Ethics in Action: Anonymization as a Participant's Concern and a Participant's Practice

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Abstract Ethical issues are often discussed in a normative, prescriptive, generic way, within methodological recommendations and ethical guidelines. Within social sciences dealing with social interaction, these ethical issues concern the approach of participants during fieldwork, the recordings of audio–video data, their transcription, and their analysis. This paper offers a respecification (in an ethnomethodological sense) of these issues by addressing them in a double perspective: as a topic for research—and not just as a methodological resource—; as a members' concern and not as (only) a researchers' problem. In order to do so, the paper focuses on a particular ethical problem, which has not yet been submitted to analytical scrutiny: the anonymization of the participants. It studies the way in which participants treat their recorded actions as "delicate," and therefore as having to be "anonymized"; as well as the way in which participants implement their practical solutions for the anonymization—by "erasing" or 'anonymizing' themselves the recording within the course of their situated action. Adopting the perspective of conversation analysis and ethnomethodology, the paper explores these issues through a sequential analysis identifying the particular moments within social interaction in which problems are pointed at by the participants and the way in which they are locally managed by them.

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Introduction

Within social sciences, and more particularly qualitative studies, ethical issues concern, in a crucial way, how data are collected, how participants are audio/video-recorded, and how these records are transcribed and exploited within scientific analyses. These issues are often discussed in a normative, prescriptive, generic way, within methodological recommendations and ethical guidelines.

This paper offers an alternative view, inspired by the notion of *respecification* developed by Garfinkel (1967, 1991): instead of treating ethical issues as a methodological problem concerning researchers in general, the paper respecifies them as a members' problem, that is, a problem encountered, discovered, and treated as such by the participants engaged in the specific context and practice being researched. Instead of offering a generic solution to a methodological difficulty from an *etic* point of view, this respecification addresses it from an *emic* point of view, by analysing how participants orient and manage the problem in situ. Within this ethnomethodological perspective, ethical questions are turned from a *methodological resource* to an *analytical topic*, studied as any other social phenomenon—as a members' concern and not as (only) a researchers' problem.

In order to do so, the paper focuses on a particular ethical problem, the anonymization of audio and video records of naturalistic social interactions among participants. It aims to offer some analytical insights into the way in which participants identify within the ongoing recording some identities, contents, allusions, and wordings as being 'delicate,' and therefore as having to be 'anonymized'. It also scrutinizes the way in which participants implement practical solutions for the anonymization—the practices by which they 'erase' or 'anonymize' the recording themselves in the course of their situated action. Adopting the perspective of conversation analysis and ethnomethodology, the paper explores these issues through a sequential analysis, identifying the particular moments within social interaction in which problems are pointed out by the participants and the way in which they are locally managed by them.

From An Etic to An Emic Perspective: Respecifying Ethical Problems

Audio and video corpora of ordinary conversations, everyday work activities, and institutional encounters are being used more and more in a variety of fields, e.g., in linguistics, sociology, and anthropology. These kinds of data are also leading to increasing debates about the ethical and juridical problems they generate and about possible standardized guidance. These problems concern all the aspects of the process of collecting data and analysing them. More particularly, naturalistic audio and video recordings, documenting situated activities of persons in their ordinary social settings, concern central aspects of personal life, such as the participants' privacy, intimacy, and image. Among other aspects, ethical issues are raised by the way in which fieldwork is conducted, in which informants, partners, or participants are approached, in which relations of trust are established. These relations are fundamental for the establishment of what is called 'informed consent,' that is, an

agreement and authorization to be recorded and studied, offered on the basis of a clear explanation of the project. Ethical issues concern several dimensions of the recordings, such as the activities and moments that are selected to be collected, as well as the perspective, frame and angle in which participants are recorded. But ethical concerns do not stop with recordings, as they also involve the way in which recorded data are transcribed, described by meta-data, and anonymized, the way in which they are archived, made accessible, circulated, and disseminated, as well as the way in which they are selectively analysed, socially characterized, and treated as representative of people, activities, moments, etc.

This paper focuses on a particular problem, the anonymization of the data. Anonymization problems are raised at various stages of a research project, namely during recordings, gathering of information for meta-data, transcriptions, writing of the analyses, and ethnographic presentation of data and excerpts, etc. Burning questions not only concern *how* to anonymize data—in the form of video files, audio files, transcribed files, and meta-data files—but also *what* to anonymize. Generally, information related to the person and their private sphere is involved, such as their name, address, phone number, etc. But these lists of items are never sufficient to achieve what the anonymization often aims at—preventing the identification of the persons involved in the data and protecting them against problems they could face because of what they said on tape. This might concern larger topics, such as personal opinions, critical positionings, and sensitive information disclosed on the recordings. As a consequence, questions concerning how much information has to be deleted from the tapes, and what kind of details are possibly relevant in this respect, are not easily solved, cannot be solved by standardized principles and overcome even the most exhaustive lists of criteria.

These problems, as well as more generally all ethical problems generated by scientific research, are mostly treated in an *etic* way—that is, within a framework, with categories and regulations dictated by professional academic imperatives, implemented in methodological advice, standardized guidelines, and general principles. Inspired by Garfinkel's ethnomethodology and by conversation analysis, this paper aims to explore an alternative perspective, favouring the *emic* dimension of these concerns, by focusing on the participants' point of view and on the way in which it casts some new light on research practice as a mundane social activity.

Instead of discussing ethic guidance and methodological or juridical recommendations, I approach anonymization as an in situ problem encountered within a course of action in which participants and researchers are involved. In this sense, I follow the ethnomethodological recommendation to treat these problems *not as methodological questions* to be solved in order to build corpora and achieve scientific projects, but *as topics subjected to scientific analysis* (on the distinction between *topic* versus *resource* see Zimmerman and Pollner 1971). This is in line with Garfinkel's (1967, 1991) invitation to *respecify* scientific questions as members' problems: "topics of logic, order, meaning, or method are eligible for respecification as locally and reflexively achieved accountable phenomena of '*order'" (1991: 17). Whereas ethic issues are generally formulated in a normative-prescriptive way, within manuals, methodological recommendations, and even mandatory, standardized, and formalized procedures for obtaining the right to study

human subjects, I adopt here a descriptive analytical stance, consisting in looking at the way in which phenomena of '*ethics' are discovered, questioned, and achieved in situ, within ordinary interactions, by the participants themselves.

Hence, the questions asked in this paper concern the way in which ethical concerns are voiced by the participants—not in general, not in response to interviews, but in the course of the social activities that are being documented and recorded for scientific purposes; the way in which the orientation towards the recording device—camera or audio recorder—reveals ethical concerns; the way in which participants creatively and contingently imagine and implement practical solutions to these ethical problems.

Ethical Issues in the Literature: Informed Consent and Anonymization

The ethical issues mainly debated in the literature concern informed consent and anonymization—both often related one to the other (see Corti et al. 2000). Substantial methodological discussions exist on both aspects. In this section, I review some of the main issues characterizing these two topics both from an *etic* and from an *emic* perspective. The paper deals with the latter: while informed consent has begun to be studied as a topic in the ethnomethodological and conversation analytic literature, anonymization has not yet been scrutinized within this framework. In this sense, this study covers an understudied area.

Informed Consent

The issue that has been most debated in the social sciences (and also in medecine) is informed consent.

The main body of literature, which emanates from an *etic* point of view, mostly offers normative regulations (see, for example, the guidelines of some national associations in the social sciences: AAA 1998; ASA 2011; ASA 1997; APA 2010; BAAL 2006; BERA 2004; ESRC 2006), and methodological suggestions aimed at offering remedies to the difficulties encountered and enhancing the efficiency of the procedures (ex. Edwards et al. 1998; Flory and Emanuel 2004; Mondada 2005: §3.3).

