

Jörg Bergmann (Bielefeld, Germany)

On the consequences of mobility: Features of emergency calls via mobile phones

Over the past years conversation analytical studies have shown that emergency calls to the police or the fire department are characterized by a robust sequential structure and by verbal and interactional features that result from the interlocutors' orientation towards the moral implications of their doings. These studies are based on recordings of actual citizen calls where rescue services are called via domestic or otherwise stationary telephones. With the huge growth in mobile (cellular) phone use a new type of emergency call emerged: Callers who have a mobile phone ready to hand may call from everywhere, thus being able to report a case of emergency much quicker and in much closer vicinity to the reported event than is usually the case in domestic emergency calls. Based on recordings of actual instances some of the peculiar features of emergency calls via mobile phones will be identified and unfolded in my paper. It will be shown that the callers' 'mobility' may have dramatic consequences, e.g. with regard to topical progression, sequential development and the participants' orientation towards the consequentiality and morality of their activities.