, as well as the unique case in which the gap is due to a neurological condition rather than asymmetrical sensorial access. The authors illustrate how sensoriality is critical to the ongoing interaction when navigating intersubjectivity. Thus, participants work to make sensoriality intelligible, accountable, or perceivable to others. In so doing, the authors highlight the multimodal resources used by participants to achieve intersubjectivity.

In raising the issue of how participants manage intersubjectivity, the authors bring to light the perspicuous nature of their research settings for the study of sensoriality. The research settings discussed cover a variety of activities, including cross-cultural purchasing and preparing of food (Mondada et al., 2021/this issue), gastroenterology and endovascular aortic surgeries (Kuroshima & Ivarsson, 2021/this issue), rope access training (LaBonte et al., 2021/this issue), video calls between distant family members (Gan, 2021/this issue), testing of nursing equipment (Katila & Turja, 2021/this issue), learning tasks within a geological field-school (Smith, 2021/this issue), and speech and language therapy with aphasics (Merlino, 2021/this issue). Some of these activities have received only limited attention in interaction research in general, due to the difficulties (e.g., intimate, exacting) in gaining access to them, while other activities have a more substantial body of existing EMCA literature. But in all cases, the authors are pioneers in addressing the relevance of sensoriality for participants of these activities.

While sensoriality is a growing area of study in EMCA research, there are relatively few discussions about how sensorial interactions can be captured through video-analysis (but see Iwasaki et al., 2019; Mondada, 2018a,b, 2020). The camcorder cannot capture the participants' subjective sensorial perceptions or experiences (e.g., the smells in the environment, how a particular food tastes). Moreover, the auditory and visual access to sensory information that the camcorder does provide, is always partial (Goodwin, 2000). Even with new technological developments in

recording equipment, such as body cameras and 360-degree cameras (McIlvenny, 2020), video recordings should not be taken as complete or transparent windows onto the moment of interaction (Goodwin, 1993, 2000; Mondada, 2006, 2009). Notwithstanding, the authors in this special issue demonstrate how embodied displays play an important role in making sensoriality visibly and audibly available on recording devices for researchers to analyze.

In most cases in this special issue, the authors did not enter their field sites with the intention of studying sensory experiences. However, this theme emerged as significant from the analysis of the video recorded data. That is to say, video-based methods were not designed to capture sensoriality *per se*, rather sensorial practices became available through the data-collection approaches employed by the researchers. The authors represented in this special issue oftentimes had to develop innovative recording methods to capture their unique interactional settings. Some also relied on additional methodologies, such as extended participant observation and interviews with participants. Several of the authors addressed the importance of building rapport with participants in making their research possible.

Through this special issue, the seven papers shed light on the organization of sensorial practices in a range of settings, as well as the practices through which researchers gained access to sensorial experiences through their video-based fieldwork. The contributors describe the ways in which participants intersubjectively manage asymmetries in sensorial experience and access. They also present their innovative techniques for capturing sensoriality as it is made interactionally relevant among participants.

2. Summary of the contributions

Mondada, Bouaouina, Camus, Gautheir, Svensson, and Tekin (2021/this issue) in their article, "The Local and Filmed Accountability of Sensorial Practices: The Intersubjectivity of Touch as an Interactional Achievement", make two contributions to a multimodal EMCA approach to sensoriality. First, they utilize interactional data from a variety of cultural and linguistic contexts involving food, including food shops in France, a food-hackathon in Sweden, an artisanal tomato sauce production in Turkey, and a Scout camp in the Swiss alps, to illustrate how the intersubjectivity and accountability of touch are locally achieved. Their discussion illustrates how multimodal resources are utilized in making visually observable the haptic practices being undertaken in different food contexts. This links to the second contribution of the article, which is to illustrate how sensorial practices become available for researchers; the very multimodal resources that participants employ to make sensorial experiences accessible to others are also the resources that make possible the videographability of the sensorial practices within video-based research. Using

a distinct approach from the other articles in the special issue, the authors discuss video recording practices through which sensoriality can be captured through the analysis of professionals filming a cooking competition in Sweden. By integrating close-up shots of the chef working with the pasta dough, the film director directs viewers' attention to the visible nature of haptic practices.

Kuroshima and Ivarsson (2021/this issue) in their article, "Toward a Praxeological Account of Performing Surgery: Overcoming Methodological and Technical Constraints", discuss the importance of sensorial perceptions in surgical settings through the lens of the practical actions that surgeons are accomplishing. In the two surgical settings, gastroenterology surgeries in Japan and endovascular aortic repairs in Sweden, the authors discuss how visual, tactile, and auditory action constitutions unfold in interaction. For example, how individually perceived tactile feedback by a surgeon can be made accountable through a complaining action. The authors discuss how surgical practice is organized to limit the reliance on private sensations, and instead to make them visible to the surgical team. In addition, the authors draw attention to the challenges of video recording in surgical contexts, including concerns with privacy, safety, and technical knowledge. The authors address how they worked collaboratively with surgeons over extended periods of time to gain access to surgical suites, determine where recording devices could be placed, and gain knowledge about the particulars of the surgeries under study.

