Conversation Analytic Perspectives to Digital Interaction

Practices, Resources, and Affordances

Edited by
Aino Koivisto, Heidi Vepsäläinen and Mikko T. Virtanen

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Applying conversation analysis to digital interaction

1 Background

Since the late 1960s and early 1970s, Conversation Analysis (CA) has established its place as one of the most rigorous yet flexible methods to analyse and understand how people interact in real life. This method has demonstrated its applicability to various settings and types of conversations, including the focus of this volume – digital interactions. This collection explores the contemporary forms of technology-mediated interaction ranging from casual instant messaging to video-mediated workshops, in several languages and within several cultures.[1] Although the objects of study vary, all the chapters in this volume share conversation analytic perspective in studying technology-mediated communication. That is, the focus is on the ways in which technologies and media are – and can be shown to be – relevant for the participants themselves and consequential for the organisation of social interaction (see e.g., Arminen et al. 2016).

At the heart of CA is the study of social action as it is implemented through language as well as through other semiotic resources such as facial expressions, gestures, emojis and *Likes*. Talking (or writing) in interaction does not mean merely transmitting information to the recipient but doing various social actions such as making a proposal, asking a favour, thanking, telling a piece of news, etc. The linguistic formats and resources are therefore viewed as being in service of implementing such actions in a recognisable way (Levinson 2013). A key difference between CA and many forms of discourse analysis is that CA focuses on how interaction unfolds moment-by-moment and how participants themselves make sense of each other's contributions in this sequentially organised interaction (e.g., Schegloff 1996: 55–56; Heritage 1984: 241; see also Wooffit 2005). In other words, as a method of warranting

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analytic claims, each turn is interpreted in relation to the previous and the next turn (Heritage 1984: 242).

Another distinctive feature of CA is that it does not rely on *a priori* expectations that would motivate the course of analysis based on outer features, such as gender, age, or cultural background, or the physical or digital setting such as a doctor's office or a messaging application. They are considered as relevant only to the extent to which the participants orient to them. That is, the relevant contexts are taken as being created locally in and through conversation. There is no denying that a digital platform can set restraints or provide new resources for interaction, but all in all, the important question is whether the interactants themselves display orientation to the technology or to the mediated nature of their conversation while doing "business as usual" through their devices. As Rintel (2015: 123) observes, "[t]he affordances of technology are materially inescapable but their relevance as a semiotic resource is a matter for participants".

This book offers a wide-ranging perspective on the state-of-the-art conversation analytic work on the impact of different types of technologies and media on social interaction. It furthers our understanding of whether or to what extent the varying practices of digital interaction can be considered as adaptations of the basic organisations and resources of co-present face-to-face interaction. The chapters explore the emerging practices in contemporary digital interaction and interaction related to digital technologies, covering a wide range of digital platforms (such as messaging applications, social networking sites, and video conferencing systems) and human-technology interactions (such as chatbots and social robots). The chapters are organised into four sections according to the platform or type of digital interaction: mobile messaging, social media, video conferencing, and human-computer interaction. Each of the chapters highlights an interactional or linguistic phenomenon – an action, a practice, a sequence, or a larger structure. Some of these are unique to online environments, such as graphicons or hashtags, whereas some occur in both on online and offline interaction, such as repair initiators and invitations. The size of the unit under inspection ranges from a single resource (such as a graphicon) to the overall structural organisation of an entire conversation.

This introduction provides an overview of some of the key CA concepts and analytic procedures and reviews their applicability to digital interaction. Specifically, we consider turn-taking (Section 2), turn design and sequentiality (Section 3), multimodality (Section 4), and participation in digital environments (Section 5). We present evidence that while some of the concepts such as 'turn' and 'projection' might not be readily applicable to text-based forms of interaction, and while some phenomena might not be straightforwardly approached with CA (such as *Likes* on social media), the essence of the method – the analysis of *position and composition* of contributions (e.g., Schegloff 2007: 20–21) – remains valid (see also, Meredith & Stokoe 2014: 202). We conclude the chapter with an overview of the chapters in this book (Section 6) and a brief conclusion (Section 7).

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2 How to apply concepts of CA to digital interaction: the case of turn-taking and text-based messaging

This section presents our discussion of the issues that arise when applying the central concepts of CA to text-based digital interaction. We closely examine the concepts related to conversational turn-taking, that is, 'turn', 'turn-constructional unit', and 'transition relevance place', and watch what happens when they collide with another type of set of units such as 'message' or 'transmission-unit'.

In conversation analytic research, the "question of units" (e.g., Szczepek Reed & Raymond eds. 2013) has been a target of extensive debate since the seminal paper by Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974). One of the central issues is the relationship between linguistic units (such as phrases, clauses, and sentences) and units that are relevant for conversational turn-taking and the formation of actions. Famously, Sacks et al. (1974: 702) suggest that turns are composed of turn constructional units (TCUs), while TCUs are typically composed of linguistic structures such as sentences, clauses, phrases, and lexical constructions. Together with their prosodic design, TCUs have the ability to form recognisable actions in specific activity contexts (e.g., Schegloff 1996: 112–113; Ford & Thompson 1996: 148–151). For turn-taking, a central asset of the identifiable linguistic structures is their projectability. That is, participants in the interaction can anticipate the completion of the turn and thus the transition relevance place before the turn is actually completed, which enables smooth turn-taking. In fact, "unit types" that lack projectability cannot be used as resources for turn-taking (Sacks et al. 1974: 702–704).

For text-based digital interaction, the question of units is interesting in terms of the applicability of the central concepts of CA and thus the whole methodology as already pointed out in the early studies (e.g., Garcia & Jacobs 1999). Indeed, while written, digital conversation – particularly chats and instant/mobile messaging – can be well analysed in terms of the sequences of action and sequential implicativeness, the question of units and turn-taking is far more complex in these digital environments. The central reason for this is the non-synchronous nature of messaging. In other words, the on-going message production and thus projectability are not available for the recipient(s) because the message is observable to them only upon its posting (e.g., Garcia & Jakobs 1999; Hutchby & Tanna 2008: 146; Beisswenger 2008; Meredith et al. 2021). Therefore, the central property associated with the notion of TCU – its projectability – is not applicable in digital, written interaction. This does not mean that messages could not be analysed as being composed of TCUs, that is, recognisable linguistic units performing social actions that can make relevant specific types of next actions (such as questions, answers, requests, offers, etc.).

Considering the relationship between the concepts of TCU or turn and a message/post, it is clear that they need to be distinguished. This is because evidently writers can include one or multiple turns or TCUs in one message (Markman 2013: 542–543). Attention can thus be paid to the *internal*

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composition of a message and whether it contains either several units or a single TCU. A multi-unit turn composed as one message has been termed a 'package-text' by Hutchby and Tanna (2008). They observe that each of the multiple TCUs and actions can be "treated sequentially implicative in its own right" (ibid. 153; see also König 2019a: 614). For example, this means that within the same message, a writer can greet, ask a question, make an announcement and thus make use of the "extended occupancy" instead of having to produce their contribution bit by bit, "by the temporal unfolding of turn constructional units" (Hutchby & Tanna, ibid.).

Another, opposite strategy is "a simple format", where only one action is produced within the message (Hutchby & Tanna 2008: 146–147). For this format, a multi-unit turn is produced over the course of several messages. The literature refers to this strategy of posting several individual messages as 'chunking' (Baron 2013; Markman 2015; König 2019a) or 'incrementing' (Marmorstein, this volume). The outcome of this strategy is a 'message-succession' (Marmorstein, this volume). It has been argued that in contrast to traditional text-messaging that favours a multi-unit "package", a more common strategy in internet-based WhatsApp dialogue is to send a series of individual postings with one action (or action component) per message (König 2019a: 614). Indeed, prior research has shown considerable interest in the writer's choice to "package" versus to "chunk" when designing their multi-unit (and multi-action) contributions. Chunking can be associated with a fast tempo of texting. This is the case in Extract 1 (see Koivisto, this volume) that involves several short messages by the same participant including a proposal (message 1), a request for information (message 2), which is actually a prerequisite for presenting the original proposal, and a request for confirmation (message 3). These are produced bit by bit, giving an impression of a lack of advance planning.

Extract 1 (Amateur theatre)

1	18.11.22	Ilona	Kulma??	*Kulma??*
2	18.11.31	Ilona	Onx se vielä auki	*Is it still open*
3	18.11.36	Ilona	Eiks se oo	*It is, isn't it*
4	18.11.43	Elsa	onse	*itis ((written as one word))*
5	18.11.45	Ilona	Nice	*Nice ((in English))*
6	18.11.48	Ilona	Tulkaa sinne	*Go there*

A single-unit message (in a series) can have different syntactic-actional relationships to the surrounding messages by the same writer. Extract 1 presents a series of syntactically complete contributions. However, a contribution (and a syntactic whole) can also be divided into several messages such that the appropriate "place" (a TRP, if you will) for the sequentially next turn (message) occurs only after the last message of that series (cf. Baron 2013, Spagnolli et al. 2021). In a series such as this, each message can be designed as an incomplete turn, effectively splitting the TCU(s)

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(Tudini 2015); Spagnolli et al. (2021) refer to these as 'installments'. These incomplete TCUs or installments can therefore be characterised as forward-oriented (Tudini 2015: 651). This practice has been shown to possibly prevent intervening messages by co-participants; participants consequently orient to the incompleteness of a turn that expands over several messages. Marmorstein (this volume) describes a practice in WhatsApp messaging that involves a message containing an incomplete opening message (such as "sayy" or a term of address or a greeting), referred to as an "individuated opening", being used to frame a forthcoming action or to merely invite the attention of the co-participant and check the availability for interaction. This shows that while a WhatsApp exchange does not have to be coterminous or focused (cf. Hutchby & Tanna 2008: 144) and the participants do not need to be logged in at the same time (cf. Markman 2013: 539), the participants may still have a tendency to interact as synchronously as possible.

Besides splitting TCUs across messages, writers can also recomplete or extend a "possibly complete online TCU-posts" (Tudini 2015; see also Baron 2013 on 'utterance break pairs'). This can be conceived of as occurring in the "transition space", that is, before anyone has responded. This is a practice that clearly resembles *incrementing* in spoken interaction, which means extending a prior TCU in terms of syntax and action after its possible completion to create a new transition relevance place (Ford, Fox & Thompson 2002; Couper-Kuhlen & Ono 2007). Furthermore, the syntactic formats (such as adverbial clauses, and independent NPs) resemble those reported for spoken interaction (Tudini 2015). The following extract from a Finnish WhatsApp group chat provides an example (Extract 2). In it, Karo extends her just-prior message by adding an adverbial clause ('as long as this headwind allows me', message 5):

Extract 2 (Amateur theatre)

1	13.53.11	Karo	Tulisko joku skidisti neljän jälkeen syömään kulmalle? 🙈	*Would someone come slightly after four to eat at kulma?* 🙈
2	14.27.53	Satu	Mä varmaan tuun kyl!	*I'm probably coming!*
3	14.54.32	Kalevi	Mie oon nyt kulmalla	*I'm at kulma right now*
4	16.05.52	Karo	Iha just kulmal!	*Will be at kulma in a sec!*
5	16.06.01	Karo	**Kuha tältä vastatuulelta pääsen**	***As long as this headwind allows me***
6	16.08.51	Satu	Oon täs pitkissä pöydissä heti kassojen vieres	*I'm at the long tables right after the registers*
7	16.09.15	Karo	Jees!	*Alright!*

To summarise, writers have the option of using a range of message constructions by either packaging several linguistic units and action components (TCUs) into one message or alternatively, by chunking their multi-unit contributions into several messages. This is evidence that

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differentiating between the concepts of TCU/turn and message/post is necessary and warrants further exploration. Moreover, while the central characteristic of the concept of TCU – projectability – is not applicable to text-based interaction in a strictly temporal sense, participants can create a projection of more to come by splitting a single TCU so that a message contains a syntactically incomplete turn. This practice of projecting continuation functions as an invitation for active, simultaneous online participation (see also Marmorstein, this volume), which indicates that the preferred style or mode of chatting can closely proximate synchronous communication.

3 Aspects of turn design and sequentiality in text-based interaction

The many forms of digital interaction have opened up new avenues for the study of turn design, linguistic practices as well as for the management of sequences and larger activities. The focus of this section is on text-based interactions. We consider the types of complications created by the properties of these digitally mediated contexts in understanding turn design and sequential embeddedness. More specifically, we discuss 1) how linguistic practices of spoken interaction become adapted to messaging interaction and how technologically-afforded novel practices are employed, 2) how non-synchronous digital interaction encourages to produce lengthy and structurally complex contributions and the challenges for methodology that lie therein, and 3) how polymedia, that is, the employment of several mediums in parallel, affects the way in which individual contributions can be analysed and interpreted sequentially.

3.1 Old, new and borrowed: sequentiality and interactional practices

From the viewpoint of Conversation Analysis applied to digital interaction, an omnipresent question is how practices of spoken (or pre-digital) interaction are utilised and adapted to digital interaction and to what extent interactants develop new practices that stem from the affordances of a specific platform (Marmorstein & König 2021; see also e.g., Zitzen & Stein 2004; Meredith & Stokoe 2014). Below, we provide examples of some novel and adapted practices related to message construction, sequentiality and linguistic resources that are used to frame a contribution.

A characteristic of messaging platforms is message permanence; if the messages are not archived permanently, they are accessible for at least some time. An early finding, as reported by Black et al. (1983), was that this feature encourages participants to initiate and advance multiple sequences in parallel and in multi-party settings, even to engage in several discussions within one common message feed. Later studies have examined in more detail how the existence of multiple lines of activity shapes the design of turns in chat and messaging (e.g., Werry 1996; Örnberg Berglund 2009; Markman 2013).

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For example, the participants in contemporary mobile group messaging routinely respond to two (or even more) prior turns consecutively (Virtanen et al. 2021). When they respond in this manner, participants may either divide their answers into two (or more) messages or deliver two (or more) answers within one message. If the participant employs engages in 'turn-splitting' – the separation and allocation of responses to their own messages – the implication is that the responses belong to different lines of activity. The opposite practice of multiple responses in a single message, referred to as 'packaging' (see previous section), serves to highlight the connectedness of the responses, as in the terms of the action they accomplish. These different options attest to how interactants flexibly employ the possibilities of the *message* as a basic unit of transmission (see also the previous section). Obviously, having these two alternatives available as a resource is a "novel" interactional practice in the sense that it is based on a technological feature of the platform.

When analysing how parallel activities are managed on messaging platforms, we can detect that linguistic resources are used in an adapted way. For example, Virtanen et al. (2021) demonstrate that when the same participant responds to two (or more) prior turns in the feed, the writer typically posts the responses so that the latter one is prefaced with the particle 'and'. 'And'-prefacing suggests that both responses were pending and that they belong to the same 'response agenda'. In other words, 'and'-prefacing contributes to maintaining coherence between successive responses that are more or less unrelated in terms of their topic and/or action. (Ibid.) For spoken interaction, 'and'-prefacing has been described in a related manner as a resource which enables the speaker's turn to connect to an overarching institutional agenda or a larger frame of activity and consequently, to create coherence (Sorjonen & Heritage 1994; Nevile 2006). However, prior studies of spoken interaction have not identified 'and'-prefacing practices related to managing multiple responses and thus managing parallel sequences. In short, as a design feature, 'and'-prefacing is a prime example of the adaptations or reconfigurations that "pre-digital" linguistic practices can undergo when transferred to non-synchronous digital environments (see, Marmorstein & König 2021: 1).

Besides the management of parallel activities, sequential connections that occur in text-based interaction are generally maintained with linguistic resources that are to some extent used similarly in spoken interaction. That is, in text-based interaction, we also find elements that project the type and shape of the upcoming turn and show how the turn relates to the previous contributions (cf. Schegloff 1987, 1996; Kim & Kuroshima 2013; Heritage & Sorjonen 2018). Besides the message-initial 'and', we can also consider other discourse particles that occupy the message-initial position (on turn-initial particles, see, e.g., Heritage 2013, Heritage & Sorjonen 2018; Vepsäläinen 2019). Let us consider greeting words as an example. Marmorstein (this volume) demonstrates that greetings and other openings are not necessarily needed in mobile messaging to establish contact. That is, participants orient to messaging as being in a "continuing state of incipient talk" (Meredith 2019: 251; cf. Schegloff & Sacks 1973). When greeting words *are* used, they develop

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new uses that can be traceable to the "original" uses. Greetings that occur in the sequence initial position are also typically disjunctive and serve to mark the message as not continuing the previous interaction but as opening a new one. When used in a non-sequence-initial position, a greeting displays renewed availability and can therefore be used to account for temporary unavailability or absence when rejoining the conversation. Marmorstein suggests that this use relates to the meaning of availability that is present in greetings, constituting a trace of their "original" use.

As yet another example, Virtanen et al. (2021) observe that the Finnish word *hei,* which is not only known as a greeting word but also as an attention-getting device (Pihlajamaa 2019), has acquired new uses in group messaging. The word *hei* can be used to introduce an immediate concern, which then initiates a new (possibly parallel) line of interaction. While this use is clearly an adaptation to multi-party messaging in which several spans of interaction can co-exist, it also has its "roots" in spoken language where attention-getters launch new courses of action and redirect talk (see e.g., Sidnell 2007: 392; Norrick 2009: 881–882).

Together, the practices discussed above demonstrate that, as Marmorstein and König (2021: 1) note, text-based dialogues "are not 'digitised conversations' reproducing ordinary conversations on a screen. Rather, they are a different kind of interaction that involves its own conditions of production and interpretation". Furthermore, our case examples demonstrate that non-synchronous digital interaction has given prominence to phenomena of sequential organisation in which connections to more or less distant prior turns are prevalent and where multiple lines of interaction are routinely managed in parallel. This contrasts with how interaction is organised and understood in fully synchronous settings where the premise is that there is a connection to the immediately prior turn (see, Schegloff 2007) and where topics and sequences can be changed, suspended, or returned to (e.g., Couper-Kuhlen & Selting 2018: 342–353) but not so much advanced in parallel.[2] These complex sequential configurations create pressure for the interactants to develop new and adapted means to index sequential connectedness and separation, as demonstrated by our case examples of turn-splitting, 'and'-prefacing, greetings, and attention-getters.

3.2 Is it interaction? The problem of lengthy turns and monologues

Another characteristic feature of sequentiality and turn design in non-synchronous digital interaction is that contributions can be lengthy and structurally complex, particularly in environments such as e-mail exchanges, discussion fora, (video) blogs as well as in the comment sections of online newspapers. Indeed, the interface design of text-based platforms encourages longer contributions because the text field is typically considerably larger than offered in messaging applications. Moreover, as the production of lengthy turns in non-synchronous settings cannot be based on real-time monitoring of the recipients' displays of non/understanding (such as gestures

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and facial expressions), the writer has to write "on the premises of the reader" (Rommetveit 1974: 63) and in accord with what can be "reasonably assumed that the reader knows and expects" (Nystrand 1989: 75). This is particularly applicable to opening posts where there is no local prior discussion (see e.g., Stommel & Koole 2010; Giles 2016). An additional point is that opening posts often do not receive any responses. However, As Meredith et al. (2021: 7) observe, this lack of uptake does not wholly prevent them to be analysed as "interactional": the posts are nonetheless recipient-designed. That is, they reveal how the poster orients to the recipient/audience and the social situation. However, this type of analysis cannot rely on the 'next-turn proof procedure' (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson 1974), which is a step away from the methodological foundations of CA.

As a consequence, the CA-informed analysis of lengthy turns exhibits similarities to textual analysis (TA), which has a long tradition of analysing the organisation and interactional features of singly-constructed texts (see e.g., Nystrand 1986; Hoey 2001; Martin & Rose 2008). In addition, while it has been demonstrated that CA offers powerful tools for ascertaining the joint accomplishment of sequentiality between turns, CA researchers have focused less attention on the composition of multi-unit turns and monologue.[3] This is possibly due to the classic take on turn-taking and turn constructional units (Sacks et al. 1974) emphasising that speakers are entitled to one TCU at a time after which the transition to the next speaker becomes relevant. The analysis of multi-unit turns then has focused on resources through which speakers project more talk beyond the first TRP (e.g., on list constructions, *if-then* clauses, and story prefaces, see Schegloff 1982; Lerner 1991) and how speakers prevent a transition to the next speaker at the first TRP (e.g., "rush-throughs" see Schegloff 1982; 1996). As an attempt to combine the insights of CA and TA in the analysis of blog posts and reader comments, Virtanen and Kääntä (2018) investigate sequentiality both within and between turns. Their specific focus is on employ the tools of genre analysis (e.g., Martin & Rose 2008) to analyse the overall structure of the opening posts, and applying methods of CA to study how, and in which respects, the posts are then taken up in the comments. In a similar vein, Frobenius (2014) has investigated both the monological organisation of video blog posts and the responsive relations constructed in the viewer comments. These studies, as well as others, highlight the importance of "bespoke modes of analysis" (Giles et al. 2015: 45) to acknowledge the multi-faceted nature of interactivity in digital environments.

A more dynamic approach to the composition and design of text-based messages of varying lengths is to examine how they are constructed stroke by stroke by collecting screen-view data in video format (on transcription, see Meredith 2016). In particular, the various ways in which messages are edited prior to transmission can be symptomatic of the writer's interactional concerns. For example, Salomaa and Lehtinen (this volume) demonstrate how participants in online workplace interaction orient to the 'emotional order' (Stevanovic & Peräkylä 2014) of the organisation by replacing an intense verbalisation of emotion by a more neutral one during the process of message construction. They support their findings by demonstrating the

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occurrence of similar neutralising self-repairs in spoken turns.[4] Another study by Meredith and Stokoe (2014) show how participants in casual messaging extensively modify, alter and adjust their messages – including emoji choices – before transmission and, in doing so, display their orientation to how the design of their turn "might accomplish a specific action or outcome in projecting a particular response" (ibid. 194). Although the stroke-by-stroke construction of messages is not typically accessible to the recipient, video data of message construction may nevertheless offer important insights into the participants' orientation to interaction in non-synchronous settings.

3.3 Missing turns: sequential analysis in polymedia era

Finally, we would like to discuss aspects of the sequential organisation related to the concept of 'polymedia' that was introduced by Madianou and Miller (2012) within the framework of communication and cultural studies (see also Androutsopoulos 2021). In short, the notion shifts the analytic focus from single platforms and technologies to whole ecologies of communicative opportunities. For example, interaction between friends and family can take place in, and alternate between, physical settings, instant messaging applications, audio and video calls, social media sites and so on and so forth. Importantly, the choice among channels and media for communication can be socially meaningful and consequential in many ways. For example, in 2006 the then prime minister of Finland captured the attention of both the national and international press after allegedly having ended a relationship by sending a brief SMS (see Laine 2010). With regard to the micro-analytic perspective of CA, the consequences of polymedia can manifest themselves in a highly concrete manner. Extract 3 demonstrates a case concerning a member of an amateur theatre group posting a WhatsApp message in which she returns to a discussion about a plan to go see a film together. This message is the first and only mention of the film in the logfile.

Extract 3 (Amateur theatre)

1	17:58:19	Jarkko	Anteeksi, mutta tulen myöhästymään vähän 😬	*Sorry to say, but I'm running a bit late* 😬
2	21:37:55	Reeta	31.1 treenipaikka vaihtunut [place] ja varausmahdollisuuden takia 6.2 treenit peruttu, tilalla 8.2. (tämä on päivä ennen läpäreitä, kyllä) treenit 17-21 [place]	*Rehearse place for 31 Jan changed to [place] and due to a possibility of overlapping booking, 6 Feb rehearsals are cancelled and rescheduled to 8 Feb (this date is one day before the go-through, yes) 5-10 pm at [place]*

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3	**22:45:31**	**Fanni**	**A star is born menis nyt ainaki pe ja la [cinema] klo 18:10? onks kaikilla jo tää viikko täynnä?**	***A star is born would be on [the cinema] at least on Fri and Sat 6.10 pm? is everyone already booked up for the week?***
4	22:48:19	Elli	Lauantai oisko? 🙈	*Saturday maybe?* 🙈
5	22:49:35	Annu	Molempiparempi 🐦	*Both good* 🐦

In message 3, Fanni first informs the others about the showtimes of a specific film in the coming weekend and then inquires whether everyone has their week already booked. An important aspect of this turn design is that it suggests that there has been prior discussion on the topic and a tentative joint decision has already been made to go to see this specific film together (cf. Koivisto, this volume). That is, Fanni does not inquire whether the recipients would like to go to the cinema and see this specific film but merely reports the showtimes. The informing ends in a question mark, which indicates that the informing also functions as a proposal that makes responses relevant. Elli and Annu treat the proposal as adequate (and not underspecified) by taking a stand on the proposed times (messages 4 and 5).

The lack of mention of the film previously in the logfile suggests that the message carries a 'transmedia trace' (Androutsopoulos 2021: 711–712) that indexes and thematises interaction in another environment, perhaps in an offline setting. Marmorstein (this volume) refers to these types of messages as 'extensions from outside' – that is, "messages that do not initiate a dialogue but extend to WhatsApp interaction that went on – or is still going on – in a different co-present or mediated setting". These types of observations of on/offline interconnections encourage us to adopt a more holistic approach particularly to mobile interaction and to examine systematically its integration into everyday interaction such as from the perspective of specific actions and activities (see also Androutsopoulos 2021).

4 Multimodality in digital interactions

Multimodality has been one of the focal areas of CA research during the 2000s. It has highlighted the importance of bodily conduct (such as gaze, gestures, and body posture) in physically co-present social interaction. Multimodality also expanded the analytic interest to address such phenomena as the manipulation of physical objects (e.g., Goodwin 2000, Mondada 2014; Nevile et al. eds. 2014; Fox, Mondada & Sorjonen eds. 2023), including digital devices (e.g., Oloff 2021). In this section, we briefly review the various ways in which multimodality is present in digital interaction, both spoken and text-based, and how they can be analysed from the perspective of social action. We first discuss aspects of video-mediated interaction and subsequently turn to the multimodality of mobile messaging and social

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media interactions. Although we discuss various forms of multimodality in a number of different settings, it goes without saying that our treatment is selective and limited in scope.

4.1 Dealing with visual boundaries: multimodal practices in video-mediated settings

As the personal, professional, and recreational video communication applications have proliferated and diversified during the past 10 or 15 years (see e.g., Harper, Watson & Licoppe 2018; Due & Licoppe 2020), the multimodal organisation of interaction in video-mediated environments has received increasing scholarly attention. Prior studies have reported that participants exploit and orient in various ways to the affordances and restrictions of the applications and technologies that support audiovisual connection more or less steadily. For example, Rintel (2013) emphasises that categories such as 'technical trouble' and 'disruption' need to be very carefully applied in these settings because they are not necessarily a participant's concern. For instance, video distortions that cause frozen facial expressions can simply be let pass – not treated as interactionally relevant, if the audio channel is still functional – or used creatively for parody or tease. Thus, it is important to remember that "technology frames but does not determine social action" (ibid. 3343; see also Hutchby 2001).

As an overarching feature of video-mediated interaction, participants have been observed to display orientation to the visual talking heads arrangement (such as a headshot) as the default frame for video interaction. That is, departures from it (such as shots of one's environment) are treated as accountable actions and inspected by others for relevance (Licoppe & Morel 2012). However, as the video-mediated participants can only monitor the part of each other's environment that is on the visual field of the camera, there is evidence that showings of objects and physical settings constitute an important part of multimodal video-mediated interaction. Showings can be accomplished either by bringing objects to the camera or by manipulating the camera (e.g., Licoppe & Morel 2014; Licoppe 2017; Virtanen & Niemi, this volume). As argued by Licoppe and Tuncer (2019), showings make visible the participants' attentiveness to the visual boundaries of the video shot and objects or settings that co-participants can or cannot see. In addition to showings of the physical space, many of the current video communication applications offer a screen sharing feature that enables the on-screen domain to become an interactional environment in which technology-mediated shared tasks can be accomplished (Heinonen, Niemi & Kaski 2021; Olbertz-Siitonen & Piirainen-Marsh 2021).

With regard to embodied resources, compared to their affordances in co-present interaction, the functional scopes of gaze and pointing gestures are restricted in video-mediated interaction (see e.g., Heath & Luff 1993; Due & Licoppe 2020). For instance, eye contact cannot be achieved, which means that next speaker selection in multi-party settings has to be done verbally, although some innovative embodied practices have been detected (see e.g., Hjulstad 2016). In the screen sharing mode, mouse cursor movements have

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been demonstrated to serve similar functions as pointing gestures (such as doing referential work) but they can also serve more elaborate functions (such as soliciting responses and making decisions on the next actions in the shared user interface) (Olbertz-Siitonen & Piirainen-Marsh 2021). This, in turn, is a textbook example of a technical user-interface feature being "transformed into an interactive resource for managing participation and distributing agency", thus highlighting the distinction between pre-designed and user-initiated technological affordances (ibid. 19; see also Arminen, Licoppe & Spagnolli 2016).

As our last point in this section, we would like to return to the distinction between synchronous and non-synchronous interaction (see Section 2) because this introduces an additional aspect to the analysis of multimodal interaction. For example, messaging applications typically offer the user different channels or modes to select from (e.g., text, audio, video; on voice messages, see König 2019b). However, despite the choice of mode, interaction remains in the non-synchronous "posting" mode, in which the key interactional unit is the message in the chronologically ordered feed. As an opposite example, let us consider video conferencing and live video streaming systems that also include a chat area. For these environments, fully synchronous video-mediated communication is combined with an additional possibility for non-synchronous text-based communication. As prior studies have demonstrated, novel interactional practices have emerged in these environments to utilise and adjust to the parallel existence of two highly different modes of participation. For example, Licoppe and Morel (2018) demonstrate that Periscope live video streamers routinely adopt a "read-aloud and response" practice when (selectively) responding to the viewers' comments in chat and managing the issue of addressivity (see also, Salomaa & Lehtinen, this volume).

During video calls and video conferencing, by contrast, participants have been observed to resort to text-based chat as in initiating a side-sequence (in multi-party settings), providing technical information (e.g., a hyperlink or a phone number), or reporting technical issues (Sindoni 2019: 2–3 and references therein). This means that non-synchronous chat often appears as a peripheral mode in environments where synchronous participation is available for all (see also Rosenbaun, Rafaeli & Kurzon 2016). Even so, the specific nature of the interaction (e.g., casual conversation vs. online class; cf. Gibson 2014) can affect the division of labour between the modes. As Virtanen and Niemi (this volume) demonstrate by examining data from remote workshops, participation in a specific mode (e.g., video) can also be subject to the situated negotiation of the relevant or preferred forms of mediated presence.

4.2 Multimodality in text-based interaction: interactional affordances of graphicons and punctuation

In text-based (or visuo-verbal) interaction, written language is likewise accompanied by other resources through which participants organise their actions. Additional resources include, to name only a few, emojis and other

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graphicons (e.g., Al Rashdi 2018; König 2019a, this volume), hashtags (Zappavigna 2014; Nurmikari, this volume), GIFs (Tolins & Samermit 2016; Salomaa & Lehtinen, this volume) as well as selfies and other photographs (Georgakopoulou 2016). In addition, text-based interaction has also highlighted the interactional affordances of punctuation (Androutsopoulous & Busch 2021; Busch 2021). As Busch (ibid. 1) states, "[w]hen punctuation is deployed in an interactional mode, it structures primarily neither intonational patterns nor grammatical patterns, but interactional patterns such as shaping sequential organisation and stance-taking". Together or individually, these multimodal resources as well as many others, can be mobilised to accomplish recognisable social actions in specific sequential and interactional contexts. It is important to note, however, that each platform is a medium of its own and multimodal affordances differ across platforms, which can impact multimodal practices as well as the generalisability of the findings (see, Mlynář et al. 2018: 7).

Perhaps the most extensively studied multimodal features of text-based interaction are emojis and their predecessors, character-based emoticons such as *:-)*. In part, these have been associated with compensating paralinguistic cues and the lack of embodied conduct (e.g.,Crystal 2006; Derks et al. 2008; Meredith 2014; Petitjean & Morel 2017; König 2019a; Busch 2021; Meredith et al. 2021). That said, it should be noted that emojis and other graphicons are not directly comparable to aspects of spoken interaction such as a speaker's tone of voice or facial expressions, since their use is arguably more intentional (Salomaa & Lehtinen, this volume). However, it is safe to say that emojis and other visual resources typically serve as contextualisation cues (König 2019a; Meredith 2019), guiding the recipient to interpret the message in a certain manner, for example as playful and not serious. Emojis can also help structure a message or create a link to a previous one (Al Rashdi 2018; König 2019a: 159–160). Meredith (2014; 2019: 252) highlights the importance of the emoji position, noting that when it occurs at the end of one's message, it indicates the stance of one's own message and when it is posted at the beginning of a message, it indicates how the previous message has been received.

While iconically conveying the writer's emotional reaction or stance, emojis have been shown to be linked to several types of conversational actions such as compliments, thanking, openings and closings, and approvals of others' messages (Al Rashdi 2018). That is, they do not simply express emotions or replace the missing facial expressions; in fact, it has been suggested that they have acquired conventionalised, symbolic meanings besides those that are iconic (König 2019a: 159). However, few studies have been conducted by CA researchers on emojis. The chapters in this volume demonstrate how emojis can be involved in the action-formation of responsive messages. For instance, a raising hand emoji can function on its own as an affirming/confirming response (see König, this volume; Koivisto, this volume). König argues that simple confirmations may be produced by using a response particle only (e.g., the German *ja*), with a response particle and an emoji (e.g., *Ja* 💪), or a emoji alone (e.g., 👍). König also demonstrates that some emojis can "boost"

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agreement (e.g., 💪), while others create, together with vowel lengthening (<jaaaa>), a cheerful or enthusiastic tone (e.g., 😍). In other words, emojis can be combined with other resources (mimicking the resources of spoken language) that together create the stance of the message.

The interplay of verbal and visual resources can be further demonstrated by examining the short extract of Finnish messaging interaction provided in Extract 4. The extract comes from a WhatsApp group of an amateur theatre group. In message 1, Emma – one of the directors of the group – announces that a song titled ”Credo” cannot be used in the theatre production. This announcement triggers several emotional responses from others.

Extract 4 (Amateur theatre)

1	14:14:10	Emma	Kaikille tiedoksi, Credoa ei saada käyttää, uusi biisi valitaan huomenna	*Attention everyone, we cannot use Credo, a new song will be chosen tomorrow*
2	14:14:53	Ilona	😭💔 eeih!	😭💔 *nooo!*
3	14:16:32	Satu	Ihanaa kun ihmiset vastaa tällee ajoissa noihin lupakyselyihin... Tsemppiä valintahommiin!	*Isn't it nice that people respond to those permission requests on time… Good luck choosing the new one!*
4	14:28:12	Tiina	😐😭	😐😭
5	14:29:11	Karo	Eikä…..	*Oh no…..*
6	14:29:13	Maukka	😳	😳
7	14:30:04	Emma	Joo tää on aika pulssia nostattava tilanne, mut me selvitään kyllä tästä ja varmasti saadaan timanttinen biisi tilalle! 🎉	*Yeah this is quite a nerve-wracking situation, but we'll come through and surely get a fantastic song as a replacement!* 🎉
8	14:34:10	Tiina	Ihan varmasti saadaan, tsemppiä! ☺	*Certainly we will, good luck!* ☺
9	14:34:34	Satu	Ihan varmasti, ei onneks oo koreobiisi :)	*I'm sure we will, luckily it's not a choreo song :)*
10	14:36:10	Karo	Se vielä puuttuis 🙈	*That would be the last thing we need* 🙈
11	14:36:19	Karo	Tsempit 💪❤	*Good luck* 💪❤
12	14:42:19	Ella	No voi helvetti... ☹	*Oh damn…* ☹
13	14:48:36	Tara	Jep meillä on huippu musapäälliköt, löydetään varmasti joku hyvä ratkaisu 🙌	*Yup we've got top music directors, we'll surely find a good solution* 🙌

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Firstly, the announcement itself is not formulated as bad news (see Maynard 2003). In other words, it does not entail any valenced adjectives or emojis to set or verify its status as bad news. However, the following responses (messages 3, 4, 5, 6, and 11) orient to the announcement as such. As we can see, a message can be constructed through a combination of written language and emojis (and other types of graphicons) or solely with either one. In messages 4 and 6, Tiina and Maukka use sad or crying emojis without any written contribution. It can be said that these function as sufficient responses on their own while also attributing a negative valence to the piece of news. Karo posts a negative response cry in message 5 ('oh no') and this is accompanied by ellipsis dots (five altogether). According to Busch's (2021: 7) analysis on WhatsApp data, ellipsis dots do not typically indicate syntactic omission but rather allude to "some shared culturally or personally shaped background knowledge without making it explicit" (cf. Koivisto 2013). For this example, the ellipsis dots appear to contribute to the depth of the emotion conveyed – thus acknowledging the meaning of the initial announcement – while also displaying empathy. The same applies to message 11, which is some kind of an empathetic exclamation, strengthened by the use of a "confounded face" ('oh damn… 😖'). The function of the emoji as strengthening the verbal expression of emotion is also detectable in the surrounding messages involving different types of emotion. For instance, positive emojis are attached to messages that contain a verbally expressed optimistic projection (Jefferson 1988) of the ongoing crisis (e.g., messages 7, 8 and 9). Furthermore, the extract reveals that several emojis can be utilised to further intensify the emotion (as in messages 2 and 4) or to introduce different (shades of) emotions. In message 11, Karo includes in her wish ('Good luck') both by "flexed biceps" (💪) and a heart (❤) emoji, arguably to indicate both the fact that the crisis can be defeated and to convey a sense of compassion.

4.3 Multimodality in social media: the cases of selfies and Likes

A pervasive multimodal feature of social media is the use of selfies and other forms of 'social photography' (Zappavigna 2016) to share experiences and maintain social relationships. Social photographs range from naturalistic snapshots of everyday life to stylised selfies and 'memes'. In particular, selfies and memes are "omnirelevant" photographic actions in many social media environments – they do not need to be motivated or accounted for (see e.g., Virtanen et al. 2021: 5). While meaning-making through photography in digital environments has already been examined in neighbouring fields such as social semiotics (e.g., Zappavigna 2016; Poulsen 2019), there are few CA studies on this topic to date. In particular, there is a lack of systematic analyses on how photographs can contribute to the key aspects of turn design (sequentiality, action formation, recipient orientation; see Drew 2012). Some first steps have, however, been taken in this direction. For example, Georgakopoulou (2016) combines sociolinguistics with CA to

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examine interaction around selfies among adolescents on social networking sites.

Georgakopoulou (2016) distinguishes between three selfie types: i) 'me' selfies (i.e. profile selfies), ii) significant other selfies, and iii) group selfies. Her findings demonstrate that 'me' selfies are typically carefully filtered, edited, and designed, which suggests that they are 'performances' (Bauman 1986), that is, displays of artistry and skill. This means that 'me' selfies are typically responded to by ritual appreciations, that is, "positive assessments of the post and/or poster, expressed in highly conventionalised language coupled with emojis" (Georgakopoulou 2016: 301). In comparison, the other selfie types highlight interpersonal relationships as their photographic design feature. Thus, they display orientation to the other photographed participants and project a response that conveys "knowing participation" (i.e., knowledge from offline, pre-posting activities) and thus, a validation of the post. (Ibid.) Future CA-informed research could expand to also cover other forms of everyday photography, such as snapshots of objects and locations, and examine their potential in designing turns to accomplish casual actions such as newstellings, direction givings, and responses of different types.

Some aspects of multimodality on social media can be more difficult to analyse with CA methods. A good example is the *Like* response feature available on many platforms. As West (2015: Chapter 4) demonstrates, *Like* can be used to display affiliation and/or alignment when responding to newstellings, polar questions, invitations, etc. West (ibid. 61–62) argues that *Like* "allows for quick backchanneling on content in the newsfeed without positioning the Liker as an active participant in any further development of a post". Nonetheless, one problematic matter for CA is that social media sites typically present multiple *Likes* on the same post as a batch (e.g.,*123 likes*). In other words, *Likes* are not amenable to sequential analysis vis-à-vis each other, let alone other responses.[5] It can, however, be argued that this technological feature positions the multiple *Likers* to form a collective voice and, further, allows a shared appreciation of other's conduct in a manner that has points of resemblance to collectively performed actions in face-to-face environments, such as clapping, booing and cheering (cf. Clayman 1993; Lerner 2002; Pfänder & Couper-Kuhlen 2019).[6]

Hashtags can also be used similarly to affiliative resources that do not create a sequential relation to a specific prior turn but an "ambient" social bond with a mass online audience (Zappavigna 2014; see also Nurmikari, this volume). As a consequence, we would not go as far as Meredith (2019: 253) in warning that "there may be aspects such as 'likes' or 'upvotes' that are not easily analysable in any meaningful way using CA". However, we can concur that not everything in text-based interaction offers itself for sequential analysis – and this also applies to spoken interaction.

