

Mediated Business: Living the Organizational Surroundings – Introduction

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Abstract:

This special section builds upon Deirdre Boden's work on the constitutive nature of talk for organizations and the *Culture & Organization* 2004 special issue that developed her concern. Specifically, we aim to further engage with how business is managed, formed and locally accomplished by means of the organizational surroundings that the participants make themselves part of and the multimodal resources that they have at their disposal, in other words: how people *live* the organizational surroundings. Our hope is to shed light on future directions in the multimodal analysis of workplace interaction and studies of organization in general, and encourage a further interconnection among scholars from various disciplines.

Keywords:

Business and Organization; Deirdre Boden; Ethnomethodology and Conversation Analysis; Multimodality; Workplace Interaction

Introduction

In her seminal book, *The Business of Talk* from 1994, Boden argued that talk is action by drawing our attention to the fact that people at work are constantly doing the organization through their daily activities or, to use Boden's term, they are “‘talking’ the organization” (Boden 1994, viii). By putting an action focus on organizational talk, Boden acknowledged the tightly interwoven sequential structure of organizational talk and, further, pointed to the importance of the local and sequential organization of talk in interaction for the emergence of larger organizational phenomena. She thus acknowledged the constitutive nature of talk for the organization and pointed out that organizations “are constituted moment to moment, interaction to interaction, day to day – across the *durée* of institutional time” (Boden 1994, 1-2). In so doing, she directly opposed an emphasis on structure over action and stated “that there is no such thing as ‘micro’ and ‘macro’”; rather, “the world is of a piece, single and whole” (Boden 1994, 5). She advocated for a co-determinative relation between structure and action; one which recognizes that talk, while being constitutive for the organization, is also, in turn, shaped by and through the organization. Boden's influence on our understanding of the importance of talk for a wide array of organizational phenomena (decision making, leadership, organizational roles, identity, etc.) cannot be overestimated. In relation to decision making, for example, she rejected the dominant notion of decisions being taken at one specific moment of time and instead identified the sequential and interactional nature of decision making: “Piece by piece, moment by moment, stage by stage and level by level, decisions are discussed, debated, diffused and ultimately resolved” (Boden 1994, 178).

Boden's influential work was recognized in this journal ten years later in a special issue entitled *Organized Activity and Talk: Echoes of Deirdre Boden*, which came out of the conference *Ethnomethodology: A Critical Celebration* organized by Stephen Linstead and Richard Osrick at the University of Essex, England, in 2002. The event specifically welcomed contributions that continued Boden's interest in workplace interactions. This special issue comprised of four papers and an introduction that relates to and works on various central aspects of Boden's work.

Concerning the micro-macro distinction, Oswick and Richards (2004) built upon Boden's metaphor of laminations, developing a critical framework for understanding the relationship between local conversations and the larger organisational context. Likewise, Samra-Fredericks (2004) analysed a single instance of organisational talk and showed how a wider organisational context was shaped by and brought into being by the local organisation of talk. A third paper by Letiche (2004) dealt centrally with Boden's concern of the agency of talk and how talk constitutes organizing. Finally, Hugill (2004) developed Boden's interest in meetings by focusing on how negotiations are discursively realized in organizational life.

While Boden and her 'followers' have had a great impact on putting talk-in-interaction at the centre of organizational life, their focus has remained mainly on the verbal side of interaction. With the current special section, we aim to add to the ethnomethodological/conversation analytic (EM/CA) perspective on workplace interaction by specifically relating it to the recent multimodal turn in interaction studies (Mortensen 2013; Asmuß 2015). In so doing, the special section seeks to compile recent studies on workplace interactions from an EM/CA perspective focussing on how various organizational surroundings (e.g. material, spatial and/or temporal) may influence the ways organisational activities are accomplished.

Whether these surroundings are specifically task-related in the given context or are more 'neutral', they are resources that the participants can bring into play in shaping the form of business that they engage in. In other words, what used to be considered as mere practical and objective conditions are often interactional resources, leaving little room for distinguishing between the relevant surroundings and the made-as-relevant surroundings. The aim of this special section is to further explore this fuzzy border of "the participants' surroundings" and "the surroundings themselves" (Mortensen 2013, 1062) in organizational contexts. We are interested in exploring *mediated business*, or examining how organizational members work with various organizational affairs by way of selecting various features in their/the surroundings. As they do so, they structure their/the surroundings. People do not just live *in* the organizational surroundings: they live it. Our aim is to engage with the 'the business of talk' by bringing a multimodal perspective to it and also by encouraging a further interconnection among scholars from various disciplines. In what follows, we will therefore map developments in the fields of organization studies and multimodal interaction, respectively.