These forms of advice mainly concern how researchers *should* proceed rather than how they *actually* act in the field. As an alternative to these *etic* approaches, which are characterized by a normative and standardized view of the research process, another approach aims to investigate and integrate the situated aspects of fieldwork and research practice, showing that informed consent raises a number of practical dilemmas in context. Although this *emic* and endogenous approach is largely under-represented within the literature, it has been adopted by a few studies in anthropology and ethnomethodology.

Research in anthropology, keen to discuss reflexivity—understood as a clarification of the position of the researcher in front of the researched, often within autobiographical metanarratives—has prompted studies of the way in which fieldworkers deal with informants, and how they negotiate informed consent, raising

issues of the possible discrepancies between the conception and the purposes of the fieldworker and those of the participants, especially when these are children, minority groups or marginal populations (Davies 2008; Calvey 2000; Wiles et al. 2007).

These questions have also been treated within an analytic perspective, considering research to be a social practice, among others. The latter perspective has been advocated by the social studies of science invoking a *principle of symmetry*, consisting in submitting research to the same analytical glance as other social activities (Bloor 1976). Likewise, ethnomethodological studies have implemented this principle by describing science as a situated practice (Lynch 1985, 1993).

Within the ethnomethodological and conversation analytic tradition, a few studies have analysed the actual social interactions in which participants agree (or not) to be enrolled in studies. On the basis of recorded data gathered by a team of sociolinguists, Mondada (2006a) offers a systematic study of the way in which the authorization for recording is asked *in medias res*, after the recording has already begun. The analysis shows the specificity and impact of the sequential moment at which the request for authorization is initiated (just after or within the closing of the previous encounter), the responses (agreement or rejection, but also minimal responses) given by the participants and the way in which they are practically treated by the researcher. Wade et al. (2009) studied informed consent appointments in randomized control trials, addressing questions such as how research staff presented study information to participants and what evidence emerged as to how well informed participants were—answered through an analysis of the sequential positions in which participants are likely to express their concern, such as in responding to open (vs. closed) questions, during pauses, and in self-selection enhancing opportunities to take initiatives and to participate. Within a broader study of survey interviews, Maynard and Schaeffer (1997, 2002) and Maynard et al. (2010) analysed requests and declinations to participate in a study on telephone openings, with a special focus on how 'early' or 'late' the declination is proffered. On the basis of a rich corpus of institutional and clinical data, Speer (2011) explored the way in which participants give their consent—when they have the opportunity to express and negotiate their position—and express agreement and alignment in preferred or dispreferred ways. Likewise, Rodrigues and Binet (2010) studied the responses citizens give to social workers requesting their consent to be recorded in consultations and home visits.

These ethnomethodological studies show how matters of 'consent,' 'information,' 'agreement,' and 'authorization' are interactionally shaped in situ, through the details of the conduct of all the participants, configuring specific sequential formats revealing how participants actually treat 'informed' and 'being informed,' 'knowing' versus 'not knowing' persons, display—and not only claim—to agree and to disagree, show the terms to which they agree and negotiate them.

Anonymization

In this paper, I focus on a cognate issue, data anonymization. Data anonymization is crucial for the preservation of the confidentiality, privacy, and intimacy of the

participants and occurs at different stages of the research process. Although in this paper I mainly focus on issues raised in the field while recordings are being made, other moments could be submitted to the same kind of analysis (anonymization being a crucial issue during data transcription, analysis, public presentation, and circulation).

In this section I first sketch a state of the art concerning anonymization from an etic and prescriptive perspective; second, I introduce the emic and analytic perspective adopted in this study.

Normative Approaches to Anonymization

In methodological textbooks, anonymization is often discussed as confrontring two related paradoxes. On the one hand, even if the researcher carries out all possible modifications of the data, total anonymization can never be secured (Hopkins 1993). On the other hand, there is a paradoxical tension between removing identifying information and relying on the details of talk and of its context for analysing data. Although ethical guidelines are often limited to very general principles (see the MRCC 2003: 3.2. guidelines: "[a]s a general rule, the best protection of the confidentiality of personal information and records will be achieved through anonymity"), they might sometimes acknowledge the difficulty of the task (see the BAAL guidelines: "[i]nformants have the right to remain anonymous. Their confidentiality should be respected, and an attempt made to anticipate potential threats to both anonymity and confidentiality (e.g., by anonymising the data, making it secure, and sometimes even destroying it). But it is important to let informants know that it is not always possible to conceal identities completely, and that anonymity can sometimes be compromised unintentionally. Recognition of this should inform their consent" 2006: 4.). Nevertheless, guidelines often don't give any more advice concerning *what* and *how* to anonymize (or give minimal indications, see again the BAAL guidelines: "[i]n order to maintain confidentiality, normal practice is to anonymize both the venue and individual participants. In the case of individuals, anonymity usually extends both to real names and online aliases or pseudonyms, where used" 2006: 7.).

Methodological discussions in the literature deal with the way in which anonymization is achieved, which can have fundamental consequences for the (im)possible analytical treatment of some phenomena (Mondada 2005: § 5). In this respect, there are significant variations concerning *what* as well as *how* it is anonymized. The most radical form of anonymization consists in destroying the entire file, or in locally erasing some portions of it. Softer forms involve the use of pseudonyms and other replacement forms—both in transcripts and in the original recorded files. Substantial discussions arise around the *appropriate* choice of these forms (see Mondada 2005 on interactional naturalistic data; Corti et al. 2000 on qualitative data; Rock 2001 on linguistic data; Pätzold 2007 on audio files; Thomson et al. 2005; Marx 1999 on the identifiability and identity knowledge related to the use of names): the issue is *both* to anonymize identifying details for ethical purposes and to preserve analytical details for scientific purposes. Against a priori guidance offering lists of items to be anonymized, various authors recognize the *contextual* relevance of the details to be anonymized, both in regard to the study conducted and the situation that has been documented. Some authors in specific cases even argue

against anonymization and for the recognition of participants as authors (Nespor 2000; Shulman 1990).

These debates and dilemmas show that anonymization is a practice that involves often diverging perspectives of the participants and the researchers, engaged in different situated activities and raising different short- and long-term issues.

Analytical Approaches to Anonymization

In this context, an alternative contribution to the discussion can be offered by looking at the way in which participants themselves orient to ethical issues within the course of the recorded activity, and how they locally and situatedly treat the issue of anonymization. This alternative consists in respecifying (Garfinkel 1967) the issue of anonymization, by treating it neither as a matter of ethical guidelines nor as a methodology question, but as a practical issue raised in situ by members themselves. The analyses of this paper aim to contribute to this perspective—by treating ethics in action, that is, ethics as a practical members' concern.

This perspective can be implemented by looking at different significant moments within social interaction:

(a) moments in which researchers ask for authorization and mention anonymization as a feature of their methodology and ethics. Focusing on these moments means turning into a topic moments behind the scene of research that are often not disclosed at all by researchers. This has often been done by the social studies of science on other disciplines (Latour 1987; Lynch 1985), but remains scarcely done about studies on language and social interaction (but see Ashmore and Reed 2000; Büscher 2005; Heath et al. 2010; Mondada 2006b, 2012).

(b) moments in which, in front of the camera or the microphone, participants engage in the recorded action point to an event, an act, or a word treated as raising problems of identification and recognition of delicate matters, and require its anonymization, either to be imposed by the researchers or by the participants themselves.

