Video in Qualitative Research: Analysing Social Interaction in Everyday Life.
Christian Heath, Jon Hindmarch, and Paul Luff. London, England: Sage. 2010. Pp. vii
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With the emergence of video as an affordable and accessible technology, its use as a
research tool has become increasingly commonplace. As affirmed in the preface to *Video
in Qualitative Research*, as well as by myriad other scholars (see Heritage, 1995;
Liddicoat, 2011) this has been a promising development, allowing researchers to capture,
review, share, and disseminate data in unprecedented ways. However, the potential
advantages of employing video in research are accompanied by the uncertainty of the
new: questions of ethics, practicalities, and implications. *Video in Qualitative Research*
situates itself at this juncture. Taking into consideration ethical issues, data collection,
data analysis, and communication of findings, Heath, Hindmarch, and Luff aim to
provide practical guidance to researchers in the social sciences who wish to use video as
a tool. While their book prioritizes the frameworks of ethnomethodology and
conversation analysis, their informed recommendations are applicable to a wide range of
methodologies within the social sciences.

Heath et al. organize the text into seven chapters that lead the reader through the
process of conducting research with video, from a historical background to final
implications. Each chapter is divided into easily digestible sections and sprinkled
throughout with informational boxes highlighting definitions, suggestions, guidelines,
and checklists. Additionally, each chapter ends with key points, recommended readings,
and a practical exercise – a useful feature for those who may want to use this book in a
classroom. Chapter One begins by providing a historical overview of the usage of
photography and video in social science research, as well as emerging uses of video in
various disciplines. This first chapter also outlines the qualities and challenges of video to
be discussed in greater detail later in the book. Chapter Two delves into issues related to
access and ethics, using three cases as models of complicated research scenarios. Chapter
Three focuses on data collection, including information about the benefits and drawbacks
of using fixed versus handheld cameras, single versus multiple cameras, and methods for
obtaining high-quality audio. Chapters Four and Five, arguably the core of this book,
provide a detailed study of the analysis of video data, from the practical matters of
selecting, transcribing, and analyzing segments, to the methodological considerations of
the situational context, interactive artifacts, and participation. Chapter Six concerns
findings, particularly how to plan and execute presentations and how to effectively
include video data in publications. Finally, Chapter Seven closes the book by reviewing
three studies from the authors' own publications to which video contributed substantially,
finishing with a brief discussion of two fields in which video data is especially relevant.

The first chapter lays the foundation of the book with a concise yet informative
historical background and an overview of the forthcoming chapters. Heath et al. begin
Chapter One by drawing attention to a paradox: despite the great benefits of video in
social science research, its adoption has been slow. According to the authors, the
potential of photography as a tool for research into motion was recognized as early as the
1830s. While the amount of studies using photography was sparse throughout the 1800s,

by the end of the century, the field of social anthropology had begun to make use of both photography and video to conduct ethnographic research on cultural practices. Although this utilization of video in ethnography continued throughout the twentieth century, video was never widely embraced as a research tool, and in fact, anthropological documentary films, intended to illustrate and entertain, began to overshadow video as a research tool. However, the authors demonstrate the potential of video by discussing current fields of social science that have greatly benefited from video data: studies of workplaces, classrooms, and non-institutional settings and analyses of communication and gestures, which in turn augment research into communication skills training and consumer behavior. Heath et al. conclude the first chapter by briefly previewing the challenges inherent in using video, from collecting and analyzing data, to presenting and disseminating results. They also emphasize their goal of cultivating an "analytic appreciation of the taken-for-granted complexities of social interaction" (p. 13).

Chapter Two addresses the delicate issues of access and ethics when conducting video research. Heath et al. first discuss access, emphasizing that the dismissal of video as a research tool is unjustified, as access is rarely a matter of concern if approached properly. They make a distinction between *getting in* and *getting on*. *Getting in* refers to physical access, aided by providing the gatekeepers of an organization with a clear description of the research being undertaken and a report of the findings upon the completion of the project; *getting on* relates to informing and involving research participants, making clear the significance of the research itself and the importance of video. Finally, obtaining informed consent from all participants is crucial. To illustrate these points, the authors carefully review three example cases: a study of collaboration and communication in the London Underground, an enormously bureaucratic organization; a study conducted in an elementary school, where securing informed consent from children must be handled with care; and a study of interaction between visitors in a museum, in which consent had to be obtained in a public setting. Heath et al. bring Chapter Two to a close with a useful account of IRB protocol, including likely questions and links to the ethical guidelines of various organizations. They also discuss the ethical considerations that must be made when deciding how to store, anonymize, and disseminate video data, focusing especially on how these decisions must be negotiated with participants when initially agreeing upon the terms of the research. Given the challenges of access and ethics, the authors close Chapter Two with an example project timetable, underlining the importance of an incremental approach.

Chapter Three tackles the practical matter of collecting video data. The chapter opens by emphasizing that each setting must be considered individually and that even the smallest decisions about data collection are significant. The first decision the authors discuss is whether to employ a roving or fixed camera. After a concise description of each approach and its advantages and disadvantages, they suggest that this choice should be based on the particular data being collected and the limitations of the setting. They then provide a more in-depth look at considerations to make when using fixed cameras, including what action to focus on, how to avoid disruption of normal activity, and how to frame the action. These decisions can be guided by careful fieldwork in the given setting, namely, understanding the nuances of the setting, speaking with "key informants," and

asking appropriate questions (p. 52). This chapter also includes a thoughtful section on reactivity and how to minimize and assess participants' awareness of being recorded. Finally, Chapter Three ends with sensible recommendations about using multiple cameras and obtaining high quality audio, as well as a useful equipment checklist.