Organizational Interaction and Multimodality

A tremendous number of studies have looked (and continue to look) at how people contextualize institutional environments through talk. However, many professional interactions are conducted with more than verbal practices alone, and it is important that we pay attention to multiple modalities that together embody a given professional context (for an overview see e.g. Streeck, Goodwin and LeBaron 2011; Mortensen 2013). Accordingly, interest in studying workplace interaction from a multimodal perspective has increased significantly during the last few decades. Here, we capture three waves of studies exploring multimodal interaction at work, which also corresponds to our process in understanding, capturing and analysing multimodality of interaction.

The first wave of studies concentrates on how different bodily modalities other than verbal modality are employed in the production of speech. Here, the 'multi' aspect is about going beyond the exclusive investigation of verbal actions, and documenting the significance of examining 'nonverbal' modalities such as gesture (Heath 1982; LeBaron 1998; Streeck 1993), body structure and movement (Jarmon 1996; Kendon 1982), facial action (Streeck and Knapp 1992), gaze (Goodwin 1980; Bavelas, et al. 2002), nods (Goodwin and Goodwin 1987; Stivers 2008), as well as

symbolic uses of artefacts (Streeck 1996) for accomplishing communication. Accordingly, studies have shown that people use means other than talk to accomplish work-related tasks, such as a team of architects using gestures at the time of discussing architectural ideas (LeBaron 1998) or personnel in a socio-technical environment organizing collaborative work with multimedia (Heath and Luff 1992). In sum, this line of research contributes to an understanding of how communicative turns in interaction are embodied – as opposed to the original conceptualization of a turn that was mainly composed of verbal and linguistic acts. Multimodality is frequently packaged as talk and non-talk here (but importantly, without prioritizing one over the other), as seen in investigations of vocal and visuospatial modalities (Stivers and Sidnell 2005), verbal and nonverbal communication (LeBaron and Jones 2002), as well as being constructed via vocalized and non-vocalized components (Jarmon 1996) and via language and the body (Hayashi 2005).

The abovementioned studies played the role of pioneer, opening our eyes toward what was not recognized before and paving the way for what we identify as the second wave in the study of multimodal interaction. This second wave embraces a diverse set of resources that are simultaneously employed, arranged and navigated by participants in accomplishing actions and activities. Here, in addition to what the first wave showed – that workplace communication involves more than talk –, now various workplace competences are understood in light of the members' ability to organize a diverse array of resources in managing the business at hand. Accordingly, the focus of this work often centres on collaborative tasks, examples of which include: architects collaboratively imagining a yet to be constructed building (Murphy 2005); archaeological students learning to appropriately view work-related objects and understand activities (Goodwin 1994); airport personnel looking at airplanes, which requires the complex combination of a plethora of semiotic resources (Goodwin and Goodwin 1996); pilots organizing speech, writing and touching displays effectively during an approach briefing (Nevile 2004); cognitive neuroscientists embodying a scientific reading of brain images through a coordination of various semiotic modalities (Alač 2005); and anaesthesia teams multimodally embodying signs that are subtle and unarticulated yet unmistakable to the members of the community (Hindmarsh and Pilnick 2002). At times, the instrumental actions of a given task can be exploited to take care of hidden social business: strategy meeting participants negotiating their entitlement through the tactical use of computer-related actions (Asmuß and Oshima 2012); plastic surgeons performing persuasive physical examinations by labelling patients' bodies (Mirivel 2008); interviewers and applicants in employment interviews negotiating epistemic authority by manipulating multimodal behaviours around applicant files (Glenn and LeBaron 2011); and hairstylists and their clients negotiating their expected roles by way of physically inspecting a new haircut (Oshima 2014). These studies of multimodal interaction indicate that what used to be considered as individual and merely practical tasks are often social interaction events, leaving little room for distinguishing the individual from the collaborative (Heath and Luff 1992).

