



2nd Colloquium on the Biographies of Artifacts and Practices

Dear colleagues,

we cordially invite you to the 2nd Biographies of Artifacts and Practices (BOAP) Research Colloquium. Based on a collaboration of researchers from the University of Edinburgh, Aalto University, and the Technical University of Berlin, this bi-monthly colloquium provides an open platform for an international network of researchers interested in BOAP and related methodological and analytical approaches. Its main goal is to contribute to strengthening the robustness of research designs in STS and the sociology of technology and innovation. Each event features the presentation and discussion of one research project that traces the biographies of complex sociotechnical systems across multiple locales and extended timeframes, often linking multiple studies and scales of analysis.

The colloquium will take place online on **September 6th, 4pm** (CEST). It will feature a talk by **Ole Pütz**, the scientific manager of the Joint Artificial Intelligence Institute (JAI) of Paderborn and Bielefeld University. Ole will present insights from his recent and ongoing research on the disciplining of language during technology development, linking conversation analytical work to the BOAP framework.

About the talk:

It is a commonsense assumption in science and technology studies (STS) that the development of technology is a social process with path dependencies. Based on the current state of technology, those who develop new technological artifacts are faced with different options of how the patterns of use of a new technological artefact may be realized, but only certain patterns of use are implemented during the development process. Insofar as these patterns prove to be successful, they are solidified at the expense of alternative forms. I claim that this process of solidification is understood in STS in the abstract but not in its empirical details. In my talk, I will present evidence that the process of solidification can be traced to the smallest details of talk through conversation analysis. It becomes visible in the dynamics of face-to-face interactions and in language use.

This talk draws on both published and unpublished analyses of the meeting talk of computer scientists' during prototype development, which were recorded as part of a long-term ethnographic study of computer science work. (1) I show that computer scientists are very exact when they talk about already implemented functionality of their prototype, but not when they talk about potential future functionality (Pütz, 2021). The prototype disciplines the language of the computer scientists studied, insofar as they attempt to describe it as exact as possible (and as is situationally adequate) when they talk amongst themselves (experts) or with other project stakeholders (laypersons). (2) While existing functionality of a prototype disciplines language, I also show that there is a heightened frequency of conflicts among meeting participants when the computer scientists discuss the next steps of prototype



development but not when other topics are discussed during meetings. Because it is consequential for prototype development what specific patterns of use are implemented, these moments are also controversially discussed, even as discussions are constrained by interactional dynamics which limit the length of emerging conflicts. In conclusion, I will draw some methodological as well as theoretical consequences from these findings.

About the speaker:

Ole Pütz is the scientific manager of the Joint Artificial Intelligence Institute (JAI) of Paderborn and Bielefeld University. He studied Sociology at Bielefeld University, Göteborg Universitet, and the University of Notre Dame. He received his PhD in 2016 from Bielefeld University for an award-winning study on strategic planning in social movement groups. Ole has worked as a lecturer for qualitative methods and in the university administration before beginning his postdoc in science and technology studies in 2017, first at the Semantic Computing Group at Bielefeld University and later at the Science of Intelligence Cluster of Excellence/Institute of Sociology at TU Berlin. He has conducted several long-term ethnographic studies and has expertise in qualitative methods, interaction analysis, and science and technology studies. His most recent work is “Managing exactness and vagueness in computer science work: Programming and self-repair in meetings”, *Social Studies of Science*, 2021.

Zoom link and contact:

<https://tu-berlin.zoom.us/j/66286915767?pwd=aUVPMjEydmVEeUViTC9MRIRNNk1NUT09>
Zoom PW: 938429

If you are interested in the activities of the research network, or would like to present at the colloquium, get in touch at david.seibt@tu-berlin.de.

Next dates in the BOAP Colloquium

(all colloquium sessions start at 4 pm, Berlin time)

06.09.2021, **Ole Pütz** (Bielefeld University): The Solidification of the Social and the Disciplining of Language during Technology Development: Evidence from Conversation Analytical Investigations of Computer Scientists' Work

6-9.10.2021, **BOAP panel at 4s conference**: Robustness in STS Research Designs and Methods – Making a Difference in Uncertain Worlds?

01.11.2021, **Dzifa Ametowobla** (Technische Universität Berlin): Organizations, Software Components, and Performative Models of Organizing