The paper will focus on the latter aspect ("Data" section on), but I give here below a few examples of the former ("Analysing Researchers' Practice: Promises to Anonymize Data" section, extracts 1 and 2).

Analysing Researchers' Practice: Promises to Anonymize Data

Anonymization is often promised by researchers to their informants during the negotiation of the authorization. It plays an important role in convincing them to give their consent. This can be submitted to analytical scrutiny by looking at recordings of requests for consent made by researchers to informants. In the data on which I based a systematic analysis of requests for consent, coming from a sociolinguistic team carrying out a study on urban multilingualism (see Mondada 2006a), the anonymization is often mentioned as an argument and a guarantee for convincing the informants that the recording does not present any risk for them. Here are some fragments taken from that corpus.

(1a) (Iischuelig)

```
1   Res:    voilà, .h et euh je (voudrais b:ien)
            here it is, .h and ehm I (would like)
2           savoir si je peux garder [l'enregistrement?]
            to know if I can keep [the recording?]
3   Inf:                           [°(ouais)°]
                                   [°(yeah)°]

4   Res:→   .h c'est anonym:e, [on va    ] les transcrire
            .h it's anonymous, [we gonna] transcribe them
5   Inf:                       [(oui=oui)]
6   Res:    et puis tra- le retravailler dans le (cadre) (.)
            and then wor- work about them within a (.)
7           euh scientiFIque
            ehm scientific (framework)
```

(1b) (gare)

```
1   Res:    mm (.) j'os- j'ose vous demander `FIN est-ce que
            mm (.) can I can I ask you WELL would you
2           vous êtes d'accord qu'on qu'on que je puisse
            agree that that I could be able to
3           garder le: l'enregistrement que je viens de fairE?
            keep the: the recording that I just made?
4   Inf:    [oui (bien sûr) ]
            [yes (of course)]
5   Res:→   [c'est absolument] anonyme donc c'est juste pour
            [it's absolutely] anonymous so it's just for
6           faire une analysE: (.) [(            )]
            doing an analysis (.) [(            )]
7   Inf:                           [mm (ouais ouais)] ça m'gêne pas
                                   [mm (yeah yeah)] it doesn't bother me
```

(1c) (sanu)

```
1   Res:    je peux garder l'enregistrement?
            can I keep the recording?
2   In1:    ((laughs))
3   In2:    bien sûr.
            of course.
4   Res:→   ça reste de toute façon anonyme, je ne
            in any case it remains anonymous, I don't
5           demande pas plus d'informations.
            ask any more information.
6   In1:    non non, moi je trouve bien
            no no, as far as I am concerned I think this is good
```

In these three excerpts, the researcher asks first whether (s)he can keep the recordings (excerpt 1a, 1f.; exc. 1b, 1–3; exc. 1c, 1)—which have been disclosed only at the end of the recorded interaction (for the analysis of this disclosure see Mondada 2006a). In the above fragments, this first pair part is granted with a positive response (exc. 1a, 3; exc. 1b, 4; exc. 1c, 2f.), which is produced in a lower hesitant voice (1a), in a frankly positive way (1b) or with laughter (1c). Interestingly, the researcher does not treat this response as sufficient, and expands her turn by mentioning the anonymization as a guarantee that is being offered (exc. 1a, 4; exc. 1b, 5; exc. 1c, 4). Here, the issue is formulated with the adjective "anonymous," which is predicated by the copula "be" or the verb "remain" about an indefinite pronoun, "*ça*" or "*c'*" ("this," "it"): this formulation does not refer to the action of the researcher (like in "I will anonymize the data") and seems rather to treat it as a characteristic of the data themselves (or even of the event). The modifiers used ["*c'est absolument anonyme*" (exc. 1b, 5); "*ça reste de toute façon anonyme*" (exc. 1c, 4)] point to the evidence of the anonymity of the data, presented both as an important requisite and as an unproblematic matter. The responses to these expansions of the request here are positive, confirming the previous agreement.

In other cases, though, while the researcher tends to present anonymization as an unproblematic aspect of the corpus, some participants rebut this claim by mentioning its problematic character. This is the case in the following extract:

```
(2) (inlingua71/ BI AE 8.30)
1  Res:  .h j'aimerais savoir si vous êtes d'accord qu'on conserve les
          I would like to know if you agree that we keep the
2         données °que:° qu'on vient d'enregistrer
          data °which° which we just recorded
3         (0.6)
4  Res:→ c'est anonyme hein, >ça reste anonyme,< mais c'était juste une
          it's anonymous right, >it remains anonymous,< but it was just an
5      → situa[tion anonyme pour une analyse euh]
          anon[ymous situation for an analysis ehm
6  Inf:→      [mais on connaît ma voix PARtout,] (0.2) vous savez
               [but people know my voice EVERywhere,] (0.2) you know
```

The request for consent is issued in a first pair part similar to the previous examples (1f.). But what comes next is a pause (3), treated as an absence of response. The researcher expands his previous turn (4f.) by invoking the "anonymity" of the data. Here, this argument is repeated three times: the anonymity is presented first as a quality of the event ["*c'est anonyme*" (4)], second as something that will be maintained ("*ça reste anonyme*" (4)], third as a feature of the context ["*c'était juste une situation anonyme*" (4f.)], which is minimized by the use of "*juste*". At this point, the researcher is overlapped by the informant, who rebuts his claims of anonymity by referring to her voice as being well known by everybody (6). This counter-claim shows the problematicity and even the impossibility of treating the encounter as "anonymous".

So, these data show that the issue of anonymization is a topic that is used as an argumentative resource by researchers, which can be accepted by informants in some cases, but can also be actively and critically discussed by them. In the remaining part of the paper, I focus on the way in which participants orient to these issues, not during the request for authorization but during the recorded event.

Data

Data analysed in this paper have been selected among a large corpus of naturally occurring social interactions recorded in audio and video over the past two decades, documenting ordinary conversations (e.g., dinner among friends, car conversations, etc.) as well as institutional interactions (e.g., business meetings, guided visits, etc.). A limited subset of excerpts has been chosen for this study, in which participants orient to the issue of anonymization.

This object of study might appear to be paradoxical: in these extracts, participants explicitly orient to the fact that what is happening and being recorded has to be anonymized; in order to turn this into a topic of analysis, it is important to preserve its problematicity and not to erase it. This raises interesting issues of anonymization of these very data—which have been transcribed in a way that allows both their analytical use and the ethical respect of their participants.

Various anonymizing procedures have been used for these data.

- As for video recordings, when video is not indispensable for analytical purposes, no screenshot has been used. When it is relevant, it has been used according to the agreements with the participants (e.g., in excerpts 6a, b, c, Rita is visible on the image, but not Guy, who was reticent about the recording, although finally agreeing with it—screenshots have been chosen so that he is not recognizable in them).
- The names of the participants have been systematically substituted with pseudonyms, which have been selected in a way that preserves some of their original features (such as their cultural connotation, their length, etc.). Other names, place names and personal references, have been replaced by pseudonyms too. I prefer to replace them with pseudonyms rather than with a general category (e.g., "Marion" may be anonymized by the pseudonym "Carole" rather than by a description such as "((Female first name))").
- Extra aspects have been anonymized too, including, for example, descriptions referring to the context of the excerpts, the site or the activity in which participants are engaged—taking into account the aspects treated by the participants as possibly problematic.

