

Publication

Agenda and emergence : Contingent and planned activities in a meeting

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Author(s) Deppermann, Arnulf; Schmitt, Reinhold; Mondada, Lorenza

Author(s) at UniBasel [Mondada, Lorenza](#) ;

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The transition between phases of activities is a practical problem which participants in an interaction have to deal with routinely. In meetings, the sequence of phases of activity is often outlined by a written agenda. However, transitions still have to be accomplished by local interactional work of the participants. In a detailed conversation analytic case study based on video-data, it is shown how participants collaboratively accomplish an emergent interactional state of affairs (a break-like activity) which differs widely from the state of affairs which was projected by a written agenda (the next presentation), although in doing so, the participants still show their continuous orientation to the agenda. The paper argues that the reconstruction of emergent developments in interaction calls for a multimodal analysis of interaction, because the fine-grained multimodal co-ordination of bodily and verbal resources provides for opportunities of sequentially motivated, relevant next actions. These, however, can amount to emergent activity sequences, which may be at odds with the activity types which are projected by an interactional agenda or expected on behalf of some institutional routine.

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