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5 Participation practices in digital interaction

This section focuses on aspects of participation that occur in different digital settings. In general, participation refers to the verbal and non-verbal practices that participants use to negotiate their alignments with regard to each other (Goodwin & Goodwin 2004). Moreover, as each exchange unfolds through time and takes place in a specific physical or virtual setting, time and space are elementary dimensions of participation. The main interest of CA is how (and to what ends) participants themselves display orientation to these dimensions. In digital interaction, an additional aspect of participation is human-machine interaction and specifically the ways in which human participants orient to machines as co-participants. The following subsections address the forms of participation in digital settings (5.1) and the various ways that time and space can be made relevant in digital interaction (5.2).

5.1 Participation in text-based settings and in human–machine interaction

In the CA tradition, the question of participation has often been approached by using Goffman's (1981) notion of participation framework, which refers to the different participatory roles that people can adopt in social encounters (see also Levinson 1987). In CA, the idea of participation framework, although acknowledged for its merits, has been generally criticised for not considering mutual reflexivity and the underdeveloped role it assigns to the hearer (Goodwin & Goodwin 2004; Goodwin 2007). Within CA studies, participation is treated as situated practices that are negotiated and re-negotiated in the ever constantly evolving conversational contexts.

We begin this sub-section by presenting some observations on how recipiency is managed and negotiated in text-based interaction. Goffman's (1981: Chapter 3) typology of reception roles becomes particularly useful in the analysis of public online forums that typically display features of both interpersonal communication (that is, with specific individuals) and mass communication (as with large audiences).[7] According to this typology, recipients can be either 'ratified' or 'unratified'. The ratified recipients, in turn, can be oriented to as either 'addressed recipients' to whom the talk is directed to as well as from whom a response is expected, or as 'unaddressed recipients' who have the right to respond if they will. The unratified participants are either 'overhearers' who by chance hear the talk, or 'eavesdroppers' who intentionally try to overhear. (Ibid.)[8]

Discussions in message boards and social media sites (such as Facebook and Twitter) are typically open to a large number of people, often to anyone with internet access. This creates a rather unique and complex participatory situation, which may vary according to the distinctive features of the platform, such as YouTube (Dynel 2014), Facebook (Eisenlauer 2013, 2014; van Hooijdonk & van Charldorp 2019), and discussion boards (Vayreda & Antaki 2009; Haugh & Chang 2015; Giles 2016). After a contribution is posted, it may or may not receive replies from its audience. A study conducted

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in the field of Pragmatics by Dynel (2017) suggests that, depending on the audience uptake, public online discussions contain two types of participation frameworks. The first is the receiver-to-receiver (members of the audience who discuss the posting) and the second is the receiver-to-producer (members of the audience who respond to the poster). In many instances, both types of participation can occur within the same discussion, and this may vary from one platform and medium to another. According to Bolander (2013: 106), readers of blogs predominantly (74%) respond only to bloggers and disregard other reader comments.

An opening posting in a discussion forum or social media site is usually not directed to anyone in particular but to a collective public audience (e.g.,Vayreda & Antaki 2009). Nevertheless, a response may still be expected or even sought after. For instance, in advice-seeking forums opening posts typically end with a request for help or advice (Vayreda & Antaki 2009). On Facebook brand pages, by comparison, the brand posts are often designed to make several types of (positive) responses conditionally relevant; this is apparent in the varied ways the respondents display orientation to the opening post as an initiation (Van Hoojidonk & van Charldorp 2019). Importantly, through the design of their turns, respondents also display their alignment to the participation framework activated in the opening post. For example, although contributing to the discussion, a responder can treat themself as a mere 'side participant' whose response is less relevant for the on-going discussion, for instance, due to a lack of personal experience on the topic (see, Haugh & Chang 2015: 112). Likewise, responders can question the status of the original poster as a ratified participant by categorising the poster, for example, as a 'troll' (Vepsäläinen, Paakki & Salovaara 2022).[9]

Social media typically involves a large group of people who read the posts but who do not respond to them. Who are they in terms of participation? Strictly speaking, to qualify as an overhearer would require that they read the posts accidentally, which might often not be the case, and an eavesdropper should be intentionally reading something that is not intended for them to read. For a public online discussion, the assumption is that the discussion is read, that is, that there are ratified "eavesdroppers" that remain unknown. Dynel (2014 2017) questions whether unratified participants exist in forum and social media discussions, as a reader of a public post cannot be reading it illegitimately. On the other hand, some scholars (Marcoccia 2004; Meredith 2021) accept the idea of lurking as eavesdropping, arguing that lurking participants are distinct from direct and indirect recipients and that the commenter is not aware of them in the same manner as they are aware of active participants.

A whole other level of participation arises when one of the participants is non-human. For example, the popular US-based conversational platforms Twitter and Reddit have hundreds of user-built chatbots, that is, algorithms that mimic human interaction, and subcultures built around conversing with them (Massanari 2016; Nishimura 2016). In the current volume, interactions with machines are in spoken form; the chapters discuss a computer-assisted

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learning environment (Kurhila & Kotilainen, this volume) and a robocallee bot (Vepsäläinen & Paakki, this volume). Both offer, among other things, interesting insights into participation. The "talking kitchen" discussed in the chapter by Kurhila and Kotilainen is both addressed and responded to, even when the human participants know that the machine cannot respond. Extract 5 is a modified fragment from an example in their chapter.

Extract 5 (Kurhila & Kotilainen, this volume)

```
01 KIT:   sujuuko kaikki    ↑hyvin,
          go+Q    everything well
          is everything going alright
02 Sara:  jooh [sujuu,  hi hi hi hi mts .hhh]
          PRT    go
          yes it is
03 Nina:       [hehhh he *he he he he he ] .hih .hih .hhhhh
04 Sara:  .hih
05 KIT:   kokkaat hienosti.
          you are cooking fine
06 Sara:  kiitos. krhih ha [ha ha ha ha ha ha]
          thank you
```

Even though the computer (KIT) is spoken to, it does not occupy a position as an equal participant. Still, it can be talked about, and a discussion with it can turn into a non-serious performance, as Example 5 demonstrates. Overall, however, the first pair parts produced by the computer do not have a projection for a second pair part, as the missing second pair part is not noticeably absent (Kurhila & Kotilainen, this volume). The role of the computer is therefore one of a partial participant that has the rights of someone who is not fully competent. This could be compared to a conversation with an animal or a small baby – both are spoken to but not necessarily expected to respond. This is not the case in all conversations with machines, as people have also been reported to display accountability towards an embodied robot to a varying degree as if they were speaking to a fully competent interlocutor (Rollet & Licoppe 2019). Yet the issue of whether or not a machine is a competent conversationalist is not the analyst's problem. As Pelican et al. (2020) argue in their study on reactions to a robot's displays of emotion, "[f]rom a CA perspective, robotic emotions exist as soon as participants treat robots as having them", and the same can be said to apply to other features of conversations with machines and software.

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5.2 Time and space as dimensions of participation in digital interaction

As previous studies of digital interaction have discovered, participants can orient to the dimensions of time and space differently, depending on the settings and nature of the interaction. Generally speaking, as Licoppe (2015: 106) asserts, "people who communicate at a distance constantly have to deal with both proximal and distant engagement, and reconcile the fact of being here, now, with the fact of also being 'there' at the same time". In contrast to physical co-presence, this form of 'connected presence' (Licoppe 2004) is based on the frequency of contact, which creates temporal continuity (de Rijk & Stommel, this volume). That is, in the digital era, presence is not opposed to physical absence but rather to silence (Licoppe 2015: 109). Furthermore, a sense of connection to others can be enhanced by the built-in presence awareness indicators of the platforms (e.g., *Writing….*) and notifications (e.g., read receipts) (Ling & Lai 2016: 838).

As regards to managing presence in text-based interaction, participants in chat rooms have been observed to routinely use the acronym *BRB* 'be right back' to announce temporary absence and as a consequence, to display orientation to their being constantly involved and attentive (Zitzen & Stein 2004: 999–1000). If we compare this to mobile messaging, the latter is typically oriented to as being in a continuous state of incipient talk – one can participate in it intermittently without the need to mark one's absences or sign-offs in between (Baron 2008; Lyons & Tagg 2019). Nevertheless, as Marmorstein (this volume) points out, messaging participants can also orient to their response as delayed by mobilising a greeting (e.g.,'hi') as a "tacit account" (ibid.).

Besides timing, another important interactional aspect of time is rhythm (see e.g., Couper-Kuhlen 1993) and this is likewise important in text-based environments. As mentioned previously in Section 2, the tempo of chat or messaging is rarely fixed and can alternate between asynchronous and close-to-synchronous. It is important that the rapid exchange of messages can be used as a resource to heighten the sense of a textually mediated presence and involvement in the on-going social action, as in the organisation of a one-off sexual encounter in a chat room (Jones 2013). In discussion forums by contrast, participants' orientation to rhythm and timing is typically quite different, and the interval between comment posts can be days, weeks or even years. Example 6 displays a case with a thread that is re-activated many times after months and even years of silence. The opening post is by an anonymous participant who requests advice from an online community (Reddit) in a situation where he claims to have made his girlfriend's sister pregnant. By the end of 2021, the post has received more than 2 600 comments. Most were posted within three months of the original post, but a few arrived later. For these later responses, we can observe different types of orientations to the timing of the comment posts. Extract 6 contains the opening post and the last four messages.[10]

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Extract 6 (Reddit discussion; OP = original poster, R = respondent)

1	Level 1 15 Oct, 2018	OP	*((subject line:))* Should I tell my girlfriend it was me who got her sister pregnant? *((lengthy body text omitted))*
			((*messages omitted*))
2	Level 2 18 Dec, 2018	R1	Eventually it will become known to everyone, so either come clean now or run. Or you'll cause far worse destruction down the line to your girlfriend, her sister, and your child.
3	Level 2 1 Apr, 2019	R2	Jeez man, After such a catastrophic calamity only a miracle can conceal all the lies and deceit you will put your girlfriend through if you decide to keep the relationship. Here is to hoping that the sister's baby gets mixed up in the NICU.She might as well bring up another man's baby so that there are no physical characteristics shared between you and the sister.
4	Level 2 6 April, 2019	R3	Remindme! 3 months
5	Level 2 26 Nov, 2021	R4	Hey op its been 3 years how did it go?

In messages 2 and 3, R1 and R2 respond to OP months after the original post without treating the comment as a late response. Message 4 might be interpreted as having been provoked by R2 "re-opening" the discussion and R3 uses the Reddit's *RemindMeBot* feature, which automatically sends the user a reminder of a thread at the targeted time (in this case, after three months). With this feature, R3 publicly occupies the role of an eavesdropper (see section 5.1) and displays orientation to the discussion as remaining potentially active. The rationale behind this could be that by then, the baby mentioned in the original post would have already been born. Three years passes until R4 posts another comment, inquiring about OP's current situation (message 5). This message is initiated by using the attention-getter *hey* (see, section 3.1), marking the discussion as re-activated. Thus, R4 displays accountability for the three-year gap between the posts (on accountability in discussion forums, see Antaki et al. 2005). Simultaneously, R4 transforms the overall activity frame from being advice-oriented to (retrospective) reflection or newstelling (*how did it go?*). Overall, Example 6 demonstrates that discussion forums often do not have mutually achieved and coordinated closings. Instead, discussions may reach their closure by the next chosen commenter who does not return to comment (see also, Meredith 2021).

As regards to space as a dimension of participation, Mondada (2011; 2013) has introduced the notion of 'interactional space' to refer to the

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material and spatial environment of social action as both action-shaping and action-shaped. As Mondada (2013: 268) summarises: "[A]ction contributes to configuring space, by selectively discriminating and highlighting relevant features. Interactional space is the result of these practices." In co-present interaction, the spatial arrangement of bodies and body orientation as well as the artefacts in the setting can be oriented to as relevant in the establishment of interactional space. (Ibid.) Recently, Oittinen (2020) applied Mondada's notion to the analysis of video-mediated interaction particularly in settings where some of the participants are physically co-located. For this type of setting, participants are required to display their simultaneous availability in both the local space (by acknowledging the presence and actions of the local participant(s)) as well as in the video-mediated space (by positioning oneself within the distributed participation framework) (ibid.). In the current volume, Virtanen and Niemi reveal how co-located hosts of a remote workshop utilise the exclusive affordances of their shared local space (as in eye contact and overlapping talk) to display mutual affiliation and shared accountability when assessing the remote attendees. By contrast, the video-mediated interactional space is made relevant by maintaining gaze at the computer screen and/or webcam.

In text-based interaction, an important aspect of spatiality is the 'represented space' (Mondada 2011), which refers to the verbal, photographic or other types of representations of physical space. A frequent form of participation, particularly in mobile messaging applications and on social media sites, is to share experiences of one's current environment with those physically absent ('I am here, and this is what being here is like for me', Albawardi & Jones 2019: 10).[11] This is a possible avenue for future research.

6 Overview of the volume

The first section of the book ("Casual mobile messaging") explores text-based interaction between friends and family via the WhatsApp application. The chapter by Michal Marmorstein ("Why say 'hi'? Framed openings in Hebrew WhatsApp messaging") investigates the practices of greeting in Hebrew. A prevalent observation in the study of mobile messaging has been that the participants appear to treat the discussion as a 'continuing state of incipient talk' (see Section 5.2), meaning that the channel is considered always open and it is not treated as necessary to re-establish contact upon each new conversation. Marmorstein shows that the practice of framing a message with a greeting has a specialised function, and unlike telephone or face-to-face conversation in which greeting is a routinised opening practice, in instant messaging it is a design choice. The next two chapters concentrate on the action design and coordination of joint activities. In the chapter "Proposing joint activities in WhatsApp group messaging: Notes on action formation, action ascription and response relevance", Aino Koivisto discusses action formation and ascription in Finnish mobile group

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interaction, focusing on invitations and proposals for joint activity and revealing that there is a low response relevance (see, Stivers & Rossano 2010) associated with these actions in group messaging. That is, when there are several participants, not everyone is always expected to respond. However, turn design may be utilised to display a stronger relevance to respond. Next in the section, Katharina König's chapter ("Response design in WhatsApp chats: Contextualising different stances of confirmation and agreement in text-based interaction") investigates the use of the German response particle *ja* ('yes') and its variants in responses to invitations and proposals in mobile messaging. In text-based interaction, prosody cannot be utilised to distinguish between different stances of confirmation and agreement and this means that visual resources are employed to differentiate between different stances and action trajectories.

The second section concerns the interactional practices on social media. Both chapters in this section inspect phenomena that have their roots in spoken, offline discussions. Many social media platforms contain a private instant messaging feature, and the first chapter in this section analyses an opening of a discussion between two strangers on the dating application Tinder. In that chapter ("Where to start? Initiating post-match chat interaction on Tinder"), Lynn de Rijk and Wyke Stommel demonstrate that openings on Tinder differ significantly from telephone openings and that the participants normatively orient to 'showing originality' due to encountering potential competition with other matches. In another chapter in this section ("The Finnish *anteeks*(*i*) *mitä* 'sorry what' as a resource for expressing affect on Twitter"), Helena Nurmikari analyses the Finnish repair initiator *anteeks*(*i*) *mitä* 'sorry what' that occurs in Twitter discussions. For spoken conversation, this repair initiator can be used to indicate problems such as hearing difficulties, but for Twitter interaction, it is first and foremost used to express affect and stance towards a prior tweet or other online content.

The two latter sections of the volume turn from text-based interaction to spoken and video-mediated interaction. The third set of chapters analyses institutional interaction using a video conferencing platform as their medium. Firstly, Elina Salomaa and Esa Lehtinen examine in their chapter ("Graphicons as a vehicle for eliciting negative emotions in multimedial workplace interaction") how a pre-given, restricted set of emotion images and animated GIFs is used in a remote workshop to encourage employees to express their negative emotions. They reveal how the employees reshape the represented, often extreme emotion to fit with the organisational emotional order. The following chapter ("Thanking and positive assessments in video-mediated workshops: Managing creativity exercises remotely") by Mikko T. Virtanen and Jarkko Niemi explores expressions of thanking and positive assessments that occur in remote workshops and the way and extent to which the technological context is made relevant in the accomplishment of these actions. Their study reveals that these actions not only open different action trajectories in different activity contexts but also display varying orientations to the relevance and procedural consequentiality of mediation.

The last section of the volume focuses on spoken human-computer interaction. The section begins with Salla Kurhila and Lari Kotilainen's

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chapter ("Computer as a conversational partner: Responding to the uncomprehending computer"), which explores a situation in which participants respond verbally to the turns produced by a talking computer in a computer-mediated learning environment. They conclude that the computer's first-pair parts do not have a projection for a second-pair part, but occasionally the human participants nevertheless respond to the machine. By doing so, they enact a performance in which the computer is credited with a role as a conversational partner and this adds a layer of performativity to their mutual interaction. The final chapter ("Unknowingly conversing with a non-human: How can a bot deceive a telescammer?") by Heidi Vepsäläinen and Henna Paakki investigates a situation that involves the human participant not knowing that they are talking to a non-human. The authors present evidence that the bot is successfully designed to utilise the predictability of the overall structure of the telemarketing call, thus making it difficult for the callee to end the discussion.

7 Conclusion

In this introductory chapter, we have applied some of the key CA concepts and areas of research to the realm of digital interaction. We have seen that the classic concepts related to conversational turn-taking such as 'turn' and 'turn-constructional unit' are not readily applicable when operating in a text-based environment. However, for the near-synchronous settings, such as in chat and mobile messaging, patterns emerge that are increasingly similar to synchronous spoken interaction, such as sending syntactically incomplete messages to project continuation and "hold the turn" to oneself. With respect to turn design, we discussed interactional practices that can be traced back to practices of spoken interaction, such as 'and'-prefacing, while simultaneously attaining new functions in digital environments. On the other hand, some emerging practices are novel in the sense that they originate from the properties of the platforms. Examples include the flexible use of the message as a communicative unit (splitting versus packaging) as well as the use of reply-marking feature, which can be used to disambiguate the targeted prior message. We also noted that the option of composing long and multi-unit messages in contexts such as discussion fora poses a problem to strictly CA-based methodology and calls for the inclusion of methods from textual analysis that focuses on the internal composition of a contribution.

A third dimension discussed in this introduction was multimodality, one of the central areas of contemporary CA research. For digital interaction, multimodality is a varied field and presents itself differently in different environments (e.g., video-mediated vs. text-based interaction). For video-mediated interaction, different practices of dealing with the visual boundaries of the camera and other factors such as managing cross-modal interaction (talk vs. text) have attracted analytic interest. In text-based interaction, on the other hand, various visual resources may be used with or without language.

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We offered examples of emojis and punctuation, photographs and the ways in which social media *Likes* can be approached within the CA framework. These versatile visual and functional elements offer a rich set of interactional resources for displaying affect and creating rapport in online settings.

Finally, we discussed participation as well as space and time as its dimensions. The classic conceptualisation of participant framework devised by Goffman provides interesting points of comparison when considering digital environments and their participation roles. For example, this concerns the question of who are the ratified participants or the collective addressee of opening posts in discussion fora that are in principle open to everyone. On the other hand, interaction with machines offers an interesting setting in terms of participation such as those by a bot and robots. They can be exceedingly different with respect to how active or noticeable their role in the interaction can be and whether or not they are acknowledged as legitimate discussants. Also, participation in online settings is a varied and multifaceted phenomenon in which the orientation to space and time also varies depending on the digital settings (e.g., instant messaging vs. discussion forum).

What would be the future challenges and prospects for the study of digital interaction? One of the interesting areas that calls for more systematic research is polymedia, i.e. the existence of different digital platforms in parallel with offline interaction. Although this is something that is prevalently present in our everyday lives, the question remains as to how we parse together an actual interaction when it begins as a face-to-face conversation but continues for instance on a mobile messaging platform. One aspect of this is that turn design can carry traces of a previous communication event and that this also detectable to an outside observer. These "traces" would warrant further study. Another interesting issue that also has methodological significance concerns the possibilities of automatically archived data such as in instant messaging applications, email services and social media platforms. Since the logfile data can contain interactions dating back over several years, we can observe the change of interaction over time, as briefly demonstrated by Koivisto (this volume). This line of research would contribute to the study of turn-design, the development and accumulation of common ground as well as joint 'interactional histories' (see Deppermann 2018; Deppermann & Pekarek Doehler 2021).

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Notes

1 We would like to thank the two anonymous reviewers for their careful reading and insightful suggestions. Vepsäläinen's work on this chapter was supported by the Academy of Finland (grant number 320694) and Virtanen's by the Kone Foundation.

2 We acknowledge that for co-present spoken interaction involving more than three participants, a single conversation can likewise split into parallel conversations. This is referred to as 'schisming' (Egbert 1997). Nonetheless, during schismatic spoken interaction, participants still typically participate primarily in one sub-conversation at a time, whereas in text-based interaction, participants have been observed to participate in two or more sub-conversations concurrently (e.g., Virtanen et al. 2021).

3 Some research has been conducted on turn-internal discourse patterns (e.g., Ford 2001; Couper-Kuhlen & Thompson 2005; Koivisto 2012) as well as on the resources and practices through which the structure of monological talk is made recognisable in, for example, AA meetings (Arminen 1998), lecturing (Arminen 2005: Chapter 5) and academic presentations (Rendle-Short 2006). In addition, some multi-unit turn activities, such as storytelling and troubles-telling, have been investigated as "big packages" (Couper-Kuhlen & Thompson 2018: Online-Chapter D; see also Houtkoop & Mazeland 1985 on discourse units).

4 When discussing how to employ "a conversation analytic mentality" in the study of long, uninterrupted stretches of talk in informal interview settings, Hutchby and Wooffitt (1998: 186–191) similarly highlight the examination of the interviewees' self-repairs and amendments as one strategy to compensate for the unavailability of the next-turn proof procedure. These instances of self-monitoring can, according to the authors, "furnish us with the basis for analytic claims about the kinds of interactional or inferential concerns relevant to the speakers' ongoing production of their talk" (ibid. 189).

5 In addition, as West (2015: 61) points out, a unique feature of *Like* responses is that they cannot be responded to, at least not with another *Like*.

6 It is interesting that a sense of collectivity can also be accomplished through linearly ordered messages when each of the participants posts the "same" message, as in a similar positive appreciation. As Georgakopoulou (2016: 193) states, this serves "as the visual equivalent of lots of people clapping and cheering at the same time".

7 We adopt Levinson's (1988, 169) suggestion here to substitute Goffman's (1981) original term of *participation framework* with a more accurate term, *reception roles*. In Goffman's (1981) terminology, *participation framework* refers only to the reception roles and excluded the production roles (see also Sidnell 2011, 141; on production roles, see footnote 8).

8 In addition to reception roles, Goffman (1981) offers a widely-used typology of production roles (i.e. 'animator', 'author', and 'principal'). Due to space restriction, we do not discuss the production roles. For discussion and applications, see Draucker (2015) and Dynel (2017).

9 The ways in which labels such as 'troll' are used in online discussions could be analysed further by using the methods of 'membership category analysis' (see, Sacks 1992; Stokoe 2011). For applications, see e.g., Stommel & Koole (2010), Giles (2016) and Housley et al. (2017).

10 The messages in this particular forum form a threaded, tree-like structure which we indicate here through levels. The original post is on level 1, and all level 2 comments are replies to the original post.

11 A related phenomenon is 'showing' sequences of one's physical environment during casual video-mediated interaction (Licoppe 2014).

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Casual mobile messaging I

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Why say 'hi'?

Framed openings in Hebrew WhatsApp messaging

Abstract

Messaging apps afford a perpetually open channel of communication in which official openings are unnecessary to establish contact. Participants who nonetheless choose to frame a new interactional span with a greeting orient toward traditional norms of social conduct where engagement with another party is contingent upon social ratification. Based on a corpus of Hebrew WhatsApp dialogues, this study explores the composition and sequential positions of greeting-initiated messages. Analysis reveals that openings in most cases are implemented by a minimal greeting and are not reciprocated. Typically, both dialogue initiators and recipients do not treat openings as a paired action that ought to be co-accomplished, but as a design feature of the message that constructs the upcoming span as a social encounter and displays the participants' stance toward each other. Given their association with availability, greetings can also serve to account for temporary unavailability or absence. These relational tasks extend from ordinary conversation; however, their indexical value is recalibrated and heightened in messaging where the prevailing alternative is to launch a span with the interactional "business".

1 Introduction

A growing body of research on online interaction has made apparent the relevance and profitability of conversation analytic tenets and procedures for the analysis of text-based dialogues conducted on digital platforms (Giles et al. 2015; Meredith 2019). Ordinary conversation provides a basic

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structural and social model for digitally mediated dialogues (cf. Herring & Androutsopoulos 2015: 129); however, the two modes are clearly not identical. Studies concerned with the organisation of sequence and action in online interaction have demonstrated the adaptation of conversational resources and methods to non-synchronous communication[1] and the emergence of new practices given the various socio-technological affordances of digital settings (see, e.g., Arminen et al. 2016; Giles et al. 2017; Frobenius & Gerhardt 2017; Herring 2019; Meredith & Stokoe 2014; Marmorstein & König 2021; Paulus et al. 2016; Seargeant 2019; Tagg 2015).

This chapter is concerned with the adaptation of one core organisational feature of conversation: its opening. Specifically, it explores framed openings of interactional spans in Hebrew WhatsApp dialogues. An interactional span consists of a structurally and thematically cohesive and (to some degree) bounded chunk of dialogue. The term *dialogue* refers to the communicative exchange of messages on WhatsApp to distinguish it from both ordinary (oral and synchronic) *conversation* and from *chat* as the technological setting in which dialogues take place.[2]

In conversation, opening sequences or phases are described as a particular subset of sequence initiations that constitute the unit "a single conversation" (Schegloff & Sacks 1973: 71). A formal device through which openings are implemented is the conventional greeting (e.g., *hello*, *hey*, *hi*, *good morning*). The present study focuses on sequences initiated by these items which, unlike other sequence initiation devices, are "activity-specific" (Duranti 1997: 67) and dedicated for marking a dialogue opening on WhatsApp.

While a conventional practice in ordinary conversation (Schegloff 1986; Pillet-Shore 2018), greeting at the opening of a WhatsApp dialogue is not a pre-scripted routine. Messaging apps have established an always open avenue for communication in which "endless dialogues" (Imo 2015) can be carried out without being formally opened or closed. Against this prevailing option, greetings, as unequivocal markers of opening, can serve to bracket an interaction and frame it as a new encounter. The present chapter focuses on interactions between close acquaintances and examines the composition and sequential positions of greeting-initiated messages. These framed openings orient to the social encounter instantiated by the dialogue rather than to the always open channel and the presumably "always on" (Baron 2008) mode it affords. In invoking the social encounter, greeting-initiated openings can serve participants in accomplishing different relational tasks – in particular, to (re)constitute their relationship, display their availability to one another, and contextualise further topic talk.

The following begins with a short review of the literature on openings in ordinary conversation and in online settings (Section 2). Next, the data and analytical method of the current study are presented (Section 3). Section 4 outlines the range of opening practices found in the data. The subsequent sections delve into the details of greeting-initiated openings, discussing their formal design (Section 5) and analysing their sequential positions and functions (Section 6). The chapter concludes with a discussion of the functional recalibration of framed openings in WhatsApp communication, specifically as compared to ordinary conversation.

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2 Openings

2.1 Conversation opening

Schegloff and Sacks describe openings as a constitutive part of the unit definable as "a single conversation" (1973: 71). Unlike sequence initiations within an established state of talk that operate at the more local level of sequence organisation, openings pertain to the overall structural organisation of a social encounter (Robinson 2013).

An encounter, as defined by Goffman, is a situation in which two parties "engage one another in focused interaction" (1963: 89). Telephone conversations provide a prime example for focused interaction, since focus is achieved through talk and sustained as long as talk continues. However, the situation may be different for co-present participants whose joint activity is not coterminous with conversation and whose gathering presents an "open state of talk" (Goffman 1981: 134) that allows for (recurring) unannounced entrance into and departure from the talk. Importantly, these situations differ from unfocused interactions (Goffman 1963) because they involve not only sheer co-presence but also a constant accessibility of participants to one another, realised (inter alia) by "incipient talk" (Schegloff & Sacks 1973).[3]

While typically compact, the opening phase of a conversation is described as a dense activity designed to achieve multiple aims (Schegloff 1986; Pillet-Shore 2018). These include the establishing of contact and interpersonal access, the (re)constitution of relationships between participants, and the preliminary organisation of further talk and action. The opening phase is therefore not a trivial routine, but one that impacts on the matter and manner of the conversation that follows.

Closely investigating the openings of landline telephone conversations, Schegloff (1986) observed the ordered recurrence of four sequences. The "canonical" opening starts with a summons-answer sequence, serving to mobilise the attention of the answerer, then transitions to identification/recognition of the parties and the reciprocation of greetings, and ends in an exchange of initial inquiries ("howareyous"), preparing for the introduction of the "reason for the call". While these components tend to appear one after the other, they are not entirely separable, as identification, especially among previously acquainted parties, is preferably accomplished implicitly through the (verbal and vocal) design of answers and greetings. Evidently, modifications of this set of sequences have been effected by the advent of caller-ID technology, which opened the possibility for pre-voice sample identification (Hutchby & Barnett 2005).

In co-present encounters, the beginning is obviously not only accomplished through talk, but also through embodied resources. Pillet-Shore (2018) observed that smiling and resetting of body position pervade the opening phase as two principal ways in which participants display their positive stance and orientation toward one another. Through the choices they make, co-present participants begin to constitute social relations already at the preparatory phase of becoming co-present. Relational work extends to successive – or simultaneous – greetings, touching, and personal state inquiries or comments.

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In both mediated and co-present encounters, greetings are a fundamental component of the opening phase. It is important to note the distinction between greetings as a lexical resource and the actions involved in greeting, i.e., the public and reciprocal ratification of persons as participants in a social encounter (Goffman 1967: 34; Heritage 1984: 106–108). Greeting-as-action is contingent upon the identification/recognition of the interacting parties. While with older telephone technology an initial *hello* (prior to recognition) could not have implemented the act of greeting (Schegloff 1986), with caller-ID technology and in co-present encounters greetings can be – and often are – the first verbal action following visual recognition of the other party (Hutchby & Barnett 2005; Pillet-Shore 2012).

Following recognition, greetings are inevitably designed for their recipients. Through their verbal, prosodic, and/or embodied design, greetings display a participant's stance toward co-participants and the current encounter. Pillet-Shore (2008, 2012) observed a systematic correlation between prosodic design and stance, such that a prominent prosodic delivery of the greeting (a "large" greeting) serves to display a positive stance toward acquainted participants and treat the encounter as special (i.e., occurring in substantial distance from last contact or unexpected), while a non-prominent delivery (a "small" greeting) indicates a neutral stance toward encountering the co-participant. While greetings are sequentially accomplished in telephone calls (Schegloff 1986; Hutchby & Barnett 2005), in co-present encounters they are preferably performed simultaneously, thus displaying as quickly as possible the mutual approval of involved participants (Pillet-Shore 2012).

2.2 Openings in online interaction

Similar to openings in face-to-face or mediated conversations, the opening of an online interaction is sensitive to the conditions of the encounter – specifically, the communicative modalities it affords, the participation framework, and the goal of the interaction – and presents the emergence of social norms that build on these conditions. For instance, Licoppe and Morel (2012) observed that in video calls, the appearance of participants as portrait-like images at the opening phase not only serves to secure and display a sustained connection and mutual recognition, but also sets the normative expectation for which participants are held accountable.

Text-based online interactions provide an array of additional possibilities. Early work has focused on openings in public forums (Antaki et al. 2005) and multi-party IRC (Rintel et al. 2001). An interesting observation that emerges when comparing these environments is that while new forum threads are not initiated by an opening phase given the "opt-in quality of the medium" (Antaki et al. 2005: 119), participants in multi-party chat rooms invest much work in the "channel-entry phase" (Rintel et al. 2001) in order to increase their chances for ratified interpersonal connection. The overall goal of the interaction – whether task/topic-oriented or social – emerges then as a crucial factor in how interaction in these public environments is initiated.

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The situation appears to be different in interactions between previously acquainted parties. In her study of Facebook chats between friends, Meredith (2014) demonstrates how the technological setup of the platform, which associates participants with preset user profiles, obviates the need for identification and recognition. While a visual indicator for logged-in participants is provided electronically, it is only by sending a message that an availability check is issued. Thus, Meredith regards all first messages as summonses, i.e., as availability checks, regardless of their internal composition and the actions they implement.

Meredith classifies first messages/summonses into three broad categories: greetings, personalised summonses (e.g., address terms), and topic-initiations. Each of these can occupy the first message alone or be combined with others. Responders can construct their messages such that they answer part or all of these components. Moreover, responses can be significantly delayed in Facebook chat. This, Meredith observes, is generally not treated as a problem due to the persistence of the on-screen text. The fact that a chat can be immediately initiated with a topic is believed to evidence participants' orientation toward chat interaction as similar to a "continuing state of incipient talk" (Schegloff & Sacks 1973).

The same notion of "incipient talk" is evoked by Imo (2015) to explain the lack of dialogue-initial framing on WhatsApp. He observed that unframed openings have become widespread on this platform (especially in comparison to the older SMS system) and proposed that this is due to the special features of the app. In particular, the indication of when participants were last seen online and the display of messages in a single, never-ending thread create a sense of "closeness" and a feeling of continuous conversation.

In summary, research on the opening of interactions in various online environments reveals a wide range of possibilities, extending from the marked openings by which a social encounter is explicitly framed to direct engagement with the official "business" of the interaction. Interestingly, while in some online environments a characteristic type of opening has evolved, other environments, specifically messaging platforms, appear to host all these possibilities. This variation reflects the fact that messaging environments are not limited to a particular type of interaction, but are instead characterised by a more open set of socio-technological affordances to which participants can orient themselves in different ways. With regard to the openings of WhatsApp dialogues, this study is thus not concerned with identifying a "canonical" opening but rather with alternative practices through which an interaction can be launched. As shown below, these include framed and unframed, minimal and elaborate forms of opening an interaction.

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3 Data and methods

This study is based on the Corpus of Hebrew WhatsApp Dialogues (HebWA), comprising in its current form 168,356 messages from 92 dyadic and group chats among university students along with friends and relatives aged between their early 20s and late 30s. Data were contributed upon consent of all participants in each chat, and all identificatory details were anonymised or removed.

For the purpose of the present analysis, six chats, representing various participation frameworks, were selected for closer examination. These include four dyadic chats between friends and classmates (involving men and women alike) and two group chats – a three-party TA (teaching assistant) group and a friends' group including nine members. The studied sample consists of a total of 4,894 messages excerpted as entire chats or as subsections of longer chats.

Through structural and thematic analysis, a total of 254 new span initiations were identified and coded. These comprise unmarked initiations, where the beginning of the span was identifiable based on topical shift, and initiations marked by formal devices (see Section 4). Among the latter group, 78 consisted of greeting-initiated openings (see below Table 1). This collection will be analysed in detail in Sections 5 and 6.

The methods applied in the present study are informed by Conversation Analysis (CA, Sidnell & Stivers 2013) and Interactional Linguistics (IL, Coupler-Kuhlen & Selting 2018). Accordingly, the analysis is concerned with how the social action of dialogue opening is sequentially accomplished in WhatsApp messaging, the resources mobilised for opening practices, and how participants observably orient to them. Nevertheless, since messaging operates under certain conditions and with resources other than those existing in ordinary conversation, premises and categories originating in CA and IL must be carefully adapted when applied to this form of communication.

First, studies of online interaction have shown that the notion of turn-taking is not entirely fit to describe the exchange system of messages for which sequential coordination is not based on a single floor economy and the monitoring of turns-in-progress (Beißwenger 2008; García & Jacobs 1999). Therefore, the relevant unit of analysis will be referred to as the *message* (cf. Baron's (2010) "transmission unit") and the term *message-succession* will indicate the successive posting of messages by a single participant. A message that forms part of a message-succession is called a *message-succession-increment* or simply *increment* (cf. Imo 2015),[4] while the term *message-package* (cf. Hutchby and Tanna's (2008) "package-text") is applied to messages that comprise multiple actions and/or multiple structural units (e.g., separate lines, numbered sections).

Second, sequence organisation in messaging is not necessarily constituted by temporal or spatial contiguity (García & Jacobs 1999; König 2019). Instead, conditional relevance holds together pairs of actions, even when not adjacent. However, as shown below, not only adjacency but also conditional relevance may be weakened in messaging for certain types of paired actions.

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In the following, the term *message-exchange* refers to the organisation of messages produced by interchanging participants, regardless of whether they form paired actions.

Third, text-based online interaction operates with different resources than oral conversation. These do not simply replicate or compensate for the loss of vocal, visual, or tactile resources but present the repurposing of existing means and the emergence of new resources that constitute a new semiotic ecology (cf., e.g., König 2021; Gibson et al. 2018; Marmorstein 2021; Petitjean & Morel 2017). Moreover, although text-based, online writing reflects a different orientation to orthography and punctuation than that which is common in standard writing, which results in the distinct usage of graphic resources (e.g., Busch 2021).

Finally, participation in messaging is organised differently than in co-present or mediated conversation. While adding a new contact or joining a group grants members the status of officially accredited participants, it does not ensure their immediate availability. This constellation, as proposed in the following section, enables different orientations to the accessibility of partners as reflected in the design of dialogue openings.

4 Unframed and framed dialogue openings on WhatsApp

At a basic technical level, once a contact is added to a user's address book, an open channel of communication is established on WhatsApp. This, however, does not mean that participants are socially available to one another at all times; rather, by customising the chat's settings and deploying particular interactional practices, participants display their orientation toward their own availability and toward others. Thus, while the default settings provide indications for users' "last seen" status and read receipts, these can be actively turned off. More explicitly, participants can use various resources to frame a new span of interaction as an increment in an endless thread or as a bounded dialogue: in the first case, they orient toward the perpetual state of access afforded by the chat, while in the latter, they orient toward the normative obligation to (re)establish social ratification when (re)joining a social encounter.