These extra aspects are typically what methodological guidance ignores; they are particularly important, since the analysis deals explicitly with contents that have been pointed out by participants as being sensitive and delicate for them. This raises the paradox of this paper, which deals with a phenomenon that the participants treat as having to be heavily edited, if not removed. But this also shows how elements made relevant by the participants can be exploited and integrated within the

anonymization procedure by the researcher. In this case, the results of the participants' orientation are reflexively taken into consideration in the procedures analysing them. In this sense, although the aim of this study is not a methodological one, the paper offers a practical hint, by showing how analyses of members' orientations can feed a specific, ad hoc, transcription and treatment of the data, respectful of their situated and emergent concerns.

Orienting to Delicate Matters: Formulating Things to be Anonymized

The analyses proposed in this paper focus on two main aspects. The first analytical observation is that participants might point, for themselves as well as for the researchers, at issues that are delicate, embarrassing, or confidential in that particular context and that should be anonymized, i.e., made not identifiable or recognizable ("Orienting to Delicate Matters: Formulating Things to be Anonymized" section). The second analytical observation is that participants might not only point to these delicate moments, but also actively *do* something in order to achieve the anonymization: in the subsequent analyses I show some of the techniques they employ for that, either in a preventive, anticipatory way or in a retrospective way ("Preventing Things from Being Recorded: Carrying Out Anonymization" section).

In this section, I focus on the fact that sometimes participants orient towards a detail of the ongoing interaction as having to be anonymized.

This orientation represents a specific instance of members paying attention towards the fact that they are being recorded. Orientation to the recording has been often discussed as a methodological bias in the literature (see the famous "observer's paradox," Labov 1972: ch. 8). But it has also been treated, from an ethnomethodological perspective, as a social phenomenon that can be turned into a topic of (vs. a resource for) analysis (Heath 1986; Laurier and Philo 2006; Lomax and Casey 1998; Stokoe 2009).

Here, I am not interested in orientations towards recordings in general, but in occasions when participants define in situ the limits of their agreement to be recorded, by orienting to the ethical conditions of their authorization (see also Speer and Hutchby 2003)—topicalizing the fact that they are recorded as raising some ethical problems, and more specifically that something said should not be identifiable or recognizable as such, thereby raising the necessity of its anonymization.

The first extract is taken from a meeting between three associates running a small company together. The extract occurs 30 min after the beginning of the recording—which has been launched by the researchers, before leaving the house and after a long explanation of the purposes of the study and the conditions of exploitation of the data. Monique announces that she has received an email (1) but displays some problems in giving more details about its sender and contents while being recorded. Jean responds to her concerns by mentioning the fact that "everything is beeped" (17) and that this information will not interest the researchers, who only focus on details ("commas" 21).

(3) (Saxe 31.03 virgule)

```
1  Mon:    ((clears throat)) mais j'ai eu un mail,
                          but I got an email,
2          (0.4)
3  Mon:    °de la région,°
           °from the region,° ((= the regional government))
4          (1.3)
5  Mon:    °°un mail de la région, qu[i (   ) euh°°
           °°an email from the region, w[hich (   ) ehm°°
6  Pau:                            [mais de la région,
                                   [but from the region,
7          qui la [région?
           who at the [region?
8  Mon:           [ça (prend) ou pas ça?
                  [does it (take) or not that?
9          (1.4)
10 Pau:    oui tu (   ) ça enregistre [bien sûr
           yes you (   ) it records [of course
11 Mon:                              [ça enregistre?
                                     [does it record?
12 Pau:    c'est pas grave, [c'est c'est pas l'contenu
           that's not bad, [it's not the content
13 Mon:                     [(   ?)
14 Pau:    qui in[téresse (les chercheurs)
           which in[terests (the researchers)
15 Jea:          [((loud laugh[ter))
16 Pau:                       [c'est simplement (          )
                              [it's just (          )
17 Jea:    mais non, mais c'est tout beepé:, ( [  ) si vous
           but no, but everything is beeped ( [  ) if you
18 Mon:                                        [c'est à (  )
                                               [it's to (  )
19 Jea:    voulez [qu'on commence] à regar[der ça
           want [that we begin] to loo[k at that
20 Pau:           [c'est signé,]         [c'est c'est trop tard pour (  )
                  [it's signed]         [it's it's too late for (   )
21 Jea:    c'qui les intéresse c'est la virgu:le, c'est c'que tu mets
           what interests them it's the comma, it's what you put
22         entre l[es
           between t[he
23 Mon:           [d'accord
                  [alright
24 Jea:    et pis que *quand tu *parles +voilà quand *tu parles
           and then that when you talk there it+ is when you talk
   mon            *raises chin*                 *raises chin again->
   jea                              +raises chin+
25 Jea:    tu fais *ça:,
           you do that,
   mon          -->*
```

The excerpt starts with Monique giving some news, beginning with an announcement (1). This announcement is not responded to by the co-participants (2), and she does an increment (3), specifying in a lower voice where the email came from. Again, in the absence of any response, she goes on, in an even lower voice, incrementally developing the news (5). The fragmentation of her turn in smaller units, along with her lower voice, displays an orientation towards the recording, even before she mentions it (8). At this point, she is overlapped by Paul, who asks for details about the sender of the message (6f.). Instead of giving an answer, Monique inserts a question about the recording (8), which is positively answered by Paul (10). This seems to be not enough, since she inquires again, in more explicit terms, about the recording (11); Paul responds by minimizing its importance, referring to the focus of interest of the researchers (12, 14), which might not concern the contents of their conversation. This statement generates a loud laugh from Jean (15), who gives another reason not to worry about the recording—invoking the anonymization ["everything is beeped" (17)].

Both Jean (19) and Paul (20) reject the possibility that the agreement previously given and the conditions of the authorization could be renegotiated. Jean picks up again Paul's argument about the focus of the researchers (21), ironically formulating it as concerning formal minutiae ("it's the comma" (21), meaning "it's the last detail") as well as gestural details [described by using a facial expression just made by Monique to illustrate it (24f.)].

In this extract, two positions are expressed by the participants as confidential information is about to be uttered. On the one hand, Monique clearly orients towards the matter of being recorded as concerning something confidential: she *prevents* the problems by slowing down the progressivity of her talk and even avoiding talking. On the other hand, Paul and Jean oppose various arguments, distinguishing between what matters to them and what interests the researchers, evoking the agreement they gave, and mentioning data anonymization: they orient to the post hoc treatment of the data by the researchers. The sequential position of this discussion is important, since it is introduced just *before* the controversial information is uttered, suspending the current activity. The discussion reveals the vision participants have of the present and future work of the researchers, as well as their trust in their ethical engagement: whereas Monique prefers an *anticipatory* treatment of the problem by herself, Jean and Paul trust a post hoc treatment of the problem by the researchers. These different conceptions of what the scientific activity consists of generate different local practices for dealing here and now with the emergence of the problem.