Chapters Four and Five are the analytic heart of the text. Heath et al. begin Chapter Four by outlining three steps in approaching a video data corpus. First, a preliminary review of the footage must be made to create a catalogue of the material, a time-consuming but advantageous process. Next, a substantive review should be undertaken so as to give careful attention to particular areas of interest. Finally, an analytic search of the corpus helps in building a data set. The authors then address how to begin the complex process of reviewing data. They emphasize that, after an initial viewing, a very short fragment of video should be selected and watched repeatedly. This should be followed by a meticulous transcription of the talk. Health et al. suggest and describe the methodology of conversation analysis for this purpose. Although more robust texts about conversation analysis may be a better choice for someone interested in using this methodology for the first time, the authors do provide a general overview of how to use conversation analysis to transcribe talk and non-verbal conduct, including gaze and gestures. Particularly useful are their suggestions for transcribing speechless action, for which standards are still nascent. For all of these forms of interaction, they especially underscore the importance of sequence and sequentiality. That is, every utterance and action is constructed in response to a previous utterance or action. In order to illustrate this, they offer an example of a medical consultation during which the action of the consultation is achieved through sequential organization. The authors conclude Chapter Four by listing general analytic considerations when analyzing video data from any methodological perspective.

While Chapter Four focuses primarily on preliminary analyses, Chapter Five addresses the methodological effects of context and participation. After a succinct history of context in the social sciences, Heath et al. note the significance of the physical environment, defining "perspicuous settings" as those that "exhibit… the issue or phenomenon that the analyst is interested in" (p. 88). The authors explicate this definition by detailing a video fragment from a museum in which objects of decorative art play a key role in the analyzed event. Particularly original is the subsequent section on digital technologies as an element of physical environments, what the authors call "technology in action" (p. 93). Their example of controllers of remotely operated railways demonstrate both the impact of digital technologies on interaction, a phenomenon that is only increasing in prevalence, and the practical matter of how to transcribe these types of video fragments. The second half of Chapter Five attends to participation. Using Goffman's (1981) participation framework, the authors discuss how to determine the types of participation that the participants engage in and how this shifts throughout a video fragment. This is illustrated through a brief analysis of an operating room, in which an anesthetist, a patient, and an assistant orient differently to various utterances and actions, adjusting their participation to fit the immediate circumstances. Finally, the authors consider literature on institutionality, using a segment of an auctioneer to show how institutionality and institutional roles are revealed through talk and action.

Following the chronological trajectory of qualitative research, Chapter Six concerns the dissemination of video data through presentations and publications. Heath et al. preface this chapter by first noting that the presentation of this data is not fixed, but rather dependent on timeframe, circumstances, and analytic framework. However, the authors do provide helpful advice. Heath et al. discuss live presentations first, explaining that selected video clips should "*progressively* reveal key aspects of the action(s) or practices under consideration," beginning with the setting of a scene and becoming increasingly complex (p. 111). They also suggest a frugality in the number of clips selected, as each one should be introduced, discussed, played perhaps multiple times, and summarized in relation to the overall argument. The authors then turn to the tools used for these purposes. In what is perhaps the only outdated section of the book, they describe how to use and edit DV tapes, now rapidly being replaced by flash media storage and SD cards, as well as cloud computing technology. They also neglect to address the challenges of navigating video formats and codecs, which are necessary for capturing, editing, and distributing video footage. Nonetheless, their overview of presentation and video editing software is still current and useful, including recommendations for providing on-screen information versus preparing handouts and a brief guide to iMovie. Presenting video data in a written publication may be more challenging due to limitations of the format. The authors note the decisions that must be made when publishing this data: how many video clips to choose, how to orient the clips, and whether they should be annotated, cropped, or merged. Additionally, there are ethical issues to contend with, as consent must be obtained in order to display participants' identities, or else images must be made anonymous through fading, blurring, or sketching. Finally, publishers may have guidelines regarding the number and quality of images. That said, the authors end Chapter Six by perspicaciously mentioning the growth in digital media publications, which facilitate the sharing of video.

The final chapter offers a review of current and future applications of video. Heath et al. demonstrate contributions of video data by describing three examples from their own work: a workplace study of coordination and communication using surveillance technologies in the London Underground; a study of how knowledge asymmetries are revealed through talk and action in medical consultations; and an examination of interactions between visitors in museums and galleries. The authors also summarize the growing importance of video in the development of new technologies and in corporate ethnography, which aims to understand consumer behavior. The book concludes with an insightful discussion of video-mediated communication and its implications for research.

In *Video in Qualitative Research*, Heath et al. deliver to qualitative researchers a practical guide to using a valuable research tool. Although they do address methodological and, to some degree, philosophical considerations, this book is largely useful for its ability to lead researchers through the process of using video in research, from initial concerns, to collection and analysis, to presentations and publications. Notably, the authors wisely avoid detailed discussions of particular technologies, which soon become passé, taking more time to address the comparatively enduring issues, such

as reactivity of participants and clips. Ultimately, the authors have written a useful and sensible text for social scientists who wish to use video as a research tool.

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