LaBonte, Hindmarsh, and vom Lehn (2021/this issue) in their article, "Data Collection at Height: Embodied Competence, Multisensoriality and Video-based Research in an Extreme Context of Work", draw on the "unique adequacy requirement" of ethnomethodological research in order to discuss how conducting research in an extreme setting, such as rope access training, relied on the embodied competence of the researcher. The authors draw attention to the significant amount of ethnographic participant observation carried out by the lead author in making possible the collection of usable recordings, as well as in understanding the significance of sensorial practices. The authors discuss three important areas for data collection: selecting the equipment array to allow recording of mobile bodies at height, determining where to focus recordings in order to capture the action, and filming as an iterative process. Knowledge, such as how differences in the height of an individual would impact helmet GoPros, was only gained through the experiences of the lead author in undergoing rope access training and work. In addition, this experience was invaluable in terms of understanding sensorial practices relevant to teaching and learning in this setting. The teachers oriented to the tension and sounds of equipment when used properly and improperly in order to facilitate teaching.

Gan (2021/this issue) in her article, “Capturing Love at a Distance: Multisensoriality in Intimate Video Calls between Migrant Parents and their Left-behind Children”, discusses a context where access to certain shared sensorial experiences are cut off: in video calls between migrant parents and their left-behind children. While research has illustrated the importance of physical touch in achieving intimacy, Gan illustrates how families “do” intimacy, even when not physically co-present. She analyzes cases of food sharing and kissing, which would typically include shared experiences of smell and taste, and touch, respectively. Despite being cut off from certain shared sensorial experiences, Gan finds that family members accentuate perceivable sensorial resources, such as sounds of enjoyment while pretending to eat, in order to achieve intimate moments. Gan’s innovative technique for capturing video calls facilitated her study of these intimate moments. Gan combined an external camera that captured the movement of children and grandparents around the phone with a screen capturing application that captured the migrant parents on the screen, as well as what the migrant parents could see of what was occurring in the home. Gan’s research with mobile technologies is one of the first to integrate these multiple camera angles in one study.

Katila and Turja (2021/this issue) in their article, “Capturing the Nurse’s Kinesthetic Experience of Wearing an Exoskeleton: The Benefits of Using Intercorporeal Perspective to Video-Analysis”, adopt an intercorporeal approach to analyzing sensoriality. This approach foregrounds the experiencing bodies of participants and researchers, who can empathize with the participants due to their own experience having living bodies. In the interactions, taken from an experimental setting in which nurses were testing out exoskeletons to assist in heavy lifting, we can see how the nurse upon wearing the exoskeleton for the first time expresses her discomfort wearing the equipment, but also performatively displays her kinesthetic experience to make it accountable to others. Moreover, the nurse’s kinesthetic experiences wearing the equipment are influenced by the actions of a fellow nurse who participates in testing movements, even without wearing the exoskeleton. The authors’ analysis is facilitated by documenting the entire research process from multiple angles, thus making available differences in how the nurse moved with and without the exoskeleton. In addition, the microanalysis was supported by interviews and written feedback from the nurses, which corroborated the discomfort displayed by the nurse in the moment of trying on the exoskeleton.

Smith (2021/this issue) in his article, “Achieving Mutual Accessibility through the Coordination of Multiple Perspectives in Open, Unstructured Landscapes”,

considers how perceptual gaps in conveying what one sees to another is managed and addressed during interactions within a geological field-school. The geology students' goal of locating and documenting geological features is impacted by how the landscape changes as they move through it, thus making it so that features are not readily available but emerge as perceivable through interactional work. The students utilize a variety of techniques to match their line-of-sight with that of others in order to make "seeable" what they are seeing. These techniques include positioning the action in another's line-of-sight, repositioning others in one's line-of-sight, and positioning oneself in another's line-of-sight. Smith also reflects on the difficulties that the landscape and geological activities present to videographers. Videography is complicated by the need to capture participants and their embodied actions, as well as geological features, which may be quite distant and expansive. The ability to identify the importance of a line-of-sight perspective to making visible distant features only became possible through camera angles that approximated the line-of-sight of a participant, even while these same camera angles obscured other interactionally relevant elements.

Merlino (2021/this issue) in her article, "Making Sounds Visible in Speech-Language Therapy for Aphasia", contributes to research in medical and therapeutic settings by analysing how speech and language therapists use their body as an instructional tool during therapy sessions to make sounds perceivable to people diagnosed with aphasia. She finds that therapists rely not only on audible sounds but also on visual cues to assist in the production of phonemes and syllables. Merlino discusses two ways in which therapists instruct patients through the visual modality: directing the attention of the patients to perceive visual cues and visually representing sounds through embodied resources. For example, therapists use pointing gestures to direct attention to the mouth and coordinate embodied resources such as gestures with corresponding sounds. Moreover, Merlino discusses the importance of using the combination of high-quality voice recordings with video footage from both fixed and mobile camcorders in making the analyses possible.

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