The issue of what the researchers will subsequently do (or not) for anonymizing the data is also worded in the next two excerpts, taken from a guided visit carried out by Julien of the premises of his company for a group of visitors. As he points to a technological device installed for security reasons and criticizes it, he suddenly orients to the fact that he is being recorded:

(4) (cep3_8.00 couper au montage)

```
1   Jul:  ben euh:: y en a un peu trop quand même quoi.
          well ehm:: they are a bit too many still PART.
2   Syl:  y en a qui ont été rajoutés y a pas si longtemps si?
          some have been added not so long ago haven't they?
3   Jul:  non, tout [a été fait mais y en a tous les:
          no, everything [has been made but they are every
4   Syl:            [j'ai aucun souvenir
                    [I don't remember
5   Lis?: ouais
          yeah
6   Jul:  quatre mètres quoi.
          four meters PART.
7   Lis:  °°c'est très lourd°°
          °°it's very heavy°°
8   Jul:  ouais et [puis eh (°°c'est             °°)
          Yeah and [then eh (°it's
9   Syl:           [ouais c'est pas très beau
                   [yeah it's not very pretty
10        (1.2)
11  Jul:  -fin bref (°°      °°)
          in short (°°      °°)
12        (0.4)
13  Jul:  j'suis enregistré en plus, après i fau[dra cou]per au montage
          moreover, I am recorded, then one will have to cut when editing
14  Syl:                                         [((slight laughter))]
15  Lis:  (       ) c'est sûr ((smiling))
          (       ) for sure
16  Jul:  ((changes topic))
```

On line 1, Julien offers a first negative assessment of the technical object he is pointing at; his colleague Sylvie reacts by asking if it has been recently improved, and although Julien responds in a negative way, he adds a further negative assessment (3, 6)—both assessments pointing to the fact that there are too many of these objects in the environment. At this point, Lisa responds with a negative assessment [it's "heavy" (7)], as does Sylvie ["it's not very pretty" (9)]. So, all of the participants finally join in the critique of the device. As the other participants are engaged in the production of aligned negative assessments, Julien closes the sequence (11) and makes an explicit comment about the fact that he is being recorded. His reference to the fact that this has to be "cut" is responded to in an aligned way, both by Sylvie's slight laughter (14) and by Lisa's smiling agreement (15). The sequence is definitively closed as Julien initiates another topic.

So, Julien initiates a critique and elaborates it until he gets a preferred negative response from his co-participants finally converging with him. When this critical point has been established and shared by all of the participants in an affiliative way, he closes the sequence by referring to what has been said as raising a potential problem for him [see the use of the first person pronoun (13)] and therefore as having to be anonymized when the video is edited by the researchers.

Uttering critical opinions often provokes an orientation towards the camera—as can be seen in the next fragment, where Julien produces a critique about the way a detail planned by the architect of the site, Jean Noumuth (transcribed here with a pseudonym), has been erased by the directors of the company:

(5) (cep02-03 couper au montage)

```
 1  Jul:   moi j'pense que dans la démarche de jean noumuth c'était
            I think that within the posture of Jean Noumuth it was
 2          important, voilà [et::
            important, that's it [and::
 3  Lau:                    [hm oui [oui
                            [eh yes [yes
 4  Jul:                            [là on l'avait mis en retrait et
                                   [there we had put it in the back and
 5          tout et pis finalement ils l'ont rasé pour faire un nouvel
            everything and then finally they erased it for building a new
 6          espace et puis, se pose la question où on l'remet,
            space and then, there is the question where to put it again,
 7          (0.6)
 8  Jul:   personne ne répond.
            nobody answers
 9          (0.7)
10  Jul:   mais bon.
            but well
11  Lau:   mhm. [non.
            mhm. no.
12  Jea:        [hum hh,
13  Jul:        [faut que j'fasse attention quand j'parle trop* (    )
                [I must pay attention when I speak too much (   )
                                                    *walks away->>
14  Lau:   +oui:, [he eh
             yes:, [he eh
    all     +all co-participants move on, following JUL-->>
15  Lis:         [he eh eh eh


16  Jul:   <làh HH j'suis enregistré, [°(c'est HHh     )° ((smiling))>
            <here h HH I am recorded, [°(that's HHh     )° ((smiling))>
17  Lau:                             [là tu as été:, tu en as trop dit là.
                                     [there you were, you have talked too much
18  Lis:   [((laughs))
19  Lau:   [((laughs))
20  Jea:   [(     ) moi.
                   me.
21  Lau:   ah oui là i faut couper au montage
            oh yes there one has to cut when editing
22  Jul:   voilà, ça je laisse faire les chercheurs
            that's it, I leave this to the researchers
23  Jea:   mais non dis des fois il faut savoir dire la la la vérité.
            but no sometimes one has to be able to tell the the the truth
24  All:   ((laughter))
```

At the beginning of the fragment, Julien refers to a detail of the building that the architect had carefully planned but which has been removed and finally erased (1–10). On line 6, Julien's turn is possibly complete, but after a rather long pause (7), he expands the critical remark (8), orienting to the absence of a response from his co-participants. Nobody aligns with him (9) and he closes the sequence (10). At this point, he is finally joined by Laurent (11) and Jean (12) with minimal acknowledgement.

Julien produces a post-closing comment referring to the fact that he has been recorded (13) and begins to walk away, further marking the closing of the sequence. Interestingly, this prompts the co-participants to produce various responses: Lisa laughs (15), while Laurent aligns with him (14, 17) and even states that the video should be cut when edited (21). Julien contributes to and even invites the production of these responses by repeating his comment about the recording (16); he responds to Laurent by referring to the responsibility of the researchers (22). Whereas these three participants seem to orient to the recording as a problematic thing, Jean produces a different type of positioning, defending the possibility of telling the "truth". Laughter and smiling comments, as well as the final general laughter (24), show that the issue is both delicate and addressed with humour.

Julien's insistence on the fact that he is recorded generates aligning responses—which were missing in the first part of his contribution; here the "risks" represented by the recordings are exploited to make his comment something special and valuable. This shows that by pointing at the recording as something possibly problematic, participants might use it to foreground and highlight what they just said, especially when it has not yet mobilized any response (see also extract 4 above).

Julien's reference to the "risky" character of his talk also shows that the orientation to the recording can suddenly reveal a complex web of social relationships characterizing the institutional context that is recorded—pointing to relations of power and hierarchy, to rights and obligations to speak, to possible access by some persons to identifiable actions, to their recognizability by some specific recipients engaging in harmful and unwanted interpretations, and to matters of affiliation and trust among the participants and with the researchers.

In all of these cases, participants point at the fact that the recording is not trivial and that it might be consequential; a direct relation is established between the delicate character of what is said and the fact that it is recorded. This might also be done in order of highlighting what is said, and of mobilizing affiliating responses. After reference has been made to the recording, the closing of the sequence and a change of topic are achieved, and the participants walk away—stopping the development of the delicate matter pointed out.

Preventing Things from Being Recorded: Carrying Out Anonymization

Participants not only turn towards the camera and point to the fact that they are being recorded, orienting to delicate moments in the ongoing interaction.

Whereas in the previous excerpts participants were pointing out to the researchers to moments to be anonymized—trusting them to do the work—in the following fragments they also actively engage in carrying out anonymization themselves. Again, the *way* in which their concern is worded, and the *moment* at which this happens (*before* delicate matters have been raised or *afterwards*), indicates how far they trust and delegate the solution of the problem to the researchers.

In this section, I focus on local practices by which some delicate contents, opinions, and positions are actively altered or even erased by the participants. Various techniques used by them can be described. On the one hand, they can actively treat the *visual* dimension of the recording, elaborating various solutions to escape the video camera (6.1). On the other hand, they can treat the *audio* dimension of the recording, adapting their speech so that it becomes blurred or inaudible (6.2). The following sections examine how these practices are implemented in a situated way.

Visual Techniques: Going Out of the Frame and Covering the Camera

Participants not only turn towards the camera, they can also actively organize the visual field recorded by it. Interactional studies based on naturalistic videos, such as in ethnomethodology and conversation analysis, aim to record the entire participation framework characterizing an activity, including all of the participants and the relevant objects and space (Mondada 2006b, 2012; Heath et al. 2010). When they are actively anonymizing the video recording, participants can orient to the position of the camera by managing either to displace the action elsewhere or to obturate the camera focus.

The following examples show how participants manage to do that. These fragments are taken from a corpus of car conversations. They concern a delicate moment in which Rita, who has agreed to be video-recorded in her car, picks up her boyfriend, who has not yet been informed about the recording. Rita displays various practices, managing to keep Guy *outside* the visual field of the camera until he agrees to be recorded.