With this multimodal perspective, everyday business like organizational and business meetings are no longer mundane nor 'talked' out; rather, they are a sphere where participants artfully, strategically and ecologically orchestrate a wide array of resources in the service of shared understanding and producing meeting-relevant actions (for an overview of such studies, see Svennevig 2012 and Asmuß 2015). A common feature of these studies lies in their conceptualization of multimodality – focus is no longer on how verbal and visual modalities are coordinated but rather on a precise coordination of multiple modalities that place talk as *one* of many modalities for the organizational achievement of institutional actions and activities.

Where we stand today, which here we consider to be the third wave, studying multimodal interaction means "to be careful not to reify 'modalities' as analytic entities" (Deppermann 2013, 2) as if they are multiple and separate channels that need to be coordinated. Instead, we need "to show

how environmental sources of meaning are drawn into the production of inter-subjective understanding and how interaction, in turn, structures its own semiotic and material environment” (Streeck, Goodwin and LeBaron 2011, 9). This also means taking different contexts of interaction seriously, including spatial, material and temporal surroundings. Nonetheless, this does not mean that past studies did not do this. A number of works revealed how various surroundings were brought into play by the participants, shaping the form of business that they engage in. Examples include: the spatial design of a room in the activity of police interrogation (LeBaron and Streeck 1997); the material/physical environments that surround an urban street sale (Llewellyn and Burrow 2008); and the biographies and other temporal/spatial surroundings of members (Samra-Fredericks 2004). Still, what characterizes the current wave is a profound engagement with reflection on what it means to appreciate and practice the EM/CA approach to studying interaction while pursuing how we might rework the ideas behind EM/CA. One example is seen in the encouragement to acknowledge simultaneity (Deppermann 2013) in addition to the CA principles of sequentiality and seriality.

Related to simultaneity is the emerging concept of multiactivity, referring to “the different ways in which two or more activities can be intertwined and made co-relevant in social interaction” (Haddington et al. 2014b, 3). The edited volume on multiactivity by Haddington, et al. (2014a) puts forward a fresh discourse of the complexity and dynamics of multimodal interaction, providing concrete insights into the challenges scholars face when analysing interactions where participants simultaneously engage in different activities that might come with different participant structures, participant identities, situational contexts and temporal orders. An upcoming volume edited by Deppermann and Streeck (forthcoming) continues this line of discussion by exploring the complex interplay of modalities and temporalities in multi-modal activities. In doing so, they revisit and reflect on basic CA concepts in the context of working with video-recorded multimodal interaction, including turn-taking and identity of turns, and the speaker-hearer model versus multimodal participants.

As seen above, the way we understand and approach the complexity of human interactions, practices and activities at work has progressed immensely in recent years. What underlines this progress is scholars’ keener awareness of members’ perspectives and surroundings, which clearly aligns with the EM/CA principle of discovering members’ methods for conducting various social affairs. Yet, this development also presents significant challenges – particularly in terms of data collection and presentation, which we believe need to be mentioned here. First of all, this keener awareness of multimodality was shaped – and continues to be shaped – by the rapid development in technology for recording practices. In addition to the current, fundamental premise of documenting both audio and visual aspects, researchers today have an infinite number of options when it comes to recording practices from the members’ perspectives. These options include: single or multiple cameras, camera placements and angles, microphone types, static or moving shots, and the inclusion of visual/written details which the participants orient to and manipulate (Heath and Hindmarsh 2002; Mondada 2012). While such availability enriches our practices of capturing the various surroundings that the participants are in, this can also hinder the identification of the made-as-relevant surroundings among the members of a given activity. Indeed, recordings are never neutral but rather “analytical *topics*”, where scholars’ recording practices shape the observation of social activities (Mondada 2012, 37, emphasis in original). While EM/CA scholars were always aware of the role recording practices play in their data collection and analysis, the urgent call for reflexive video practices has been lately more explicitly made and discussed in its own right, as seen, for example, in a volume edited by Broth, Laurier and Mondada (2014) that offers “*video analyses of video practices*” (2, emphasis in original), and an article by

Mengis, Nicolini and Gorli (2016) that is dedicated to advancing our knowledge and reflection regarding video-recording methodology for studying organizational phenomena. To recapitulate, the exploitation of today's technological affordances needs to be coupled with careful reflections on how they represent the members' perspectives.