Unframed openings of dialogues can be defined as such only by their contrast with framed openings. Thus, an unframed opening is a thematically disjunctive sequence initiation not prefaced by the formal marking of transition to a new topic. Consider, for instance, the following exchange between Alon and Michal (Extract 1). Nine days after they had last texted each other to compare their solutions on an assignment, Alon initiates a new interactional span (message 5) with a question, seeking to find out whether Michal is present in the common area (the "aquarium") so that he can see her notes:

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Extract 1 (HebWA030)[5]

	17/01/19			
1	Al	15:49:14	right it does make sense	נכון זה באמת הגיוני
2	Al	15:49:15	my mistake	טעות שלי
3	Al	15:49:22	thanks!	תודה!
4	Mi	15:50:00	wonderful	נפלא
	26/01/19			
5	Al	10:09:27	**are you here in the aquarium?**	**את פה באקווריום?**
6	Al	10:10:06	if not, and you come later, I'd be happy if you could bring the notes from probability [class], I have some corrections unfortunately :(	אם לא, ואת מגיעה אחרכך, אני אשמח אם תביאי את הסיכום בהסתברות, יש לי תיקונים לצערי :(
7	Mi	10:11:48	thanks for mentioning [it]!!a	תודה שאתה אומר!!א

This sequence follows a relatively long period of silence; however, it is not time that delimits it (a message exchange can extend over a long lapse, cf. Imo 2015: 29), but rather its unrelatedness to the previous course of action. Importantly, this type of unframed initiation differs from what can be referred to as "extensions from outside", that is, messages that do not initiate a dialogue but extend to other interactions that occurred – or are still ongoing – in a different co-present or mediated setting.[6]

While participants can initiate a dialogue with their intended action as in Extract 1, they can on occasion precede it by announcing the type of action that follows. These announcements, or "action labels" (Virtanen et al. 2021), often contain an expression of stance toward the projected action. In Extract 2, Sara begins a new interactional span in the TA group chat in which she asks for feedback on a presentation she has prepared. In her initial message in the sequence (message 4), she qualifies the upcoming action as "an embarrassing question", thereby accounting for what may be interpreted as a trivial question:

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Extract 2 (HebWA015)

1	Sa	10:59	I don't know how to make it so it (i.e. the assignment) displays automatically at 6 PM so I'll just open it at the end of the exercise..	אני לא יודעת איך לעשות שזה ייחשף אוטומטית ב-6 אז אני פשוט אפתח את זה בסוף התרגיל..
2	Av	11:00	ok	סבבה
3	El	12:06	👋	👋
4	Sa	15:30	**an embarrassing question**	**שאלה מביכה**
5	Sa	15:31	so actually the presentation I prepared is for two classes? that is in previous years they did all of this in one lesson and now we have two?	בעצם המצגת שהכנתי להיות היא לשני שיעורים? זאת אומרת בשנים הקודמות עשו את כל זה בשיעור אחד והפעם יש לנו שני שיעורים לזה?
6	Av	15:37	yes, I also thought about that only after the class...my presentation (and in fact the assignment as well) includes all of the articulatory phonetics and the terminology	כן, גם אני חשבתי על זה רק אחרי השיעור... גם המצגת שלי (ולמעשה גם התרגיל) כוללת את כל הפונטיקה החיתוכית וגם את המונחים

While announcements of an action are type-specific, pre-action framings can also be generic and secure the basic precondition of attention and recipiency of the co-participant (Schegloff 2007: 48). The following excerpts illustrate two common practices: in Extract 3, Alon uses the metalingual expression 'say', and in Extract 4 he places a term of address before an information-seeking question that launches a new span:

Extract 3 (HebWA030)

1	Al	13:34:44	**sayy**	**תגידי**
2	Al	13:34:53	food-wise	בקטע של אוכל
3	Al	13:35:06	will I have something to eat at your place or it's better that I eat at home?	יהיה לי מה לאכול אצלך או שעדיף לי כבר לאכול בבית?
4	Mi	13:36:23	I just made antipasti with no broccoli and cauliflower	בדיוק הכנתי אנטיפסטי נטול ברוקולי וכרובית

Extract 4 (HebWA028)

1	Al	13:34:44	**Ophirul**	**אופירול**
2	Al	13:34:53	are you still at the university?	אתה עוד באוניברסיטה?
3	Op	13:35:06	yes	כן

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The playfully extended 'sayy' and 'Ophirul' (the name *Ophir* ending with an endearment suffix *ul*) both appeal to the attention of the recipients. However, while the first is a generic elicitation of the next relevant action ('say', i.e., 'please respond'), the second invokes the social relationship between the dialogue partners and reconstitutes it as close and friendly.

The practices reviewed above are all commonly used to initiate dialogue on WhatsApp. The distribution observed throughout the selected data includes 99 cases of unframed openings, 15 cases of action announcements, and 54 cases of generic pre-action framing identified as dialogue openers. These are alternative forms of greeting-initiated openings, as summarised below in Table 1.

Table 1. Distribution of (un)framed opening practices in the data

OPENING PRACTICES	FREQUENCY
Action (unframed)	99
Action-specific framing	15
Generic attention-getters	54
Greetings	78
NA[7]	8
TOTAL	254

Specific and generic pre-action framing devices are not exclusive to dialogue openings. They can be used in the middle of an interactional span, for instance, when a parallel line of talk is introduced by an action label (Virtanen et al. 2021); alternatively, they may be non-initial. In their study on vocatives in text-messages, Asprey and Tagg (2019) observed that besides initiating interaction via "focusing", terms of address can be recruited to implement relational work of various kinds.

The following focuses on framed openings initiated by greetings. Unlike other resources observed in the data, a greeting is a dedicated means for opening: it is not only sequence-initial, but also an explicit mark of entrance into a social encounter. Through focusing attention on openings initiated by greetings, prototypical cases may then be observed where messaging is treated as a social encounter.

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5 Greeting-initiated openings on WhatsApp: A structural analysis

Openings initiated by greetings vary in their structural composition. They can be minimal or elaborate, contain different types and forms of greeting expressions, and may occupy a separate message or be integrated with a subsequent action in the same message. To some degree, the composition of an opening correlates with its sequential position. This topic will be addressed in the next section.

The types of greeting used in messaging can be characterised by their genericity/specificity and formality/casualness. Overall, there is clear preference for generic and casual forms of greeting (see Table 2), a preference well explained by the close and friendly relationships between most of the members in the studied chats. Thus, the most frequent type of greeting is the generic and casual item היי/הי *hay*/*hey* 'hi'/'hey' (no distinction can be made based on Hebrew's consonantal orthography). A common variant of *hay*/*hey* is the newer slang form היוש *hayush*, a combination of *hay* 'hi' and the suffixal endearment morpheme *ush*. The standard Hebrew greeting שלום (*shalom* 'hello') appears in only a few cases. Interestingly, the expression שלום רב (*shalom rav* 'greetings'), a conventional opening of formal letters, is also used, but with a clearly playful intent (see Extract 6).

Participants not only use generic greetings, but also use standard greetings that refer to a specific time of day or week. These include בוקר טוב (*boker tov* 'good morning') and its conventional response בוקר אור (*boker or*, lit. 'a morning of light'), שבת שלום (*shabbat shalom*, lit. '[may you have] a peaceful Shabbat', a greeting used in Jewish tradition approaching or on Saturday), and שבוע טוב (*shavua tov* '[may you have] a good week', a greeting used in Jewish tradition on Saturday evenings). The deployment of these items, observably more common in groups than in dyads, suggests that the actual time in which the message was produced can be considered relevant even in what may be an asynchronous interaction. Finally, combinations of types of greeting are also observed, e.g., הי שלום (*hay shalom* 'hi hello').

In choosing a particular *type* of greeting, participants index their stance toward their partners and the interaction as a whole. However, a more local and specific display of stance is accomplished at the granular level of the realised written *form*. While the prominent prosodic delivery of a greeting in spoken language serves to indicate a positive stance (cf. Pillet-Shore 2012), this can also be achieved in text-based messaging through the manipulation of visual resources. The following are commonly deployed: (i) reduplication of the greeting token (e.g., הי הי 'hi hi'), (ii) extension of the token by repeating (once or more) its final letter (e.g., הייייי 'hiiiii'), and (iii) use of further contextualisation cues, specifically the exclamation mark, emoticons, and emojis (e.g., היי! 'hi!', בוקר אור :) 'good morning :)').

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Table 2. Formal variation and frequency of greeting expressions

Token variation		Frequency
hi/hey	הי/היי	39
hayush	היוש	9
hiii	היי	4
hiiii	היי	4
hi hi	הי הי/היי היי	4
hayushsh	היושש	2
hayushshsh	היושש	2
good morning	בוקר טוב	2
hello	שלום	2
hi/hey hello	היי שלום	2
hiiiii	היייי	1
hayuz	היוז	1
good morning (res.)	בוקר אור	1
good week	שבוע טוב	1
greetings	שלום רב	1
greetings (f.)	שלומה רבה	1
hi/hey hellooo	היי שלוממם	1
hayush good week	היוש שבוע טוב	1
Total		78

Openings are usually minimal and consist of only one greeting token (58 of all 78 cases). However, openings can also be implemented by a more elaborate sequence including, besides the greeting, an address term and personal state inquiries ("howareyous"). Similar to the openings of ordinary conversations among acquaintances, an opening sequence in WhatsApp messaging does not involve an identification component, except in the unique position of chat initiation (see section 6.1). When a greeting and an address term are both used, the latter usually comes second. Evidently, when placed after a greeting, an address term does not serve as a "focaliser" (Asprey & Tagg 2019) but is mobilised for other tasks, such as addressing specific recipients in group chats and/or soliciting engagement (cf. Clayman 2013: 292).

Whether minimal or elaborate, openings can either occupy a single message or a message-succession, or be integrated with the first topic or action in the same message. Moreover, within a single message, an opening can be placed on a separate line or be delineated from the following action by punctuation or emoji. When individuated and realised in a separate message(-succession), openings strongly project continuation which can be fulfilled in one of two ways: either the same participant immediately posts a topical message (see below Extract 8) or leaves room for their partner to respond to the opening (see below Extract 6). It is only in the latter case that an opening sequence is *co*-accomplished. As discussed in section 6.2 below, these cases are rather rare and occur only in particular types of exchanges. In most cases, the opening is integrated with the first action such that its conditional relevance, qua first-pair part action, is considerably weakened.

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6 Openings in WhatsApp dialogues: a sequential analysis

Sequence and topic organisation are both implicated in the distribution of opening messages. Greeting-initiated messages appear in three locations: (i) at the very beginning of a chat, (ii) at the beginning of a new topical span, and (iii) when resuming a topic or (re-)joining an initiated course of action.[8] The sequential location of the opening bears relevance on its response such that a first opening can be reciprocated at the beginning of a chat or a topical span, whereas in the resuming or re-joining position it is hardly ever reciprocated.

Compared to the exchange of greetings or "howareyous" in ordinary conversation (Schegloff 2007: 195), initial openings in WhatsApp are considerably less response mobilising. In the studied collection, 48 greeting-initiated messages occur in dialogue-initial position (i.e., at the beginning of a chat or a topical span) while only 22 occur in response position. In most cases, then, greeting is singly implemented by the dialogue initiator. Moreover, elaborate openings are relatively more common in dialogue-initial position than in response position, where a minimal greeting – if greeting is at all reciprocated – is typically used. The following subsections closely analyse each of the locations in which greeting-initiated messages occur.

6.1 Chat-initial openings

The absolute beginning of a chat is a typical location for greeting-initiated openings to appear. The studied data records the beginnings of four (out of six) chats. Only one of them, the TA group chat, does not start with a greeting-initiated opening but rather with an "extension from outside" (sharing of documents discussed in a co-present meeting). While identification/recognition is generally obviated by the chat setting (cf. Meredith 2014), the beginning of a chat can include an identification component, especially when participants are not (well) acquainted. Consider the following excerpt (Extract 5) from the beginning of a chat between Dikla, a senior, and Hadar, a new member of the university's debate club:

Extract 5 (HebWA065)

1	Di	15:27	**hi! it's Dikla from the debate [club] and psycholinguistics! how are you?**	**היי! זו דקלה מהדיביט ופסיכולינגוויסטיקה! מה שלומך?**
2	Ha	15:31	**hi hi** **I'm great, how are you?** **I've already been updated about the news** 😅	**הי הי** **אני מצוין, איך את?** **כבר עודכנתי בחדשות** 😅
3	Di	15:31	yes! how fun :)	כן! איזה כיף :)

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Dikla begins the chat with an elaborate single-message opening (message 1) consisting of a positively marked greeting token ('hi!'), self-identification, and a personal state inquiry. Dikla and Hadar know each other from previous co-present encounters, and Dikla's user profile also contains a photo. Still, Dikla orients to the fact that this is her first interaction with Hadar in the WhatsApp "realm" by explicitly introducing herself as the dialogue-initiator.

Hadar's response (message 2) fully reciprocates Dikla's opening: it is initiated by a positively marked greeting (this time a reduplicated 'hi hi') and an answer to – and the return of – the personal state question. Notice, however, that Hadar also moves on to initiate topic talk by anticipating Dikla's first action (letting her know that they are paired up for an upcoming contest). As recipient, then, Hadar can first occupy the "anchor position" (Schegloff 1986) and introduce the initial topic without having to shorten the opening with a preemptive move (in this case, not returning a personal state question), as she would have to do in ordinary conversation. This is possible because openings in WhatsApp can be – and typically are, in fact – implemented by a single message(-succession) rather than by a message-exchange that is incrementally built by both parties.

6.2 Topic-initial openings

Greeting-initiated openings occur most frequently when new topics or courses of action are introduced.[9] Unlike other framing devices that can be used to introduce a new topic into an already open span (Virtanen et al. 2021), greetings are strongly disjunctive and serve to mark the message not as continuing a previous interaction, but as opening a new one. The next subsections examine cases in which greeting-initiated openings are exchanged, cases in which a first opening is not reciprocated, and greeting-initiated messages in response position that do not reciprocate a first opening.

Reciprocated openings

Exchanges of greeting-initiated openings are infrequent: in only 13 cases (out of 48) is a first greeting reciprocated. Two features appear to enhance the response relevance of the initial opening in these cases: (i) its sequential individuation and (ii) its elaborate and personalised design. Consider, for instance, the next initiation of dialogue between Michal and Alon (Extract 6):

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Extract 6 (HebWA030)

1	Mi	11:39:27	**dear Alon**	**אלון היקר**
2	Mi	11:39:29	**greetings**	**שלום רב**
3	Al	12:20:08	**dear Michal**	**מיכל היקרה**
4	Al	12:20:11	**greetings(f.)**	**שלומה רבה**
5	Mi	12:27:03	I wanted to ask	רציתי לשאול
6	Mi	12:27:21	If you can estimate when your notes in algo and probability will be final in the drive	אם אתה יודע להעריך מתי הסיכומים שלך באלגו והסתברות יהיו הסופיים בדרייב
7	Mi	12:27:28	because I want to print them	כי אני רוצה להדפיס אותם

Michal jokingly deploys the opening of a formal letter: she begins by formally addressing Alon and places the greeting "beneath" it (messages 1–2). This succession of messages is not immediately followed by introduction of the interactional "business" and thus constitutes the only relevant action to be responded to. Alon's response, which comes 40 minutes later, presents full reciprocation of the opening and displays acknowledgment of Michal's playful intention by returning a "female" form greeting. Only after the opening is reciprocated does Michal move on to introduce her request to Alon (messages 3–4).

The individuated opening appears to be the only type of opening that warrants the description of "availability check" (cf. Meredith 2014; see above 2.2.). Indeed, the initial message does nothing more than opening the channel and inviting the other party to confirm their availability for interaction. While individuated openings serve as a tacit means to check availability, this can also be accomplished with explicit questions (e.g., 'are you there?', 'do you have a minute?').[10] The difference between these two practices seems to lie in their projection: while explicit availability checks are designed to secure a focused interaction, individuated greeting-initiated openings can also be used to set the appropriate conditions for further delayed action (e.g., a dispreferred first-pair part, as in Extract 6) or to initiate an interaction, of any length and pace, that is not task-oriented but intended for pure socialising.[11]

The individuation of the initial opening, i.e., its proposal as the only relevant action, most strongly mobilises its reciprocation.[12] However, an elaborate and personalised design of the message through which the action of opening is foregrounded seems to also enhance its response relevance. Consider the next dialogue initiation (Extract 7).

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Extract 7 (HebWA065)

1	Di	09:35	**hi! how are you?** **_when_ are you coming this week to the practices?**	**היי! מה שלומך?** **מי את מגיעה השבוע לאימונים?**
2	Ha	09:36	**hi hi, great week. I am good thank God, thanks. How are you?** **I'm coming to double practices on Tuesday and Wednesday.**	**הי הי, שבוע מצוין, שלומי ברוך השם טוב, תודה. איך את?** **מגיעה השבוע לאימון כפול בשלישי ורביעי**
3	Di	09:36	me too:) how *fun*!	גם אני :) איזה יכף!
4	Di	09:36	that's the plan at least	זה התכנון לפחות

The opening message is initiated by a positively marked greeting token ('hi!') followed by a personal state inquiry that includes a second-person index ('how are you'). This elaborate opening is placed on the first line of the message and is thus structurally separated from the subsequent information-seeking question. The response (message 2) addresses each component of the opening, transitioning from a marked greeting to a detailed answer to the personal state inquiry and a returned inquiry. Moreover, following the structure of the initial message, the response to the opening is separated from the response to the first action which appears on the subsequent line.

While responses to greeting-initiated openings can present full reciprocation as in the examples above, they generally do less than the initial opening, either consisting of a minimal greeting or not returning a greeting at all. The next excerpt illustrates the first possibility (Extract 8):

Extract 8 (HebWA065)

1	Di	11:10	**hi _love_**	**היי אהוה**
2	Di	11:10	**love**	**אהובה**
3	Di	11:10	are you at the university today?	את באוניברסיטה היום?
4	Ha	11:11	**hi**	**היי**
5	Ha	11:11	yes	כן
6	Ha	11:11	in about an hour I think	עוד שעה בערך לדעתי
7	Di	11:11	I wanted to suggest that you eat lunch with me ::)	רציתי להציע לך לאכול איתי צהריים ::)

The opening consists of a neutral greeting and an address term (repaired in message 2) and is immediately followed by another message implementing a pre-invitation (Schegloff 2007: 29). Hadar's quick response includes only a neutral greeting before providing a positive "go-ahead" to Dikla's inquiry. Arguably, the response is designed to be concise in such cases because the recipient recognises the immediate relevance of the first action, which trumps the relevance of the preceding action of opening. As seen in the subsequent excerpts, the more pressure to respond the first action exerts, the less relevant a response to the opening becomes.

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Non-reciprocated openings

When a greeting-initiated opening is not individuated, recipients can – and often do – address only the first action or actions that immediately follow. Observably, the perceived urgency of a first action and/or aggregation of actions plays a distinctive role in diminishing the response relevance of the opening. Consider the next excerpt, also from Dikla and Hadar's chat (Extract 9):

Extract 9 (HebWA065)

1	Ha	11:37	**hi love I probably won't be able to come to the debate round in the end**	**הי אהובה אני כנראה לא אוכל להגיע לסיבוב דיבייט בסוף**
2	Ha	11:37	is it too late?	זה מאוחר מידי?
3	Di	11:39	umm I don't think so	אממ נראה לי שלא
4	Di	11:39	one second I'll check	שנייה אבדוק

The opening presents the same structural components as in Extract 8; however, in this case it appears in the same message as the first action – a report on Hadar's probable absence from a debate round to which she was assigned. The report is immediately followed by the question of whether this change of plans comes too late. Dikla's response, two minutes later, addresses only this question. Dikla treats the matter as urgent not only by responding quickly, but also by displaying her immediate consideration of the issue (via the vocalisation *umm*, see Marmorstein 2021), even before a straightforward answer can be provided.

The response relevance of an opening can also be overridden when an aggregation of actions immediately follows the opening. In the next excerpt, Ophir initiates a dialogue in which he asks Alon about transportation to the university (Extract 10):

Extract 10 (HebWA028)

1	Op	20:14:04	**hi Alon. how's it going?**	**הי אלון. מה הולך?**
2	Op	20:14:25	say, the shuttle from the university to Mount Scopus leaves at 12?	תגיד, ההסעה מהאוניברסיטה להר הצופים יוצאת ב-12?
3	Op	20:14:41	and where does it leave from? :)	ומאיפה היא יוצאת? :)
4	Op	20:14:48	[I'm] planning to take it tomorrow to the exam in cognition	מתכנן לקחת אותה מחר לבחינה בקוגניציה
5	Al	20:42:50	there is [one] at 12:15 on regular days, I don't know if there is [a shuttle] tomorrow	יש ב-12:15 ביום רגיל, אני לא יודע אם יש מחר
6	Al	20:43:04	sorry, 11:55	סליחה, 11:55
7	Al	20:43:07	from the main gate	מהשער הראשי

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The opening comes in a separate message and includes, besides a greeting token, an address term and a personal state inquiry. This elaborate opening, however, is immediately followed by three more messages: the first two contain information-seeking questions about the time and place from which the shuttle leaves for campus, and the last message provides the rationale for these questions. Alon's response, almost half an hour later, addresses only the two information-seeking questions. While the matter at hand is not urgent, Ophir's aggregation of questions instantiates a strong, response mobilising type of action (Stivers & Rossano 2010), taking precedence over the opening and ultimately overriding its relevance.

Greeting-initiated openings in response position only

The discussion thus far has focused on responses to initial openings or the lack thereof. However, greeting-initiated responses are not only mobilised by sequentially initial openings, but can also occur independently of them. In the following dialogue initiation, Alon and Michal discuss the time of a planned future meeting (Extract 11).

Extract 11 (HebWA030)

1	Al	21:59:55	sayy	תגידי׳
2	Al	22:00:02	when are we meeting on Sunday?	מתי אנחנו נפגשים בראשון?
3	Mi	22:01:17	**hi!**	**הי׳!**
4	Mi	22:01:28	in the evening?	בערב?
5	Al	22:02:04	didn't we say breakfast?	לא אמרנו ארוחת בוקר?

The dialogue is not initiated with a greeting; rather, Alon uses the attention-getter 'sayy'[13] to frame his question about the timing of the meeting. Michal, on the other hand, initiates her response sequence with a positively marked greeting token ('hi!') and only then moves on to propose an answer to Alon's question. Michal thus does not conform to the expectations set by Alon's initiating sequence, which only made relevant the provision of information. Rather, in using the greeting, she reframes the interaction as not "just business", but as a social encounter in which she participates as an available and involved partner. As such, a greeting can serve as a design feature of the response through which a positive stance toward co-participants is tacitly displayed.

6.3 Topic resuming and action (re-)joining

While greeting-initiated messages are typically deployed at the beginning of sequences that initiate new topics, they can also be used when resuming or rejoining an open line of talk. Specifically, greeting-initiated messages can occur after a delay in response to a pending initial action. In this excerpt of a dyadic chat, Alon asks Ophir for feedback on his solution to an assignment (Extract 12):

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Extract 12 (HebWA028)

	07/12/2018			
1	Al	23:55:42	like I managed to give a counter example in b	כאילו הצלחתי לתת דוגמא נגדית בב'
	08/12/2018			
2	Op	11:44:33	cooll!	מגניבב!
3	Op	11:44:34	I'd love to see :)	אשמח לראות :)
4	Al	12:07:24	maybe I wrote nonsense	אולי חרטטתי
5	Al	12:07:30	like maybe it's not really a tangible example	כאילו זו לא באמת דוגמא מוחשית
6	Al	12:07:32	one second I'll send [it]	שנייה אני אשלח
7	Al	12:09:03	picture of the assignment	תמונה של התרגיל
8	Al	12:09:03	picture of the assignment	תמונה של התרגיל
9	Op	14:10:20	**hi.**	**היי.**
10	Op	14:10:41	not sure if you can define the probability function as one divided by n. because n approaches infinity	לא סגור אם מותר להגדיר את פונקציית ההסתברות כאחד חלקי אן. כי אן שואף לאינסוף
11	Op	14:10:45	so isn't it simply 0..?	אז לא פשוט 0..?
12	Al	14:14:54	umm you're right	אמם צודק
13	Al	14:14:59	so maybe I did write nonsense	אז אולי באמת חרטטתי

The interaction on the previous evening ends with a message in which Alon reports that he has managed to suggest a solution to the assignment. The next morning, the interaction is renewed by Ophir, who offers to review it (messages 2–3). Shortly after, Alon posts two pictures of the assignment; however, Ophir remains silent for two more hours before responding to Alon. When he finally does, he initiates the sequence with a minimal and neutral standalone 'hi', and subsequently provides his feedback. In response (message 11), Alon does not reciprocate the greeting, but responds only to Ophir's feedback.

Considering the preceding context, message 9 does not appear to launch a new course of action, but rather serves as a response to the feedback request – an eagerly awaited response, in all likelihood. The design of the greeting is also markedly different from the design of the first greetings so far illustrated: it lacks any indication of positive stance or enthusiasm and ends with a period. This design shows remarkable similarity to the design of non-initial greetings in co-present encounters which are produced, as observed by Pillet-Shore (2008: 158), "with final (period) TCU-terminal intonation and without sound-stretches, smile voice, increased emphasis/volume or higher pitch". Moreover, as in Extract 12, these greetings are also not reciprocated in co-present encounters.

In ordinary conversation, Pillet-Shore notes that the "final period" design of a greeting displays an orientation toward its recipient as "already greeted" (ibid.). In messaging, however, where an initial display of mutual ratification is not required, a non-sequence-initial greeting is apparently

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used to achieve a different goal. As observed earlier, a greeting in a chat can serve to display *social* availability. When used in non-sequence-initial position, it displays renewed availability and thus proposes a previous lack of availability which led to temporary suspension of the interaction. In using a greeting, a participant can then display recognition of this suspension and thereby account for the delayed response.

Greeting-initiated messages are also used to re-open topics in group chats; however, their work in this setting appears to be somewhat different than in dyads. The next example comes from a group chat of nine friends who had lived together in a volunteering commune and maintained close relationships ever since. The group is very active and regularly maintains multiple lines of talk. The cited excerpt begins with Elia's request for television series recommendations. However, in message 10, Raz uses the misplacement marker 'by the way' to introduce a new topic – a proposal to renew the discussion about the friends' trip to Petra (a tourist site in Jordan). This proposal is addressed by two group members before the discussion returns to the topic of recommended series. Three days later, after the discussion has shifted to the cost of living for backpackers in the Far East, Delila re-opens the discussion regarding the trip to Petra (message 17 in Extract 13):

Extract 13 (HebWA035)

	22/06/18			
1	El	7:09:08	recommendations for shows on Netflix?	המלצות לסדרות בנטפליקס?
2	Ba	7:16:17	Orange is the New Black	כתום זה השחור החדש
3	Ba	7:16:29	I started watching about a week ago	התחלתי לראות לפני שבוע בערך
4	Ba	7:16:34	I'm already on the second season	אני כבר בעונה שנייה
5	Ra	9:19:05	Suits!!!	Suits!!!
6	Ra	9:19:11	Narcos	נרקוס
7	Ra	9:19:31	The *Americans*	האסמדיקאים
8	Ba	9:21:32	Narcos is also cool	נרקוס גם סבבה
9	Ra	9:39:36	Suits is amazing	Suits מדהים
10	Ra	19:01:57	by the way, we spoke theoretically about next year all of the commune will be in Petra!!!	אגב, דיברנו תיאורטית על זה ששנה הבאה כל הקומונה בפטרה!!!
11	Ga	20:16:20	I am theoretically still for it	אני תיאורטית עדיין בעד
12	El	20:36:54	let's do it	יאלה
3	Ga	21:19:46	The end of the fucking world something like that a great series on Netflix	The end of the fucking world משהו כזה סדרה מעולה בנטפליקס

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14	Ga	21:20:05	and of course Black Mirror	וכמובן מראה שחורה
	25/06/18			
25 messages not presented				
15	El	5:53:51	that's crazy in three months in the east you barely reach that hhh	זה משוגע בחצי שנה במזרח אתה בקושי מגיע לזה חחח
16	Ga	7:59:29	actually when my sister lived in Ecuador they saved a lot hh	דווקא כשאחותי גרה באקוודור הם חסכו מלא חח
17	De	20:54:15	**hi hi I suddenly remembered that I never responded to the Petra issue that was raised here not long ago** **let's actually make that happen!**	**היי היי פתאום נזכרתי על זה שלא הגבתי לעניין הפטרה שעלה פה לא מזמן** **בואו באמת נגרום לזה לקרות!**
18	El	20:56:27	it could be really fun	זה יכול להיות כיף חיים

Delila initiates her message with the reduplicated token 'hi hi' and explicitly refers to her failure to respond to the "Petra issue". Evidently, in the framework of a group chat, there is no pressing obligation for Delila to respond, since the proposal to re-discuss the trip to Petra was issued to the group as a whole (cf. Koivisto, this volume). In this case, the greeting is not used to reactivate the dialogue and account for a delay as it does in the dyad in Extract 12); rather, initiating her message with a greeting (a positively marked one, unlike the neutral token in Extract 12), Delila accomplishes two goals: she flags her presence in a dialogue from which she was previously absent, and additionally constructs her contribution not as contextually misplaced or misfitted, but as continued participation in an open line of talk. The use of greetings in the re-opening position is thus sensitive to the overall participation framework of the chat. What is common to both dyads and groups is the employment of the greeting as a token of availability in order to account for a prior withdrawal from active participation.

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7 Discussion and conclusions

The chat environment enables – and indeed fosters – an open state of talk in which official openings are not necessary for the establishing of contact. The greeting-initiated opening is accordingly not a prescripted routine but rather a design choice. Participants who choose to frame new interactional spans with a greeting orient toward traditional norms of social conduct where engagement with another party is contingent upon social ratification. Given the common alternative of launching a messaging span immediately with the interactional "business", greeting-initiated openings become an overt index of participants' concern with the relational framework in which the interaction is embedded.

Compared to other sequence-initiating devices such as pre-action framing and attention-getters, greetings are the most disjunctive device that constructs a subsequent span as a separate and discrete unit. Interestingly, the deployment of this "heavier" device does not correlate with longer lapses in chat activity. A close examination of the intervals between all 254 coded openings and their preceding messages (which can be retroactively identified as ending the prior sequence) reveals extreme variation for each practice, ranging from a few seconds to several weeks from ending to initiating a new span. Observably, the preference for a particular opening practice is not exclusively or directly linked to time elapsed since the last interaction (cf. König 2015). Moreover, it must be acknowledged that even while a chat is inactive, the interaction can still be maintained in other platforms or settings. This can also affect participants' perception of the distance between their prior and current interactions and project on their preference to treat the interaction as a new encounter or as the continuation of a previous one (see note 4).

Analysis reveals that greeting-initiated openings in messaging operate differently than greeting exchanges in ordinary conversation. First, a single opening message(-succession) can contain a greeting, a term of address, and a personal state inquiry – a sequence of actions that in ordinary conversation is incrementally accomplished by a number of reciprocated turns (Schegloff 1986). Moreover, topic talk can be launched immediately after the initial opening, often in the very same message. This reflects the different organisation of messaging as a non-synchronous system of communication that allows for the compression of several actions into a single message(-succession) (Hutchby & Tanna 2008; König 2019).

Second, it is observed that the recipients of greeting-initiated openings generally do less than the dialogue initiators: in most cases, they do not reciprocate the greeting, and when they do, they typically use a minimal greeting. To increase the response relevance of their openings, dialogue initiators must individuate the opening – and thus delay topic talk to a later time – or design the opening in a more elaborate and personalised fashion, such as to foreground the action of opening. However, these mobilising methods are not frequently employed. Far more common are cases in which the design is minimal and the greeting is pushed to the background of a

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larger message. Typically, then, both dialogue initiators and their recipients do not treat openings as a paired action that ought to be co-accomplished (sequentially or even simultaneously, see above 2.1.). Instead, openings in most cases become a design feature of the message that constructs the upcoming span as a social encounter and displays participants' stance toward each other. Indeed, as a framing device, greetings can be used as responses independently of their occurrence in the initiating message. They serve recipients to re-frame the interaction as a welcomed social encounter in which they act as involved participants.

Minimal (greeting-only) openings can also be used to (re-)join an open interactional span, specifically to frame a message that responds to an initiated and still-pending topic or course of action. In such cases, the association of greeting with social availability – indeed, the indexical value of the greeting as a display of availability – can be mobilised to account for a delay in response, which is thus attributed to prior unavailability. In group chats, those joining later on in an open line of talk can use greetings to flag their presence in a discussion from which they were previously absent. Deploying greetings to tacitly account for delay or absence suggests that participants in a chat do not simply drop in and out of the interaction as is generally assumed for an "incipient state of talk" (cf. Berger et al. 2016) but can choose to hold themselves accountable for disengaging from the channel of interaction.

The distribution of greeting-initiated openings across dyadic and group chats reveals several differences between the two. First, greeting-initiated openings are far less frequent in groups and are always minimally designed.[14] Second, specific greetings (e.g., 'good morning') are preferred to generic salutations (e.g., 'hi') in groups; specific greetings propose a different type of framing than a generic 'hi', since they indicate the specific time at which the message was produced. This form of anchoring seems to be especially useful in a multi-party group chat where participants may not share the same time zone (as is the case for some members of the studied friends' group) or when participants are concerned with invoking a context that is shared by all (e.g., *shavua tov*, lit. '[may you have] a good week'). Finally, the data featured only one case in which a greeting was reciprocated in a group. The return of a greeting in this case can be ascribed to the fact that the recipient was specifically addressed (in a subsequent message) by the dialogue initiator. Otherwise, where dialogue is conducted in a one-to-many mode, a mutual indexing of social ratification and availability is apparently not expected.

The analysis presented in this chapter was based on data from chats between close acquaintances. In using a greeting-initiated opening, participants present themselves as mindful of the relational aspects of the interaction and make publicly apparent that they are open to interaction. Given their association with availability, greetings can also serve to account for temporary unavailability or absence. These relational tasks extend from ordinary conversation; however, their indexical value is recalibrated and heightened in an environment where they constitute a marked choice vis-à-vis engaging exclusively in topic talk. Arguably, this choice is also affected by

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local contingencies, such as the particular task at hand, and more enduring aspects of the interaction, such as power relations or social distance between participants. The interplay between these and the general interactional patterns observed in this analysis awaits further investigation.

Notes

1 The term 'non-synchronous' is used rather literally to describe all forms of digitally mediated communication that do not take place in a single, shared time frame as in oral conversation. This description includes both asynchronous and quasi-synchronous interaction.

2 This distinction is supported by the vernacular use of 'chat' in Hebrew, mostly not as a descriptor of action, but as a name for the location or platform in which the interaction takes place (e.g., 'in the chat').

3 Following Berger et al. (2016), Goffman's description of an 'open state of talk' is preferred to a 'continuous state of incipient talk' given the association of the latter with the notion of *beginning* rather than with the notion of *potential* (for talk).

4 The term 'increment' is used in its basic sense (rather than in the more technical sense it has acquired in CA, e.g., Ford, Fox & Thompson 2002) to refer to a message added to a previous message(-succession) by the same user.

5 References are made to the serial number of each chat in the HebWA corpus. The chats were exported as text files, which are reproduced in each table. Each message is presented on a separate line in the table in the exact Hebrew original and in the English translation. Typos are indicated in italics. The focal point of analysis is marked in bold. Timestamps are provided for the time of day, recording up to a centisecond or millisecond measurement of message reception time (as in the extracted chat file).

6 For instance, a messaging sequence can continue a telephone conversation, as reported by the participants in the next excerpt. After leaving a bar and realising he had forgotten to pay, Alon called Ophir, who was still present there, and asked him to cover his share. Ophir continues this conversation in WhatsApp in order to confirm Alon's order. The beginning of this sequence is entirely abrupt and can only be interpreted with reference to the larger communicative context in which it takes place:

1	Op	22:42:20	a vegan [dish] in jar?	טבעונית בצנצנת?
2	Op	22:42:25	and half-pint Goldstar?	ושליש גולדסטאר?
3	Al	22:42:30	yeahh exactly	כעע בדיוק
4	Op	22:42:35	🤦	🤦

7 This category refers to voice messages that initiated interaction, which were inaccessible to the researcher.

8 All three locations constitute the beginning of an interactional span, but differ in their more global or local scope.

9 'New topics' does not only refer to mentions of brand-new issues, but also to the further development of previous topics that are formally constructed not as continuing previous discussion, but as individual offshoots.

10 The studied sample did not feature such questions; however, these were observed in the larger corpus.

11 Participants appear to orient differently to these two trajectories. Thus, unanswered individuated openings that are subsequently followed by a first action suggest that the opening was used as a 'pre-business' phase, possibly also recognised as such by the recipient, who declined to participate in such a phase.

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12 König (2015) presents similar cases in German where an individuated opening is reciprocated. However, these cases are rare in her data as well (p.c.).
13 The extended writing of 'sayy' is not especially marked for this participant; see (3).
14 Greeting-initiated openings were found to constitute approximately 1.6% of all messages in dyadic chats as opposed to 0.9% in group chats, a difference proven statistically significant in a chi-square test ($p<0.05$).

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Proposing joint activities in WhatsApp group messaging

Notes on action formation, action ascription and response relevance

Abstract

This article discusses action formation and ascription in Finnish mobile group messaging. It focuses on specific "first actions" that propose future joint activities: one-off invitations and inquiry-like proposals. It examines the issues of response relevance associated with these actions in the context of group messaging. I argue that although the mere existence of a large group of recipients may relax the preference for accepting responses or for responding at all, the turn design of the first actions also has a great impact on how strongly relevant the committing responses become. One-off invitations are typically formulated as interrogatives in the conditional mood or as requests for sign-ups for an event. They are followed by committing responses or accounts for inability to attend. In contrast, the declarative format is associated with events the realisation of which is not dependent on the participation of the group members, which in turn creates less pressure to respond. The proposals for joint activity discussed in the chapter are "inquiry-like", i.e., they are designed to inquire possibilities to meet based on the basis of existing, similar plans between the proposer and the recipients (i.e., to have lunch together). Accordingly, recipients only post reports of aligning plans and no accounts for not being able to come are offered. In these cases, missing responses cannot be considered as officially absent. The article ends with observations regarding the routinisation of recurring proposals and the role of group-specific interactional history in action formation.

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1 Introduction

A central concern in Conversation Analysis (CA) is how speakers formulate social actions and recipients recognise them – or, how actions are ascribed to certain turns-at-talk (see Schegloff 2007: xiv; Heritage 2012: 2–3; Levinson 2013; Couper-Kuhlen & Selting 2018: 210–311; Depperman & Haugh 2021). In recent years, the knowledge on both initiative and responsive actions in spoken interaction has increased significantly. One especially well-researched action type is directive-commissive actions (Couper-Kuhlen 2014), such as requests or the imperatively-formatted turns and the actions that they accomplish (e.g., Heinemann 2006; Curl & Drew 2008; Drew & Couper-Kuhlen 2014; Sorjonen, Raevaara & Couper-Kuhlen 2017; Rossi 2015). Interest in offers and proposals is also growing (e.g., Asmuß & Oshima 2012; Curl 2006; Stevanovic 2012, 2013; Stevanovic & Peräkylä 2012; Stivers & Sidnell 2016; Thompson, Fox & Raymond 2021). However, less is known about initiating actions and how they are responded to in digital interaction. This chapter explores questions of action formation and action ascription in Finnish mobile group messaging (WhatsApp) on smartphones and focuses on invitations and proposals.[1] The motivation for choosing these data was the fact that instant messaging has become a pervasive way of communicating daily business, not only between individuals, but also between groups of different sizes. For a hobby group or a group of friends, a WhatsApp group may be the primary channel for making proposals and organising shared activities. It has also been claimed that proposals are harder to find than other "recruitment actions" in spoken interaction (Stivers & Sidnell 2016: 148–149). Thus, it is important to start mapping out recurring, commonplace conversational actions and their core features as they occur within the limitations and affordances of various digital platforms (see also König, this volume).

I treat invitations, proposals for joint activities and related actions as belonging to same "family of directive-commissive actions" (Couper-Kuhlen 2014: 624; see also Thompson et al. 2021)[2]. The central feature that all directive-commissive actions have in common is that the speaker aims to realise a future event or action. Furthermore, for both proposals and invitations, it is relevant that the recipient commits to the action/event as an active participant (cf. Couper-Kuhlen 2014: 629; see also Stevanovic & Peräkylä 2012). However, whereas proposals are designed to benefit both parties, invitations have been seen as a subcategory for offers in the sense that they mostly benefit the recipient (Couper-Kuhlen 2014: 638, footnote 15; Schegloff 2007: 35). In the analysis, I bring together two maximally different kinds of actions within this domain: invitations to one-off events and proposals to attend a recurring group-specific activity. These are different in terms of the linguistic and multimodal resources used and adapted for action formation within the affordances of digital interaction. I also juxtapose *invitations* and *proposals* and the formats that they employ to reveal some complexities in action formation, action ascription and response mobilisation.

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Next, I examine invitations and proposals for shared activity by taking previous research on these in spoken interaction as my starting point. However, I also take into account the restrictions and benefits of the digital platform (Giles et al. 2015; Meredith 2019), especially in the context of group messaging (see also Virtanen, Vepsäläinen & Koivisto 2021). I show that the formulation of the actions, the meanings ascribed to these actions, and their sequential trajectories are closely connected to the fact that they are targeted at a group rather than an individual. More specifically, I examine the extent to which these actions mobilise responses. Although invitations and proposals are clearly "first" actions and "canonical action types" that make a second pair part of a specific kind relevant (i.e., acceptance/commitment, or rejection) (see Stivers & Rossano 2010: 5), in group messaging they do not mobilise responses from all participants, and this is recurrent and often unproblematic. That is, group members are not necessarily accountable for producing a response (cf. Stivers & Rossano 2010). I investigate the reasons for this. In addition, I describe my initial observations of how action formation is affected by group-specific shared knowledge and interactional history (see Deppermann 2018), the origins of which lie in the "offline" world but are manifested online. The focus will be on the linguistic routinisation and minimisation of recurrent proposals.