In excerpt 6a, we join the action as Rita, waiting for Guy in her car, sees him approaching. The opening of their encounter is initiated by Rita *outside* the car, orienting to the fact that there are cameras *inside*: Rita gets out of the car in order to ask Guy if he agrees to be recorded, and it is only *after* some negotiations that they sit together in the car and begin the "how-are-you" sequence. As we can see, the interactional space of the encounter (Mondada 2009a) is actively reconfigured by the participants in a variety of ways, orienting to the visual field covered by the camera, and organizing their conversation in relation to it.

(6a) (EMIC 1707R306c)

```
1        (3.#0)                                      * (0.5)#
   rit  >>looks and smiles through the rear*,,,,-->
        >>window towards Guy approaching---*
   im       #im.1                                   #im.2
```

image 1   image 2

```
2  RIT:  atten*#ds,
         wait a minute,
            ->*goes out from the car-->
   im           #im.3
3        (1.3)
4  RIT:  attends Guy,#
         wait a minute Guy,
   im               #im.4
```

image 3   image 4   image 5

```
5        (0.7)
6  RIT:  attends. avant* de monter# dans la voiture,
         wait. before you enter the car,
                  --->*talks to Guy above the roof-->
   im                     #im.5
7        faut que j'averti+sse, y a #deux caméras.
         I have to tell you, there are two cameras.
   guy  >>walks-stops---+looks at her above the roof-->
   im                     #im.6
```

Guy

image 6

As Guy is walking towards the car, Rita suspends the imminent opening of the encounter by producing three "*attends*" ("wait") (2, 4, 6), while she gets out of the car (1–6, images 1–5). In this way she shows to finely orient to the temporality and progressivity of the conversation, by delaying the greetings, and positioning herself in a way that creates an alternative interactional space to the one given by the car cockpit in which Guy is usually supposed to sit—and which is being video-recorded by two cameras, one on the dashboard, the other on the back seat. The fact that this usual positioning of the participants is delayed is explicitly formulated by Rita's temporal expression ["before you enter the car" (6)]. Thus, both meet outside the car, establishing a face-to-face frontal configuration across the roof (5f., image 6). As this first interactional space is established—outside the interactional space foreseen by the position of the camera—Rita informs Guy about the recording device:

(6b)

```
 7  RIT:  faut que j'averti+sse, y a deux caméras.
          I have to tell you, there are two cameras.
    guy   >>walks-stops---+looks at her above the roof-->
 8        (1.3)
 9  RIT:  qui sont dans la voi+ture
          which are in the car
    guy                    ->+looks down inside the car->
10        (0.3)
11 RIT:   pour Marianne, (.) et +son étude, (.)
          for Marianne, (.) and her study, (.)
                             -->+looks at Rit-->
12        c'est pour écouter le[s interactions.
          it's for eh for listening to the interactions.
13 GUY:                       [(    )
14 RIT:   si t'as pas envie j'peux les éteindre. (.)
          if you don't like it, I can stop them. (.)
          j't'avais pas demandé et [je:
          I haven't ask you and [I:
15 GUY:                            [(      )
16 RIT:   ouais c'est: comme c'est pas un espace comme d'habitude, +voilà.
          yeah it's: since it's not a space as usual, that's it.
    guy                                                       -->+lk inside->
          (0.4)
17 RIT:   ça t'dérange pas?+
          it doesn't bother you?
    guy                 ->+
18 GUY:   oui oui non non
          yes yes no no
19 RIT:   no*n?
          no?
          ->*enters the car-->
20        (3.0)*
            ->*
```

Speaking over the roof of the car, Rita tells Guy about the recording device (7). Her subsequent turn-constructional units are produced in an incremental way: confronted with the silence, the reluctant responses, and the facial expressions of her partner, she adds several increments and expansions to her explicative turn, as they maintain their body positions—Guy inspecting the interior of the car from outside (9f., 16f.). In fact, this sequence is a request for authorization made by Rita on behalf of the researcher (formulated as an informing or even as a warning—"*faut que j'avertisse*" (7) "I have to tell you"), which is only granted by Guy on line 18. Before Guy's acceptance, Rita orients to the relevance of avoiding having Guy on the camera, and proactively organizes the interaction in such a way that she achieves his invisibility. Again, the issue of the recording context is formulated in terms of interactional space by Rita herself ["since it's not a space as usual" (16)]. An alternative interactional space is thus created for the request, escaping the camera, and is maintained until the request is granted and the sequence is completed.

As Guy finally sits in the car (34), and as Rita again suggests they stop the camera (35), they perform another action that again orient to the camera, and actively neutralize it for a while. Guy grasps the authorization form and uses it to obstruct the camera angle (35, images 7 and 8) while they kiss each other (36–40). In this way, they perform the greeting sequence in a special, intimate interactional space, escaping from the camera, which is done in an ad hoc fashion for this particular action.

```
(6c) (one minute after extract 6b)

32 RIT:  t'es pas content? °.hhh°
         you're not happy? °.hhh°
33       (0.8)
34 RIT:  mais c'est pa::::s,+ (0.5) (  ) la caméra,
         but it's no:::::t, (0.5) (  ) the camera,
   guy                   -->+sits in the car--->>
35       (.) mais si tu veux +on peut l'+arr#êter si ça t'déran#ge hh
         (.) but if you want +we can stop it if it bothers you hh
   guy                       +..........+covers the camera w. form-->
   im                                   #im.7          im.8#
36       (0.2)
```
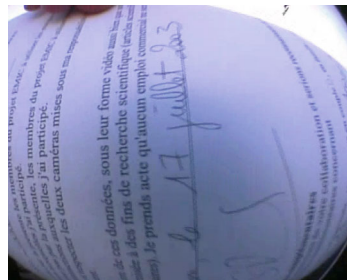

image 7   *image 8*

```
37 RIT:  mhmmm,
38       (2.0)
39       ((smack))
40       (0.2)+
   guy      ->+
41 GUY:  ça va?
         how are you?
42 RIT:  ((smack))
43 RIT:  et toi?
         and you?
44 GUY:  oui oui
         well well
```

When Guy gets into the car, he displays again some dissatisfaction related to the recording. This re-occasions Rita's proposal to stop it (32–35). Instead of verbally responding to this offer, Guy does something else: he takes the consent form and uses it to cover the camera. The video recording is briefly made inoperative for a particular action of the participants—as Guy and Rita kiss each other. This act of anonymizing the video mobilizes as a material resource the very form granting the recording. At the end of this kissing round, Guy puts away the forms. As they sit side by side, in front of the camera, the how-are-you sequence is produced, which completes the opening sequence. The interactional space for the journey and the conversation is established at this point, in front of the camera, and in acceptance of it.

Here participants actively configure both their interactional space and the visual field of the camera—displaying their orientation towards the relation between some actions (negotiating agreement, kissing), their temporality (before/after consent) and their recordability. The interactional space they dynamically design and redesign is delimited by the camera, which defines the visible and documentable frame of publicly recorded actions, and their possible ethical implications for the participants (see also Mondada 2009b).

Audio Techniques: Speaking Lower/Louder Away From/Near the Microphone

Participants may orient towards the microphone in very similar ways they treat the video. The microphone also defines a phonic field, which tries to capture all of the relevant aspects of the conversation but which can be neutralized by modifying audio features of the voice. Speaking with a lower voice, away from the microphone, can be a technique for neutralizing the recording. Conversely, speaking louder, into the microphone, can be a technique for obstructing the audio, impeding the recording of something else, or covering quiet voices.