Closely related to the abovementioned challenge, the second issue we shall reflect on is the presentation manner of our datasets. While its standard means has been (and remains) transcript, the analysis of multimodal interaction has generated a number of different approaches to transcription, including the use of transcriptionist comments (i.e. describing events by using double parentheses), specialized notational systems (i.e. particular systems developed to capture how certain visible behaviour unfolds over time), and visual representations (e.g. drawings and video frame grabs) (Hepburn and Bolden 2012, 70). However, these approaches still centre around the verbal sequence, which is questioned by today's multimodal scholars: "Too often, analysts regard talk as their starting point, even when talk appears late in the order of things accomplished in face-to-face interaction" (Streeck, Goodwin and LeBaron 2011, 12), leaving us with a question of what it means to capture and analyse multimodal interaction. An alternative way of dealing with this issue has been proposed by other contemporary scholars: make available the option of documenting video clips (exemplary journals include: *Academy of Management Discoveries* edited by Andy Van de Ven, and *Social Interaction: Video-Based Studies of Human Sociality* edited by Mie Femø Nielsen, Johannes Wagner, Brian Due and Kristian Mortensen). This provides the readers with an opportunity to fully observe the phenomenon – beyond the transcriptions written by the researcher. Together with this advancement, our ideas around ethical issues and anonymization have also become keener, which is an immensely sensitive affair for scholars who handle multimodal data. In sum, no matter which approaches we use to present our data, it is impossible to cover *all* aspects of what is going on in interaction. Furthermore, similar to the recording practices, our transcribing approaches also shape and are shaped by the activity in question and our focus.

The final point of reflection, as we take seriously the member's perspective, is the role of field work and ethnographic information as part of our dataset. While the principle of EM/CA is that all we need for analysis is 'there' and 'observable' in the recorded interaction data, and that we ought to ensure our analysis precisely documents what the participants orient to as relevant in situ, the call for ethnographic context has been increasingly acknowledged among EM/CA scholars. This tendency may be seen in, for example, more space dedicated in published works to the description of the setting/activity in question, and the ethnographic information gained by the researcher may be introduced as it becomes relevant in grounding their analytical claims (but without degrading what is observable in the recorded data). Similarly, many scholars who work with institutional settings with a multimodal perspective have suggested using fieldwork to determine what should be recorded and how and to gain insight into the specific order and mechanisms of the activities in question (Heath, Hindmarsh and Luff 2010; Oshima and Streeck 2015; Maynard 2003; Samra-Fredericks 2004). Going back to the first issue outlined above, a focus on ethnographic information may enhance our recording practices and help us more precisely distinguish the participants' surroundings and made-as-relevant surroundings. Indeed, balancing the researcher's interest and that of the activity participants (i.e. what business they find themselves engaged in) can be a difficult task. Yet, we should continue our engagement with this issue by constantly reflecting on our recording, transcribing and analysing practices, and how they reveal aspects of the participants' perspectives, as well as by making this process transparent to the community of audience. We believe that we can turn this challenge into a great achievement through increased reflexivity and transparency.

Interaction, Organization and Management

Having discussed the more-than-ever keen awareness of the participants' perspectives and surroundings in the field of multimodal interaction studies, we now turn our attention to what we have learned about business and organizations from an interactional perspective. Studies dealing with talk in organizations have contributed significantly to our understanding of how organizations are created and how they function. By taking their point of departure in the participants' perspective, Boden's work on the business of talk and other EM/CA-inspired work interested in the emergence of organizations through interaction (Drew and Heritage 1992; Heritage 1997; Mondada 2013; Psathas 1999; Samra-Fredericks 2004) repeatedly demonstrate that talk-in-interaction is constitutive of the organization and, hence, that what happens inside the organization cannot actually be separated from what the organization stands for. Organizational members *do* the organization by means of their everyday discursive and other behaviours (Boden 1994).

These findings have had a great influence not only on the fields of discourse and interaction but also on the fields of organization and management studies. Scholars like Mats Alvesson (Alvesson and Ashcraft 2009; Alvesson and Kärreman 2000) working within critical management studies have by means of a critical discourse lens contributed significantly to deconstructing management as a rational, agentless organizational entity, and thereby enhancing our understanding of management as being irrational and consisting of individuals with preferences, emotions and social needs. In the field of strategy, scholars that apply a practice approach to strategy (strategy-as-practice) like Eero Vaara (Vaara 2010; Mantere and Vaara 2008) and Curtis LeBaron (Dameron, Lê and LeBaron 2015) have by means of critical discourse analysis and conversation analysis pointed to the ad-hoc, person-driven and highly processual nature of strategy work in organizations, challenging the traditional focus in strategy research on strategic outcome and linearity in strategy development.