More specifically, my research questions are:

- How are invitations and proposals for joint activities formulated and interpreted in WhatsApp group messaging? How do the participants employ the advantages of the medium to accomplish these actions?
- What accounts for low response relevance, given that the abovementioned actions typically receive responses from only a few group members?
- What is the role of interactional history and group-specific common ground in the design of these actions?

The article is organised as follows. I start by providing the background to action sequences in digital interaction and presenting my data. The analysis is divided into three sections: I first focus on invitations and their subtypes (Section 4.1), and then proposals (or inquiries) for joint activities (Section 4.2). The article ends with some initial reflections on how the formulation of recurrent actions within the same group of people may become routinised and minimised over time (Section 4.3). Throughout the article, I address the limits of labelling an action in a message as a specific action and attempt to determine what the decisive criteria could be.

2 Preliminaries: Instant group messaging and sequences of action

Methodologically, the starting point for this article is that instant messaging in WhatsApp is in many ways "conversation-like" and thus analysable from the CA perspective and using CA methods. For example, it can often be

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characterised as quasi-synchronous (cf. chat): the parties may be active at the same time and the tempo of the conversation may be fast, even though longer gaps and silences may occur for various reasons. Typically, one message in WhatsApp chat consists of one TCU (turn-constructional unit), which is similar to a spoken interaction (König 2019). This means that longer "turns" may also be divided into several, one-TCU-long messages (see, e.g., Meredith 2019: 243–244; Extract 13 in this chapter and Introduction in this volume), which may reflect the close-to-synchronous planning and posting of messaging.

When applying CA to instant messaging, it is important that individual messages can be analysed as turns that form sequences of action. To quote Meredith & Stokoe (2014: 202; see also Virtanen & Kääntä 2018), "participants in both online and spoken interaction are oriented to the same basic contingencies of maintaining intersubjectivity and building sequentially organised courses of action". However, the way in which sequences are organised – especially in group messaging – may differ from spoken interaction. A well-known phenomenon is *disrupted adjacency* (e.g., Garcia & Jacobs 1999): sequentially connected messages (e.g., a question and an answer) are not necessarily posted adjacently. This is due to the fact that individuals may end up posting their messages at the same time (even though the writing process is visible in the application). WhatsApp affords a resource for avoiding confusion in such situations, i.e., quoting the targeted message; also using lexical tying devices (see, e.g., Virtanen et al. 2021). However, the content of the messages is often enough to disambiguate the targeted earlier message. Consider the following extract in which Kalevi inquires whether anyone in the group is planning to have lunch at a place called Kulma:

Extract 1 (Amateur theatre)

1	30.10.2018 17.06.53	Kalevi	Onko joku tulossa kulmalle?	*Is someone coming to kulma?*
2	30.10.2018 17.13.06	Satu	🕵 As usual	🕵 *As usual ((in English))*
3	30.10.2018 17.17.59	Aleksi	Varoitan jo nyt et taidan tulla 15–30min myöhässä treeneihin! Pahoittelut tästä	*Just to warn you already that I'll probably be 15–30 min late to rehearsal! Sorry about this*
4	30.10.2018 17.18.41	Kalevi	Jei! Oon ehkä puolelta siellä	*Yey! I'll probably be there at half past*

Whereas in message 2, Satu provides a clear second pair part to the inquiry, the third message by Aleksi is not part of the topic nor sequence. It is an announcement labelled as a "warning" (see Virtanen et al. 2021: 6) of his being late for the rehearsal that the group is attending the same evening. In the flow of messages, this message is not connected to the previous one, nor does it generate more talk on the topic; it remains sequentially isolated. In the next message in the feed, Aleksi provides a third position response

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to Satu's answer in message 2. It is unproblematically understood as such because message 4 ('Yey! I'll probably be there at half past') would not be an appropriate response to message 3. Thus, the message offers an example of disrupted adjacency, and in this case, is not even marked as non-adjacently placed. These kinds of concurrent sequences and topics do not pose a problem for the group interaction but are a typical feature for which the participants have the resources to deal with (see Virtanen et al. 2021).

Indeed, sequential examination of online interaction has typically focused on disrupted adjacency or "false" adjacency pairs, and the reasons why these occur and how they are managed (see Garcia & Jakobs 1999, 1998; see Meredith 2019 for an overview). In a group context, adjacency pairs may be organised so that after the sequence-initial action targeted at all the group members, several second pair parts are posted consecutively. Extract 2 provides an example.

Extract 2 (Medical students)

1	8.1.2018 15.35	Viivi	Heei Disney-ihmiset! Puhuttiin joidenkin kanssa että nyt tammikuussa ois kiva vielä viettää leffailtaa, ja alustavasti ois ehdotettu ens ti 15.1., kuinka monelle tää ois ok? 😁	*Heey Disney-people! Some of us were saying it'd be nice to have one more movie night in January, and a tentative suggestion is next Tues. 15.1., how many of you could make it?* 😁
2	8.1.2018 15.42	Natalia	👌	👌
3	8.1.2018 15.54	Katja	👌	👌
4	8.1.2018 15.56	Hanna	👌	👌
5	8.1.2018 20.46	Suvi	👌	👌
6	8.1.2018 20.47	Minna	Mun pitää viel tarkistaa mut alustava joo! 😍	*I still have to check but a tentative yes!* 😍
7	8.1.2018 21.05	Lotta	Pääsen kuudelt töistä mut ehdottomasti sen jälkeen ☺	*I get off work at six but definitely after that* ☺

Here, Viivi asks her group members to inform her whether they can attend a movie night on a specific date. The next four messages are positive and minimal (emoji only) responses to the inquiry. However, adjacent messages 3–5 are not sequentially related: they do not respond to the just-prior message in the feed, but are produced in the same sequential slot, as second pair parts (although messages 3–5 pick up the answer strategy employed in Natalia's message). This particular pattern of (disrupted) adjacency is typical of the instances discussed in this article. However, this study does not concentrate on issues of coherence in online interaction or matters of sequence organisation as such (e.g., Herring 1999; Berglund 2009); it looks at the ways in which certain first actions are designed and how their design features mobilise specific types of next actions.

Whereas in spoken interaction, first action such as invitations, requests for action, requests for information, and offers "routinely and reliably receive

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response" (Stivers & Rossano 2010: 5), in text-mediated group interaction, the issue of sequential implicativeness in more complex. It could be argued that the mere fact that the responsibility to respond is distributed to a group of recipients who are not physically co-present means that the response relevance for a single recipient within the group is lower; all the groups in the data feature at least nine members (see the following section for details). Moreover, the typical resources for response mobilisation in face-to-face interaction, namely prosody and gaze, are not available (see Stivers & Rossano 2010). However, some turn-design features and aspects of group-specific conventions also lower the expectations of responding; these features and conventions are examined in detail in the analytic sections. I thus examine sequences of action from an *action* point of view, i.e., what kind of next action a first pair part makes relevant and what kind of second actions it routinely receives in a group messaging context.

3 Data and method

The data for the study consist of the logfile data[3] of three different Finnish WhatsApp group chats among young adults:

1) Amateur theatre (13 members: 3 directors and 10 actors, aged 20–29), 2964 messages, collected in 2018–2019), 36 cases of invitations / proposals for joint activities
2) Medical students (9 members, aged 26–28), 318 messages, collected in 2018–2019, 5 cases of invitations / proposals for joint activities
3) Twenty-something friends (12 members, aged 20–24), 500 messages, collected in 2016–2018: 3 cases of invitations / proposals for joint activities

The first group chat involves both institutional, for example, hobby-related talk, and casual interaction such as invitations, proposals, making plans, news announcements, bantering, and sharing funny memes, videos, and pictures. Datasets 2 and 3 involve interaction between groups of friends, unrelated to any hobby or other institutional setting. All the data has been anonymised, and I obtained informed consent from all the participants.

The analysis is based on 44 sequences that start with a first action identified as an invitation or a proposal/inquiry regarding a joint activity. To ensure comparability across the data, I included first actions in accordance with the criteria presented in the study by Routarinne & Tainio (2018: 152) on invitations in Finnish telephone conversations: each case involves information on the nature of the planned event or activity and suggests a place and time (or the information is available in the context). The sequences are clearly sectioned off from the surrounding prior interaction; they have a clear, topically disjunctive beginning and ending, although third position responses do not necessarily occur. Most of the sequences originate from the Amateur theatre data (36/44 cases), which is clearly the longest logfile

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in the database as well as a rich source of both institutional interaction (e.g., directors informing and instructing the actors) and casual interaction among the whole group (also arranging activities outside rehearsals, sharing pictures, memes, etc.) (see Virtanen et al. 2021 for more specific information on these data). It should be noted that clear differences between invitations and proposals are not easy or even relevant to make; however, as already pointed out, the analytical focus is on the "maximally different" cases, i.e., the cases in which the proposed event/activity involves a clear inviter and only happens once (one-off invitations, Section 4.1) and in which the proposed activity is recurrent and not specifically organised by anyone (inquiry-like proposals, Section 4.2). Comparison of these subgroups reveals differences in the composition of the messages (multiunit vs single unit), differences in the syntactic formats employed, and the response relevance issues that each type of first action sets in motion.

The method of analysis is Conversation Analysis. The aim was to apply CA methods in digital interaction, so that the specifics – the restrictions and affordances – of the digital platform under analysis were taken into account (see Koivisto et al., in this volume; Giles et al. 2015; Meredith 2019 for a more specific description of the analytical approach).

4 Analysis

4.1 One-off invitations

According to Couper-Kuhlen (2014), invitations are a part of directive-commissive actions; closely related to proposals, suggestions and offers. Whereas Couper-Kuhlen (2014: 638, fn 15; see also Schegloff 2007: 35) categorises invitations as belonging to *offers*, Routarinne and Tainio (2018: 149; see also references therein) define an invitation as "a *request* from the inviter to the invitee to spend time together for the participants' mutual benefit". Making clear distinctions within this "family of actions" (Couper-Kuhlen 2014: 624) or "set of action types" (Schegloff 2007: 34–35) may thus be problematic. In their study of Finnish invitations, Routarinne and Tainio (2018: 152) focus on "genuine" invitations that involve the time and place of the planned event and the nature of the planned event or activity, and exclude invitations that lack these features (unless they can be inferred from the context). As already pointed out in the Data and method section, these features were decisive when I was compiling the collection of invitations and cases that I labelled as proposals for joint activities in my data. Invitations, however, also feature a clear inviter, who makes the event or activity available to the group members. The actions labelled here as invitations may thus resemble *offers,* whereas those labelled proposals are closer to *inquiries* or *requests* to spend time together (see also Section 4.2).

Routarinne and Tainio (2018) studied the linguistic formulation of Finnish invitations in telephone conversations. According to them (2018: 150), possible *social action formats* (Couper-Kuhlen 2014) for Finnish invitations include (1) an announcement constructed as a declarative

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sentence, (2) an inquiry formed as a polar question, and (3) a request formed as an imperative clause. These characterisations reflect the multi-layered or "double barrelled" nature of invitations, i.e., questions or announcements serve as formats for performing other actions (Schegloff 2007: 9, 75–76; Couper-Kuhlen & Selting 2018: 213). In Finnish telephone conversations, the syntactic format is strongly connected to whether the invitation is sequentially and topically "new" (declaratives) or whether it is re-issued (imperatives and interrogatives) (Routarinne & Tainio 2018: 153; Sacks 1992, lecture 6, Spring 1972). In my data, interrogative is the most typical format, even though declaratives also occur (see Extract 6). Below I first analyse invitations that include an interrogative and then give an example of a declaratively formatted invitation and consider their differences in terms of response relevance.

In Extract 3, Ilona invites the group members for a get-together on Saturday evening (message 1, posted on Monday). This is a prime example of a "genuine" invitation: it includes the time (Saturday), place (the inviter's home) and a description of the nature of the planned event (get-together).

Extract 3 (Amateur theatre)

1	28.1.2019 20.04.43	Ilona	Mitä teette lauantaina ♥ kiinnostaisko illanistujaiset ♥♥ voisin houstaa ☺ saunavuorot on jo viety :(	*What are you doing on Saturday ♥ would you be interested in a get-together ♥♥ I could host ☺ the sauna's already taken :(*
2	28.1.2019 20.08.44	Satu	Kinky boots kutsuu taas, eli mä en oikein ehdi sit enää sen jälkeen	*[Name of play] calls again, so I can't really make it after that anymore*
3	28.1.2019 20.11.10	Riina	Oi joo, kiinnostais! Oon opinnoissa kiinni viiteen, mutta sen jälkeen ☺	*Oh yes, I would! I'm studying until five, but after that ☺*
4	28.1.2019 20.18.03	Kalevi	Eeeeeeeei muistaakseni mitään, kelpais kyl	*Noooothing if I remember right, would be nice*
5	28.1.2019 20.28.11	Niklas	Oi olis tosi jees, mulla on vapaata siinä vielä! ☺	*Oh, would be really nice, I'm still free that day! ☺*
6	28.1.2019 20.29.13	Karo	Joo kuulostaa hyvältä!	*Yeah, sounds good!*
7	28.1.2019 20.42.21	Ella	Vois kyllä ☺	*I might ((be interested/ come)) ☺*
8	28.1.2019 21.37.07	Ilona	Ihanaa ☺♥♥	*Wonderful ☺♥♥*

According to previous research on spoken interaction, invitations are complex activities that often take multiple turns and sequences instead of a single adjacency pair (Routarinne & Tainio 2018: 150). This is also partly true in Extract 1. That is, even though the invitation is presented as one message, it consists of several parts – TCUs. The message begins with a pre-invitation ('What are you doing on Saturday', see Schegloff 2007: 29–34), which is followed by the actual invitation within the same message

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('would you be interested in a get-together')[4]. That is, Ilona's message does not enable responses to the pre-invitation. After the actual invitation, she gives additional details within the same message: an explicit offer to act as a host, and a qualification of a sort (not being able to book the sauna). The first inquiry and the declaratively formatted offer to host the event are both delivered in the conditional mood, a distinctive feature of Finnish invitations and proposals (Routarinne & Tainio 2018: 160; see also Stevanovic & Peräkylä 2012: 306). Interestingly, the TCUs in the multiunit message do not end with punctuation marks; instead, the TCUs are separated by heart emojis and a smiling face with heart-eyes. The emojis construct to tone of the message and its parts enthusiastic and emotional, thus making similarly formatted responses relevant (see also König, this volume).

Within the next 40 minutes, Ilona receives six answers, one of which is an account for not being able to come (Satu in message 2, see Drew 1984) and five are acceptances or displays of interest. All except message 6 are in the conditional mood, which is in line with the invitation. After message 7, the invitees post no more messages. Interestingly, Ilona does not post her third position response until one hour after the last response ('Wonderful 😍❤❤'), as if waiting for more responses until that point. The outcome of the invitation is that six out of twelve group members (invitees) respond and six do not react at all. This does not seem to pose a problem for communication, that is, the missing responses are not insisted on, nor is the original invitation reformulated (cf. Davidson 1984).

In another type of invitation, the writer mentions an event that has already been discussed in the offline world with some of the group members and is then reactivated or announced to the rest of the group via WhatsApp. These cases resemble invitations described by Routarinne and Tainio (2018: 153) in which the inviter comes back to a plan that has already been tentatively discussed to finalise it in terms of date, place, and participants (*re-issued invitations*). However, instead of having to call or text each invitee separately, group messaging enables simple "polls", asking how many of the group members can/could come. Extract 4 (previously Extract 2) comes from the medical students' data, featuring nine female friends who socialise outside their studies. In an opening turn 1, Viivi posts a multiunit invitation that builds on previously made tentative plans with some of the group members (*Puhuttiin joidenkin kanssa* 'some of us were saying'). In this case, the components of the message are separated by commas, and the whole message ends with a question mark and a "grinning face with smiling eyes", setting a cheerful tone to the message.

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Extract 4 (Medical students)

1	8.1.2018 15.35	Viivi	Heei Disney-ihmiset! Puhuttiin joidenkin kanssa että nyt tammikuussa ois kiva vielä viettää leffailtaa, ja alustavasti ois ehdotettu ens ti 15.1., kuinka monelle tää ois ok? 😀	*Heey Disney people! Some of us were saying it'd be nice to have one more movie night in January, and a tentative suggestion is next Tues. 15.1., how many of you could make it?* 😀
2	8.1.2018 15.42	Natalia	🙋	🙋
3	8.1.2018 15.54	Katja	🙋	🙋
4	8.1.2018 15.56	Hanna	🙋	🙋
5	8.1.2018 20.46	Suvi	🙋	🙋
6	8.1.2018 20.47	Minna	Mun pitää viel tarkistaa mut alustava joo! 😍	*I still have to check but a tentative yes!* 😍
7	8.1.2018 21.05	Lotta	Pääsen kuudelt töistä mut ehdottomasti sen jälkeen ☺	*I get off work at six but definitely after that* ☺
	((Two unrelated messages omitted))			
10	9.1.2019 12.32	Tiia	Pääsen disney-iltaan!	*I can make it to the Disney evening!*
11	9.1.2019 12.46	Viivi	Eli ens ti it is then! Tervetuloa tänne tavarapaljouden keskelle, Ville sanoi lähtevänsä jonnekin meitä karkuun sit muutamaks tunniks 😊	*Next Tues it is then! Welcome to our messy place, Ville said he'd run away for a few hours* 😊
12	9.1.2019 13.14	Natalia	👋	

The first TCU of the message narrows down the invitees within the group: the Disney people. To the analyst, however, it is not clear how many of the group members identify themselves as members of this subgroup (or whether it includes everyone). The greeting word (see Marmorstein, this volume) and the address terms are followed by two components that give information on the previously made tentative plans of a movie night in January, and also a specific date. After this, Viivi does the "poll", asking how many could attend. This obviously makes positive answers from the targeted recipients relevant. Thus, there is a strong conditional relevance for responses. However, the conditional mood (*ois kiva* 'would ('d) be nice'; *kuinka monelle tää olis ok?* 'how many of you could make it?') is arguably used to express a "still open

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but desirable future" (Routarinne & Tainio 2018: 156; cf. Kauppinen 1998) and thus creates less imposition on the recipients in terms of how strongly they have to commit to the event, although a strong response relevance still remains. And, indeed, positive answers start coming in the form of "person raising hand" emojis – arguably displaying strong commitment as there are no qualifications in the messages (see also König, this volume). The first three come within 25 minutes and the fourth later the same day. Interestingly, the fourth message also reinvokes the topic after hours of silence, and another two responses follow. These two responses involve conditional acceptances of the invitation. One more accepting answer is posted the next day. This time, another unrelated sequence of messages intervenes, which makes an explicit reference to the relevant event ('I can make it to a Disney evening!') in order to make the targeted first pair part specific (see also Virtanen, Vepsäläinen & Koivisto 2021: 12). As in Extract 1, a third-position message is posted to close to the sequence and thus treat the received responses as sufficient.

Extract 5 represents a similar pattern. However, due to contextual factors, its response relevance is lower.

Extract 5 (Amateur theatre)

1	16.2.2019 17.07.44	Satu	Ollaan puhuttu Ilonan kanssa yksistä Kalliossa ysin aikaan - ketkä mukana?	*Ilona and I are thinking of having drinks in Kallio around nine - who's on board?*
2	16.2.2019 17.09.06	Riina	Haluisin, mutten pysty ☹	*I'd like to but I can't* ☹
3	16.2.2019 17.10.59	Julius	Mä voisin tulla!	*I could come!*
4	16.2.2019 17.11.18	Julius	Mie voisin ehkä, oon menossa alkuillaksi kaverin synttäreille mut sen jälkeen vois	*I maybe could, I'm going to a friend's birthday party in the early evening but after that I could*
5	16.2.2019 17.12.34	Ilona	❤☺🍷	
6	16.2.2019 17.18.58	Karo	Sitsaamassa tänään 🔥🎤	*(I am) in a party today* 🔥🎤
7	16.2.2019 17.46.42	Ella	Vietän rauhaisaa koti-iltaa 😁	*I'm having a quiet night in* 😁

Satu's inquiry is also a "genuine" invitation/proposal for joint activity in the sense that it involves a reference to the place (Kallio), time (around nine) and nature of the event (drinks). This time, a specific group member who was involved in the planning of the event, Ilona, is mentioned (see third position turn in message 5). As in Extract 5, an explicit request to sign up is made (*ketkä mukana?* 'who's on board?'). However, in this case, the event is planned for the same evening, which arguably reduces expectations for responses. Five out of twelve respond, and as in the previous case, the invitees either accept the invitation or report their plans for the evening, responses which function as accounts and rejections (Drew 1984). In contrast to the proposals discussed in the next section, the accepting responses are formulated using the modal verb *voida* ('can') in the conditional mood (e.g., 'I could come'), thus construing the decision and the commitment to come as still tentative. It is also noteworthy that the group members merely report

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their other plans or their inability to come instead of evaluating the plan or their ability to attend – or apologising for their inability. Thus, the invitation is treated as casual and low key, available to those who happen to have time and energy that very night (in contrast to Extract 4). Moreover, the invitation concerns a previously planned event with at least one already committed member (as in Extract 5), which makes it less dependent on accepting responses from the rest of the group.

The previous three cases represent clear, response-relevant invitations in terms of their content but also in the sense that the expectations for accepting/committing responses were created through their interrogative form. However, the data also includes invitations in a declarative form. In the study by Routarinne and Tainio (2018), declaratively formatted invitations were the most frequent format in their telephone conversation data. The motivation behind this format was that by reporting an event that is going to take place anyway (e.g., we're having a house-warming party tomorrow), the recipient can also treat is as an announcement. Thus the "(moral) obligation to accept the invitation is less binding". (Routarinne & Tainio 2018: 157; see also Drew 1984: 141–143.) Invitations formulated as announcements also occur in my data. Whereas the previously discussed invitations involving a request to "sign up" for an event seemed to prefer responses from as many group members as possible, the "announcements" are designed to allow non-problematic absence of committing responses. In the next example, a group member – Aino – issues an invitation to join her and some other people in a Christmas Carol event. Like the previous examples, this a real, "genuine" invitation, which announces the place, time and nature of the event in one, multiunit message. Later in the message, Aino uses the word *kutsu* ('invitation') to label the action suggested in her message.

Extract 6 (Amateur theatre)

1	14.12.2018 14.51.24	Aino	Me mennään Elisan ja Sannin kanssa sunnuntaina klo 15 KAUNEIMPIIN JOULULAULUIHIN Tuomiokirkkoon ❤💃🎅👼 saa liittyä seuraan! kutsu meni kans tanssijoille!	*Me, Elisa and Sanni are going to the CHRISTMAS CAROL EVENT in the Cathedral on Sunday at 3 PM* ❤💃🎅👼 *you're welcome to join us! I've also invited the dancers!*
2	14.12.2018 14.54.19	Niklas	Oi vois tulla! 😍	*Oh, I could come!* 😍
3	14.12.2018 14.55.09	Ilona	Eiih parasta 😍😍 mut töissä 😕😭	*Nooo that's the best* 😍😍 *but working* 😕😭
4	14.12.2018 15.09.20	Sakke	Kova! ☺	*Cool!* ☺
5	14.12.2018 15.11.28	Riina	Oijoi! Olis ihanaa, mutta mäkin oon töissä ☹	*Ohh! Would be lovely, but I'm working too* ☹

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In message 1, Aino announces an existing plan of going to a Christmas carol event in a church and then issues an explicit invitation: she writes that the invitees may join her, Elisa and Sanni (*saa liittyä seuraan* 'you're welcome to join us', literally 'Ø is allowed to join'). The first TCU serves as a prelude to the actual invitation, but also informs the group of the fact that the inviters are going anyway – positive responses are not actually needed for the plans to be realised (see also Drew 1984: 140–141). In addition, Aino reports that she has also invited the dancers of the theatre production, which means that a considerably large crowd has received the invitation. Thus, the morphosyntax of the actual invitation (a declarative), the setting of the event (it will happen regardless of whether anyone in the group attends) and the number of invitees seem to affect the way in which the invitation is received by the group members.

Of 12 possible invitees, only four respond. The only accepting response is from Niklas in message 2, though it is presented in conditional mood, thus treating the participation as a possibility, as in the previous example ('Oh I could come! 😍'). Messages 3 and 4 by Ilona and Riina involve response cries (*Oi, oijoi, eiih,* see Goffman 1978) and other appreciations of the planned event ('would be lovely', message 5) and accounts for not being able to attend. They are also accompanied by emojis that on the one hand further intensify the positive affect associated with the event (😍), and on the other hand serve as displays of the negative affect caused by overlapping engagements (😞😷). What is noteworthy is that message 4 by Sakke involves a mere appreciation of the idea (literal translation of *kova* is 'tough' or 'hard', but in this context the tone is clearly positive, thus translated here as "cool"). That is, Sakke seems to treat Aino's message as a piece of news that does not necessarily make an accepting response relevant. In Routarinne and Tainio's (2018) telephone conversation data, declaratives were sometimes treated as announcements with news receipts, which made an explicit invitation relevant (e.g., 'and I would like to invite you there') in the following turn (ibid. 159–160). In this case, however, the fact that the announcement was intended as an invitation is explicated within the same message. Also, Sakke's *Kova!* is a "genuine" appreciation, not a preparatory element for an approval.

The rest of the group, eight members, do not react at all[5]. Thus, the existing responses can be interpreted as coming from people who can at least picture themselves attending the event. Of course, the rest of the group are not necessarily online at the time the invitation is issued; however, the silent group members do not respond later either. In this case then, the first pair part does not set a strong conditional relevance for a response of a specific kind (i.e., second pair part to an invitation), and the non-respondents do not orient towards their lack of commitment as accountable or their responses as "pending" (cf. Virtanen et al. 2021: 7–10 on the linguistic design of pending responses).

In this section I have discussed the design features of WhatsApp invitations, i.e., offers to organise a get-together at a specific point of time, featuring a clear inviter/organiser of an event/activity. We have seen that messages involving an invitation are multiunit wholes, in which the actual invitation may be preceded by a pre-invitation or a description of the

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nature of the event. The focus of the analysis was on the relationship of the (syntactic) design of the first action and the expected responses. Invitations that contained an interrogative made a complying response relevant, whereas invitations that did not could also be treated as mere announcements (cf. also Routarinne & Tainio 2018), which lowered response relevance. Furthermore, interrogatives were connected to events the realisation of which depended on the invitees, whereas declaratives (announcements/reportings) were used when the event would happen anyway, regardless of the invitees. That is, a stronger response relevance held for invitations that involved an interrogative (even though some group members still kept silent – for reasons that were not available to the analyst, e.g., the dynamics of the group).

In the next section, we see that even interrogatives are not always strongly response mobilising if the realisation of the plan does not depend on the recipients. In other words, in these cases, even a no-response situation would not threaten the realisation of the plan/event or the face of the inviter, which relaxes the strong expectation of preferred (accepting) responses or even responses at all (see also Routarinne & Tainio 2018: 157; Drew 1984: 141–143). This means that the proposed activity is typically not contingent on the positive responses of the recipient (cf. Stevanovic & Peräkylä 2012: 308).

4.2 Inquiry-like proposals

According to Thompson, Fox & Raymond (2021: 1), in proposals, a "future or hypothetical activity is being put forth as something the speaker and recipient(s) might do together". In English, proposals are typically accomplished with "first-person plural formats" such as *Let's, Why don't we,* and modal interrogatives and declaratives (Thompson, Fox & Raymond 2021, see also Stivers & Sidnell 2016; Couper-Kuhlen 2014: 639). For Couper-Kuhlen (2014), a proposal (as a technical term) is an action that benefits both parties, the proposer and the recipient; this separates them from offers in which the recipient is the beneficiary of the future action. Requests, on the other hand, are understood as benefiting the speaker, while the recipient is the one who performs the requested activity (Couper-Kuhlen 2014; see also Stivers & Sidnell 2016). The difference between invitations, proposals and requests is not necessarily always clear; recall the definition by Routarinne and Tainio (2018) who consider invitations to be requests to spend time for mutual benefit. For the purposes of this study, I use the concept of *proposal,* in contrast to the previously discussed one-off invitations that featured a clear inviter and were thus offer-like.[6] I also use the term *inquiry* or *inquiry-like proposal* to emphasise the fact that the proposals in the data may be designed as a request for information rather than proposals that make an acceptance of the proposed activity relevant (cf. Stivers & Sidnell 2016; Stevanovic & Peräkylä 2012; Stevanovic 2012).

For this section, I selected a unified subgroup of proposals occurring in the theatre data: proposals to have a late lunch in a student cafeteria before the rehearsal (14 instances, also referred to as "lunch messages" to avoid too hasty a judgement of the action type implemented in the messages). In these cases, the first action requests company for an activity that is not hosted

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or organised by the proposer but is something that (some of) the group members do together recurrently. As in the previous section, the main focus is on the design features of the first action and their sequential implication (i.e., issues of response relevance). Future research could aim for a more comprehensive account of different proposal formats in Finnish WhatsApp chats[7]; here I focus on cases that were recurrent in the current data and highlight the complexities involved in action formation, action ascription and response relevance, especially when contrasted with the previously discussed invitations.

In Finnish, proposals and suggestions[8] centrally figure verb-initial interrogatives/declaratives in the conditional mood, or, alternatively, a *jos* 'if'-prefaced declarative (Hakulinen et al. 2004, § 1659, 1664; see also Tykkyläinen & Laakso 2009; Laury 2012; Routarinne & Tainio 2018: 153; Stevanovic & Peräkylä 2012: 306).[9] I start with a case that looks like a "prototypical" proposal in that it involves an interrogative in the conditional mood; this can be considered a request type (instead of the inquiry type, which will be discussed subsequently) in the subgroup of lunch messages. The name "Kulma" ('Corner') is an abbreviation of the name of the student cafeteria that the group members frequent.

Extract 7 (Amateur theatre)

1	5.12.2018 13.53.11	Karo	Tulisko joku skidisti neljän jälkeen syömään kulmalle? 🤡	*Would anyone want to come to eat at Kulma just after four?* 🤡
2	5.12.2018 14.27.53	Satu	Mä varmaan tuun kyl!	*I'm probably coming!*
3	5.12.2018 14.54.32	Kalevi	Mie oon nyt kulmalla	*I'm at Kulma right now*
4	5.12.2018 16.05.52	Karo	Iha just kulmal!	*Will be at Kulma in a sec!*
5	5.12.2018 16.06.01	Karo	Kuha tältä vastatuulelta pääsen	*As long as this headwind lets me*
6	5.12.2018 16.08.51	Satu	Oon täs pitkissä pöydissä heti kassojen vieres	*I'm at the long tables right after the cash registers*
7	5.12.2018 16.09.15	Karo	Jees!	*Alright!*

Karo's proposal in message 1 is an interrogative clause presented in the conditional mood (*tulisko joku* 'would anyone want to come'). According to Sorjonen, Raevaara and Lappalainen (2009: 109), the conditional mood is used in requests when the action is contingent on the recipient's acceptance. However, whether or not the actualisation of the plan is contingent on the recipient is not clear, i.e., the turn does not give a clear indication of whether or not Karo is going anyway, with or without company. The verb *tulla* ('come') (instead of *lähteä* 'go'), however, indicates that Karo will be in Kulma herself. The proposal/request is targeted at an unspecified 'anyone' (in singular), thus seeking a positive answer from at least one of the group

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members. Interestingly, the message ends with the "monkey covering mouth" emoji which is typically used to index 'I don't believe what I just said' (https://emojipedia.org/speak-no-evil-monkey/), as if the proposal was some sort of imposition on the recipients (i.e., a request that mainly benefits Karo).

However, instead of a request for acceptances or rejections as a response, Karo's turn is treated as an inquiry of existing plans: Satu reports her pre-existing intention of coming in message 2 ('I'm probably coming!'). That is, instead of using the conditional mood (e.g. 'I could come'), she marks her response with an epistemically downgrading adverb *varmaan* ('possibly'), thus something that is dependent on her own plans rather than triggered by Karo's proposal. Kalevi, on the other hand, joins in the conversation an hour after the first pair part, to inform the others that he is at Kulma right now, that is, an hour before Karo's suggested time. Thus, only those who are able to respond positively or who have related plans join in the conversation. No accounts for not being able to come are offered. Thus, although this extract seems to contain a certain kind of misalignment (cf. Couper-Kuhlen 2014: 624–635) between the design of the first action (request format that makes an acceptance in the next turn relevant) and the way in which it is responded to (with a report of the existing plans instead of acceptance), the response design here is actually typical of the collection of lunch messages.

In fact, in the main body of lunch messages, the first action is formulated in a way that it does not directly make *acceptances* relevant; it *inquires about existing plans* (e.g., *Onks joku tulossa kulmalle?* 'Is someone coming to Kulma?', see Extract 8 below). That is, although these proposals *do* involve a description of a future event/activity in which the proposer and the group members could participate together, they are not necessarily presented in the "request format", i.e., they do not involve the conditional mood. Instead, they are formatted as interrogatives in the indicative mood (e.g., 'is anyone going') or as "elliptical" phrases with a question mark ('Kulma??'). Typically, the implication is that the proposed activity does not necessarily require the agency of the recipient in order to be realised. I call such cases *inquiry-like proposals*; they take the format of an *inquiry* or a *request for information* to implement the proposal.

The design features of the proposals also have a more general impact on response relevance. Whereas the absence of responses would be highly problematic in the context of an interrogatively formatted one-off invitation (such as Extract 3 in which Ilona invited the group members for a Saturday evening get-together), the recurring inquiry-like proposals to have a pre-rehearsal lunch clearly do not mobilise responses from anyone else but those who are already planning to go or are already on their way (as already seen in Extract 7). Consider Extract 8 (previously presented as Extract 1).

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Extract 8 (Amateur theatre)

1	30.10.2018 17.06.53	Kalevi	Onko joku tulossa kulmalle?	*Is someone coming to Kulma?*
2	30.10.2018 17.13.06	Satu	🕵 As usual	🕵 *As usual ((in English))*
3	30.10.2018 17.17.59	Aleksi	Varoitan jo nyt et taidan tulla 15-30min myöhässä treeneihin! Pahoittelut tästä	*Just to warn you I'll probably be 15–30 min late to the rehearsal! Sorry about this*
4	30.10.2018 17.18.41	Kalevi	Jei! Oon ehkä puolelta siellä	*Yey! I'll probably be there at half past*
5	30.10.2018 17.29.02	Ilona	Onks kulmalla vielä patonkeja??	*Are there still sandwiches at kulma??*
6	30.10.2018 17.29.17	Ilona	Meidän luento loppui jo nyt niin ehtisin sinne 😍❤ patongin hakuun	*Our lecture's already finished so I have time to come there 😍❤ and pick up a sandwich*
7	30.10.2018 17.35.01	Satu	On tos ainaki kaks 😊	*They have at least two 😊*
8	30.10.2018 17.35.44	Satu	Jotka nään täst pöydästä	*That I can see from this table*

The design of the lunch message is typical: Kalevi asks if anyone is coming to Kulma. The turn is an interrogative, and the initial verb (*onko* 'be+ Q') is in the indicative mood rather than the conditional, which is constitutive of proposals in Finnish (Hakulinen et al. 2004, § 1659, 1664). The future-oriented verb form *tulossa* ('coming') also indicates that Kalevi is inquiring about the existing plans of the others rather than actually proposing a joint activity. Furthermore, the inquiry is formally targeted towards an unspecified "someone", which also enables a scenario in which no one comes (even though it grammatically prefers a positive response, whereas *ketään* 'anyone' would anticipate a negative response, cf., e.g., Heritage & Robinson 2011). The pressure of offering a positive response – or responding at all – is thus low, because, based on the message formulation, Kalevi himself is going anyway and is merely requesting company. This reading is confirmed by Kalevi's next contribution (message 4), in which he informs Satu of his time of arrival (suggesting that he is already on his way). However, there are also other layers of meaning in Kalevi's message. In principle, informing the group of his plans allows the members to change their existing plans on the basis of the information they have received (see Ilona's message in line 5 that comes later, after the timeframe given in Kalevi's message in line 3; see also Extract 12, message 4: *mä voisin kans tulla* 'I could also come').

In the responding messages, only those who are going or are planning to go respond (messages 2, 5 and 6) and no accounts for not being able to come are offered. Moreover, the responses do not seem to embody *acceptance* of the proposal but rather a *report* of the group members' existing plans, which is a way of aligning with the formulation of the proposal. However, Kalevi

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could in principle re-evaluate his plans according to the responses received, even though this option is not discussed in the data.

Sometimes the lunch messages are designed to find out whether anyone is at Kulma at the time the message is sent. This makes the message even more like an inquiry – or a request for information – than a proposal seeking acceptance as a preferred response. This type of formulation also reflects the time at which the message is sent. As the rehearsal starts at six, the texter may assume that if they send the inquiry closer to six o'clock, people planning to have lunch at Kulma are most likely there already. Consider Extracts 9 and 10.

Extract 9 (Amateur theatre)

1	9.1.2019 17.18.16	Satu	Ketää Kulmalla?	*Anyone at Kulma?*
2	9.1.2019 17.18.35	Elsa	meitsi	*me ((in slang))*
3	9.1.2019 17.18.49	Satu	Jes, tuun sinne ihan just	*Yess, I'll be there in a sec*

Extract 10 (Amateur theatre)

1	16.1.2019 16.48.56	Satu	Ketään kulmalla? :)	*Anyone at kulma? :)*

What is noteworthy is that in these cases, responding is made relevant only for those who already are at Kulma. Even though the questions contain no verbs, the adessive case *Kulma-lla* ('at Kulma') suggests that Satu is interested in whether someone is at Kulma right now, so that she can join them. Furthermore, asking whether *ketään* ('anyone') instead of *joku* ('someone') is at Kulma anticipates a negative answer. In Extract 9, Satu produces an actionally preferred answer (*meitsi* 'me'), disclosing her whereabouts in the cafeteria (also very promptly, within seconds). Following the same logic, Extract 10 receives no responses – apparently no one is there. Thus, the absence of responses in this context can be interpreted as a negative response. Interestingly, however, in these cases her going to the cafeteria could be seen as contingent of the recipient reaction; another possible interpretation is that if Satu knows that someone is there, she knows to look for them. The format she chooses thus leaves this issue open.

The subset consisting of lunch proposals/inquiries demonstrates that sometimes, participants formulate proposals in a way that reflects their current, existing plans instead of making the realisation of the event contingent on positive responses. Moreover, the fact that the recipients formulate their responses as reports rather than acceptances suggests that the action ascribed to the initiating message reads rather like an inquiry (or a request for information) than a proposal proper. The most recurrent format embodying an interrogative in the indicative mood clearly lowers response relevance – the proposer implies that no positive responses are needed for the event to be realised and creates no pressure to respond positively or even at all. However, we also saw that even when the conditional *was* used (the request format), the recipients could respond similarly, which shows that the participants were orienting towards the casual, recurrent nature of the

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proposed activity, which does not require them to account for their absence. This is a sharp contrast to the "on-off invitations" discussed in the previous section, in which the interrogatives made responding strongly relevant. We also saw that the proposer took into account the common "offline" activities of the group (beginning time of their rehearsal) in the design of the proposal. This feature is investigated in more depth in the next section.

4.4 On routinisation

The 14 lunch proposals/inquiries of the Amateur theatre group also offer a longitudinal perspective for explaining their linguistic design. The limitation here is obviously the small amount of data which means that the observations reported here necessarily tentative. However, there is a clear tendency that the formulation of the proposal gets routinised and thus minimised over time (see also König, this volume, Extract 2). This observation is in line with Deppermann's (2018) findings on recurrent instructions in driving lessons: they become increasingly shorter and syntactically less complex. Thus, the *shared bibliographical time* or *interactional history* of the participants (instructor and student) affects the recipient design of recurrent actions (Deppermann 2018; see also Deppermann & Pekarek Doehler 2021).