The extracts analysed in this section show how participants orient towards the audio features of their conversation and modify them in contexts that are treated by them as having to be anonymized.

If we come back to the meeting extract analysed above, we notice that Monique, referring to a phone call she received, progressively lowers her voice:

(7) (= beginning of exc. 3)

```
1  Mon:    ((clears throat)) mais j'ai eu un mail,
                             but I got an email,
2          (0.4)
3  Mon:    °de la région,°
           °from the region,° ((= the regional government))
4          (1.3)
5  Mon:    °°un mail de la région, qu[i (    ) euh°°
           °°an email from the region, w[hich (    ) ehm°°
6  Pau:                                 [mais de la région,
                                        [but from the region,
7          qui la [région?
           who at the [region?
8  Mon:           [ça (prend) ou pas ça?
                  [does it (take) or not that?
```

While the announcement is made in a normal voice (1), as Monique goes on with an increment in her turn (3), she lowers it. A new expansion of her turn (5) is uttered in an even lower voice and is left unfinished. This occasions Paul's repair initiation (6f.). The question she asks (8) instead of responding to Paul shows that these prosodic features are oriented towards the microphone.

So, a frequent practice consists in lowering the voice, sometimes even whispering and mumbling, as a way of paying attention to and even escaping the microphone. Other practices consist in speaking allusively and in leaving turns unfinished. All of these practices display a local orientation to the microphone, which reflexively categorizes what is being said as particularly delicate. Moreover, these practices actively shape the audibility of the talk, organizing different accesses to it for co-present participants and remote observers [in a way that recalls practices used by marginal people for escaping video surveillance in the underground (Heath and Luff 2000)].

In the next two excerpts, we can see some of these phenomena, within a guided visit, in which Jacques guides a group of visitors across the venues of a big company.

(8) (3_11.44 logement)

```
 1  Sop:  et là, au bout, c'est les: appartements officiels, c'est ça hein?
           and there, at the end, it's the official apartment, isn't it?
 2         (0.3)
 3  Eli:  où ça?
           where?
 4         (0.4)
 5  Sop:  euh:: là, le le balcon, [qu'on voit là,] oua[is.
           ehm:: there, the the terrace [that we see there,] yeah
 6  jac:                            [ah oui:,]         [ben
                                    [oh yes:,]         [well
 7         c'est pas le lon- °c'est:°
           that's not the hou- °it's°
 8  Sop:  c'[est [l'appartemen:t [euh
           th]at's [the apartment [ehm
 9  Jac:    [C'EST l-            [ouais c'est le: logement du
             [THAT's t-           [yeah it's the: house of
10         président, [c'est le: l'appartement du président oui
           the president, it's the: the housing of the president yes
11  Sop:              [oui
                      [yes
12         (1.7)
13  Jac:  c'est- (0.3) ah oui mais j::'suis enregistré ((small laughter))
           it's- (0.3) oh yes but I::'m recorded ((small laughter))
14         (1.7)
15  Jac:  non mais c'est:: (.) °voilà.° c'est l'logement
           no but that's:: (.) °that's it.° that's the house
16         du président °ouais°.
           of the president °yes°.
17  Eli:  [((laughs))
18  Sop:  [((laughs))
19         (2.8)
20         ((a new topic is initiated by Jacques))
```

As they are walking around the premises of the enterprise, Sophie, who is an older employee of that company, asks for a confirmation concerning the luxurious flat with a terrace they can see in the distance. Another visitor, Elise, initiates a repair of Sophie's reference, occasioning Sophie's repair and a more precise location of the flat she pointed at.

This also prompts Jacques' change-of-state token and confirmation (6), as well as an elaboration, which starts in a dispreferred way [with "well" (6), followed by a negative description, then a positive description in a lower voice (7)]. As Sophie persists in her reference to the apartment (8), Jacques gives new information, that this is the house of the president of the company. His new description of the house is repeated, but without being further developed (9f.). As Jacques restarts once again his characterization of the house (13), he suspends it and after a pause refers to the recording (13). He repeats again his description (15f.), but does not add anything to the initial formulation. Although his incipient

turn projects more to come, it is suspended and abandoned: the progressivity of his talk seems hindered by the recording—and the explicit reference to the recording works as an account for him not saying more about that topic. After some laughter from the participants, Jacques changes the topic of the conversation.

In the next excerpt, taken from the same visit, the delicate topic is also curtailed and the suspension of its development is accounted for by referring to the recording:

(9) (1_46.54 monument)

```
1  Jac:   donc ça c'est, (.) quelque chose qui a été rapporté ouais.
           so this is (.) something that has been brought here yeah.
2          (2.3)
3  Jac:   c'est assez particulier, bon ben le monument d- moi j'l'
           it's quite particular, well well the monument d- I I
4          >trouve intéressant,< mais après, (.) c'est l'endroit.
           >find (it) interesting,< but then, (.) it's the place.
5          (1.0)
6  Sop:   ouais [(on dirait qu'il est:)
           yeah [(it seems that it is:)
7  Jac:         [LÀ, C'EST ENREGISTRÉ, faut qu- ((small laughter))
                [HERE, IT'S RECORDED, I have to- ((small laughter))
8          ((walks away))
```

As Jacques points to a monument, and begins to say something about it, he utters a veiled criticism concerning its location (4). After a pause, Sophie aligns with him, in a turn-at-talk (6) that agrees with him and projects a negative assessment. But Jacques overlaps her (see below about the exploitation of overlaps in these settings) and loudly refers to the recording situation. His turn is abandoned, as he walks away, closing the sequence (8).

As in excerpt 9, the development of the ongoing topic is shortened and abandoned; moreover, the reference to the recording is made in a louder voice, which overlaps the possible critical talk of a co-participant. In this way, Jacques suspends both his talk and Sophie's turn, abruptly closing the sequence.

Whereas the previous cases concerned the speaker controlling his own talk, literally cutting it, although more is projected, this case shows that another way in which the speaker hinders a co-participant's contribution to the conversation is by overlapping her.

A particularly explicit use of the overlap in service of the anonymization is given in the next excerpt, taken from a dinner conversation in which four gay friends are talking about a handsome waiter, an ex-boyfriend of a friend of theirs.

(10) (lse 6.33 anonymiser)

```
 1  JAM    ben alors franchement eh, comment dire ça.
            so then really eh, how to say
 2  ERI    COmme:nt? il est joli::,
            WHAt::? he is cute::,
 3         (0.8)
 4  JAM    le serveur?
            the waiter?
 5         (0.2)
 6  ERI    ouais:::.
            yeah:::.
 7         (1.0)
 8  JAM    ah ouais?
            ah yeah?
 9         (0.4)
10  JEA    ((laughs))
11  LUC    et pis bon surtout euh <(0.5) ((gesture))>
            and moreover above all ehm <(0.5) ((gesture))>
12  JEA    ((small laughter))
13  LUC    comac [le (   )
            gigantic [the (    )
14  all          [((laughters))
15  LUC    comme tous les ex, à Frédéric.
            as all the ex-boyfriends, of Frédéric.
16         ((laughters))
17  JAM    le le fam[eux bertrand (   )
            the the fam[ous bertrand (    )
18  ERI             [NOUS N'CITERONS pas de nom,
                    [WE'LL NOT QUOTE any name,
19         pour ano-ny-mi[ser,
            in order to ano-ny-mi[ze,
```

This extract of conversation is permeated by allusions to the sexual attributes of the boy they are speaking about. James expresses some doubts (1) about him, in contrast to Eric, who produces a positive assessment (2). His turn is not followed by a second, upgraded assessment, but by a pause (3) followed by a repair initiator (4). In initiating repair, James delays the second assessment; after Eric's confirmation, another pause occurs (7) and James produces another interrogative turn (8). At this point two other participants engage in the conversation, Jean and Luc. The latter adds a descriptive element about the boy, which is first produced verbally and then completed gesturally—both referring to the size of his penis. The gesture indicates a measure, which is responded to by Jean's laughter, and which is verbalized in the next turn [as "gigantic" (13)]. The object described remains inaudible, covered by

laughter, in a position and a format typical of dirty jokes (Jefferson 1984). As laughter continues, James (17) utters the boy's name, preceded and projected by the adjective "famous". This allows Eric to anticipate that the name is about to be announced: in overlap, with a louder voice, he refers to the anonymization, which is actually achieved by his very turn.