The constitutive paradigm within organizational communication (Putnam and Nicotera 2008; Schoeneborn, et al. 2014) also corresponds with the growing interest in processual and practice-oriented approaches to organizational phenomena such as strategy, leadership and culture. Here, specific aspects like roles and identity, as well as questions of organizational asymmetries, have drawn substantial attention. Instead of seeing organizational roles as pre-defined and static entities that shape organizational discourse in a specific and predictable way, a focus on the interactional foundations of organizational life reveals their dynamic and negotiable nature. One such work is a volume edited by Antaki and Widdicombe (1998), which provides valuable insights into the local, intersubjective and turn-by-turn accomplishment of organizational identities. Here, the editors highlight that identity work serves a purpose and "*is used* in talk: something that is part and parcel of the routines of everyday life, brought off in the fine detail of everyday interaction" (1, emphasis in original). Continuing on from this, specific meetings have been studied extensively as one prominent and recurrent workplace activity, contributing to our understanding of workplace identities as locally situated and interactively accomplished. For instance, Fasulo and Zucchermaglio (2002) investigated the use of pronouns by meeting participants and discussed how the individual pronoun 'I' is used to highlight the meeting participants' official roles; Vöge (2010) showed how laughter is used in complaint sequences in order to highlight organizational seniority and superiority; similarly, Djordjilovic (2012) demonstrated multi-party team meetings as workplace activities, where the team identity is recurrently invoked and re-negotiated in order to build alliances and affiliations among the team members.

When looking at the recent developments in the fields of multimodal interaction and

organizational and management studies, we see a shared tendency in both: an increased awareness of and interest in pursuing people's experiences, practices and strategies from their point of view and, accordingly, methods that better merge the members' perspectives and the researcher's perspective. This special section suggests a more solid bridge between these fields, and we hope that this creates another opportunity for a further interconnection among scholars from various disciplines who share a keen interest in exploring organizational phenomena.

Overview of Contributions and Future Directions

The two contributions in the current special section bring forward reflections on the fundamental assumption of Boden's work on organizations: it is important to take a participant's perspective into consideration in order to be able to acknowledge the complexity of organizational work. A profound engagement with this principle allows us to ask several questions, two of which will be specifically addressed below.

The first question is about taking seriously the multimodal nature of participants' resources that form the foundation of organizational phenomena. From an EM/CA perspective, it is central to understand organizations in specific and social life in general from a member's perspective instead of accounting for a member's actions through the lens of an outside analyst. Consequently, an attempt to fully understand what organizational life looks like requires an investigation of the member's resources that are available for them when performing organizational actions (e.g. making proposals, accepting an offer, claiming responsibility, and so forth). These resources are multimodal in nature (verbal, embodied, material, spatial and temporal) and are recognizably and systematically employed by the organizational members in order to accomplish specific actions.

Both papers in this special section closely build upon Boden's overall interest in understanding the constitution of organizations in action and adding to them the multimodal nature of organizational work. Tuncer's paper convincingly establishes the need for critical awareness about the verbal bias prominent in much organization research. The systematicity of the workplace practice of initiating unscheduled encounters relies highly on material objects (in this case the office door), embodied aspects (body torque, bodily movements, gaze direction), and spatial and temporal aspects (walking along the corridor and stopping at a fixed point of time), leaving the verbal side to be an integrated part of an array of different resources that workplace interlocutors have at their disposal when pursuing organizational goals. Moreover, the multimodal focus of Tuncer's paper allows for relevant reflections about the start and end of organizational encounters. That is, the multimodal approach reveals an earlier start to the organizational encounter than would have been allowed for with a verbal focus. The hearable walking movements on the corridor combined with their termination when reaching the office door are shown to be a first move (summons) into the interaction – before the verbal exchange takes place – and they are a crucial part of negotiating entitlement to initiate an unscheduled office encounter. Thus, in order to understand the organizational work that is accomplished in such a sequence, it is essential to uncover the embodied and material orientations of all interlocutors.