For the theatre group in my data, the relevant period to be considered – their interactional history – is the training season, extending from October to February. The beginning of the season was also the time when the WhatsApp group was established (in October). As already seen in Extracts 9 and 10, the linguistic format of the recurring actions may become routinised and thus involve little explicit information on what is going to happen, or when or what the proposal entails. The recognisability of the content of the turn seems to be connected to the fact that these types of invitations or proposals are issued at a specific day and time, before the rehearsal; thus, their design reflects group-specific common ground (on common ground, see Clark 1996). Compare the following examples, the first from the beginning of the training season (Extract 11), the second from about a month later (Extract 12).

Extract 11 (Amateur theatre)

1	29.10.2018 16.44.52	Satu	Onks kukaan menossa kulmalle ennen treenejä? :)	*Is anyone going to Kulma before the rehearsal? :)*
2	29.10.2018 16.48.20	Kalevi	Mie kunhan etsin löydän postilaatikon	*Me, once I find a mail box*
3	29.10.2018 16.48.25	Kalevi	*ensin	**first*
4	29.10.2018 16.50.07	Aleksi	Mä voisin kans tulla :) opiskelen vaan hetken viel	*I could also come :) I'll just study a bit more*
5	29.10.2018 17.21.09	Satu	Jees, oon täs heti kassalta suoraan pitkien pöytien keskellä	*Alright, I'm here right after the cash register in the middle of the long tables*

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Extract 12 (Amateur theatre)

1	3.12.2018 15.43.55	Ilona	Viideltä kulma?	*Kulma at five?*
2	3.12.2018 15.49.45	Kalevi	Jessöör	*Yes sir*
3	3.12.2018 16.03.08	Aleksi	Mää menin jo (koska nälkä)	*I've been already (because hungry)*
4	3.12.2018 16.03.41	Satu	Mä kans viideltä	*Me too at five*

In Extract 11, Satu (message 1) composes her message as a fully-fledged polar question explicating the time (before the rehearsal) and the place (Kulma) and the intended recipient (*kukaan* 'anyone'). In contrast, Ilona's proposal in Extract 12 is much more minimal: it is not morphosyntactically a question, and only involves a reference to time and location, accompanied with a question mark. However, it clearly serves as a recognisable and sufficiently detailed proposal for this very group. Moreover, there is no need to account for issuing this proposal at this point of time – the closeness of the rehearsal is enough. The recognisability and sufficiency is witnessed in the following three messages, which offer acceptances (messages 2 and 4) or report having already visited the cafeteria (message 3). Note also that the responses align with the minimal "style" of messaging – messages 2 and 4 (and the 'because' addition in message 3) do not include a predicate verb (see also König, this volume).

Because the knowledge of the start time of the rehearsal and the habit of going to Kulma just before it belongs to the common ground of the group, an even more minimal formulation is possible:

Extract 13 (Amateur theatre)

1	18.1.2019 18.11.22	Ilona	Kulma??	*Kulma??*
2	18.1.2019 18.11.31	Ilona	Onx se vielä auki	*Is it still open*
3	18.1.2019 18.11.36	Ilona	Eiks se oo	*It is, isn't it*
4	18.1.2019 18.11.43	Elsa	onse	*itis ((written as one word))*
5	18.1.2019 18.11.45	Ilona	Nice	*Nice ((in English))*
6	18.1.2019 18.11.48	Ilona	Tulkaa sinne	*Go there*

Ilona's proposal (message 1) entails only a reference to the place with two question marks, which show that Ilona is relying on the group-specific common ground. The duplication of the question marks creates a sense of immediacy, which can possibly be explained by the fact that the message is posted later than usual. This example also shows that the conversation may be (almost) in real time: Ilona's messaging reflects her thinking process, which gives the impression that she is not planning far ahead; five messages related to whether the cafeteria is still open are posted within one minute. After receiving an answer to her questions in messages 2 and 3, she evaluates the information (message 5); the sequence ends with an explicit invitation in the

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imperative mood ('go there'), thus treating the invitation as unproblematic (Routarinne & Tainio 2018: 157). However, it does not attract any responses (which does not, however, necessarily mean that no one is going).

This short, preliminary review of the minimisation of the linguistic format of recurrent proposals within a group shows that the analysis of action formation and ascription should also take into account group-specific practices that may be rooted in their shared activities in the offline world but emerge in the context of a mobile messaging platform, changing over time. That is, the habit of going to pre-rehearsal lunch creates a habit of making proposals via WhatsApp, which may then become routinised. Thus, the minimal linguistic design of the first pair part is not motivated by only the proposer's pre-existing plans or lack of imposition, but it also relates to interactional history and shared common ground.

5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed the issue of the action formation and ascription of some frequently occurring "first" actions in WhatsApp group messaging: invitations and inquiry-like proposals. A central facet in the analysis has been the design of the first action and how strongly it makes (positive) responses relevant. Regarding invitations, we saw that they may be formulated as interrogatives, making responses relevant (or even explicitly asking group members to sign up for the planned event), or as declaratives, which allows them to also be treated as announcements (see also Routarinne & Tainio 2018; cf. also Stivers & Rossano 2010: 26). Invitations involving an interrogative typically also suggest that the realisation of the event is contingent on positive responses. In terms of proposals for joint activity, I examined a subgroup of instances that leaned towards inquiries, as they involved a question about the group members' existing plans to do something (that is, whether some group members had *also* planned to have pre-rehearsal lunch, for example). As reported in previous studies of invitations (Drew 1984; Routarinne & Tainio 2018), issuing an invitation (or making a proposal) that involves an event that is going to happen anyway mitigates the potential imposition on the recipients and lowers the response relevance. However, in terms of the agency of the planned activity, inquiries still test the waters for joint activity – the recipients can also decide to go on the basis of the information they receive about the existing plans of the other group members.

In terms of message composition, invitations are typically multi-unit messages or "package-texts" (Hutchby & Tanna 2008; Virtanen et al. 2021, see also Marmorstein, this volume), in which the nature of the planned event is announced first and the actual invitation is delivered later, in either an interrogative or declarative form. Invitations are also typically accompanied by emojis that create an enthusiastic and affective tone to the message. Inquiry-like proposals, on the other hand, are typically delivered

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in a message consisting of a single TCU and with less affective emojis or no emojis at all, reflecting their recurring and casual nature, as opposed to one-off invitations.

The recipient reactions aligned with the formulation of the first action. In the case of one-off invitations (e.g., a get-together in the home of the inviter) the reception was celebratory (containing appreciations and emotional emojis), and several committing responses were posted (although not necessarily from everybody). However, the declarative format (an announcement of an event to which the group members are invited) also allowed mere appreciation of the event without commitment to participate. In the case of the recurrent proposals that were designed as inquiries about the plans of the other group members, the recipients typically reported their existing plans (e.g., 'I'm (probably) going' instead of 'I could come'). However, only those whose plans were similar to those of the proposer responded, which means that responses (nor accounts) were not expected from everybody. In fact, together with the turn format that did not require responses from everybody (a declarative or an interrogative targeted towards 'someone' or 'anyone'), the mere existence of the group seemed (to some extent) to relax the normative obligations of responding and providing accounts for (implied) rejections. In addition, the group had presumably shared information about the behaviour of the group members in social gatherings – who tends to participate and who does not. Overall, missing responses are not "officially absent" (Schegloff 1968), unless prompted in retrospect.

This study shows that mobile messaging offers a convenient platform for issuing invitations and making proposals to a group of people who participate in shared activities in the "off-line" or "co-present" world. The CA tools enabled me to inspect the turn design of the first actions and how the recipients treated them and, accordingly, to make judgements about the conditional relevance associated with specific turn formats and actions in the context of group messaging. That said, much of the relevant information was not accessible via logfile only. For instance, some of the group members may use messaging platforms less actively or may even have a more distant relationship with other members or less desire to socialise, which may partially account for the observed low response rate in some cases.

However, the study shows that having access to a logfile data over a longer period of time also has benefits that allow new, less studied avenues for research. The data at hand involved actions that recurred throughout the data, which made longitudinal observations possible. Based on the subset of "lunch invitations" discussed in this chapter, it seems that recurrent activities tend to become routinised over time. This results in syntactically minimal and even opaque inquiries if made without knowledge of the previous, fuller occurrences of the same action. These tentative observations are thus in line with Deppermann's ideas (2018): the interactional history of the participants affects the available resources for action formation and changes recipient design over time. Thus, the mere sequential analysis of isolated sequences does not fully explain the syntactic design of a turn. Furthermore, in future

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interaction research, considerations of routinisation and interactional history would clearly benefit from messaging data that span over long periods of time.

Notes

1 I would like to thank Katharina König, Heidi Vepsäläinen and the anonymous reviewers for their valuable comments on the previous versions of this chapter.
2 Couper-Kuhlen (2014: 624) groups together requests, suggestions, proposals, offers, and invitations as an "extended family of directive-commissive actions".
3 Information about the "reply to" function (see Virtanen et al. 2021) was added to the logfile data by hand by students who were members of the group and/or originally collected the data.
4 Interestingly, Routarinne and Tainio state that verbs of volition, typical of invitations in other language, do not occur in their Finnish data. In this case, however, the verb *kiinnostaa* 'interest' is used.
5 Elisa and Sanni are not members of the WhatsApp group.
6 Note that the focus here is on proposals for joint activities, i.e., activities that the recipients could do together with the proposer, rather than proposals that project joint decision making regarding the matter at hand (cf. Stevanovic 2013 on workplace interaction).
7 Another dataset to which I have access (not part of this study due to limitations of time and space) involves a more varied set of syntactic formats for proposals, e.g., a frequently used verb form *pitä(i)skö* 'should one' *(Pitäiskö meidän huomen illalla mennä eka johonkin bubiin* 'Should we go to a pub first tomorrow night'). These are being investigated in an on-going study (König & Koivisto, in preparation).
8 In Finnish, the word *ehdotus* covers both proposals and suggestions.
9 It should be noted that no comprehensive study of Finnish proposal formats in everyday conversation has been conducted. Moreover, in Finnish, speakers may employ the zero-person construction (Laitinen 1995), which leaves the agent of the nominated action implicit, so that the interpretation of the action – whether it can be read as involving the recipient alone (a request) or as a joint venture (proposal) – may be unclear (Couper-Kuhlen & Etelämäki 2015: 8).

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Response design in WhatsApp chats

Contextualising different stances of confirmation and agreement in text-based interaction

Abstract

This chapter analyses the use of the response particle <ja> ('yes') and its most frequent variants <jaaa> and <joa> in German WhatsApp chats to investigate the particularities of response design in text-based messenger chats. Drawing on recent research in digital conversation analysis (Arminen et al. 2016; Giles et al. 2015), it focusses on the particles' use in the coordination of joint activities, in particular in responses to directive-commissive actions (Couper-Kuhlen 2014b; Koivisto, this volume).

As texters cannot make use of prosodic or embodied resources to distinguish between different stances of confirmation or agreement, they appropriate textual resources such as the iteration of vowels used to differentiate between <ja> used for simple confirmations and <jaaa(a)> for contextualising a euphoric stance. This is also reflected in the systematic use of different emojis with which the response particles can form 'multimodal gestalts' (Mondada 2014): Simple <ja> responses are recurrently appended by 👍; emphatic emojis such as 😍 co-occur with <jaaa(a)> responses. In contrast, <joa> usually contextualises restrained agreement or confirmation. Moreover, sequential analyses show that the choice of a particular response particle is tightly fitted to the initial action; <joa> often follows an initiating action which is framed as preliminary, <jaaa(a)> repeatedly responds to proposals and invitations that are marked as emphatic or enthusiastic. Based on these findings, the chapter develops a multidimensional approach to the study of action formation and ascription in messenger chats that takes activity contexts, sequential trajectories, co-occurring verbal resources, emojis, and the sequencing of postings into account.

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1 Introduction

Responses are an important tool for negotiating a shared perspective, and thus, for establishing intersubjectivity (Lee 2013; Thompson et al. 2015).[1] Conversation analytic research of talk-in-interaction shows that with response particles, speakers do more than just confirm or disconfirm; they also take a stance towards the questioners' epistemic rights to ask, or their willingness to comply to the question's terms and agenda (Raymond & Heritage 2012; Sorjonen 2001; Stivers 2019). In choosing from a repertoire of response particles, speakers thus conduct important interactional and relational work.

Building on recent advances in digital conversation analysis (Arminen et al. 2016; Giles et al. 2015), the chapter analyses the use of the response particle <ja> and its most frequent variants <jaaa> and <joa> in German WhatsApp chats to investigate the particularities of doing confirmation and agreement in text-based messenger chats. It is argued that texters routinely choose between the different variants to express different stances of confirmation or agreement. In oral conversations, routinisation not only occurs on the verbal level but also concerns the coordinated use of prosodic and embodied resources (see, for instance, Selting & Couper-Kuhlen 1996; Reber & Gerhard 2019). Together, they form 'multimodal gestalts' (Mondada 2014) which are fitted to the local sequential context, but which can also exhibit an inherent systematicity. As texters cannot make use of prosodic or embodied cues for contextualising different stances of confirmation (Raymond 2010), they need to appropriate the textual resources the platform affords. With data obtained from the Mobile Communication Database (MoCoDa), a web-based corpus of German text-based WhatsApp chats (Beißwenger et al. 2019), the chapter develops a multidimensional approach to action formation and ascription in messenger chats that takes activity contexts, sequential trajectories, co-occurring verbal resources, and the sequencing of postings into account. The analysis will also focus on the routinised use of emojis that co-occur with the response particles to form 'multimodal gestalts'.

The chapter will start with a short overview of current conversation-analytic research of response particles before discussing uses of the response particle *ja* and its variants in German talk-in-interaction. The next section then deals with the particularities of designing responses in text-based interaction. Section 4 briefly describes the procedures for collecting and coding data from the MoCoDa. Section 5 illustrates the main findings by conducting sequential analyses of prototypical uses of <ja>, <jaaa> and <joa> in German WhatsApp chats. To ensure comparability, the analyses will focus on their use in the coordination of joint activities, in particular in responses to directive-commissive actions (Couper-Kuhlen 2014b; Koivisto, this volume). Section 6 will point out the methodological challenges of conducting digital-CA research of quasi-synchronous messaging. The final discussion reflects how texters make use of the multifaceted resources the messenger platform affords for response design, and points out future directions in the study of action formation in digital interaction.

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2 Response particles in talk-in-interaction

Response particles always operate back on a prior turn. Depending on the action this turn implements, response particles can (dis)confirm a prior question or assertion, (dis)agree with an assessment, or accept/reject an invitation or a suggestion (Sorjonen 2001). Response particles are thus an important resource with which interlocutors secure an intersubjectively shared understanding and manage their social relationship. This section describes the dimensions of interactional work that response particles achieve in their sequential habitats, and it discusses the role of prosodic and embodied resources for confirming and agreeing with response particles in German talk-in-interaction.

Note, however, that response particles are not the only resource for confirmations or agreements (Lee 2013; Raymond 2003). They are just a part of what Stivers (2019) has termed the 'answer possibility' space, i.e. the range of possible answer types that speakers can realise following a question. Response particles gain their particular functional profile in relation to other response types, such as repeats or verbal elaborations. Moreover, nodding, or – in the case of text-based messaging – a thumbs-up emoji, can already be enough to confirm or agree with a prior message.

2.1 Response particles in the answer possibility space

In CA, answers with response particles are conceptualised as type-conforming, as they "conform to the constraints embodied in the grammatical form of the FPP" (Raymond 2003: 946). With response particles, speakers accept the terms of a question (contextualising that the proposition is presented properly, or that the question is adequately designed for the recipient) and go along with the action or agenda it is implementing (unlike transformative answers that work against a question's constraints, see Stivers & Hayashi 2010). However, Stivers (2019) argues that responding interjections, as she calls them, need to be further subdivided into different classes (marked and unmarked), as they can be used to convey different stances. Whereas unmarked interjections such as *yeah* "simply and only confirm the question's proposition, thus furthering the questioner's action agenda, topical agenda, and sequence" (Stivers 2019: 194), marked particles can indicate that speakers take issue with some aspect of the prior question (upgraded interjections such as *of course*), that speakers have some trouble in answering the question (downgraded interjections such as *maybe*) or that they push against the question's agenda (acquiescent interjections such as *sure*). In contrast to unmarked response particles, upgraded particles are emphatic; at the same time, they indicate that the question was not necessary, as it asks for something self-evident or something that the questioner could have known. Downgraded particles are heard as "not being definitive" in their confirmation (Stivers 2019: 203), while generally accepting the question's terms and agenda. Finally, with acquiescent particles, speakers register that they hear the question as a proposal agentively put forward by the questioner.

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Apart from the choice of particle type, their prosodic modulation also plays a crucial role in contextualising different stances. In his study of polar answers to yes-no-interrogatives, Raymond (2010) describes several prosodic resources by which speakers can indicate confirmation, as well as express appreciation, project good or bad news, or register and return a challenge. For requests, Couper-Kuhlen shows that with response particles which are upgraded prosodically "there is likely to be an affective lamination, which becomes interpretable in context" (2014a: 238). For instance, speakers express their enthusiasm to comply with a request with marked loudness and pitch. In contrast, delayed particles that lack prosodic upgrading can index a reluctance to comply. So, with response particles, speakers often do more than just confirm or agree with a prior. In choosing from a repertoire of response particles and realising them in different prosodic designs, speakers index varying epistemic, affective and interpersonal stances of confirmation and agreement. The next section outlines some particularities of response particles in mundane German conversation.

2.2 *Ja* and its variants in German talk-in-interaction

In German talk-in-interaction, the particle *ja* ('yes') is the default type-conforming response particle for confirming positively formatted polar questions.[2] With *ja,* speakers confirm that the proposition expressed in the question (which, in German, may be realised as a verb-first question, a verb-second declarative or in a phrasal format) holds true (Zifonun et al. 1997: 372ff.). Confirmations with *ja* convey a speaker's certainty concerning the proposition's validity (L. Hoffmann 2008: 202). At the same time, speakers claim sufficient epistemic access and rights to answer the question, and they accept the wording of the matter at hand as suitable. *Ja* is not only used in response to 'knowledge questions' but also accepts proposals (*Shall we do X?*) and agrees with assessments (*That was wonderful, wasn't it?*).

Depending on the prosodic format, speakers can simply confirm (*jà,* falling intonation) or emphasise their agreement with the prior turn (*jă,* fall-rise, *jâ,* rise-fall), (Zifonun et al. 1997: 374), or a combination of stressing and lengthening the vowel, (see Imo 2013: 167). They can also express particular affective stances: The lengthened variant *jâ:* is usually heard as a reluctant or annoyed confirmation (Zifonun et al. 1997: 374). Moreover, in combination with other particles such as *oh, ja* can also contextualise "[l]ebhafte Zustimmung" ('lively agreement'), (Weinrich 2007: 836) or high involvement (Imo 2013: 169, 195).

To date, only few studies have described the numerous variants (such as *jaja, (m)joa, jap, jep, jau, jo*) derived from the default response particle *ja*. Grammars mention some of them, but do not present detailed analyses of their actual use. Interactional-linguistic studies indicate that the variants are used to express different epistemic stances. Golato and Fagyal (2008) and Barth-Weingarten (2011) show that the double saying *jaja* is involved with claiming and negotiating primary epistemic rights. Depending on the particles' prosodic design *jaja* can either indicate "that the prior utterance contains already known information […] and that therefore the current

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action should be stopped" (Golato & Fagyal 2008: 249), it can treat a prior turn as misaligned, as something "that the prior speaker should have known better" (Golato & Fagyal 2008: 252) or it simply registers epistemic primacy without foregrounding the "epistemic rivalry" (Barth-Weingarten 2011: 316). As *jaja* usually co-occurs with nodding, its omission seems to be a systematic resource to indicate sequential misalignment (Barth-Weingarten 2011: 353–360). Imo (2013: 169–172) discusses *mjoa* and *jojo* as variants that are used to downgrade the particle's affirmative character.[3] Groß (in prep.) focusses on different prosodic variants of *joa.* She demonstrates that, in second position, *joa* can function as an epistemic downgrade contextualising that the speaker does not have sufficient access to the matter at hand. Groß and Dix (2021) highlight the importance of facial gestures (such as pursing one's lips) that co-occur regularly with *joa* in face-to-face interactions, and which also carry a stance of uncertainty. Thus, in face-to-face interaction, response particles are embedded in 'multimodal gestalts' which exhibit some degree of routinisation.

Interactional-linguistic studies have only just begun to shed light on the intricacies of the role that response particles play in the answer possibility space in German talk-in-interaction. In the case of *ja,* speakers can choose from a range of more or less lexicalised variants that can be used to express different epistemic and affective stances of confirmation or agreement. The overview also shows that the particles' prosodic and embodied design is an essential resource speakers use to differentiate the stances they take in their responses to a prior turn. To establish comparable contextualisations in text-based interactions, users do not have these vocal and visual means at their disposal. Instead, they have to exploit the resources the platform affords.

3 Designing responses in text-based interaction

Studies that apply conversation analytic methods to the linguistic analysis of online interactions (coined 'digital CA' by Giles et al. 2015, also see Arminen et al. 2016; Marmorstein & König 2021; Koivisto et al., this volume, for an overview) usually contain a 'disclaimer note' that some of the concepts originally developed for spoken interactions might have to be adapted given the particularities of non-synchronous and posting-based multimodal digital platforms. This theoretical and methodological caution is motivated by the particular conditions for producing and receiving messages that shape how the interaction, i.e. the collaborative and incremental meaning-making process between two or more online participants on a given platform, can unfold (Koivisto et al., this volume.) Yet, even though there is no full synchronisation between chat participants, the adjacency pair – or rather the tying of different users' contributions by conditional relevance (Schegloff 2007: 20) – is a very important interactional principle in messaging interaction. Given the particular spatial and temporal organisation of non-synchronous messaging (Beißwenger 2020; Meredith 2017), texters need to develop practices to ensure that their contributions are interpretable. In the

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case of confirmations and agreements that are made relevant by (parts of) a prior message, this means that they have to make sure: that their postings are recognisable as responsive moves to a particular first pair part; that all components relevant to the response are put across comprehensively; and that they contextualise the stance of confirmation and agreement adequately (see Section 2.1).

Digital CA is interested in the practices that users develop and apply in dealing with a platform's affordances to establish and maintain intersubjective understanding in an emerging interaction. Previous studies have, for instance, investigated graphic practices of self and other repair with which users prevent or attend to misunderstandings (Collister 2011; Mostovaia 2021; Schönfeldt & Golato 2003). Other studies look at practices with which users in text-based interactions convey varying affective stances. Emojis (Beißwenger & Pappert 2020; Dresner & Herring 2010; Sampietro 2021), expressive particles or interjections (König 2019b; Meiler & Huynh 2020; Petitjean & Morel 2017), and also nuanced practices of punctuation (Androutsopoulos & Busch 2021), can work as contextualisation cues for emotive involvement, irony, or degree of (in)formality (to name a few). Moreover, texters make use of different practices to establish coherence in the ongoing discourse. They might draw on hypertextual features the platform provides, such as the 'reply-to' function in which the original posting is embedded visually and hypertextually (Virtanen et al. 2021), they contextualise coherence with discourse markers (Marmorstein 2021, this volume; Virtanen et al. 2021), or they apply particular practices of sequencing their actions. Users can send 'package texts', i.e. messages that deal with several lines of actions at once (Hutchby & Tanna 2008; König 2019a), or they contribute by sending chunks or increments, i.e. each message deals with a separate action (Baron 2010; Markman 2015; Tudini 2015). This shows the broad and variegated spectrum of practices that users have developed in their appropriation of the affordances of messaging platforms. While empirical studies in digital CA often tend to focus on just one resource to highlight its particular function, the studies often miss that different linguistic means usually co-occur to form a 'gestalt' of resources. Therefore, applying previous findings in digital CA to the study of response particles in messaging chats calls for a comprehensive and systematic description of their interplay. Taking the response particles <ja>, <jaaa(a)> and <joa> as its starting point, this chapter will aim to identify the interrelation of resources by which users express different stances of confirmation and agreement in text-based messaging.

4 Data

Methodologically, digital CA is grounded in the study of authentic, naturally-occurring data that are not influenced by the researcher's interests or the procedures for gathering data. Dialogic messaging chats can be collected using screen-capturing software or chat logs (see Beißwenger 2008; Meredith 2016; Meredith & Potter 2014 for a discussion of methodological issues). The

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following analyses are based on chat logs from the Mobile Communication Database (MoCoDa), and a corpus of authentic German messaging chats (dyadic chats and group chats) uploaded by users on a voluntary basis (Beißwenger et al. 2019).[4] To date, many studies in digital CA – especially those that deal with private messaging communication – rely on small collections that are built individually by researchers in the field. In contrast, the MoCoDa provides a large corpus of mobile messaging that is accessible via a searchable web-based platform (https://db.mocoda2.de/).

The current study takes a form-based approach as its starting point. Collections were built for each of the response particles using RegEx queries to be able to identify spelling variants of the particles. The search for forms of <joa> yielded 50 tokens. For variants of the response particle <ja> with an iteration of the vowel <a> a total of 175 instances could be identified. False hits were not added to the collection (see Table 1).

Table 1. Forms of responsive <joa> and <jaa>

RegEx query	**Forms identified**	**Examples for false hits**
*jo+o*a+a*r*h*r** (a diphthongised particle with at least one <o> and one <a> plus optional <h> or <r>)	• 42 instances of <joa> • 3 instances of <joaa> • 5 instances of <joar> • No instances with initial <y> such as *yoa* • No instances with initial <m> such as *mjoa*	–
*jaa+a** (a minimum of one iteration of the vowel, no other consonant)	• 87 instances of <jaa> • 40 instances of <jaaa> • 24 instances of <jaaaa> • 10 instances of <jaaaaa> • 4 instances of <jaaaaaaa> • 2 instances each of <jaaaaaa> and <jaaaaaaaa> • 1 instance each of <achjaaa> <ajaaa>, <jaaaaaaaaa>, <jaaahaaaaa>, <jjaaaaaa>, <ohjaa> • No instances with initial <y>	*tjaa* 'well' *najaa* 'well' *Katjaa* (first name)

For the form <ja> a different procedure had to be chosen, as an initial search yielded over 2,800 results, with many instances in which <ja> is used as a modal particle. To ensure a roughly comparable data basis, a randomised subset of 100 instances of <ja> was generated in which all response particles were identified and added to the collection. This procedure led to a total of 62 <ja> tokens. All collections can be accessed online.[5]

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5 <ja> and its variants in text-based messaging

Response particles can be used following various first actions (see Section 2). To ensure comparability, the following analyses will concentrate on their use in the context of coordinating joint activities, which, among other things, involves planning future meetings, asking participants about their whereabouts, reaching a joint decision about a present for a friend, as this is one of the main domains for which mobile messaging is used (Ling & Baron 2013; Thurlow & Poff 2013). Texters collaboratively plot their next actions, they sort out all relevant background information needed, they make suggestions, proposals, requests, and offers (Couper-Kuhlen 2014b, for directive-commissive actions, also see Koivisto, this volume). Studies indicate that these actions are built for compliance (Thompson et al. 2021). In their responses, interlocutors negotiate deontic rights and responsibilities and also display their commitment to proposed courses of action (Asmuß & Oshima 2012; Stevanovic 2012). The following analyses will argue that with the response particles <ja>, <jaaa(a)> and <joa>, texters generally accept the epistemic and deontic rights associated with the first actions; they differ, however, in their commitment to the answers they give. To tease out the particularities of each particle, their prototypical uses will be analysed separately.

5.1 Straightforward confirmation or agreement with <ja>

The data show a comparatively diverse picture for responsive uses of <ja> in German WhatsApp chats in terms of the first action they refer to. The majority of the instances analysed reply to polar questions which instantiate requests for information or confirmation (23/62). Moreover, <ja> is found in response to suggestions, proposals or invitations (17/62), informings (10/62), and assessments (8/62). There are also three cases in which <ja> functions as a third-turn acknowledgement, as well as one case in which the initiating action cannot be identified.

The following analyses illustrate how responsive <ja> is used for straightforward confirmation and agreement in the coordination of joint activities. With <ja>, texters indicate that they can confirm or agree unproblematically, and that no other terms need to be negotiated before confirmation can be given. Texters do not halt the sequential trajectory projected by the previous utterance. In Stivers' terms (2019: 197), it does "nothing more than confirmation". However, it is not the use of <ja> alone that contextualises this straightforwardness, but also its sequential embedding and other mark-up strategies, such as co-occurring textual resources with which the particles form multimodal gestalts.

The particle <ja> usually forms part of a longer posting, but the collection also contains five instances of stand-alone <ja> with no other verbal[6] content in the posting. These stand-alone particles can be found in sequences in which texters ask for a quick confirmation, e.g. of some piece of background information they need for coordinating their meetings, such as in Extract 1.[7]

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Extract 1 (MoCoDa #TTEXS)

8	9:42	Laura		Treffen wir uns in 10 Minuten einfach vor diesem Bäcker?	*Shall we simply meet at this bakery in 10 minutes?*
9	9:42			Wo die vielen Glasfenster sind	*Where the numerous glass windows are*
10	9:42	Kim		Der direkt um die Ecke?	*The one right around the corner?*
11	9:42	Laura	→	Ja 💪	*Yes* 💪
12	9:42	Kim	→	Ja ok	*Yes ok*

The adjacency pair in messages 10 and 11 forms an insert sequence that locally suspends the conditional relevance established by Laura's initial suggestion. Kim first needs to determine the exact location of the bakery before she can accept Laura's proposal. Laura's confirmation in message 11 is simple and straightforward, as she only replies with <ja> appended by an emoji which can be read as an indicator that Kim got it exactly right. Laura does not add anything else to her confirmation and Kim's reply in message 12, which accepts Laura's initial proposal, also treats this information as sufficient.

Another example of a context which calls for a quick confirmation is Extract 2, taken from a group chat in which Luca suggests meeting at a market (message 1).

Extract 2 (MoCoDa #fdL3V)

83	15:11	Luca		Feierabend Markt	*After-work market*
84	15:26	Maik	→	Ja	*Yes*
85	15:27	Sebastian		Vielleicht ja, vielleicht nein	*Maybe yes, maybe no*
86	15:33	Steffen	→	Ja	*yes*
87	15:33			Mr Love2[8]	
88	15:35	Luca		Wann?	*When?*

The group members meet regularly at this location. This can explain the relative brevity of Luca's initial query (see Koivisto, this volume, for the routinisation of directive-commissive actions). It calls for a short reply by group members to determine who is willing to join Luca. While Sebastian's reply is designedly ambiguous, both Maik and Steffen accept Luca's proposal as it is. Once this is settled, they texters then go on to coordinate the exact details of their meeting (in message 88 Luca asks for a possible time).

These excerpts illustrate how stand-alone <ja> (in some cases appended by emojis) is used in response to short queries that call for a quick and

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short answer needed to proceed with a communicative project (Koivisto, this volume, refers to these as "simple polls"). The particle <ja> is treated as a sufficient means to confirm or agree. There is no further comment or negotiation of the terms of agreement. Also, there is no indication of a particular affective stance.

Most instances of <ja> are found as initial particles in longer messages (49/62). Here, too, they are recurrently used to deliver uncomplicated confirmations or agreements. In the context of negotiating the temporal coordinates of a meeting, the utterances following <ja> can even underscore that a suggestion is particularly suitable. This is the case in Extract 3, in which three friends plan a get-together after Christmas.

Extract 3 (MoCoDa #OGoME)

31	11:58	Mia		((voice message in which Mia agrees with the group to meet at her place. She offers to cook potato soup and suggests they meet at 6pm))	
32	14:21	Luisa		Das klingt gut :) eher 19 Uhr? :) dann passt das auch weil ich ja noch warten muss bis ich das Auto meiner Mutter bekommen kann.. fahre dann um 6 hier los :)	*That sounds good :) could it be 7pm? :) it should work then because I have to wait until I can have my mother's car… I will start from here at 6pm :)*
33	14:21			Gibst du mir nochmal eure Adresse? :)	*Can you tell me your address again? :)*
34	14:23	Mia	→	Ja 19 uhr passt super!:) Katharina wie siehts bei dir aus?...straße 1 4.... Gelsenkirchen ✸👍☺ Parken könnt ihr auf dem öffentlichen parktpkatz,der ist direkt gegenüber	*Yes, 7pm suits me fine! :) Katharina what about you? [address in Gelsenkirchen] ✸👍☺ You can park in the public parking lot that's directly opposite my flat*
35	14:25	Katharina	→	Ja passt mir auch :) Super :D Ich bringe mir selbst was zu trinken mit ;) Ich freue mich!!	*Yes, suits me, too :) Super :D I will bring my own drinks :) I'm looking forward to this!*
36	16:15	Luisa		Mögt ihr Rosinen?	*Do you like raisins?*

In message 32, Luisa responds to Mia's voice message with a text. She suggests a later meeting and asks for Mia's and Katharina's confirmation. Mia, as the host, is the first to agree. Her confirmation is placed at the beginning of a package text (Hutchby & Tanna 2008; König 2019a) in which she also explicitly refers to Katharina and replies to Luisa's request in message 33. As there are several issues Mia has to address, she needs to make sure that her confirmation is identifiable as such by the other texters. She does so by explicitly repeating the time at which they can meet (*Ja 19 uhr passt super! :)*

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'Yes, 7pm suits me fine! :)'; also, see Virtanen et al. 2021 for lexical repetitions in dealing with several lines of talk) and confirming that the suggested time works for her. After that, she does not register any additional relevance to negotiate the matter. This is also the case in Katharina's confirmation which is also part of a package text. With her initial <ja> she delivers her confirmation in a format type-fitted to Luisa's suggestion in message 32, while at the same time mirroring Mia's wording by choosing the same verb *passt mir auch* ('suits me, too') and also the same evaluative adverb *Super :D*. After that, the matter can be closed, Katharina moves on to another topic (bringing her own drinks). Also note that, in both instances, the texters use a smiling emoticon which in the given context[9] (the emoticon was already used repeatedly in messages 32 and 33) indexes a light and friendly mood that is upheld throughout the exchange. In this excerpt, <ja> is used as a means to unproblematically agree with a prior suggestion.

The collection also yields cases in which some qualification is added following <ja>, usually formatted with conjunctions or particles such as *aber* ('but') or *nur* ('only/just'). However, these qualifications do not refer to the confirmation or agreement as such, but to some additional matter that is made the topic of the following chat.

Extract 4 (MoCoDa #SejNf)

29	15:50	Simon		Also machen wir das dann so? Du holst michael und andi ab und bist dann gegen 17:15 bei mir ? :)	*So, will we do it as suggested? You will fetch Michael and Andi and be at my place around 5:15 pm? :)*
30	15:52	Sandra	→	Ja 👍 Muss nur mit Lisa noch abklären wann sie zuhause ist und ob sie Johannes mitnehmen kann oder ob sie nach kommt 😊	*Yes 👍 I just have to check with Lisa when she will be at home and if she can fetch Johannes, or if she will join us later* 😊
31	15:52	Andreas		Ja ist in der näher hauptbahnhof wuppertal	*Yes, it's close to Wuppertal main station*[10]
32	15:53	Simon		Ja reicht ja wenn ein auto pünktlich ist	*Yes, it's enough if one car arrives on time*

The group are planning to go bowling together and discuss who will drive whom to the venue. In message 29, Simon summarises what has been said so far and directs this at Sandra. In message 30, she agrees with his suggestion, with a simple <ja> directly followed by a thumbs-up emoji, which visually co-illustrates her acceptance. She then goes on to address further complications in their coordinative efforts. This, however, does not concern her previous agreement but rather opens up another issue that has to be resolved. In message 32 Simon refers only to this second matter, which attests that the previous one is settled.

What these excerpts illustrate is that, in the context of coordinating future events, <ja> is used for uncomplicated and unconditional confirmations or agreements – be it for clarifying some background knowledge or for agreeing

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with a suggested procedure. This corresponds to the straightforward or affectively neutral way in which the initiating actions are presented. The response particle is delivered type-conformingly, right at the beginning of a posting; it is not accompanied by hedging devices or other particles that would frame them as somewhat delayed (König 2021, for such markers). On the contrary, texters recurrently use expressions that highlight a prior's adequacy, such as *ja genau* ('yes exactly'). This straightforwardness is also brought about by the relative shortness of the confirmation or agreement proper (especially in the case of stand-alone particles). Even if most <ja> messages are expanded verbally, texters do not usually qualify their confirmation or agreement. Qualifications that are repeatedly contextualised via *aber* ('but') or *nur* ('only/just', see excerpt 4) usually concern an additional complication, but do not change or negotiate the terms of the <ja> response. Recipients treat the confirmation or agreement as settled. It does not lead to sequence expansion. In the given collection, there is no systematic variation in punctuation or the use of capitalisation.[11] However, what can be attested is a tendency to use emojis or emoticons (in 33 out of the 62 instances of <ja>) that boost the confirmation or agreement (such as 💪 or 👍) or that index a friendly atmosphere (such as :) or ☺). This pattern of use forms the background against which the variants <jaa(a)> and <joa> stand out systematically, as the following analyses will show.

5.2 Enthusiastic confirmation or agreement with <jaaa(a)>

In total, 175 instances of <ja> with at least one iteration of the vowel <a> could be identified in the MoCoDa. The following analyses is based on a subcollection of 64 cases of <jaaa> and <jaaaa> (summarised as <jaaa(a)>) to capture those variants that clearly deviate from the minimal form <ja>. In previous literature, the iterated use of letters has been identified as a graphostylistic resource to 'emulate' prosody (see Darics 2013; Siebenhaar 2020), i.e. as a practice with which texters imitate paraverbal features of spoken discourse such as loudness or lengthening ('paralinguistic restitution' in Thurlow and Poff's (2013) terms). These studies usually describe locally contingent uses of letter repetition. However, the recurrent use of vowel iteration in the response particle <jaaa(a)> suggests that these forms have undergone some lexicalisation and are used as a systematic resource to express a particular stance of confirmation or agreement.

Most <jaaa(a)> particles respond to proposals for a future meeting (19/64) and to comments that already express a positive evaluative connotation (19/64). They are also deployed to answer polar questions that often deal with the specifics of planning a meeting (14/64).[12] This indicates that <jaaa(a)> is more tightly associated with the coordination of joint activities than the 'default' response particle <ja>. The following analyses will show that <jaaa(a)> is similar to <ja> in that it issues a straightforward and uncomplicated confirmation or agreement. In addition, however, it usually also conveys an enthusiastic or euphoric stance, indicating that the texter is overjoyed about the matter at hand. This rejoicing is expressed by specific co-occurring textual resources which will be highlighted in the analysis.

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The following two excerpts are taken from the initial stages of chats in which texters start planning a future meeting. The <jaaa(a)> responses display a texter's joy to be part of the event before further details are negotiated. As the excerpts are taken from group chats, the particles form part of a line of responses that also accomplish cheerful confirmations and agreements.

Extract 5 (MoCoDa #V6vMr)

1	11:40	Marie		Hello :) ich wollte fragen, ob ihr Lust hättet, Tanz in den Mai zu feiern?💞	*Hello :) I wanted to ask if you would like to go to a celebration dance in May?* 💞
2	11:59	Nina		Oh ja gerne ☺	*Oh yes, gladly* ☺
3	12:11	Sophie	→	jaaa 😍 wo sollen wir hin?	*jaaa* 😍 *where shall we go?*
4	12:12	Nina		Nightrooms? 😊	*Nightrooms?* 😊
5	12:16	Sophie		oder was in Bochum? 😊	*or something in Bochum?* 😊

Extract 5 starts with a proposal. Nina is the first to respond in a cheerful manner. She does this with the default particle <ja> which is additionally marked by the particle *oh,* which is said to add a lively tone (see Section 2.2), the adverb *gerne* ('gladly') and an emoji. Sophie's response aligns with Nina's cheerful reply. In contrast to message 2, it comes across as more enthusiastic even without additional lexical material. This is achieved by using the iterated variant <jaaa> and a comparably marked emoji: Sophie does not replicate Nina's ☺ (see Extract 3 for such a practice). Instead, she selects 😍 as an emoji which stands out in the given context, due its colouring and the forms depicted (the red heart-shaped eyes and the opened mouth), which could be analysed as a heightened 'visual salience' (Beißwenger & Pappert 2020: 108). Moreover, Nina furthers the activity by asking about a possible venue. Her acceptance, however, does not depend on the answer to this question. It is not something that needs to be clarified before she can accept the invitation. Sophie's response can thus, also be classified as straightforward (see Section 5.1).