In this case, the overlap is in service of "covering" the voice by uttering information locally treated by the participants as confidential. It is striking that what is said in overlap formulates the very action the overlap is performing. Participants use in a skilled way the temporality and the sequentiality of talk, as well as its projective potential, for an online control of what can or has not to be recorded.

A last technique is observable in the data: it concerns another way of manipulating talk in a skilled way, both orienting to the recording and progressing in the conversation.

The next fragment is taken from the corpus of car conversations. Guy is still sceptical about the recording and Rita offers to stop the tape. Guy refuses but suggests another way to circumvent the recording—speaking in a foreign language.

(11) (EMIC_neerlandais)

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1  Rit:  et donc si tu préfères qu'on arrête, on arrête.
         and so if you prefers we stop, we stop.
2        (3.1)
3  Guy:  non ça va.
         no that's okay
4        (1.8)
5  Rit:  sinon on peut l'arrêter un moment.
         otherwise we can stop it a moment.
6        (0.6)
7  Guy:  non ça va.
         no that's okay
8        (1.2)
9  Rit:  (le micro   [  )
         (the micro  [  )
10 Guy:             [(gaan)       we       nederlands      s%preken     dan
   eve                                 %music starts to play-->>
                     [(would/when/shall) we speak dutch then
11       begrijpen ze gewoon niet wat we zeggen
         they simply don't understand what we say
12       (0.3)
13 Rit:  wij spreken nederlands
         we speak dutch
14       (0.5)
15 Guy:  (        )
16       (0.7)
17 Guy:  (    [  )
18 Rit:       [((laughter))
```

As Guy has again expressed his doubts about the authorization to record, Rita again suggests stopping the video (1). Finally Guy refuses to stop the recording (3, 7). But he proposes an alternative solution, consisting in code-switching—that is, in changing the language of the exchange. While the conversation was in French, he begins to speak Dutch. He also explicitly mentions this language and explains this choice, as a way of not being understood by "them," i.e., by the researchers (11). Significantly, they go on talking about a friend having a trial for sexual abuse (not shown in the data).

Interestingly, the use of Dutch co-occurs with the music starting to play; this constitutes a further way of making an audio recording difficult to understand for the researcher—another member's way of anonymizing data.

Conclusions

In this paper, I have proposed an ethnomethodological and conversation analytic study offering a respecification of ethical issues as they are oriented to, pointed at, and actively treated by the participants within their situated activities. Instead of considering ethical issues as a *methodological problem* needing to be remediated and solved within general academic and juridical imperatives, this paper treats them as a *topic of inquiry*. This allows a glimpse into what can be called "ethics in action": ethics as it is actually performed by the participants. Ethics in action is achieved by the researchers as they engage in asking for permission and in offering various warranties to their informants; it is also achieved by the participants themselves, in the course of actions that are audio/video-recorded for scientific purposes and which have been agreed upon by them.

The paper focuses on a particular ethical issue, the anonymization of bits of talk or conduct. Anonymization has proven to be notoriously difficult to circumscribe by general guidelines: lists of items to be erased or replaced in order to make it impossible to recognize participants' identities or to identify possible delicate information, positions and critiques are always incomplete. They necessarily end with an "et cetera clause" (Garfinkel 1967) and are irremediably indexical. The respecification of anonymization issues offered in this paper shows that participants display a local orientation towards the recording device when delicate, risky, and problematic matters are done or said as they are being recorded. This orientation emerges locally, in an occasioned way, from the situated categorization of actions by the participants as reflexively making relevant a special attention towards the recording device and as needing anonymization of the recorded data. In other words, members' orientation to ethical matters is not a general and omnirelevant feature of the recorded interactions—it is a locally emergent contingency, generated by the participants situatedly interpretating and monitoring what happens in real time.

The analytical stance adopted in this paper permits us to better describe this emergent contingency, its sequential environment, and its specific temporality. Participants skilfully manage the temporality of the ongoing course of action in their identification of relevant moments to be anonymized: they might display a prospective orientation, anticipating the crucial point or a retrospective orientation,

pointing back at some anonymizable item. These orientations display different relations to the process of research itself and generate different practices for managing the situation: *prospective* orientations tend to favour participants' techniques for erasing, neutralizing, and occulting delicate bits of conduct; *retrospective* ones tend to delegate their management to the researchers, invoking relations of trust and previous agreements reached with them, expressing participants' imagination and vision of how data might be used, interpreted, circulated, etc. Although researchers are generally not directly addressed at these moments, the social, personal, and ethical relation to them is evoked, invoked, ratified, and eventually reconsidered.

The way participants point to particular moments in social interaction works as a hint to the researchers to adopt a consequent ethical stance: in this respect, participants themselves do the work that is generally attributed to normative guidelines; given that the latter are necessarily incomplete, the *reflexive* suggestion given by this study invites the integration of participants' concerns in the management, transcription, and analysis of data—and thus engagement in the analysis of members' orientations as a way of respecting their concerns.

As we have seen, participants do not only orient towards the recording, pointing at delicate moments in need of anonymization; they also actively achieve anonymization, by adopting a number of *ethnomethods*. Among the practices studied in this paper, we demonstrated how participants treat both the visual and auditory dimensions of the recordings. They might anonymize video recordings, either by positioning themselves outside the frame of the camera or by covering it—in both cases producing a camera view that is unable to record what happens. They might also anonymize sound recordings, with similar techniques: speaking in a lower voice, and even whispering or mumbling, is a way of positioning talk outside the frame of the microphone; overlapping another participant's talk—as well as locally recruiting music and noise—is a way of "covering" sensitive talk. The data also show other techniques, such as code-switching in a foreign language used as a secret code, or speaking allusively.

These techniques display the members' real-time analysis of the ongoing action, as well as of the ongoing action as-it-might-appear-on-the-recording. In this sense, the detailed analyses offered in this paper reveal the skilled vernacular competence of the participants, who are able to timely and situatedly identify and modify relevant interactional characteristics that matter for ethical issues. Ethics in action refers to and relies on this local accountability of the action's finest details; it gives hints about how both researchers and participants *do* ethics in a situated way.

Transcript Conventions

Talk has been transcribed according to conventions developed by Gail Jefferson (see Jefferson 2004).

An indicative translation is provided line per line, in italics.

Multimodal details have been transcribed according to the following conventions (see Mondada 2007):

* *	each participant's actions are delimited by the use of the same symbol
*—>	action described continues across subsequent lines
*—≫	action described continues until and after excerpt's end
—>*	action described continues until the same symbol is reached
≫–	action described begins before the excerpt's beginning
….	action's preparation
,,,,,	action's retraction
luc	participant doing the action is identified in small characters when he is not the current speaker or when the gesture is done during a pause
im	image; screen shot
#	indicates the exact moment at which the screen shot has been recorded

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