Oittinen's paper provides highly needed insights into the ways modern technologies constitute interactional resources for meeting participants to build alliances and relationships. In specific, the paper deals with the multimodal accomplishment of alignment and affiliation among the local (i.e. physically co-present) meeting participants during a technology-mediated meeting with other participants in different distant locations. Her analyses demonstrate how the local meeting participants make relevant their embodied orientation through gaze, head and body movements, and the use of material objects (e.g. paper documents and screens) in order to establish

affiliation among themselves in the event of interactional trouble with distant participants. Thus, what at first sight might appear to be 'wasted' time (e.g. the overall meeting is set on hold due to a hearing/technical problem) is transformed by the local participants into accomplishing relevant organizational actions, such as negotiating social relationships and alliances among colleagues.

The last point made above leads us to our second question: where to look for organizational phenomena. While a great number of studies focus on formal work-related activities (meetings, performance appraisal interviews, strategy workshops, etc.), little attention has been given to the vast majority of workplace activities that are not pre-planned, agenda-driven or time-scheduled. In other words, activities like coffee breaks, lunch room gatherings, and spontaneous conversations in shared office spaces, around individual offices or in the corridors have not been investigated in great detail despite them constituting a major part of everyday workplace activities (Fayard and Weeks 2007; González-Martínez 2016). One reason for this lack of attention might be due to the fact that agreeing with organizations and practitioners to video-record specific work activities is likely less-problematic for pre-planned and time-scheduled events with pre-defined participants than for spontaneous workplace interactions with changing numbers of participants. Nevertheless, the study of more informal workplace encounters is very relevant in understanding business and organizations. Various organizational phenomena like culture, identity and roles are dynamic and interactionally negotiable phenomena, and their localized emergence can become observable in interactions where time, space, participants and topics need to be made relevant on a turn-by-turn basis.

Both papers in this special section relate closely to the issue raised above. Tuncer's paper investigates how people at the workplace initiate unscheduled office encounters with their co-workers when their office doors are left open. Here, the embodied conduct of the office visitor when approaching the doorway is recognizably designed to initiate an encounter. Tuncer's analyses reveal the systematicity of these encounters in focussing on a number of different interactional problems that arise when initiating an unscheduled office encounter, and illustrate how people competently use open door environments as interactional resources. In terms of Oittinen's paper, the technologically-mediated meetings that she is examining are 'formal' in the sense that they are pre-scheduled and agenda-driven (Schwartzmann 1989). However, she captures the more informal and unplanned side of these organizational encounters, where the participants in the local space go 'off-line' and engage in local interaction with their physically co-present colleagues. Her paper demonstrates that, when looking into the various affordances and constraints that participants make relevant in such a setting, an apparently mundane setting becomes immensely complex and multi-faceted. It was also shown that the informal interactions that might arise out of problematic moments in the technologically-mediated meetings facilitate meaningful space for the organizational members to build alliances and create a sense of community.

Both papers offer significant perspectives on reflecting about what it means to study mundane work settings, and how people make use of different constraints and affordances of such settings in accomplishing everyday business. They highlight the importance of looking into the informal sides of the organization by demonstrating that much organizational work – including the negotiation of hierarchy, entitlement, status, relevancy, alliances, and so forth – is negotiated in informal settings, and, in so doing, the participants competently and selectively use various features of such settings. This emphasizes the need for future research on informal and everyday scenes in and around organizations: coffee breaks, printer room interactions, and scheduled and unscheduled office encounters. In addition, while some of these encounters deal with seemingly non-work related activities (e.g. having lunch together), it is often the case that they develop into work-related discussions. This poses a challenge to the distinction between formal and informal work life, encouraging further reflection on the role of the traditionally assumed informal sides of

organization in constituting core organizational work.

This special section highlights and celebrates a more detailed understanding of the dynamics and complexities of workplace interaction. Specifically, it focusses on how business, in its broadest form, is managed, formed and locally accomplished by means of the organizational surroundings that the participants make themselves part of and the multimodal resources that they have at their disposal. The starting point for this interest was the work of Deidre Boden, who from an ethnomethodological position demonstrated the systematic organization of talk at work and contributed tremendously to emerging lines of research that see talk, discourse and communication as constitutive for the organization. Our aim has been to pursue this interest further by relating Boden's and other EM/CA inspired work on organizations to the recent increase of work on multimodality, and to contribute to the discussion of future directions in the multimodal analysis of workplace interaction and studies of organization in general. We hope to have widened focus from talk that happens in organizations to organizational life that emerges through and by means of the organizational surroundings: a focus shift from 'living in the organizational surroundings' to 'living the organizational surroundings'.

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