Extract 6 illustrates another practice with which texters contextualise enthusiastic confirmation. Leonie sends a rather elaborate invitation for a meeting at this year's Christmas market which is initiated with festive emojis. Instead of using an indirect question format, like Marie in Extract 5, she chooses a more forthright style stressing the necessity to meet. She ends on a question which is presented in capital letters and with iterated question marks:

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Extract 6 (MoCoDa #NEUrW)

1	16:37	Leonie		🎄☃🍷🎅 leeeeeeute, habt ihr auch so Bock auf Weihnachten, Weihnachtsmarkt, Plätzchen und den ganzen tollen Kram? Dieses Jahr gehen wir aber auf nen Weihnachtsmarkt, I won't accept any nos. HABT IHR BOCK??	🎄☃🍷🎅 *guuuuuuys, are you also in the mood for Christmas, Christmas market, cookies and all this wonderful stuff? This year we have to go to the Christmas market, I won't accept any nos. ARE YOU READY??*
2	16:44	Susanne	→	JAAAA 🤘	*JAAAA* 🤘
3	16:48	Friederike		Jooo	*Jooo*
4	16:54	Hannah		Jawohl 👍	*Yes, Sir* 👍
5	16:59	Leonie		Ihr seid spitze 👏	*You are awesome* 👏
6	17:03	Friederike		Wir müssen nur am besten jetzt schon schauen wann	*We should, however, start to look for possible times now*

Not only does the choice of the iterated response particle frame Susanne's reply (message 2) as enthusiastic;[13] the following emoji as well as the constant capitalisation, with which she evokes the image of screaming rock fans, mirrors the design of Leonie's final question and also supports this contextualisation. Even though previous literature on SMS highlights capitalisation as one characteristic stylistic feature of text-based messaging (Thurlow & Poff 2013), this is the only case in which the typographic resource is used. So, rather than being a recurrent feature of emphatic response particles, it can be traced back to the local management of responsiveness and alignment with a previous posting. Moreover, this excerpt illustrates a stand-alone use of the particle which, like most of these instances (21/64), is not appended by chunks. This attests that, in addition to contextualising enthusiasm, the particle also accomplishes a straightforward confirmation or agreement which does not require further qualification or negotiation.

Emojis are recurrently used following the <jaaa(a)> particle to co-contextualise the joyful and enthusiastic mood, as the following excerpt from a dyadic chat illustrates.

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Extract 7 (MoCoDa #GDIx6)

2	20.06.18 21:48	Johanna		Du fährst auch morgen zum Hurricane, oder? 😍 schreib mal, auf welchem Camping Platz du bist, ich fahr auch morgen früh los ☺	*You will drive to the Hurricane festival tomorrow, won't you?* 😍 *text me which camping site you are on, I will also start tomorrow morning* ☺
3	21:56	Maja	→	Jaaa 😍😍 wir sind dieses Jahr beim green Camping! Am besten wir machen einen Treffpunkt aus? Wenn wir Internet haben 😊	*Jaaa* 😍😍 *we are at green camping this year! It might be best if we agree on a meeting place? When we have internet access* 😊
4	23.06.18 12:41	Johanna		Ich bin auf Camp 8, quasi direkt an dem Schild 😂 wenn man vom penny aus derLichterkette folgt, sind wir dann links halt direkt beim Schild :)	*I am in camp 8, virtually right at the signpost* 😂 *if you follow the fairy lights from the Penny supermarket, then on the left-hand side right by the signpost :)*

Johanna starts the chat with a posting that contains two first pair parts. She requests confirmation for the presumption that Maja will also be at the Hurricane Festival, and then asks her for the camping site she will be staying at. In her response, Maja deals with the pair parts one after the other (see König 2019a). She confirms Johanna's assumption with *Jaaa*, before she gives the name of her camping site. Moreover, she picks up the heart-eyed emoji from Johanna's initial posting and intensifies it by iteration. Again, the iteration of the vowels and a comparably marked emoji use convey an enthusiastic and euphoric stance. This way, Maja not only confirms that she will also be at the Festival, she also contextualises that she is looking forward to the event (and to meeting Johanna there).

She then issues a follow-up suggestion to agree on a meeting place, which is taken up three days later by Johanna (message 4). While the response is expanded after the initial particle, the continuation within the same posting does not qualify the confirmation. Instead, Maja immediately deals with the second first pair. Confirmations with <jaaa(a)> do not usually lead to sequence expansion, as in this instance. Rather, texters can move on to the next issue on the agenda to coordinate their joint activities.

To sum up, <jaaa(a)> responses accomplish a straightforward, but at the same time euphoric, confirmation or agreement. Responses with <jaaa(a)> are not subject to negotiation in the following discourse; rather the texters move on to the next step to plan their joint activities. The enthusiastic

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stance is often illustrated with specific emojis, with which the particles form multimodal gestalts (in 41 out of the 64 instances of <jaaa(a)). Texters routinely select emojis different from those associated with <ja> (👍 with <ja> and 😍 with <jaaa(a)>). The choice is also fitted to the local contexts, in that it is marked in comparison to the design of previous messages (upgrading by iteration, or by choosing visually more salient emojis). Moreover, <jaaa(a)> particles are recurrently used in reply to initiating actions, which are in themselves often delivered in an emphatic style of writing.

5.3 Downgraded confirmation or agreement with <joa>

As there are only 50 documented instances of <joa> (and related forms) in the database, this already suggests that this response particle might be used for specific purposes. More than half of the particles reply to a polar question instantiating a request for information or confirmation (15/50) or a proposal (14/50), but <joa> is also used in response to *wh*-questions (3/50)[14] or other first pair parts (such as informings, comments, newsmarks, or picture postings, 8/50).[15] The particle <joa> is deployed repeatedly to introduce a texter's description of his or her current situation as rather uneventful; it can precede and hedge slightly negative assessments, or deliver a somewhat restrained confirmation or agreement. The following analysis will focus on the latter cases.

In the context of coordinating joint activities <joa> responses express an overall tendency to confirm or agree with a prior, while at the same time indicating that one has not yet fully made up one's mind, that something might still intervene with the plans, or that the terms of agreement still have to be negotiated. So, compared to straightforward confirmation or agreement with <ja>, texters do not fully commit to their answer. Compared to euphoric responses with <jaaa(a)>, <joa> expresses a rather undedicated stance.

Extract 8 shows a prototypical context in which texters use <joa>. It is taken from a chat in which a group of friends has already exchanged a considerable number of messages to determine that they will meet to play board games in the evening. In message message 69 Anna asks them to finally confirm when exactly they will come to her place.

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Extract 8 (MoCoDa #EqCw3)

69	18:44	Anna		Also wann jetzt ca. damit ich mit drauf einstellen kann 20:30?	*So, when shall we meet approx. so that I can be prepared? 8:30pm?*
70	18:47	David	→	Joa halb 9 sollte ich schaffen ca	*Joa I should be able to make half past nine approx*
71	18:49	Alex		Jo	*Jo*
72	18:55			Wäre aber sonst auch jetzt schon fertig	*I would also be ready now*
73	18:58	Anna		Dito	*Me, too*
((Messages omitted.))					
79	19:18	Anna		Schreibt bitte wann ihr losgeht	*Please text me when you leave*
80	19:27	Alex		Gehe los	*I'm leaving*
81	19:27	David		Ich esse eben dann geh ich los	*I'll eat first and then I'll leave*
82	19:40			Bin los	*I've just left*

In her initial posting, Anna first asks for the time of their meeting using the approximator *ca* ('circa') and then presents a candidate answer ('8.30pm?'). That is, the first pair part itself is explicitly cast as an open suggestion. David is the first to respond. Not only does the particle <joa> itself indicate a downscaled commitment, but also his use of the modal verb *sollen* ('should') as well as the repeated use of the approximator *ca*. Also, the verb *schaffen* ('to make it') implies that he has to make some effort to meet at the suggested time. This response stands out against Alex's short and unhedged *Jo*, an informal variant of *ja* ('yes'), and he also stresses that he could start right away (message 72). That David does not commit to his initial confirmation is documented later in the chat, when he gives a short update of his plans (message 81) and then informs the group that he has left earlier than announced initially. He does not account for this change, however, which can be read as another indication that with <joa>, texters only present a provisional confirmation.

There are also stand-alone uses of <joa> in the collection. In contrast to comparable uses of the response particle <ja>, these instances are usually followed by some sort of qualification that concerns the confirmation or agreement. The excerpt to illustrate this is taken from a chat in which Fabius' initial inquiry makes a confirmation of the group members relevant (Extract 9). In this particular community of practice, a simple confirmation is recurrently done with emojis only, as in messages 685 and 689 (also see Koivisto, this volume). Against this quick and economic way of responding, Janus' <Joaa> is a marked response strategy.

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Extract 9 (MoCoDa #Qy1Pp)

684	17:26	Fabius		Jemand Bock auf Grieche in Spelle?	*Anybody interested in eating at the Greek restaurant in Spelle?*
685	17:26	Richard		🤳	
686	17:26	Janus	→	Joaa	*Joaa*
687	17:27			Aber dann nicht so spät oder?	*But not too late right?*
688	17:27	Fabius		🤳[16]	
689	17:27	Bernd		👍	
690	17:27	Fabius		Ich bin da flexibel	*I am flexible*
691	17:28	Hendrik	→	Joa ich auch wohl	*Joa me too modal particle*
692	17:28	Bernd		19 Uhr in spelle den Tusch?	*The table at 7pm in Spelle?*
((Omitted discussion on whether they want to see a basketball game before going to the restaurant.))					
708	17:46	Janus		Bin mit 19 Uhr stelle zufrieden, dann können wir nachher auch noch was machen	*I am content with Spelle at 7pm, then we can also do something together afterwards*

Janus' stand-alone <joaa> reply is quickly appended by a chunk in message 687 in which he presents the terms on which his full commitment depends. This suggests that he uses <joaa> to indicate that in principle he is willing to agree with Fabius' proposal, but still needs to determine the exact conditions for the meeting before he can finally commit to the appointment. Also note that the iterated use of <a> works as another resource that indicates a not-yet-finite decision.[17] Janus' response triggers an expanded discussion about their plans for the evening and the time at which they want to meet at the restaurant. It is not until message 708 that Janus finally and definitely confirms that he will join the group at the restaurant. Hendrik's <joa> in message 691 can also be read as a not-yet-fully committed confirmation to message 684. This is also reflected in his use of the modal particle *wohl,* which can function as a downgrading modaliser (see Weber 2020).[18]

In the context of coordinating joint activities, <joa> is used to present preliminary or conditional confirmations or agreements. In Stivers' terms (2019: 203) <joa> can be classified as a downgraded interjection, as "the answerer can be understood to be disaligning in the sense of not being definitive in her answer". Recurrently, it replies to suggestions or proposals that are extenuated e.g. by approximators, or framed as candidate answers or preliminary suggestions. The particle <joa> often co-occurs with hedging

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devices, such as modal verbs, modal particles or a subjunctive verb mode. In contrast to <ja> and <jaa(a), <joa> responses cannot be characterised by a particular use of emojis. In 35 out of 50 cases, texters do not include emojis at all. The remaining 15 cases do not show a clear pattern. Also, the response's tentativeness is not contextualised by specific punctuation practices that could have been expected in such an environment. In the given collection, there are only three instances in which <joa> co-occurs with ellipsis dots, which additionally indicate openness and non-completion (see Androutsopoulos 2020 for comparable uses). What is characteristic, however, is that <joa> responses are usually elaborated (either in the same posting or in a directly following chunk) in that texters explicate the terms for a full confirmation or agreement. This leads to an expanded sequence in which constraints or counter-proposals are negotiated among chat partners. In this respect, <joa> responses differ from straightforward answers with <ja> and <jaaa(a)>.

6 Deviant cases

An analysis of a large-scale database like the MoCoDa can illustrate how texters appropriate the affordances of mobile messaging for their communicative projects. While there surely is a bias in the data (for instance, it is mostly students in their early twenties who donate data, they choose which chats, they want to upload, with how many messages, they choose which activities or topics are suitable), which needs to be reflected in interpreting the scope of the results. The comprehensive data set enables at least a general overview of recurrent practices that have emerged across different users. When applied to the study of response particles such as <ja>, <jaaa(a)> and <joa>, an interactional approach is faced with methodological challenges, two of which are briefly illustrated in this section.

The first considers the role of idiolectal preferences which can have an impact on the quantitative distribution in a given category, particularly in rather small data collections. The search procedure applied here (see Section 4) yielded a total of 50 <joa> cases produced by 35 different texters. For most instances in this category (and also for the other two response particles) it was possible to identify the initiating action to which the particles reply,[19] and to describe and validate the response particle's functional profile. However, there is one chat containing 5 cases of <joa>, all by the same texter, which deviate from the general pattern.

The following excerpt contains three of the five <joa> instances. Ahmet chats with his cousin Fatma about the problem that he cannot make up his mind about dating either Ilayda or Helin (sequence (1)), the people he trusts most in his life (sequence (2)) and his feelings after having broken up with Ilayda (sequence (3)).

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Extract 10 (MoCoDa #DQi83)

(1)	276	16:25	Fatma		Schick mal Chat dann musst du nicht alles schreiben haha	*Send the chat so that you don't have to write everything haha*
	277	16:25	Ahmet		hab mit der getelt	*we had a phone call*
	278	16:25	Fatma		Achso	*I see*
	279	16:25	Ahmet		und bin immernoch am telen	*and I am still on the phone*
	280	16:26	Fatma		Tamam	*Okay (Turkish)*
	281	16:26	Ahmet	→	joa	*joa*
	282	16:26	Fatma		Klär das lieber mal mit ilayda	*You should settle this matter with Ilayda*
((Messages omitted.))						
(2)	419	22:00	Fatma		Was ist mit deinem baba	*What about your father*
((Lines omitted.))						
	423	22:00	Ahmet		hat seine gründe warum er nicjt	*I have my reasons why not him*
	424	22:00	Fatma		Ohhh	*Ohhh*
	425	22:00	Ahmet	→	joa	*joa*
	426	22:01	Fatma		Wir reden noch warum nicht	*We will talk about why not*
((Lines omitted.))						
(3)	689	07:09	Fatma		Wie gehts dir dabei	*How do you feel in all this*
	690				Was hat sie gesagt	*What did she say*
	691	07:10	Ahmet		es ist komisch	*it is strange*
	692	07:11	Fatma		Versteh es	*I understand*
	693	07:12	Ahmet	→	joa	*joa*
	694	07:12	Fatma		Was hat helin dazu gewagt	*What did Helin say about this*

In all three sequences, Ahmet uses a stand-alone <joa> particle in fourth position, i.e. after a third-turn acknowledgement issued by Fatma. He is the only texter in the given collection to use <joa> in this position. From the given context, it is not clear what this particle achieves. It does not index a

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downgraded commitment, as other instances of <joa> in the collection do. As both texters converse in a quasi-synchronous mode, with messages being exchanged at rather short intervals, it is plausible that the particle works as a continuer that keeps the chat going without adding anything to the current discourse (this compares to the 'topic hold, topic attrition' function Sorjonen (2001, 261-267) describes for Finnish *joo*). The other two instances in the chat, also posted by Ahmet, work in much the same way, so the data strongly suggests that this usage reflects his personal style, rather than common practice in text-based messaging. A mere descriptive analysis of the data would have identified a considerable number of stand-alone uses of <joa> that are not appended by a chunk explicating some sort of qualification. A more fine-grained analysis, however, can help to identify idiosyncratic practices that diverge from prototypical uses.

Another challenge consists in the potential ambiguities of stance-taking in text-based messaging. Extract 11 is one of 11 instances of <jaaa(a)> in which a euphoric stance cannot be identified unambiguously. Anna and Marie agree to meet for a short evening stroll (see Extract 8 for the subsequent closing sequence of the chat).

Extract 11 (MoCoDa #mCfzY)

18	19:01	Anna		Obwohl lass uns doch lieber jetzt gehen, kann mich gerade eh nicht konzentrieren 🙈	*Although let's rather go now, I cannot concentrate at the moment anyway* 🙈
19	19:09	Marie		Okeee **Okay**	*Okay*
20	19:09	Marie		Soll ich jetzt zur Ecke laufen?	*Shall I walk to the corner now?*
21	19:13			Haaaaalloooo	*Heeeeelloooo*
22	19:14	Anna	→	Jaaaa ich laufe auch los 💪	*Jaaaa I will also leave* 💪

Marie agrees with Anna's suggestion to leave right away (instead of studying first, which was her initial suggestion), and then proposes to go to a particular meeting place. Even though this is a matter of immediacy, Anna does not reply directly. Four minutes later, Marie therefore renews the relevance for a timely reply (message 21). In this context, Anna answers with <jaaaa> and reports that she is also about to leave.

There are several issues that complicate a straightforward interpretation of the particle's stance. The repeated use of <a> is in line with Marie's previous vowel iterations in message 19 (possibly indexing a reluctant agreement) and message 21 (which in the given context has an annoyed tone). It is possible that Anna's iteration reflects this tone, so that her <jaaaa> contextualises a somewhat irritated or stressed stance (one of the functions attested for lengthened *ja* in spoken interactions, see Section 2.2). Also, a euphoric response would be a rather untypical reply to an annoyed reminder or to

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a simple and unmarked suggestion for a meeting place. That is, the activity context does not lend itself to a euphoric response. Moreover, with 💪 Anna uses an emoji that is more usually used in unmarked confirmations or agreements (see Section 5.1).

Unfortunately, the analysis of logfile messenger data has to stop at this point. There are no other resources that can help to disambiguate the stance Anna takes with her reply. The next turn proof procedure, by which a following contribution offers an interpretation of the preceding one (Sacks et al. 1974: 729), cannot be applied in the given context, as the next communicative action between the two participants is not documented in the database. The metadata do not contain any indication if this sequence has led to a follow-up discussion of how Marie has interpreted Anna's response. As mobile messaging chats are intertwined with many other social encounters in the texters' everyday communication (ranging from face-to-face meetings or phone calls to parallel chats that may also take place on other platforms), these multi-channel or multi-platform communication routines constitute a challenge for the interactional analysis of digital communication. At the same time, this deviant case illustrates the context sensitivity of response particles which gain their specific function in the activity context in which they are used, and the importance of co-occurring resources that help to contextualise a texter's stance of commitment.

7 Discussion

Responses are among the basic formats of social interaction (Lee 2013; Thompson et al. 2015). In confirming a prior, speakers not only make claims about the truth of a foregoing utterance but also negotiate issues of epistemic access and authority, agency and affiliation (Raymond & Heritage 2012; Stivers 2019). In the context of coordinating joint activities, participants also negotiate deontic rights and their commitment to a projected course of action (see Koivisto, this volume). While there is a growing body of conversation-analytic research of response particles in spoken interaction, only few studies in digital CA have touched upon their systematic deployment in text-based interactions (Imo 2013, 217ff.; Tagg 2009). Rather, concerning response design, digital CA research has mainly concentrated on CMC-particular issues of the management of disrupted adjacency and overall interactional coherence (König 2019a; Meredith 2019). Thus, future studies in digital CA should examine more closely which practices of action formation and action ascription texters have developed, given the particular affordances of mediated interaction.

The analysis of the interactional deployment of <ja> and its most frequent variants <jaaa(a)> and <joa> in German WhatsApp chats demonstrates how texters have adapted to the particularities of digital interaction (Herring 2013; Marmorstein & König 2021). On the one hand, there are clear associations between the different phonetic and prosodic shapes of the response particles

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in oral conversation and in text-based chats. The written forms are not unique to digital communication, but have been transferred from spoken interactions (Imo 2013: 271-277). On the other hand, texters appropriate the platform's textual resources to contextualise different stances of confirmation and agreement – such as the iteration of vowels to differentiate between <ja> for straightforwardness, and <jaaa(a)> for contextualising a euphoric stance.

Moreover, the corpus analysis has revealed that response particles can be part of multimodal gestalts which show some degree of routinisation in that simple <ja> confirmations are recurrently appended by 👍; while contextually marked emojis, such as 😍, co-occur with <jaaa(a)> responses. With only very few exceptions (see Extract 11 for a discussion), emojis are not necessary, i.e. texters can also indicate stances of commitment and agreement by the differential use of either <ja> or <jaaa(a)> alone. Emojis help, however, to illustrate straightforwardness or enthusiasm visually. Thus, a comprehensive interactional analysis of action formation in mobile messaging should not stop at the verbal level.

At the same time, the choice of particles is also fitted to the local context. <joa> often follows an initiating action which is framed as preliminary, such as candidate answers or a tentative suggestion. <Jaaa(a)> repeatedly appears after proposals and invitations that are marked as emphatic or enthusiastic, while <ja> (especially as a stand-alone particle) recurrently responds to questions that make a simple confirmation relevant.

Another issue particular to response design in text-based chats concerns sequencing: <joa> responses are usually followed by qualifications that prompt sequence expansion. In contrast, in <ja> and <jaaa(a)> responses, texters directly move on to another aspect or topic. Moreover, this level of analysis also pertains to the question of how actions are distributed across postings. In the given collection, chunking is not systematically associated with a particular response particle, but is rather used to separate the actual confirmation or agreement and all relevant aspects related to it from other topics in the chat, by 'packaging' them into one single posting. That is to say, if <ja>, <jaaa(a)> and <joa> responses are elaborated, these elaborations usually form part of the same posting (Extract 9 is a notable exception). Aspects that relate to parallel lines of talk are then delivered in a separate message.

Of course, the analysis of the three response particles <ja>, <jaaa(a)> and <joa> is only just a first glimpse into the intricate paradigmatic organisation of the answer possibility space in text-based messaging. Future research will have to incorporate other variants (see for instance Extract 7 for uses of *jooo* and *jawohl*, but also *jep, jau, jap, yo* and the English loan *yes*), as well as non-particle replies.[20]

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Table 2. Levels of analysis for the study of response design in text-based WhatsApp chats

Sequential embedding	Activity formats that invite confirmation or agreement as a response (affectively neutral queries for <ja> responses, emphatic style of writing often invites <jaaa(a)> as a response, <joa> after firsts that are framed as preliminary)
Linguistic design	Co-occurring interjections, hedging devices (e.g., modal particles, approximators with <joa>) or emphatic markers Co-occurring syntactic constructions (e.g., adversative structures, that qualify the confirmation or agreement in <joa> postings)
Orthography	Iteration (much variation in expressing enthusiastic confirmation or agreement with <jaaa(a), less variation with downgraded confirmations or agreements with <joa>) Capitalisation and punctuation (apart from single cases there is no systematic use of use of capitalisation; the same holds true for punctuation marks)
Sequential design	Sequencing within a posting (e.g., stand-alone cases of <ja> or <jaaa(a)> that contextualise a straightforward confirmation or agreement, initial placement of response particles to clearly mark the posting as responsive) Sequencing of postings: packaging of all aspects that relate to the confirmation or agreement, chunking for separating other lines of talk
Multimodal design	Use of co-illustrative emojis (e.g., 👍 with <ja> and 😊 with <jaaa(a)>) or absence of emojis (usually with <joa>)
Hypertextual design	Selecting and addressing users with the @ operator and the 'reply to' function are only rarely used to disambiguate reference to particular postings

Thus, a digital-CA analysis of response design in text-based messaging calls for a multidimensional approach that takes into account how texters appropriate the platform's affordances for recognisably designing their postings as responses, and for contextualising different stances of confirmation or agreement. Such an approach can work as a heuristic tool which first helps to identify the levels of analysis, and the range of possible resources that texters have at their disposal. In a second step, the actual

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practices that texters apply in a given data set can be explored systematically (see Table 2).[21]

To date, studies in digital CA usually build on observations obtained from the conversation analytic research of spoken interactions. The methods and resources speakers use to design their turns-at-talk in casual conversation form the background against which practices in digital communication are described. However, Stivers and Sidnell (2016) stress the point that proposals are especially hard to find in naturally occurring interactions. CA studies, therefore, tend to look at institutional or elicited data in which joint activities are planned (Asmuß & Oshima 2012; Stevanovic 2012; Stivers & Sidnell 2016). In contrast, WhatsApp chats offer a rich source for the study of offers, proposals, suggestions, requests or invitations, and their subsequent uptake in non-institutional settings. The analysis of directive-commissive actions in Koivisto (this volume), and this chapter, can thus, be a first step in opening up the reverse perspective in which conversation analytic research could be informed by results from digital CA.

Notes

1 I would like to thank Aino Koivisto, Lari Kotilainen and two anonymous reviewers for their constructive feedback on the first draft of this chapter. My thanks also extend to Kathrin Weber, Alexandra Groß and Agnese Sampietro for data discussions. I thank Victoria Barry for proofreading.

2 Conversation analytic research also documents its use as discourse marker, for instance as a prosodically integrated turn-initial device introducing dispreferred responses (Betz 2017; Meer 2009) or as a turn-exit device in final position (Auer 2021; Imo 2013). Moreover, *ja* can be used as a modal particle (Reineke 2018), as a backchannel, a newsmark or a question tag (Imo 2013: 159–195; Weidner 2015 for an overview of the particle's functional spectrum). *Ja* can also form part of the change-of-state token *achja* (Betz & Golato 2008).

3 "[P]honologische Varianten von *ja*, mit denen der affirmative Charakter dieses Responsivs herabgestuft werden kann" (Imo 2013: 169).

4 When donating their messaging chats, users are asked to provide metadata concerning (among other things) the chatters' gender, age, their relationship, or situational factors that are relevant for understanding the dialogues. Moreover, all donors make sure to replace all references to persons with pseudonyms (Beißwenger et al. 2019: 335–339). The database also records instances in which the 'reply-to' function was used. The data used for this study were collected before self-deletion of messages was introduced.

5 The collections can be accessed by registered MoCoDa users: https://db.mocoda2.de/message-list/ffJ758LGXp (collection of <ja> instances), https://db.mocoda2.de/message-list/izXqoZcNul (collection of <jaa> instances), https://db.mocoda2.de/message-list/IWdJNqcYOp (collection of <joa> instances).

6 Note, however, that the tokens might be appended by emojis or emoticons.

7 The message count has been taken over from the MoCoDa.

8 There is no additional information in the following dialogue or the database's metadata that could help to disambiguate this message.

9 Qualitative research shows that it is not possible to identify stable functions for emojis and emoticons. They rather work as multifunctional contextualisation

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cues that gain their functional potential in the given local context (see for instance Beißwenger & Pappert 2020; Sampietro 2021).

10 This message replies to a question that was raised in the previous dialogue.

11 A recurrent use of capital <J> at posting-initial position is due to the autocorrection feature.

12 In the other instances, <ja> responds to postings expressing thanks or wishes, or to picture postings. Alternatively, it works as a third-turn acknowledgement token. Five instances in the data could not be classified.

13 Note that the other two group members also confirm in a comparatively marked manner, by choosing another token variant with multiple iterations of the vowel (<Jooo>) or <Jawohl> as a token which is associated with emphatic confirmation (often in a military context).

14 Also see Imo (2013: 276) for <joa> in an SMS dialogue. Imo analyses this single instance as an alleviated response token ("abgeschwächtes Responsiv") that also works as a discourse marker projecting that the following assessment will only be mildly positive.

15 For 10 instances of <joa> in the collection, it is not possible to determine their point of reference. See Section 6 for a deviant case analysis.

16 From the given chat protocol, it is not clear what Fabius accomplishes with the emoji in message 688. It can be read as a support of Janus's suggestion not to start too late.

17 In contrast to the various iterations documented in section 5.2, in the given data, the use of <joa> is quite consistent. Compared with 42 instances of <joa> there are only three cases of <joaa> and five cases of <joar> (also see Table 1). So, vowel iteration is not utilised systematically.

18 In the given context, however, it is also possible that Hendrik's "joa" replies to Fabius' proposal in message 684, whereas the latter part of the message "ich auch wohl" (*me too* + modal particle) responds to message 690. Due to the particular temporal affordances of messaging chats (see Section 2) such sequential ambiguities cannot always be resolved.

19 This is a relevant observation in itself. This supports the general tendency for texters to use confirming response tokens in contexts in which they can be disambiguated.

20 Confirmation or agreement can also be done by emojis only (see for instance Extract 9), so the answer possibility space in messaging chats differs from that in spoken interaction.

21 Note that texters do not communicate with all textual resources available to them: While they could also make use of various graphostylistic resources text-based messaging affords (such as capitalisation or punctuation), they do so only infrequently. The same holds true for hypertextual mark-up strategies such as using the 'reply-to' function.

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Social media II

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Where to start?

Initiating post-match chat interaction on Tinder

Abstract

Although Tinder is one of the biggest dating apps in the world, a core feature of the platform is still scarcely researched: the chat function. In this chapter we analyse how Tinder users initiate interaction with their matches. The data consist of post-match chats of 10 Dutch Tinder users, analysed based on digital CA. We found that initiating interaction is often done by launching a first topic immediately, rather than by other possibly relevant actions such as greeting, identifying, or initial inquiries, and that chats are opened with actions that critically elicit a response. In these topic initiations, users also tend to orient to originality and commonalities with the matched user. Our findings indicate that Tinder openings are strongly tied to the specific digital environment (profiles, the abundance of dating candidates) *and* to the goal of the interaction: flirting and/or getting to know one another. Making a response relevant is the key to initiating a potentially 'effective' chat, as this gets the conversational ball rolling. Doing so in an original fashion makes the user stand out from "the crowd".

1 Introduction

Although Tinder is one of the most popular dating apps in the world, a core feature of the platform is still scarcely researched: the chat function (but see Licoppe 2020; Licoppe 2021). Users create a profile consisting of one to nine photos, some basic information like gender, age and possibly work/education and can also provide a short description, a so-called "bio", about themselves. The app then presents profiles of other users within a certain radius of the user's current location. Users choose whether they want to get in touch with

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someone by swiping left (no) or right (yes). When both parties approve, a match is established, and the users can start chatting. This text-based chat forms the bridge between a match and a possible offline encounter and is thus a crucial phase of the dating trajectory. Getting the conversational ball rolling may determine the success of the chat and thus impact whether the users will arrange a date. In this chapter we analyse how Dutch Tinder users initiate chat interaction with their matches. Our aim is to examine how the specific social and mediated context of the app factors into Tinder chat openings. The analysis first describes how conversation starters on Tinder are structured, finding they regularly include a topic initiation, not just greetings. We further analyse these topic initiations for how they are related to the specific social and technical context and affordances of Tinder, including the interactional work that is done to elicit a response from the recipient and to stand out from "the crowd".

Openings are crucial to any type of interaction. A conversation is "a substantive, naturally bounded stretch of interaction comprising all that relevantly goes on from the moment two (or more) individuals open such dealings between themselves and continuing until they finally close this activity out" (Goffman 1981: 130). Openings are thus an essential part of conversations, and they are highly organised (cf. Schegloff 1986). In openings, some matters are established: 1) *copresence*, meaning participants see themselves as socially present to each other (Goffman 1963); 2) mutual availability; and 3) mutual recognition. As the structural organisation of an opening is affected by the nature of the interaction (cf. Sidnell & Stivers 2013: 261), Tinder chat openings may also be assumed to be closely intertwined with their mediated context. Tinder chat openings have not been studied yet, but identification and recognition, greetings and topic proffers have been found to be pertinent to (landline and mobile) telephone calls and Facebook chat openings. Therefore, we briefly review these studies on openings in other mediated contexts.

2 Background

2.1 Opening a telephone call

Openings of landline telephone calls have probably received the most attention in CA-related research. The main point of reference of studies into telephone calls (Luke & Pavlidou 2002) is Schegloff's (1986) analysis of 500 American landline calls between friends and family members. He found that these openings tend to consist of four sequences (Schegloff 1986: 116):

1. the summons-answer sequence
2. the identification-recognition sequence
3. a greeting sequence
4. initial inquiries

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What follows these sequences is the *anchor position*, i.e., the point at which the reason-for-the-call is presented, typically by the caller (or the initiator of the contact, in case of a missed call). Participants treat deviations from this pattern as marked. For example, when a first topic is introduced before reaching the *anchor position*, participants interpret this as there being some urgency to the matter (Schegloff 1986: 117).

It has been argued that such highly organised openings in landline calls ensure that the essential opening issues are dealt with before 'the reason for the call' (Hopper et al 1990): when the summons is not answered, there is no *copresence*. The identification-recognition sequence ensures that both parties, lacking visual cues, can confirm they are speaking to whom they think they are speaking. The greeting and initial inquiries allow to check for mutual availability. Hence, the interactional structure of landline telephone call openings serves rather specific social functions.

The typical opening sequences described by Schegloff (1986) have become more explicitly recognisable as mediated by the technology of landline telephony with the examination of openings of *other* types of interaction, such as mobile telephone calls. Mobile call openings are in many respects similar to landline calls (Hutchby & Barnett 2005), but there are also differences, for example related to the fact that mobile phones (in Western cultures) tend to belong to individuals rather than to "households"/ groups of people (Hutchby & Barnett 2005). This difference is reflected in the absence of an identification-recognition sequence in mobile phone calls. While self-identification is common practice in Finnish landline calls, in Finnish mobile phone calls it usually only occurs when the recipient does not know the caller (Arminen & Leinonen 2006).

Another practice that is tied to the assumption that a mobile phone is generally answered by its owner is *pre-voice sample* answerer *identification* (Hutchby & Barnett 2005). In this type of identification, the caller pre-identifies the answerer by producing a second summons after the phone has been picked up (e.g., *Hullo Sammy,* spoken by the caller Neil to answerer Sammy, Hutchby & Barnett 2005).

The reverse is also possible, in which the called pre-identifies the caller (*pre-voice sample* caller *identification*, Hutchby & Barnett 2005). This is tied to the technological affordance (present in both landline and mobile phones) of the "caller ID", which enables callers to show their number/name before the summons is answered. This means the caller's name appears on the display when the answerer has the caller's number in their telephone's phonebook, which allows the recipient to identify who is calling based on the summons. The impact of this affordance is found in openings where answerers identify the caller - usually by saying their name - *before* a voice sample has been given (e.g., *Simone*, spoken by the answerer Kisha to caller Simone after picking up, Hutchby & Barnett 2005). Hence, the introduction of caller ID impacts how and when users identify the other party during the interaction and, specific to mobile phones, Western users orient to the idea that the answerer is always the owner of the phone. Similarly, openings of text-chat interaction are related to contextual and technical factors.

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2.2 Initiating a chat interaction

While Internet Relay Chat (IRC) openings were found to resemble face-to-face and telephone openings including greetings and salutations (Rintel et al. 2001), opening sequences in Facebook chats between friends were different from telephone call openings (Meredith 2014). For one, the summons consisted of the first message(s) sent, which implies the platform produces an aural and visual cue. This means that the summons in chat *always* does something else interactionally, apart from checking availability (Meredith 2014: 126–127) (or *copresence*), because a message needs to be sent in order to create a notification and get the recipient's attention.

Meredith (2014) identified three types of summonses in her data set: 1) greeting tokens; 2) personalised summons, like 'Babe!' (similar to mobile phone answers); and 3) topic initiations, in which the first turn was essentially treated as the *anchor position*. These topic initiations were not treated as marked by the chat users, showing topic initiations in chat are unlike those in telephone openings, in which starting the call with a topic initiation instead of the typical opening sequences may indicate urgency (Meredith 2014).

Regarding their design, topic initiations in Facebook chat often consisted of *topic proffers* (Meredith 2014: 126). Topic proffers in turn are often questions, allowing the recipient to embrace or reject the topic. These proffers tend to address topics that concern something in the recipient's knowledge domain or experience (Schegloff 2007: 170). Designing a first post in this way shows an orientation to the specific conversational partner(s) (cf. *recipient design*, Sacks et al. 1974: 727).

Lastly, the identification sequence found in landline telephone calls was not found in chat openings (Meredith 2014). This was related to the affordance of chat that the (nick)name of the other party is always available, making the sequence redundant. Similar to the openings of mobile telephone conversations, users seem to presume that the owner of the profile is also the one answering the summons. The lack of an identification sequence shows that users orient to the underlying principle that: '(...) "one should not tell one's coparticipants what one takes it they already know" (Goodwin 1979: 100)' (Meredith 2014: 127).

It should be noted that the Facebook chats examined by Meredith (2014) involved (Facebook) friends. Possibly, summonsing works differently in chat conversations between strangers. It is this type of setting which is relevant to online dating.

2.3 Flirting and (online) dating

Openings that are most often associated with the context of flirting are pick-up lines. Although there is some interactional work on flirting (e.g., Speer 2017; Haugh & Pillet-Shore 2018; Oktarini 2020), pick-up lines have, to the best of our knowledge, not been studied empirically. However, Sacks (1992) did conduct a small experiment with a group of students (49). He asked them to write down a pick-up line, finding that pick-up lines were overwhelmingly phrased as a question (Sacks 1992: 102). Furthermore, the local environment

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was employed in pick-up lines to co-categorise speaker and recipient (Sacks 1992). For example, by asking someone who is standing at the bus stop if they know when the bus will arrive, the environment (the bus stop) is not only employed to justify the interaction, but also to co-categorise both parties as potential passengers (Sacks 1992). Similarly, participants of a speed dating event orient to the context of speed dating in their conversation (not per se in the opening), displaying a shared naivete towards the activity and in doing so co-categorising themselves as similar kinds of people for whom speed dating is an atypical activity (cf. Turowetz & Hollander 2012: 653). Apparently, co-categorisation is common in the activity of getting acquainted, which is also relevant in flirting/dating.

There are roughly two types of platforms in online dating: dating sites and dating apps. Although these environments have become blurred in recent years (dating sites tend to be complemented by an app), they still differ substantially. Dating sites tend to have a larger focus on profile information. They show possible profiles of interest based on many possible search terms and filters. If a user is interested based on the profile, the owner of the profile can be contacted through a text message (e.g., chat or e-mail). Dating apps tend to have more concise profiles and show potential profiles of interest based on filters such as age, gender, and location. They only allow for interaction via chat once both parties have approved (a so-called 'match'). How users initiate chat interaction through these platforms has rarely been the topic of research (but see Mortensen 2017).

Research on Tinder specifically, has mostly focused on profiles and swiping behaviour (e.g., Ingram et al. 2019; Olivera-La Rosa et al. 2019; David & Cambre 2016), but there are also some studies of Tinder chats (Licoppe 2020; Licoppe 2021). These analyses provide insights into Tinder as an interactional space. First, similar to how strangers in face-to-face interactions use (an aspect of) the immediately available context as a first topic (Maynard & Zimmerman 1984), Tinder users tend to employ information from the other's profile in their chats, which can be linked to the profile as the only mutually available context in online dating (Licoppe 2021). Second, it has been found that Tinder users orient to "ghosting", which refers to the phenomenon that one party unilaterally breaks off contact by not producing more posts (Licoppe 2021). One of the practices users employ to avoid being ghosted is the use of first pair parts (FPPs) to establish conditional relevance (Licoppe 2021). Third, Licoppe (2020) found that there are substantial differences between Tinder chats and chats on Grindr, a dating app specifically for men interested in men. On Tinder, users tend to cycle through numerous topics, while on Grindr users arrange meetings much sooner. Furthermore, elaborate[1] answers seem preferred on Tinder, since this provides hooks for next turns, while on Grindr users tend to give laconic answers, seemingly avoiding interaction about more personal matters (Licoppe 2020). Hitherto, the ways in which users initiate Tinder chats has not been analysed in detail.

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3 Data and methods

3.1 Data collection

The data consisted of 96 post-match Tinder chats of 10 Dutch users. Following Licoppe (2020; 2021) these users were interviewed about their experiences with chat via the app and a corpus was made of the chat conversations they donated for research. Participants were found in the researcher's own network and through snowball sampling[2], with a prerequisite that participants would be willing to share some of their chats.

Ten participants were found (five cisgender[3] men, five cisgender women). They all received higher education, were between 21 and 30 years of age and resided in larger Dutch cities (Amsterdam, Nijmegen, Rotterdam, Zwolle). The interviewees' main reasons for using Tinder was to find a (temporary) romantic and/or sexual partner, similar to the average Tinder user's motivation (cf. Sumter et al. 2017). Entertainment and getting a better idea of their own place on the 'market place' were given as secondary reasons by some. None of the participants had a Tinder Premium or Gold account (paid services that unlock extra features of the app), so all participants had access to the same affordances.

The interviews provided context for the analysis of the chat conversations and insights into users' experiences with the app. They lasted for approximately 90–120 minutes and were audio-recorded. All participants consented to the interview being recorded and to recording any chats they shared during the interview. Using a topic list to guide the interviews, participants were asked to show examples for each topic to gather a relatively broad scope of chats. Topics included what the users considered a pleasant/unpleasant chat conversation, how they know someone is interested, meeting someone (or not) after a chat, ghosting (the conversational partner abandoning the chat), the offline context in which they used the app, and more. A general question was used to start the interview, and the first question with relation to showing chats was: "What happens after a match is established?". We also asked participants' opinions about and appreciation of the chats. Each interviewee donated between five and nineteen chats. Twenty-four chats consisted of an unanswered summons (one or more messages). The chats ranged in length from 1–15 messages to longer conversations of 40–100 messages. Length of the messages varied as well, ranging from 1 word (or a GIF [Graphics Interchange Format] or a single emoji) to more than 100 words. On average, messages consisted of 6–10 words.

The 96 chats were analysed using conversation analytic methods (ten Have 2007; Sidnell & Stivers 2012). We first made a collection of chat openings. These openings were analysed in a fine-grained manner, looking at actions and sequential organisation, turn design, and how this relates to previous research on openings and to the (technological) setting of Tinder (profiles, multimodality, timing of posts) (cf. Giles et al. 2015). This resulted in subcollections of opening posts on the basis of how they were structured: 1) a greeting and possibly initial inquiries; 2) a greeting, possibly initial inquiries, and a topic initiation; and 3) a topic initiation. Because topic initiations were prevalent in the opening posts, the latter two subcollections

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were further analysed. For this analysis, we excluded chats in which the first post never received a response (44 out of 96 chats), because we were also interested in how topic initiations were responded to. The data were discussed in multiple data sessions (cf. ten Have 2007). For this chapter, excerpts of the chats were translated into English by the authors; typos are not mirrored in the translations.

3.2 Ethics

There is little precedent for how to collect Tinder chat data in an ethical way (see also Condie et al. 2017). We explain our considerations and precautions in some detail (cf. Stommel & De Rijk 2021) to advance the discussion of how we can protect users without regarding the whole research area as off-limits.

Tinder chats take place in the private sphere, meaning they are only visible to both parties in the chat. Moreover, the conversations are highly personal, concerning potential (romantic/ sexual) relationships. Therefore, it is extremely important that the Tinder users who donated their chats are untraceable. To protect users, all data have been anonymised using pseudonyms and by removing all identifiable information such as photos, locations, and work/study details by blurring photos or using placeholders for textual information. Because Tinder does not offer the option to search for individual profiles and because these chats are not available publicly, it is virtually impossible to trace the participants of our study.

However, ethical conduct requires more than rendering participants untraceable. While the participants of the interviews consented to the use of their anonymised chats, their interactional partners did not. Asking these others for consent or providing an opt-out was near-impossible and had required the participants to approach each of their relevant matches through Tinder itself. Apart from practical issues (this is a lot to ask of participants), this manner of approaching users would also be far from ideal, as it would be an inappropriate context to recruit participants; recruitment through Tinder would be invasive, possibly even harmful.

This problem does not alleviate our responsibility as researchers. It is often difficult or impossible to ask users for consent in the case of online data, such as tweets, forum posts, etc. Therefore, it is important to consider what harm the research could do to unknowing participants. Previous research found that many concerns of users are related to the link between their utterances/ posts and their (online) identity (Golder et al. 2017). First, they fear to be made fun of or even bullied because of what they posted. Second, they are concerned that organisations or governmental institutes would use the data to disadvantage them. Third, they are concerned that their utterances are torn from their context, transforming what they tried to communicate (Golder et al. 2017, 9). In our study, these concerns are overcome by making it impossible to trace back the utterances to their source.

A fourth concern of users is that it feels 'creepy' or 'scary' to be the subject of research. In our study, we hope to alleviate this concern as the focus is on patterns in the chat interaction, not on anything related to the users

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themselves. To further take users' concerns into account as much as possible, the profiles of the chat partners were not copied and thus not included in the study, as these *are* strongly tied to the users and how they present themselves. The bio (textual part of the profile) is never cited since these texts are likely to be viewed by Tinder users and thus potentially recognisable. Where relevant for the analysis, we paraphrase profile information that was gathered during the interviews.

3.3 Tinder as an interactional context[4]

On Tinder, the only way to reach out to your match is through the chat feature. When a match is established, users receive a notification. Both users in the match are able to initiate a chat (unlike some other services, like Bumble, where a woman is able to start a chat with a man, but not vice versa). Users can have multiple matches and chat with multiple others at the same time. Users can also easily "unmatch", after which it is not possible to continue the chat, unless a match is re-established through swiping.

While chatting, the profile of the other party is readily available, by clicking the profile photo above the chat box. Apart from the name, age, 1–9 photos and possibly a concise text, the profile page shows the current physical distance between the user and their match (the other party). Some participants noted in the interviews, that they always view the other's profile before initiating a conversation, implying the profile can be a reason to refrain from chatting with the other party. Thus, a match does not indicate that users are (very) keen on starting a chat per se.

Furthermore, Tinder offers the possibility to customise the chat functionality, for example by turning off read-receipts. If this function is on, chat partners can see whether their latest chat messages were seen by their match. Users can also turn off push-notifications received while the app is closed. One can choose notifications of new matches or of new chat messages. During the interviews, some participants explained that they turned off chat notifications, because receiving many notifications in a short time was annoying. When notifications are switched off, users only know whether their match sent a new message when they open the Tinder app. Depending on the user, the app is opened with intervals of hours or even days. Therefore, long silences before a response on Tinder are hardly comparable to silences in online chatrooms or online multiplayer games. In those online environments, users tend to ask for or explain their reasons for not responding within a certain amount of time (usually several minutes at most) (Collister 2008). On Tinder, multiple days between posts do not seem to affect the "success" of a chat and users do not tend to apologise or explain long silences in our data set.

Users cannot see if their matches are online, but they can see if the other is typing. Tinder also adds a date and time code to the chat when the time between messages is longer than 15 minutes. A time stamp is also available for each individual message by tapping the message, but our data set lacks these time stamps. So, when there is no time code in our data set, this means that the post appeared within 15 minutes after the previous message.

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Lastly, Tinder offers the use of emojis and GIFs and the option of sharing songs and a phone number. Sending a photo is not possible, but it is possible to comment on photos of the other party's profile. These comments then appear with the photo in the chat. Tinder does not have a quote feature.

4 Findings

We first describe the ways in which Tinder openings were structured in terms of action(s) like greetings, initial inquiries, and topic initiations. Then, we present two patterns we identified in topic initiations specifically, namely orientations to originality and to commonalities with the "match" (i.e., the recipient).

4.1 Opening interaction

For the sake of brevity, we use the term "conversation starter" to refer to all posts the initiating user sends before the recipient responds. In terms of action(s), we found three types of conversation starters:

1. a greeting and possibly initial inquiries
2. a greeting, possibly initial inquiries *and* a topic initiation
3. a topic initiation

Extracts 1–3 are examples of these three types of conversation starters[5]. In Extract 1, Lorenzo opens the chat with a greeting. Kiki responds two days later with a return greeting. The next morning, Lorenzo makes initial inquiries (message 3) to which Kiki responds that evening.

Extract 1. Type 1

1	Mon, 18th, 22:55	Lorenzo	Hey	*Hey*
2	Wed, 20th, 22:08	Kiki	He :)	*Hi :)*
3	Thu, 21th, 11:09	Lorenzo	Alles goed?	*Everything okay?*
4	Thu, 21th, 19:56	Kiki	Yes. Met jou?	*Good. And you?*

Extract 1 thus shows a case in which a greeting sequence is completed before another sequence is initiated, even when there are long stretches of time between the posts.

There are also cases in which the greeting and inquiries are made as a conversation starter, not waiting for a response but grouping first pair parts (Type 2) (cf. package post, Hutchby & Tanna 2008). Extract 2 is an example,

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consisting of a greeting ('Hey Chantal') and a topic initiation ('What are you looking for in a boyfriend?).

Extract 2. Type 2

1	Sat, 29th	Edo	Hey Chantal, gevonden!! 🙋 Wat zoek je in een vriendje?	*Hey Chantal, found him!!* 🙋 *What are you looking for in a boyfriend?*

Lastly, conversation starters may straightforwardly consist of a topic initiation without any greeting or general inquiries, as can be seen in Extract 3.

Extract 3. Type 3

1	Sat, 7th, 9:00	Roger	+1 voor je anthem! Ik begon me al af te vragen of ik de enige was die ze kent 😁	*+1 for your anthem! I was starting to wonder if I was the only one who knew them* 😁

An opening on Tinder consists of less steps than the canonical telephone opening (cf. Meredith 2014). In Tinder chat, the summons always does something besides summoning, thus the summons-answer sequence takes a different form and is often combined with other actions, like greeting, initial inquiries (type 1 and 2), and even initiating a first topic (type 2 and 3). Second, there is no identification/recognition sequence as the name of the other party is always readily available.

In conversation starters that consist of more than a greeting, we see that the initial inquiries are done and/or the first topic is introduced immediately after the greeting, which shows that in Tinder chat, the sequences do not form adjacency pairs like in spoken conversation, but that first pair parts are produced in series without waiting for a second pair part (cf. Meredith 2014).

The three types of openings posts were relatively equally distributed in our data (see Table 1). Topic initiation in the opening post (type 2 and 3) is thus a common practice on Tinder, occurring in more than half of the chats.

Table 1. Distribution of types of opening posts

Type	**Chats (n = 96)**
1) Greeting and/or initial inquiries	39 (40,6%)
2) Greeting and/or initial inquiries *and* topic initiation	24 (25,0%)
3) Topic initiation	33 (34,4%)

Given the prevalence of topic initiations in first posts, we now analyse their design, what they achieve and how they are responded to. Aside from their prevalence, topic initiations are also of interest for further analysis, because

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they may be assumed to be particularly relevant for the process of "getting to know the other person" and thus warrant further analysis.

4.2 Topic initiation in/as a conversation starter

In all following sections we only look at type 2 and type 3 conversation starters that received a response (type 2, n = 18; type 3, n = 26) (see Method section). We examine the example of Edo and Chantal more closely (Extract 4).

Extract 4. Partial repeat of Extract 2

1	Sat, 29th	Edo	Hey Chantal, gevonden!! 🙋 Wat zoek je in een vriendje?	*Hey Chantal, found him!!* 🙋 What are you looking for in a boyfriend?
2	Sat, 29th, 23:04	Chantal	Hee Edo! Heb ik even geluk! Wat ik zoek? Hmmm goeie vraag....	*Hi Edo! Lucky me! What I'm looking for? Hmmm good question....*

Edo opens the chat with a personalised greeting ('Hi Chantal') followed by 'found him!! 🙋', which implicitly refers to Chantal's bio. At the end of her bio, she writes: 'I'm looking for a boyfriend, do you know anyone?'. 'found him' *treats* the profile question as a first pair part (cf. "retrosequence", Schegloff 2007). While emojis do not have a clear-cut meaning, the 🙋-emoji potentially embodies Edo's availability – the raised hand signals something like 'I'm here' or 'I volunteer'. Thus, Edo's topic initiation responds to Chantal's bio, meaning it is designed for Chantal specifically and depicts him as someone who carefully read her bio before starting the chat. This type of recipient design (Sacks et al. 1974: 727), by drawing on contextual information like the bio, seems typical for chat openings more generally (cf. Stommel & Te Molder 2016). Then, he asks: 'What are you looking for in a boyfriend?', expanding on his topic initiation with a question. This makes a response relevant and shifts the topic in a more serious direction, inviting Chantal to elaborate on what type of person she is looking for and thus also allowing her to deny that she "found him".

These two characteristics of topic initiations, being 1) recipient-designed based on the profile information (41 out of 44) and 2) containing a first pair part (35 out of 44), can be found in most type 2 and 3 opening posts, as can be seen in the examples in this chapter. We now turn to another aspect of topic initiations in Tinder chats.

4.3 Topic initiation: Orientation to originality

Recurrently, users orient to originality in their opening posts. Extract 5 shows a conversation starter from James to Kiki. Kiki 's bio mentioned that she likes

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to play videogames. James initiates a conversation with a question ('what games do you play?'), which is preceded with a self-deprecating preface: 'Here's another boring opening:'. This preface comments on the conversation starter, implying James knows what counts as a good conversation starter. He thus wards off the critique of being boring *and* orients to the norm not to open a chat in a boring manner. The latter aspect is related to the context of Tinder: 'another' refers to conversation starters from *other* matches Kiki may be assumed to receive.

Extract 5

1	Wed, 1st, 14:07	James	Hier nog een saaie opening: welke games speel je?	*Here's another boring opening: what games do you play?*
2	Fri, 3rd, 23:18	Kiki	Ik zou zo een lijst kunnen typen en er wen uir mee bezig zijn 😂	*I could type out a list and just take a whole hour doing so* 😂
3			Sorry voor de typos. Gaat lekker	*Sorry for the typos. Going strong*
4			Over het algemeen point & click indies. Veel oude spellen. Een paar nieuwe, maar vaak blijven het indies. Op dit moment veel Stardew Valley. Ik raak er al een beetje op uitgekeken dus zodra mijn pc meeverhuist ga ik starten met Obduction. Daar wacht ik al 3 jaar op 😂	*Generally point & click indie games. Many older games. A couple of new ones, but mostly indies. At the moment a lot of Stardew Valley. I'm starting to get bored with it already so as soon as my pc is moved with me I'll start with Obduction. I've been waiting for that game for 3 years* 😂

Thus, the preface achieves two things. First, it positions James in relation to other possible matches starting a conversation with Kiki. Second, it portrays James as someone who knows the Tinder convention that you shouldn't use a "boring" question to open a chat. Paradoxically, James thus shows that despite his "boring opening" he knows the rules of the game and is therefore a Tinder-savvy interactional partner. He is orienting to originality as an important quality, without doing something original there and then. Kiki's elaborate response treats James' choice of topic as worthwhile ('I could type out a list and just take a whole hour doing so'), implicitly denying James' self-deprecating preface of his own opening question.

In Extract 6, Jip comments on his own opening using an account for this first topic rather than a preface.

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Extract 6

1	Fri, 11th, 14:05	Jip	Heehee, watvoor "muziekjes" hebben je voorkeur?	*Heyhey, what kind of "tunes" do you prefer?*
2			Ik dacht ik bespaar je nog meer afgezaagde gamergirl comments en begin gewoon over muziek	*I thought I'd spare you even more hackneyed gamergirl comments and just start off about music*
3	Sat, 12th, 01:03	Maya	Hey hey! Ahh super fijn haha eindelijk	*Hey hey! Ahh so nice haha finally*
4			Ik ben zelf wel een trouwe rock fan, maar over het algemeen kan ik overal wel naar luisteren. Beetje hiphop tussendoor kan ook nooit kwaad ^^	*I'm a loyal rock fan I'd say, but generally I can listen to anything really. A little bit of hiphop inbetween doesn't hurt either ^^*
5			Waar luister je zelf naar?	*What do you listen to?*

A greeting ('Heyhey') is followed by a question about Maya's taste in music in message 1. The quotation marks ('"tunes"') refer to Maya's bio which contained the word *muziekjes* ('tunes'). Following the opening question, Jip provides an account (message 2) which is critical of gaming as a topic ('hackneyed gamergirl comments') in contrast with music as a topic, implying this is more interesting or original. The design of the account with 'I thought I'd spare you' presents Jip as taking into account Maya's presumed interests.

The fact that Jip accounts for his conversation starter indicates that there are normative expectations surrounding suitable first topics. This is also evidenced by the use of 'even more' (message 2) which orients to the possible multitude of matches and chats and the interest of standing out from other Tinder users.

Maya's reaction aligns with Jip's account although she only implicitly confirms that she often receives questions about videogames. She accepts his account in message 3 with an affective response token ('Ahh'), an assessment ('so nice'), two laughing tokens and 'finally' which implicitly confirms she frequently receives questions about gaming on Tinder and positively receives Jip's considerateness ('I thought I'd spare you'). The affective token, laughing tokens and superlatives ('so nice' and 'finally') treat Jip's account as humorous. Crucially, both participants orient to Maya's bio for what counts as original and to the norm to be original or different from 'the others'.

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4.4 Topic initiation: Opening in a marked way

In the conversation starters shown in Extract 5 and 6, users orient to the norm that a first topic should be original. Another way users might be seen to be invoking originality on Tinder is by initiating an uncommon interactional activity to get the conversational ball rolling. We call these openings marked because they deviate from most topic initiations in our data set which are first pair parts, specifically information seeking interrogatives (see also Meredith 2014). Extract 7 is an example of an opening which does something different than seeking information, namely initiating a game in which the initiator of the contact *already knows* the 'correct' answer the other is invited to give. It is one of only two such instances in our data set (see Extract 9 for the second case). Danni initiates a chat with Lara.

Extract 7

1	Wed, 4th	Danni	We hebben allebei een foto met gekleurde huisjes	*We both have a photo with little colorful houses*
2			Ik gok dat die van jou in Stockholm is genomen	*I'm guessing that yours was taken in Stockholm*
3			Nu mag jij raden waar mijn foto is genomen🤓	*Now you can guess where my photo was taken*🤓
4	Thu, 5th, 17:10	Lara	Nee haha, in Praag!	*No haha, in Prague!*
5			Die van jou in Copenhagen denk ik?	*Yours in Copenhagen I think?*
6		Danni	Oehh jammeeer	*Ohh toooo bad*
7			Praag is wel nice!	*Prague is nice!*
8			Mooie stad	*Beautiful city*
9			Helemaal goed geraden💯	*You guessed completely right*💯
10			Wanneer was je in Praag?	*When where you in Prague?*
11	Thu, 5th, 19:40	Lara	Jaa hele leuk stad!	*Yeahh great city!*

In her conversation starting messages (1–3), Danni initiates the activity of a game rather than an exchange of information. First, she points to a commonality in her and Lara's profile ('We both have a photo with little colourful houses') (message 1). Message 2 provides a guess where Lara's photo was taken, thus treating Lara's bio as the resource for the game. The next post then invites Lara to make a guess where Danni's picture was taken (message 3). Again, the emoji is ambiguous, but it seems to emphasise the game element ("wise" face), for example inviting Lara to be "smart" or

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referring back to Danni herself in a playfully self-deprecating way. So, this opening does not seek (more) information about Lara in terms of hobby's or taste in music like in the previous examples, but invites Lara to play a game. Lara aligns, which is "played out" until message 6. Interestingly, Danni then shifts to the information seeking format working towards the question 'When were you in Prague?' (message 10), capitalising on the topic of the game but no longer in the game format. So, the game, in retrospect, served the originality of the opening, and once the conversational ball is rolling, the more common information seeking – getting to know one another – is turned to.

4.5 Topic initiation: Orientation to commonalities

Apart from originality, Tinder users orient to commonalities with their matches. This can be a way to distinguish oneself from other possible matches, namely by highlighting specific commonalities. The conversation starter in Extract 8 is an example of pointing out a commonality instead of looking for one (i.e., noticing rather than asking). In message 1, Roger starts the conversation by complementing Els about her anthem (Tinder profiles may contain a favourite song, which others can listen to through Spotify). In the same message he notes he thought he was 'the only one' who knew this band, highlighting a "special" commonality between him and Els (fan of the same band). In other words, he co-categorises himself and Els ('+1 for your anthem!') and simultaneously places other Tinder users outside of that category ('I was starting to wonder if I was the only one that knew them'). Els accepts the compliment ('Haha thanks!') in message 2 and elaborates on her anthem 'I always say this will be the opening dance on my wedding 😂😂😳' which can be heard as a flirt in the context of Tinder and dating.

Extract 8. Partial repeat of Extract 3

1	Sat, 7th, 9:00	Roger	+1 voor je anthem! Ik begon me al af te vragen of ik de enige was die ze kent 😄	*+1 for your anthem! I was starting to wonder if I was the only one who knew them* 😄
2		Els	Haha thanks! Ik zeg altijd dat dit de openingsdans wordt op mijn bruiloft 😂😂😳	*Haha thanks! I always say that this will be the opening dance on my wedding* 😂😂😳
3		Roger	Haha damn dat is wel heel ver vooruit gedacht al heb ik wel een nummer geclaimd daarvoor i gues😂	*Haha damn well that's thinking very far ahead though I've already claimed a song for that I gues*😂

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Co-categorisation is something Tinder chat openings have in common with pick-up lines in face-to-face interaction. However, the mutually available context that Tinder users have access to contains different or even more personal information than co-presence generally grants strangers. While initiators of a face-to-face conversation rely on the local environment, like 'we are both waiting for the same bus' or 'we both smoke', the categories on Tinder can be personalised to a greater extent by using information found in the profile. Extract 9 shows just how specifically recipient-designed such conversation starters can be.

Extract 9

1	Mon, 2nd	Fokke	Kun jij deze zin (1 van m'n favoriete) dan afmaken: "Pohh mien pa en ma stemmen er elk jaar op, Partij van de armoed? Ik weet wel…"	*Can you finish this sentence (1 of my favourites) then: "Ohh me dad and mum vote for it every year, Party of the Poverty? I do know…"*
2		Ilena	Partij van de uh armoed?	*Party of the uh Poverty?*
3		Fokke	Ken je die nog niet want dan heb ik een parel voor je	*Don't you know that one yet because in that case I have a beauty for you*
4		Ilena	OHH IK ZAT TE VER	*OHH I WAS TOO FAR*
5			CDA is ChristenUnie natuurlijk	*CDA is ChristenUnie of course*
6		Fokke	Hahaha yesss	*Hahaha yesss*
7			Prachtig	*Beautiful*
8			Maar hij zegt ook nog partij van de armoed hahahaha	*But he also says party of poverty later hahahaha*
9			Love it	*Love it*

Fokke starts a chat with Ilena by referring to a video fragment he suspects she is familiar with based on her profile. Like Danni (Extract 7), he establishes conditional relevance in an original manner by producing a grammatically unfinished sentence for Ilena to complete (cf. *designedly incomplete utterances*, Koshik 2002). Unlike in Extract 7, Fokke does not explicate the basis for this conversation starter, but he refers to her bio by using 'then' in ('Can you finish this sentence (1 of my favourites) then:'). His first message is thus recipient-designed and highly reliant on being co-members of a niche group, using the referent '1 of my favourites' without any specification. Ilena only has the quote and her own bio to derive what Fokke is referring to.

Thus, the co-categorisation done by Fokke is highly personalised. Not only is the reference he makes focused on one of Ilena's interests, he narrows down the category to which he counts them both as members by assuming Ilena's knowledge on this topic and implicitly even testing it. After a further probe from Fokke (message 3), Ilena passes the "test" (message 5), after

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which Fokke displays enthusiasm (messages 6 and 7) having established a highly specialised commonality.

5 Conclusion and discussion

Our analysis identified practices related to the initiation of Tinder chats. First, greetings are optional, not default for starting an interaction, merely working towards topic initiation. An explanation for this finding is that it seems difficult to distinguish yourself from others with a greeting (and initial inquiries) alone, making it more likely that no response will follow at all (cf. Licoppe 2021). This is an even bigger hurdle when the chat is initiated while the recipient is not online, and the conversation thus starts (even more) asynchronously. When an opening sequence is produced over the course of hours or even days, little interactional progress is made (cf. Extract 1). This may also explain why openings on Tinder frequently consist of or include topic initiation (type 2 and 3). Second, topic initiation is recipient-designed, drawing on the user's profile. A topic initiation usually consists of an information seeking first pair part. Third, Tinder chat openings normatively orient to originality. Such orientations both ward off potential accusations of being boring and display the user as knowing what counts as original and what does not. Fourth, topic initiations may highlight commonalities, co-categorising the initiator of the chat and the recipient in a highly specialised way. Thus, pointing out commonalities is also a way to stand out from the crowd.

We will discuss how these findings relate to previous research on openings of chat interactions and dating. In line with Meredith's (2014) findings, we see that chat openings on Tinder differ significantly from telephone openings, both landline (Schegloff 1986) and mobile (Hutchby & Barnett 2005; Arminen & Leinonen 2006). This is related to the affordances of chat: the summons always does something else besides summoning, and the name of the profile owner being always available makes identification generally unnecessary, even when initiating contact with strangers.

The finding that topic initiations are common is in line with previous research on chat (cf. Meredith 2014), indicating that users exploit the affordances inherent to the technology. Where a greeting may be used to check the availability, it is likely that opening with a topic initiation is done to elicit a response as soon as the recipient becomes available: " [In] a context where the recipient's availability is not yet established, chat-starters may design their turns to best mobilise a response *when* the recipients become available" (Meredith 2014: 167, emphasis in original). Our analysis supports this explanation, because the Tinder topic initiations were overwhelmingly recipient-designed and often contained information seeking first pair parts, designed to elicit a response (see also Licoppe 2021).

It has been suggested that topic initiation is done when availability is already established (Szymanski et al. 2006). However, Tinder does not provide any information regarding availability, so this cannot explain our

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findings. Thus, we bolster Meredith's (2014) claim that greetings can be done to check availability for synchronous chat interaction, while topic initiations are done to elicit a response regardless of availability. We also found that users initiate interaction with a greeting *and* a topic initiation at the same time (type 2 openings), which shows that greetings and initial inquiries do at least more than checking availability.

Another suggested explanation for the prevalence of topic initiations in chat, is that it is related to a 'continuing state of incipient talk' (cf. Schegloff & Sacks 1973), which implies the conversation does not have to be re-opened even if there has been a gap in the talk. Meredith (2014) rejects this as an explanation of her findings, on the basis that the topic initiations she found were often the first things posted in a chat. She studied chats between (Facebook) friends, whereas our data consist of chat openings between strangers. Therefore, our findings support her rejection of a 'continuing state of incipient talk' as an explanation of topic initiations further, as we can also be certain that the online interaction is not a continuation of offline or preceding online talk.

So, it seems that in chat, mutual availability and co-presence are not relevant for opening interaction. This is likely tied to the affordance of chat, which allows for a state of what Licoppe (2004) calls "connected" presence, in which presence is not simply the opposite of absence and where the physically absent party renders themselves present by "multiplying mediated communication gestures" (Licoppe 2004: 135). In other words, the relationship is strengthened by phatic communication regardless of physical distance, sending text messages or doing short calls, enabled by the connectivity inherent to mobile phone technology at any place, at any time, (Licoppe 2004). Chat through mobile phone apps always provides an open channel for communication for users to instigate or continue talk (cf. SMS, WhatsApp, Telegram). Despite physical absence, or in the case of Tinder, despite being strangers, participants are connected.

Due to the Tinder swiping functionality preceding the chat and the list of matches from which users navigate to individual chats, users are confronted with potential competition with other matches. This competition is implicitly oriented to in meta-comments as part of conversation starters, which refer to other possible matches that open chats. In face-to-face flirting, competition may also be relevant, but this is likely to involve other interactional means (e.g., gaze and other non-verbal cues). On Tinder, one cannot be certain of the recipient's attention and/or investment in the interaction. It is also unclear how many others have an open channel with your match, which amplifies the (feeling of) competition. Thus, the affordance of Tinder to have multiple matches at the same time and easily switch back and forth between chats, makes standing out from "the crowd" crucial.

Highlighting commonalities is a way to distinguish oneself on Tinder, as Tinder users are generally looking for others with whom they have things in common (Neyt et al 2020). Pointing out a commonality can be a strategy to start the chat in an original way. The more specific these commonalities are, the more effective such a conversation starter potentially is, as it reduces the chance that others highlight the *same* commonality. However, standing out

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is not necessarily an explanation for these conversation starters, because the reverse is also true: a conversation starter can also be used by the *initiator* to gauge if the match is interesting to them.

Flirting on Tinder thus shows some similarities to speed dating, as well as some differences. Trying to establish something shared using context information is done in both environments, as seen by the co-categorisation of Tinder users and how speed daters discuss the act of speed dating itself (and claiming a shared naivety towards the activity) to establish some common ground (Turowetz & Hollander 2012). However, on Tinder the context of the profiles allows for co-categorisation in a much more specific manner than in speed dating. While speed dating was found to follow an interview-like format (Stokoe 2010), Tinder is characterised by first pair parts that center on originality, either in terms of action or topic.

The importance of standing out is supported by the orientation users show to originality in their topic initiations. Sending an original conversation starter, by choosing an original topic or opening in an uncommon way, projects an interesting or playful chat. This makes it more likely one catches the attention and/or receives a response. Catching attention may be not only related to socially "standing out", but also to the relevance of being noticed in the constant stream of messages and notifications on mobile phones. Opening posts never receiving a response and thus going unnoticed is a common phenomenon in digital/online interactions (cf. Giles et al 2015). A catchy starter may increase the chance that the recipient actually notices the post. The relevance of socially standing out from the crowd is also evidenced by the meta-commentary in openings that accounts for lack of originality. By criticising their own opening, users orient to the norm that openings on Tinder should be original and present themselves as Tinder savvy.

Overall, opening a Tinder chat is intricately interconnected with both the technical/design affordances of the app and the social context of dating. Those who optimally exploit the available means, are likely to be most successful in Tinder dating.

Notes

1 Elaborate answers can be understood as answers in which more information is given than needed, i.e. when orienting to the maxim of quantity as described by Grice (1989) (Licoppe 2021).
2 Method of data collection where participants recruit additional participants from their personal network.
3 Cisgender people identify with the gender they were assigned at birth. The antonym would be 'transgender'.
4 Based on the Tinder version of Spring 2020.
5 All transcripts represent the way users constructed their posts. Some users pressed "send" after each sentence, while others sent posts containing multiple actions. The transcripts reflect this with each new line representing a new post. This is relevant because it indicates whether the recipient had any opportunity to respond in between posts.

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The Finnish *anteeks*(*i*) *mitä* 'sorry what' as a resource for expressing affect on Twitter

Abstract

The chapter deals with the use of a Finnish open-class repair initiator, *anteeks*(*i*) *mitä* (lit. 'sorry what'), which consists of an apology lexeme *anteeks*(*i*) and the question word *mitä*. The study data comprises technology-mediated, written interactions on Twitter, which are public. The main approach of the study is Digital Conversation Analysis. The study adds to previous conversation analytical studies on repair and affect, which have mainly focused on spoken interactions. Previous research on Finnish spoken interactions has mentioned *anteeks*(*i*) *mitä* but not yet studied it in any detail.

The study shows that *anteeks*(*i*) *mitä* can be used in different sequential positions. The expression is mainly used as part of a longer tweet, either as an initial element in a responsive tweet or as a hashtag, *#anteeks*(*i*)*mitä*, which is usually situated towards the end of the tweet. It can also be used in a similar sequential position to that in spoken language, functioning as an open-class repair initiator. I argue that, regardless of its position or of whether it is written as a hashtag, in most cases, *anteeks*(*i*) *mitä* expresses affective stance of astonishment and indicates a problem in accepting something prior. It can be a cue and stance marker for displaying affiliation or disaffiliation with a previous tweet, or an evaluation in an opening tweet that deals with daily online news topics or events on a tv show, for example.

1 Introduction

When online interaction is in written form, the ways of communicating and using language are very different from those in face-to-face settings. However, many profound practices of spoken interaction, such as repair

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sequences, seem to have found their way into written interactions. But, as the channel of communicating is different from spoken interactions, these practices acquire new types of usages and interactional meanings. This study focuses on the use of the Finnish expression *anteeks*(*i*) *mitä* on Twitter.[1] This expression consists of an apology word *anteeks*(*i*) 'sorry' and the question word *mitä* 'what'. Conversation analytic studies of spoken language have analysed these two lexemes separately as open-class repair initiators (Haakana 2011; Carlson 2014). *Anteeks*(*i*) *mitä* is also used as a unit of its own, but prior research has reported that the expression is uncommon in spoken data (see also Lilja 2010; Pajo 2013). On Twitter, however, *anteeks*(*i*) *mitä* is used more frequently, even as a hashtag. In this chapter, I will first demonstrate that 1) *anteeks*(*i*) *mitä* can be used on Twitter as an open-class repair initiator, but this use is rare. Then, I will argue that in this techno-social setting 2) *anteeks*(*i*) *mitä* is conventionalised as a tweet-initial response to something prior and often precedes a longer evaluation and 3) expresses affective stance. In addition, I will show that 4) the expression is also used as a hashtag (*#anteeks*(*i*)*mitä*) to show affective stance and invite the ambient audience on Twitter to affiliate with the writer.

Section 2 briefly introduces relevant prior research on repair, affect, and Twitter. The next section presents the study data (3). Section 4 examines the affective use of *anteeks*(*i*) *mitä* in responsive tweets. The final section contains a summary and discussion (5).

2 Background

This section lays the foundations for the analysis by briefly introducing conversational repair (2.1), this study's approach to affect (2.2), and Twitter as an interactional platform (2.3). These topics have been studied extensively in different fields of research, yet much remains unknown about the use of repair initiators in Finnish in written form and in online interaction.

2.1 Research on repair

In spoken interactions, conversations are built turn by turn, as a joint effort of the participants. As natural speech is not planned but formed during interaction with co-participants at a certain moment, the flow of speech often includes minor hesitations and errors, both in one's own speech turns and between participants. An open-class repair initiator (e.g., *huh*, *what* or *sorry* in English) indicates a problem in the other speaker's previous turn, but it does not explicate the source of the trouble and leaves the interpretation of the problem to the speaker of the trouble source turn. The open-class repair initiator has already been mentioned in the classical papers by Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974) and Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks (1977). Drew (1997) has investigated it in more detail in English interactions.

Regardless of the lexeme used, different open-class repair initiators have a similar sequential position and interactional functions in different languages

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(Dingemanse, Torreira & Enfield 2013; Dingemanse & Enfield 2015). Studies on Finnish repair initiators have confirmed this finding (e.g., Haakana 2011). A common way in which to respond to such a repair initiator is to repeat either one's whole prior turn or a part of it. The responses, preferably produced by the producer of the trouble source turn, often show that the producer of the repair initiator had a problem related to either hearing or understanding. In addition to solving problems related to hearing or understanding, the repair sequence has been shown to be used for other interactional purposes, such as *schisming* (Egbert 1997), or showing closeness between participants (Haakana & Kurhila 2009).

Apology-based expressions in repair sequences have been discussed previously in studies based on English data. In his study on the sequential environments of open-class repair initiators, Drew (1997) shows that apology-based expressions (e.g., *sorry?* and *pardon*?) are used similarly to expressions such as *huh?* or *what?* in the two sequential environments analysed (after an abrupt topic change; after an inapposite turn). Schegloff (2005), when discussing complainability in interaction, also presents instances in which apologetic expressions (*sorry, excuse me*, and *I beg your pardon*) are used as open-class repair initiators for claiming fault for not having heard or understood what the co-participant said. He also points out that apology-based open-class repair initiators may in some cases be used disaffiliatively, *directing* blame towards the producer of the trouble-source turn (ibid. 473). In his study on managing trouble responsibility in conversation, Robinson (2006) focused on the use of other-initiations of repair, finding that apology-based open-class repair initiators, such as *sorry?* and *I'm sorry* assign the responsibility of the problem to its speaker.

In Finnish, the most common open-class repair initiators are the question word *mitä* 'what' and its abbreviation *tä*(*h*)[2] (Haakana 2011; Lilja 2010; Haakana, Kurhila, Lilja & Savijärvi 2016). Lexemes such as *anteeksi* 'sorry' and *kuinka* 'how' have been reported as less common repair initiators (Haakana 2011; Pajo 2013). *Anteeks*(*i*) on its own (Carlson 2014) does not seem to have an apologetic meaning as a repair initiator but is more related to hearing problems. The use of open-class repair initiators has also been attested in text-based chat interaction on IRC (Nurmikari 2013). The expression under examination, *anteeks*(*i*) *mitä*, combines two lexical elements that are also used separately as open-class repair initiators. Studies of spoken interaction have so far rarely found this type of combination.

I will argue that on Twitter, *anteeks*(*i*) *mitä* does not accomplish an apology but, instead, serves to display affect. The expression is usually positioned as an initial element at the beginning of a longer responsive tweet. In this sequential position, the expression exploits the function of initiation of open-class repair by highlighting something that was said or conducted prior, but does not call for a repair.

2.2 Research on affect

Research on social interaction from conversation analytic and interactional and related linguistic perspectives has found affect to be expressed

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in collaboration with co-participants and embedded in actions and the sequential positions of actions (e.g., Couper-Kuhlen 2009; Du Bois 2007; Sorjonen & Peräkylä 2012). Affect can be conveyed through multiple different resources, such as verbal, prosodic, and embodied resources like gestures and body posture (e.g., Goodwin 2007). Studies of Finnish spoken interactions have focused on affect in, for example, (response) particles and their prosody (Vepsäläinen 2019; Koivisto 2011) and laughter (Haakana 1999).

Prosody can play a significant role in the interpretation of the function of open-class and other types of repair initiators. An affective stance of astonishment can be revealed by prosodic cues in a repair initiator, as well as other responses, in different languages (Selting 1996; Huhtamäki 2015; Benjamin & Walker 2013; Katsiveli 2020; Sørensen 2021). To date, no thorough research has been conducted on the prosody of open-class repair initiators in Finnish. However, Routarinne (2003) and Haakana (2008; 2011) have observed that expressions whose sequential position resembles that of open-class initiators are used with different kinds of prosodies and may become interpreted for example as news receipts or expressions of astonishment rather than answer-seeking questions.

In text-based interaction, the participants cannot take advantage of prosodic cues for portraying affect. Ways of expressing affect in written form have established conventionalised usages in, for example, literature and literature dialogues (e.g., Nykänen & Koivisto 2016). On social media, affective interaction is an essential way of sharing opinions and feelings about current topics, and is distinctive in that the display of affect is public (Koskinen 2014; Giaxoglou & Johansson 2020; Johansson & Laippala 2020). Particularly on Twitter, affective stances are often taken by employing evaluating hashtags such as *#annoyed* and *#lovely* (Zappavigna 2015) and, for example, by portraying laughter (e.g., *#sigh*, *#laughs*; Wikström 2014). They can also be utilised as metadiscursive signposting (e.g., *#irony*, *#sarcasm*; Kunneman, Liebrecht, van Mulken & van den Bosch 2015). In this chapter, I show that *anteeks*(*i*) *mitä* is conventionalised as a lexical resource for portraying affect on Twitter, both by itself and as a hashtag. In the following section, I take a closer look at Twitter as a platform for interactions.

2.3 Twitter

Twitter is a popular social media platform, widely used by news agencies, the mass media, politicians, companies, and celebrities, as well as ordinary people. The way of participating in a conversation on Twitter is by *tweeting*, that is, by posting short messages of not more than 280 characters long. The messages – *tweets* – may include text, emojis, hashtags, direct quotes from other Twitter users, photos, GIFs (Graphics Interchange Format), videos, and links to external websites (Wikström 2019). One can also participate in a conversation for example by liking, commenting, and sharing tweets posted by others. Every Twitter user has their own profile page, on which one's tweets and other activities appear for anyone to read and comment on. Two of Twitter's perhaps most distinctive social features are *retweeting*, which means sharing a tweet from another Twitter account on one's own

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Twitter page (Scott 2021), and *following*, which means subscribing to receive the tweets of another user or account in their stream (Marwick & boyd 2010). These features make it possible for ordinary people to connect with each other and even public figures and institutions; however, such asymmetrical connections are usually non-reciprocal (Dayter & Jarmulovitz 2016). Forming spontaneous social groups through engaging in interaction is characteristic of Twitter, and *ambient audiences* are always present when posting a tweet (Marwick & boyd 2010; Zappavigna 2011). As it is common to post tweets that are open for anyone to read in a public space, Twitter can be used as a platform for self-praise (Dayter 2014).

One of the most well-known features of Twitter is the hashtag. Users can produce them by writing the hash sign (#) and then a selection of letter and number characters. Some hashtags have become very popular (e.g., *#metoo*; Johansson & Laippala 2020), whereas other innovations are used only once. Unsurprisingly, hashtags have been reported to serve many social functions, ranging from topic-marking and metacommentary to emotive use and 'ambient' affiliation with the virtual community. (Wikström 2014; Zappavigna 2011, 2015). A hashtag may be positioned in any part of the tweet, making it a flexible resource for different pragmatic and affective purposes. The concept of a hashtag is relevant for this study, as one of the uses of *anteeks*(*i*) *mitä* is as a hashtag.

Twitter (2022) considers its content public and advises users to take this into account when posting content. Nevertheless, ethical issues still need to be addressed when dealing with data that are written online by private persons but shown publicly (Salomaa 2019: 31–34). Personal information, even if shared online on a public platform such as Twitter, might not be intended to be shared to a big audience or to be found by anyone using search tools, or to be collected by a researcher and published further (Zimmer & Proferes 2014; Ditchfield 2021). Regardless of its public nature, the sensitivity of both everyday and political conversational data on Twitter needs to be carefully considered. Consequently, many studies (e.g., Wikström 2014; Dayter 2015) have anonymised or pseudonymised the data excerpts in order to make the participants as unrecognisable as possible. In this study, the data examples were pseudonymised.

3 Data

The data for this study were collected manually in 2018–2020, using the search tool in the web version of Twitter. I used four search terms, variants of *anteeks*(*i*) *mitä* with or without a hash (see Table 1). *Anteeksi* with the word-final *i* is the written standard form of the word, whereas dropping the final *i* (*anteeks*) makes it more casual (Carlson 2014: 97–98; VISK 2004: § 37). Approximately a hundred tweets per variant were gathered, but the search for hashtag *#anteeksimitä* provided only 81 instances. The data consisted of 391 instances of (#)*anteeks*(*i*) *mitä*. Table 1 shows the frequency of the different variants in the data.

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Table 1. Occurrences of *(#)anteeks(i) mitä* and its variants in the data

Expression	**Tweets (N)**
anteeks mitä	101
anteeksi mitä	100
#anteeksmitä	109
#anteeksimitä	81
Total	**391**

The data excerpts shown in the examples below are copied manually as text from the original data. All the examples presented include the emojis and links to external websites that were attached to the tweets. Metadata linked to the data excerpts shown in this chapter, such as timestamps and likes, were collected at a later stage. The tweets are shown in both Finnish and English (translated). If a hashtag has been translated, it is marked with square brackets (e.g., *#[themagicianofmoscow]*, see Extract 2). In multiparty interactions, timestamps are shown in order to indicate the flow of the conversation and to analyze the sequential progression of the interaction. Each separate tweet is numbered to make following the analysis easier. The amount of likes and retweets related to each tweet are shown in square brackets below the translations. If a participant from the list of likes engages in the interaction with comments, they are also mentioned. Extract 1 illustrates how the tweets and their translations are presented in this chapter. The original tweet is presented as a screenshot in Figure 1. The user names have been pseudonymised.

Figure 1.

Extract 1

16.02	Antti Virtanen @anttivirtanen	Olipas viihdyttävää seurata MotoGP:n kilpailu! Jännitettävää aivan viimeiseen mutkaan saakka. Ei ihme, että lajin suosio kasvaa jatkuvasti! #motogpfi	*It was so entertaining to follow the MotoGP race! Exciting all the way to the last curve. No wonder the popularity of this sport keeps increasing all the time! #motogpfi*
	[9 likes, including Marko]		

The tweet has received nine likes, one of which is by Marko (a focal participant discussed in section 4.1). Likes provide cues for the analyst to interpret the participant framework and the participants' stances towards each other (Scott 2021; see Introduction of this volume). However, data

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gathered manually using a search tool, as in this study, did not always show the full list of likers, at which point of the interaction the likes were given, or whether some initial likes were retrieved. Hence, the lists of likes are ambiguous for analysis.

I now turn to the use of *anteeks*(*i*) *mitä* on Twitter. The data reveals two main contexts of use: *anteeks*(*i*) *mitä* in ongoing interactions, which is discussed in this chapter, and *anteeks*(*i*) *mitä* in reported dialogues embedded in conversational storytelling, which I consider elsewhere (Nurmikari, in preparation). Next, I look at how *anteeks*(*i*) *mitä* is used in different sequential positions and as a hashtag, and how the resource has a distinctive function in displaying affective stance.

4 The affective anteeks(i) *mitä*

In this section, I show that on Twitter, *anteeks*(*i*) *mitä* is used to display affect. I start by presenting two cases in which *anteeks*(*i*) *mitä* is used in the sequential place of an open-class repair initiator (4.1). From this, I proceed to discussing *anteeks*(*i*) *mitä* as an initial response in tweets that either affiliate or disaffiliate with what was said before (4.2, 4.3). I then examine instances in which *anteeks*(*i*) *mitä* is used as a hashtag (4.4). The section ends with an analysis of an instance (4.5) that implies that *anteeks*(*i*) *mitä* alone may function as an affective response.

4.1 Open-class repair initiation on Twitter

The data show that, *anteeks*(*i*) *mitä* can be used on Twitter as the only element in a tweet and in a sequential position similar to that of an open-class repair initiator. Extract 2 illustrates this. The opening tweet (1) consists of a photo of ice-hockey player Ruslan Ishakov, who is known by the nickname *Moskovan taikuri* 'The magician of Moscow', the nickname written in Russian, an emoji depicting a carnival tent, and Finnish hashtags. The tweet is by an institutional Twitter account *HC TPS*, Ishakov's sports club.

Extract 2

1	10.10	HC TPS @HCTPS	Волшебник Москвы 🎪 #HCTPS #Turku #Liiga #OleTPS #Moskovantaikuri [A photograph of Ruslan Ishakov playing ice hockey.]	*Volšebnik Moskvy [The magician of Moscow]*[3] 🎪 *#HCTPS #Turku #[League] #[BeTPS] #[The magician of Moscow]*
		[71 likes and 2 retweets]		
2	10.20	Anna Korpi @annakorpi	**Anteeks mitä?**	

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3	[time-stamp not available[4]]	Miro Salo @mirosalo	no ??	[*well ??*]
4	10.24	Anna Korpi @annakorpi	Anteeeeks ku en ymmärrä noita merkkejä 🤦	*Sorryyyy I don't understand those characters* 🤦
5	10.26	Janne Korhonen @jannekorhonen	#moskovantaikuri	*#[The magician of Moscow]*
6	10.27	Anna Korpi @annakorpi	Jassoota	*Aah, I see*

The first three hashtags (message 1) mention the sports club (*#HCTPS*), its hometown Turku (*#Turku*), and ice hockey (*#Liiga* 'league'). These are topic-marking hashtags (Wikström 2014), which give the reader a context, and attach the tweet to a broader Twitter discussion on these topics. The hashtag *#OleTPS* 'be TPS' that follows them connects the tweet to a marketing campaign (HC TPS 2019). The Finnish hashtag of the player's nickname (*#Moskovantaikuri*) is a translation of the Russian text and explains it for a Finnish-speaking audience.

Anna comments on the initial tweet with *Anteeks mitä?* (message 2). The following turn (message 3) is not written by the initial trouble source speaker (HC TPS), as is typical when treating open-class repair initiators in spoken interactions (Drew 1997; Haakana 2011); on Twitter, an institution might not answer (Dayter & Jarmulovitz 2016). Instead, it is Miro who first answers Anna (message 3) with the particle *no* and question marks, encouraging her to continue (Sorjonen 2002). Anna responds to Miro's tweet (message 4), apologising for the problem she caused (Schegloff 2005) by using the apology lexeme *anteeks* with multiplied vowels as a stance marker (*Anteeeeks*). An emoji of a monkey holding its head represents in this context an affect of embarrassment or frustration. Anna then continues by explicating her turn as an apology for not understanding 'those characters'. In message 5 a new participant, Janne, treats Anna's explanation as referring to the Russian characters and thus repeats the Finnish hashtag (*#Moskovantaikuri*) from the initial tweet as a repair. Hence he positions himself, similarly to Miro, as competent to answer Anna's question even if it relates to what was written by HC TPS in the opening tweet. In message 6 Anna accepts the repair. This example shows the use of *anteeks mitä* as an open-class repair initiator displaying a problem in understanding. The co-participant(s) do not initially treat the tweet as such, but Anna is asked to explicate her problem. She does so by repeating the expression of apology from her first tweet and by saying that the problem is related to understanding. The function of the *Anteeks mitä?* tweet is then revealed as a display of a problem in understanding.

The following example also shows the use of *anteeks*(*i*) *mitä* by itself in the sequential position of an open-class repair initiator. The conversation in Extract 3 starts with Antti's tweet about MotoGP, the Grand Prix of motorcycle racing. The first sentence begins with a finite verb suffixed with an enclitic particle chain *-pas* (*oli**pas** viihdyttävää* 'it was so entertaining').

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This feature makes the sentence positively emphatic (see, VISK 2004: § 834, § 1716). Antti tells that he has found the race exciting and states that the popularity of the sport keeps increasing.

Extract 3

1	16.02	Antti Virtanen @anttivirtanen	Olipas viihdyttävää seurata MotoGP:n kilpailu! Jännitettävää aivan viimeiseen mutkaan saakka. Ei ihme, että lajin suosio kasvaa jatkuvasti! #motogpfi	*It was so entertaining to follow the MotoGP race! Excitement all the way to the last curve. No wonder, the popularity of this sport keeps increasing all the time! #motogpfi*
		[9 likes, including Marko]		
2	16.33	Joona Orava @joonaorava	Paitsi Suomessa.	*Except in Finland.*
3	16.37	Marko Helin @markohelin	**Anteeks mitä**?	**Anteeks mitä**?
4	16.50	Joona Orava @joonaorava	Mihin sekään perustuu, että suosio kasvaa koko ajan Suomessa. Verrattuna mihin?	*What is that based on anyway, that its popularity keeps increasing in Finland. Compared to what?*
5	16.51	Joona Orava @joonaorava	Ei ainakaan medianäkyvyyden osalta. Eipä lajista pahemmin juttuja ole Suomessa.	*At least not as far as media exposure is concerned. There's hardly any news about the sport in Finland.*
6	16.52	Joona Orava @joonaorava	Etenkin siihen nähden, että Suomeen saatiin kisakin, jota nyt ei sitten tänä vuonna ajettu.	*Especially considering that we even got the race to Finland, which then wasn't held this year after all.*

In (message 2), Joona joins the conversation with a comment that grammatically fits as an addition to what Antti wrote (*paitsi Suomessa* 'except in Finland'; cf. Pomerantz 1984). By doing this, he is showing disagreement with Antti's opinion (Schegloff 1996; Ford, Fox & Thompson 2002; VISK 2004: § 1109). At this point, Marko joins the interaction with *Anteeks mitä?* (message 3). Joona, who wrote the previous tweet, treats Marko's *anteeks mitä* as addressed to him. He explicates his claim in three further tweets posted only one minute apart from each other, forming one multi-message answer and an explanation for his trouble-source turn (message 2). In Joona's initial answer (message 4), the clitic *-kään* (*mihin se**kään*** 'on which it-*kään*') implies a negative answer 'based on nothing'. Importantly, it shows disalignment (VISK 2004: § 1634–1635) with what Antti said about the sport being popular in Finland. In the subsequent tweets (messages 5–6), Joona continues by expressing his dissatisfaction with the state of the sport in Finland. Therefore, *anteeks mitä* functions as a repair initiator that gives Joona the floor to explain and justify his opinion. The data do not show any more participation on Marko's part, hence his stance in writing *Anteeks mitä*? remains unknown.

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This section has shown that *anteeks*(*i*) *mitä* can be used as the only element in a tweet to respond to another writer's tweet in a sequential position that resembles that of open-class repair initiation in spoken interaction. However, cases where such use of *anteeks*(*i*) *mitä* is followed by a repair as the second-pair part (see, Extract 2), are rare; on Twitter, it is common that a tweet does not get a reply (Salomaa 2019: 64–65).

4.2 Affiliative tweet-initial comment

The examples so far have shown the use of *anteeks*(*i*) *mitä* as the only element in a tweet. However, the expression is also used in the initial position of longer tweets. In these cases, *anteeks*(*i*) *mitä* does not function as an open-class repair initiator, implying the need for repair from another interlocutor. Instead, it is a tweet-initial display of affective stance. In this and the next section I analyse two main usages of *anteeks*(*i*) *mitä* in a tweet-initial position: its use as a display of affiliation (this section) and a display of disaffiliation (4.3). Extract 4 shows an affiliative use. It starts with Jussi's tweet about a piece of news about Winnie the Pooh (message 1). Mirja tweets back with a comment that begins with *anteeks mitä* (message 2).

Extract 4

1	Jussi Pesonen @jussipesonen	BREAKING: Aamun uutispommina tieto, että Nalle Puh on tyttö. Opittu todellisuuteni ei olekaan totta.	*BREAKING NEWS: A bombshell this morning, the claim that Winnie the Pooh is a girl. My learned reality is not true after all.*
	[102 likes, 9 retweets, 20 comments]		
2	Mirja Takala @mirjatakala	**Anteeks mitä** 😳 en ole tainnut ikinä ajatella tätä, mutta oletin pojaksi.	***Anteeks mitä*** 😳 *I don't think I've ever thought about this, but I assumed him to be a boy.*

Jussi frames his telling about having discovered surprising information about the gender of Winnie the Pooh as 'breaking news', displaying affective stance by using capital letters, and as a 'bombshell' (message 1). The tweet has received many likes and comments, one of which is written by Mirja (message 2). She starts her comment with *Anteeks mitä* and continues with a gaping eyes emoji, representing surprise. As Clift (2021) suggests in her study on spoken interaction, eye-rolling can display affiliation or, in contrast, disaffiliation. Accordingly, Mirja explicates her stance after her initial response. She explains the newsworthiness of Winnie the Pooh's gender to her, thus aligning with Jussi's surprised stance. Here, *anteeks mitä* is used as a tweet-initial lexical response to point out something unexpected in the prior tweet.

In Extract 5, *anteeks*(*i*) *mitä* again begins an affiliative tweet. Sami quotes[5] the chief inspector of the Finnish Food Safety Authority from a news article. The English hashtag *#OnlyInFinland* that is written after the quote comments

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on the absurdity of game not being accepted as organic meat and shows Sami's critical stance towards the news (on code-switching from Finnish to English as a stylistic resource, see Koivisto 2021). Timo responds to Sami with a tweet that starts with *anteeksi mitä?*.

Extract 5

1	Sami Peltola @samipeltola	Riistaliha ei täytä luomulihalle asetettuja määräyksiä, eikä sitä saa markkinoida luomuna, sanoo Elintarvike-turvallisuusviraston ylitarkastaja Eeva-Liisa Taskinen. #OnlyInFinland	*Game doesn't meet the regulations set for organic meat, nor is it permitted to be marketed as organic, says Eeva-Liisa Taskinen, the chief inspector of the Finnish Food Safety Authority. #OnlyInFinland*
	[293 likes, 43 retweets]		
2	Timo Alatalo @timoalatalo	**Anteeksi mitä?** Eikö riistaliha ole sitä ainoaa ja oikeaa luomua? Aivan käsittämätöntä.	***Anteeksi mitä?*** *Isn't game the one and only real organic food? Absolutely inconceivable.*
	[1 like]		

After the initial independent orthographic unit *Anteeksi mitä?*, Timo expands the tweet with two sentences. He first writes a question about game not being organic food, which starts with *eikö*, thus challenging the chief inspector's argument (VISK 2004: § 1695). He then explicates his view with an extreme case formulation (Pomerantz 1986) *aivan käsittämätöntä* 'absolutely inconceivable'. The two latter sentences of the tweet are second assessments and upgraded evaluations (Pomerantz 1984) that display affiliation with Sami's critical stance towards the topic that he raised. Hence, the tweet as a whole shows Timo affiliating with Sami's stance and displaying a critical stance towards what Taskinen said. The tweet-initial *Anteeksi mitä?* is used in a position different from open-class repair initiators, but takes advantage of their function by highlighting the issue as something problematic, *absolutely inconceivable*, and worthy of commenting further.

4.3 Disaffiliative tweet-initial comment

In contrast to its affiliative use, *anteeks*(*i*) *mitä* can also be used at the beginning of a tweet as a disaffiliative response to what was previously said or conducted. Extract 6 is an excerpt from a longer, multiparty conversation dealing with skills that one can learn in the army. Harri has participated in the conversation earlier with a comment supporting the army. In her tweet, Sanni shares her view on the army not being essential for learning certain skills (message 1). Below, Harri responds to Sanni's comment with a tweet that starts with *Anteeksi mitä?* (message 2).

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Extract 6

1	20.09	Sanni Koivu @sannikoivu	Jos miehet ei opi olemaan ryhmässä, keskittymään tai pukemaan villasukkia muuten kuin käymällä armeijan niin a) mikä vittu miehiä vaivaa b) voisko näitä ehkä sittenkin oppia jossain muualla	*If men don't learn how to be in a group, concentrate or put on woolen socks in any other way than doing their national service then* *a) what the fuck is wrong with men* *b) could these be learned somewhere else after all*
	[2 retweets and 7 likes]			
2	20.19	Harri Joki @harrijoki	**Anteeksi mitä?** Sulla ei selkeästi ole hajuakaan armeijasta ja siitä mitä siellä tehdään ja opitaan. Kommentistasi huokuu vielä nykyaikainen feminismi miesvihoineen. Kannattaisiko tutustua hieman aiheeseen ennen moista ulostuloa?	***Anteeksi mitä?*** *You clearly have no clue about the army and what they do and learn there. Your comment also oozes modern feminism with its misandry. Might be worth getting to know a bit about the topic before making such comments?*
	[35 likes]			
3	20.38	Sanni Koivu @sannikoivu	Lähipiirissäni on monta minulle rakasta miestä ja kaikki heistä osaavat pukeutua säänmukaisesti ja toimia muiden ihmisten kanssa, oli armeija käytynä tai ei :)	*I have many men in my circle whom I love dearly and all of them know how to dress to suit the weather and get on with other people, whether they went to the army or not :)*
	[2 likes]			

In message 2, Harri begins his response by employing the expression *anteeksi mitä* as an orthographic unit of its own. Thus, it is positioned as an initial element in a similar way that the expression was used in Extract 5. In the latter part of the tweet, Harri challenges Sanni's perception of the army and categorises her as somebody who has no knowledge on the topic. He also accuses Sanni as being a modern feminist with hatred towards men. In addition, he suggests her to familiarise with the topic. Here, the disaffiliative content of the whole tweet gives the tweet-initial *Anteeksi mitä?* an interpretation of disaffiliation towards what Sanni wrote.

In addition to responding to a previous tweet, *anteeks*(*i*) *mitä* can be used at the beginning of an opening tweet that is not commenting on another tweet, as shown in Extract 7. Aki writes a live tweet (Salomaa & Lehtinen 2018) about the television reality show Big Brother, topicalising it accordingly

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through the hashtag *#bbsuomi* 'Big Brother Finland'. He refers to an event in the show when the show participants have been sent to a cabin and are playing Battleship as an assignment.

Extract 7

1	Aki Tammi @akitammi	**Anteeks mitä?** Mökkiläiset sanoo et päättelytehtävä ja ei tarvi ilmottaa et uppos, mut sit ne ite valittaa samasta asiasta😊 #bbsuomi	***Anteeks mitä?*** *The cabin group says it's a logic-based task and you don't need to report sinking but then they complain about the same thing themselves* 😊 *#[bbfinland]*
	[3 likes]		
2	Elli Laine @ellilaine	se oli vitsin heitto.	*it was a joke.*

The tweet-initial element *Anteeks mitä?* appears as a disapproving response to what Aki witnessed while watching the show. Further, the element functions as a cue for the audience to interpret the rest of the tweet as an elaboration for the negative stance. Aki explains that the tv group's actions when playing Battleship did not make sense to him. The latter section beginning with mut 'but' signals a contradiction between the group's words and behavior. The laughing emoji then shows a humorous or ironic stance (König 2019). The tweet as a whole is thus revealed as a complaint. Elli, however, turns down Aki's complaint by explaining that the events in Big Brother had been a joke.

My investigation shows that *anteeks*(*i*) *mitä* can be used in different sequential positions. The expression is conventionalised in a turn-initial position (105/391 tweets) and as an affective stance marker that displays an affiliative or disaffiliative stance to what was said or done before. The vast majority (95 %) of these tweet-initial uses of the expression are written without the hash (cf. on a similar usage of the particle *eiku* as a tweet-initial resource on Twitter, Nurmikari 2021). As shown in the analyses above, despite its apology lexeme, the tweet-initial *anteeks*(*i*) *mitä* does not typically represent an apology on Twitter. On the contrary, the use of the expression indicates that there is something problematic in the previous turn or conduct; hence, the use of the apology word seems overt and ironic. To conclude, the affective meaning of the use of the tweet-initial *anteeks*(*i*) *mitä* is related to the following aspects of its design and use: 1) The author gives no opportunity for the other participant to give an answer to *anteeks*(*i*) *mitä*, as would be the case after a genuine question (e.g., an open-class repair initiator); 2) *anteeks*(*i*) *mitä* is followed by more text that reveals an affiliative or disaffiliative stance by the writer; 3) the apology lexeme *anteeks*(*i*) does not function as an apology but, rather, appears as ironic.

So far, I have discussed the use of *anteeks*(*i*) *mitä* as a tweet-initial element that is an affiliative or a disaffiliative response to a previous tweet or a source outside of Twitter, followed by the writer further explicating their stance and opinion with the subsequent part of the same tweet. It appears that this use makes use of the meaning potential of the resource as an open-class repair

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initiator and the apology lexeme to display a critical stance towards a prior participant's contribution. Pomerantz (1984) describes the use of *questioning repeats* (*what* and *hm*) preceding expressions of disaffiliation in spoken interaction, and also Schegloff (2007: 102–105) points out that an other-initiated repair sequence may anticipate disaffiliation as a *pre-rejection* or *pre-disagreement*. Moreover, the function of *anteeks*(*i*) *mitä* seems similar to that of the responses described by Benjamin and Walker (2013) and Kurhila and Lilja (2017), where a strong prosody used with a repetition of part of the trouble source turn expresses astonishment and a problem in accepting the previous turn. In text-based interaction on Twitter, a similar orientation can be displayed by using a lexical expression that looks like an open-class repair initiator, thus pointing out a problem in the previous turn or action, including an ironic apology used to express affective stance and highlight a problem with acceptance.

4.4 As an evaluative hashtag

As shown above (Sections 4.2 and 4.3), *anteeks*(*i*) *mitä* is conventionalised as a tweet-initial response that precedes further evaluative stancetaking. However, when *anteeks*(*i*) *mitä* is employed in hashtag format (*#anteeks*(*i*) *mitä*), it most frequently appears in a non-initial position (184/190 cases). The hashtag as the only element in the tweet (one instance) or tweet-initially (five instances) is very rare in the data. Forming a hashtag from a word that is not meant as a topic marker is prominent and may imply that the hashtag is significant in evaluating what is being said and taking a stance (Zappavigna 2011). Extract 8 shows such a use of the hashtag *#anteeksimitä*. Heli shares online news and a direct quote from the website of the newspaper Helsingin Sanomat on her Twitter page. The quote suggests different grading scales for different genders in matriculation exams.

Extract 8

Heli Salonen @helisalonen	”Ylioppilaskirjoituksissa omat arvosteluasteikot kummallekin sukupuolelle.” **#anteeksimitä** Ei kuulosta #tasaarvo'lta?	*'Separate grading scales for both gender in matriculation examinations.'* ***#anteeksimitä*** *Doesn't sound like #[equality]?*
	Feminismi saapui Suomen talouskeskusteluun – asiantuntijat vaativat hallitu… Sukupuolten välisen tasa-arvon pitäisi olla talouspolitiikan tärkeimpiä tavoitteita, sanovat feminististä taloustiedettä edustavat Diane Elson ja Jerome de Henau. Valti… hs.fi	***Feminism landed in the Finnish financial debate – experts demand that the govern...*** *Gender equality should be one of the most important goals of financial politics, say Diane Elson and Jerome de Henau, who represent feminist economics. Gover... hs.fi*

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By using the hashtag *#anteeksimitä* after the quote, Heli takes an affective stance to the suggestion put forward in the newspaper article. She then elaborates her stance with a rhetorical question ('Doesn't sound like #[equality]?'). In doing so, she brings up a contrast between the quote and improving of equality and treats the content of the quote as unacceptable, revealing a disaffiliative stance. Moreover, the word *tasa-arvo* 'equality' is presented as a hashtag. By doing so, she is emphasising and defending the importance of equality, and topicalising the problem she is addressing. Moreover, the news she shared included a quote by a feminist, with whose opinion she can be seen to affiliate through her affective tweet for an ambient audience (Zappavigna 2011). Overall, the use of *anteeks*(*i*) *mitä* in hashtag format is similar to the responsive and affective functions of the expression in the tweet-initial position discussed in the previous sections.

The hashtag *#anteeks*(*i*)*mitä* may also be positioned at the end of a tweet, which is common to hashtags (see e.g., Zappavigna 2015). Extract 9 shows a tweet-final use of *#anteeksmitä* in a live tweet about the tv show Talent. Katri localises the tweet to a current moment with the adverb *nyt* 'now' and the demonstrative pronoun *tää* 'this'. These cues show that Katri tweeted while watching the tv show.

Extract 9

Katri Viita @katriviita	Siis nyt mun huumori ei riitä ymmärtämään et mitä tää scheisse on talentin FINAALISSA?! #talent **#anteeksmitä**	*So now my [sense of] humor doesn't stretch to understanding what this scheisse [shit] is in the talent FINALE?! #talent* ***#anteeksmitä***

In Extract 9, cues to affect, such as capital letters, an exclamation mark and a German swear word *scheisse* 'shit', make clear Katri's critical stance towards the events in the television show. By using the hashtag *#anteeksmitä*, Katri is emphasising her struggle to approve the events. However, the hashtag is positioned further from the explanation of the problem than in Extract 8, that is, after a topicalising hashtag *#talent*. It can be argued that the *#anteeksmitä* hashtag invites other Twitter users affiliate with the tweeter (see, Zappavigna 2011). However, as is common on Twitter, the tweet did not receive any responses.

4.5 As a stand-alone evaluative response

As the prior sections have shown, the lexical expression *anteeksi mitä* (including its variant forms and hashtag adaptations) is regularly used in tweeting as a resource for displaying disaffiliation and for taking an affective stance towards something prior. However, in the prior cases the resource was employed in multi-unit turns in which affective work was also carried out by other means. Next, I will show that *anteeks*(*i*) *mitä* can be convey a disaffiliative stance even as a stand-alone response. In Extract 10, the expression is used as a response to a retweeted content.

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Extract 10[6]

Risto Mattila @ristomattila	**anteeks mitä** **Maija Markkanen** @maijamarkkanen Olen tänään hiljentänyt enemmän tilejä kuin koskaan. Jotkut vinosilmäkulttuuria ihannoivat mt-potilaat ovat tulleet spämmäämään ketjujani ihan huolella. Se on joku anime, joissa piireissä näitä trolleja on ihan solkenaan. He kaikki ovat ilmeisesti homoja. Pahempia kuin silakat.	***Maija Markkanen*** *@maijamarkkanen* *Today I've muted more accounts than ever. Some mental health patients idealizing slant-eyed culture have come and really spammed my threads. It's some anime, whose circles have an endless number of these trolls. They must all be gay. Worse than Baltic herrings.*

The shared tweet contains a racist, derogatory statement towards several groups of people: mental health patients, Asians, and homosexuals. When sharing the tweet to his followers, Risto takes a negative stance towards its content by using the expression *anteeks mitä*. The expression does not seem to indicate a problem in understanding (cf. section 4.2) but, rather, in accepting the content ideologically. This way, Risto can be seen as constructing a 'positive identity' for himself (Dayter 2014: 101), that is, presenting himself in a public space as someone who is against discrimination (Marwick & boyd 2010).

It should be noted that Risto's tweet did not get a response, which in turn means that its meaning cannot be analysed by relying on the conversation analytic 'next-turn proof procedure' (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson 1974). However, the tweet can still be analysed for how it is 'recipient designed' (Meredith, Giles & Stommel 2021: 7–8; Koivisto, Virtanen & Vepsäläinen, this volume). The stand-alone expression *anteeks mitä* is written without a question mark, therefore expressing affect and disaffiliation, rather than seeking an answer. Importantly, as the disaffiliation embodied by *anteeks mitä* is not elaborated in the tweet, both the recipient and the more general, ambient audience are arguably oriented to as understanding and agreeing on why the prior tweeter's conduct is considered so plainly and self-evidently objectionable.

4.6 Summary of findings

This section has shown that the lexical expression *anteeks*(*i*) *mitä* can – even if infrequently – be used in a similar sequential position to that of open-class repair initiators in spoken interaction. The most common use of the expression on Twitter, however, is a tweet-initial response, where *anteeks*(*i*)

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mitä predeces a longer evaluation sequence. The tweet as a whole shows affective stance and affiliation or disaffiliation with something that has been said or presented earlier by another Twitter user, or for example, in an online news article. The hashtag version of the expression is often used in a tweet-final position after the target of evaluation has been presented by the writer. In this use, the hashtag is often complemented by other cues that likewise display affective stance towards what was said or performed earlier. *Anteeks*(*i*) *mitä* is also used, although more rarely, as a stand-alone comment in tweets that include content sharing. In these cases, the expression displays, by itself, the writer's negative and disaffiliative stance towards the shared content.

The affective use of *anteeks*(*i*) *mitä* is conventionalised on Twitter. Single cases of affective usage of *anteeks*(*i*) *mitä* in the sequential position of open-class repair have been discovered also in chat-based interaction (Nurmikari 2013) and in literary dialogue (Leppänen 2020). Moreover, the rarity of the expression used by itself as an open-class repair initiator, as presented in this study, is in line with what has been observed about the use of the expression in the data of spoken interactions.

5 Discussion

This chapter has shown how a repair expression originating from spoken interaction – *anteeks*(*i*) *mitä* – has adapted to being used on Twitter as a resource of stancetaking. By applying the methods of Digital Conversation Analysis, I have investigated the sequential positions and interactional functions of the resource in Twitter interaction. The results revealed, first, that altough *anteeks*(*i*) *mitä* can be used as an open-class repair initiator also in tweeting, this use is rare.

Second, and more importantly, the analysis revealed that the expression *anteeks*(*i*) *mitä* does not typically call for a repair on Twitter but functions as a stance marker that shows affiliation or disaffiliation with a prior tweet or, for example, shared content. In this usage, the expression often paves way for a longer elaboration that reveals the writer's stance in more detail. However, the expression can also be used as a stand-alone response that displays disaffiliation or negative stance towards something prior. Overall, this use of *anteeks*(*i*) *mitä* extends the resource's repair use to point out something objectionable in the prior discussion. In other words, the expression is harnessed not only to show unexpectedness but also to do moral work.

The analysis also presented the use of the expression as a hashtag, *#anteeks*(*i*)*mitä*. The hashtag use shows a strong pragmatic force of affect and evaluation, similar to the use of the expression without the hashtag. As its characteristic, the hashtag form addresses an ambient Twitter audience and invites the audience to affiliate and share the tweeter's views and experiences as members of an ambient community (see, Marwick & boyd 2010; Zappavigna 2011). The phenomenon of turning a repair initiator, originating from spoken interaction, into a hashtag-based stancetaking

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resource is not restricted to Finnish only, as similar hashtags can be found on Twitter at least in English (*#sorrywhat*, *#excuseme* and *#saywhat*), German (*#bittewas*, *#wiebitte*), Dutch (*#pardon*), Swedish (*#vasadu* and *#ursäkta*) and Estonian (*#vabandust* and *#palunvabandust*). Future research could look at the interactional practices related to these hashtags from a cross-linguistic perspective.

As a final remark, this study has shown that collecting instances of a specific expression such as *anteeks*(*i*) *mitä* from social media interaction can result in a data set that reveals phenomena which, even if existing in spoken interaction, have remained unstudied due to their rarity. Although the affective stancetaking use of *anteeks*(*i*) *mitä* is evident on Twitter, it is surely not a phenomenon restricted to Twitter only. It is used, for example, in headlines of entertaining online news articles (see also, Leppänen 2020). Future research could benefit from investigating its use in different text-based environments, from online news sites to discussion fora and mobile messaging apps.

Notes

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2 The second syllable *tä* in *mitä* is the partitive case morpheme. It has been conventionalised as an open-class repair initiator by itself (Haakana 2011).

3 Thank you to Suvi Kaikkonen for transcribing and translating the Russian expression.

4 As said, the timestamps were collected later than the initial data. In the meantime, Miro's tweet had become unavailable, which means that also the timestamp was not available. The order of the tweets and the timestamps on Anna's tweets (2) and (4) imply that Miro's tweet (3) was posted between 10.20 and 10.24.

5 The Taloussanomat news article can be found by googling the quote. Sami himself did not share the source. In the original news article, the verb for reporting is not *sanoa* 'to say' but *muistuttaa* 'to remind'. The Google results imply that Sami modified the quote for his tweet.

6 In the shared content, the expression *silakka* (*Baltic herring*) refers to a person who is actively against racism and discrimination politics (https://www.silakkaliike.fi).

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Video conferencing III

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Graphicons as a vehicle for eliciting negative emotions in multimedial workplace interaction

Abstract

This chapter examines a case of multimedial interaction in the workplace by studying the parallel use of two digital platforms in accomplishing an organisational task. In our study, we analyse a case in which the participants of a video-mediated workshop draw on images or animated GIFs (i.e. *graphicons*) in managing emotion discourse. The activity of reflecting on work-related emotions is conducted across two media, that is, partly on a text-based digital platform, partly during the workshop on the video-conferencing platform. Using conversation analysis, we analyse both how assignments featuring graphicons are commented in the chat function of the platform and how the participants elaborate their comments orally. The study shows, first, that graphicons may be used in an organisational context as part of initiative actions that encourage employees to display their negative emotions. Second, we show how graphicons may be used in managing and maintaining organisational emotional orders, that is, expectations with regard to displaying emotions in a given organisation. Finally, our research contributes to digital conversation analysis through showing how sequentiality is constructed and oriented to across different media in workplace interaction.

1 Introduction

In this chapter, we investigate digital practices in a workplace context.[1] As Orlikowski and Scott (2016) note, digital work cannot be separated from

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non-digital work in the 21st-century workplace. Rather, digital practices are ubiquitous. Moreover, digital practices form part of complex organisational activities in which different modalities and media, including both digital media and more traditional forms of communication, such as paper documents and face-to-face interaction, are closely intertwined (Boczkowski & Orlikowski 2004). In this chapter, we analyse a case of multimedial interaction in the workplace by studying the parallel use of two digital platforms in accomplishing an organisational task.

We approach our data by applying conversation analysis. Thus, as well as illuminating the role of digital practices in the workplace, our study has a methodological goal of demonstrating how conversation analysis can be used to analyse multimedial interaction. We focus primarily on sequentiality across different media. Sequentiality has been a major concern in conversation analytic studies of digital interaction. As Giles et al. (2015) point out, the norms governing sequentiality may be different in digital vs. everyday spoken conversation. For example, Skovholt and Svennevig (2013), in their study of workplace emails, found that non-response to initiatives, such as opening posts in a discussion forum is often treated as unproblematic. Further, as pointed out in the early stage of CMC research by Herring (1999) and Garcia and Jacobs (1999), a sequential structure may be 'disrupted' such that the first pair parts and second pair parts of adjacency pairs are not adjacent. Many of these differences between digital and face-to-face interaction have to do with the asynchronous character of text-based digital interaction: users interacting with each other need not be in the same space at the same time. Thus, the task of conversation analysis, with regard to sequentiality, is to uncover what 'nextness' means in different kinds of digital contexts (Meredith 2019). Research has shown (e.g., Berglund 2009) that participants in digital interaction have found ways of constructing coherence across asynchronously produced sequences.

When we move from the analysis of interaction in a single digital platform to looking at multimedial interaction, further complexities with regard to the 'nextness' of activities arise. There may be two kinds of nextness that are intertwined: the nextness of activities within one media and nextness across different media. These activities may also be accomplished through various modes. Thus far, little conversation analytic research of such practices has been reported (Meredith 2019). Reeves and Brown (2016) and Oloff (2019) examined how social media use is embedded in everyday face-to-face activities, and Reeves et al. (2017), in their work on game studies, considered how interaction inside a game can be combined with the study of players' interaction with each other and with spectators in the face-to-face context.

Here we approach multimediality in the workplace by analysing a case where a specific workplace activity is accomplished with the help of multiple media. Our data are drawn from a workplace context in which members of an organisational team meet in a series of workshops that are arranged with the help of a digital platform. The purpose of the workshops is to enable the team members to plan and co-ordinate their activities and support each other throughout a long-range project. Thus, an important aspect of the workshop is to offer opportunities for stopping and reflecting on the current

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stage of the project. In this study, we focus on a practice where, as part of a video-mediated workshop, the team members utilise images or GIFs (i.e., *graphicons*; see Herring & Dainas 2017) in reflecting on their feelings about the project. The activity is conducted via both media, i.e., the text-based digital platform and the video-conferencing platform. The workshop facilitator posts the graphicons on the platform, and the participants choose those that best reflect their own situation and use them in discussing their feelings, first in writing the platform's chat function and then through video-mediated talk-in-interaction during the workshop. We address the following research questions:

1. How are graphicons used to organise emotion discourse?
2. How do the participants use the affordances of different media to display their emotional stances?
3. How is emotion discourse sequentially organised across the different media?

The results enable us to contribute to three different discussions. First, we show how graphicons as a specific kind of digital resource can be utilised in the workplace and how their use is intertwined with the institutional order of workplaces. Second, we show how a multimedial activity is actually interactionally accomplished in a workplace and, accordingly, reflect on the interactional affordances of different workplace media. Third, we offer insights on how multimedial activities can be approached through conversation analysis.

In the next section, we first introduce our key term of multimediality. Next, we review earlier studies on graphicons and on the management of emotions and affect in the workplace context. Finally, we describe our data and methodology and present our empirical analysis of the data.

2 Background

2.1 Multimediality

Here we are interested in situations in which people use multiple digital media in combination in order to accomplish their work and interact with their co-workers. We refer to the use of these kinds of media combinations as multimedial activity. Below, we briefly introduce the idea of multimediality and related concepts.

Technical development has prompted discussion on the intertwined nature of contemporary media forms across a broad variety of disciplines, from art and literary research to cultural studies (Bateman 2017). These fields have addressed the phenomenon with concepts referring to media interrelationships in general, such as *intermediality* (Elleström 2014) and *media convergence* (Jenkins 2008), and more specifically to transformations across media, such as *transmediality* (e.g. Ryan & Thon 2014; Elleström 2014), and *remediation* (Bolter & Grusin 2000). These concepts all emphasise

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the fact that communication or media products in the present era of digital media are not distributed solely through a single medium, but through various media, such as both newsprint and online media (see Bateman 2017) – or, as in our case, through different digital platforms.

Here, instead of any of the above terms, we use the broader concept of *multimediality* to describe the use of, and interrelations and transformations between, multiple media. At the same time, this concept allows us to bridge the gap between media studies and linguistics. According to Bateman (2017), while media studies have tended to ignore the role of language, linguistics and multimodal studies have tended to focus exclusively on language or modes, ignoring the role of the medium itself. In this chapter, we draw in particular on Kress and van Leeuwen's (2001) work on multimodality and multimediality and treat multimediality as a necessary counterpart of the concept of multimodality. In talking about multimediality, our aim is to distinguish between media and modes, while also emphasising the integral relationship that subsists between them. While modes can be seen as ways or systems for conveying meanings, such as talk, writing, or gesture, the concept of medium refers to material resources for meaning making, such as paper or digital platforms (ibid.). We also concur with Arminen et al. (2016) that interaction is always mediated. Thus, the concept of medium refers not only to technologies but also, for example, to the human body as a medium for talk and gestures. Different media offer different affordances (Hutchby 2001; Meredith 2017), that is, different opportunities for action, as well as different constraints. In addition to the technical interface of the medium, modes are an important aspect of affordances: for example, technological media such as Facebook, Instagram, or Teams differ in the modes or combinations of modes (e.g., talk, writing, moving or still images) they afford and prioritise. Reciprocally, as Bateman (2017) notes, semiotic modes are not "free" but are always contextually anchored in a medium.

2.2 Graphicons in interaction

Emojis, emoticons, images and GIFs are essential elements of digital interaction that we see as modes or sets of modes that can be realised in different media. Although these multimodal sets of resources may differ in their functionalities, they can be grouped under the umbrella term *graphicons* ('graphical icons'), introduced by Herring and Dainas (2017). The crucial role of these resources has been addressed in previous studies in many fields, including digital discourse studies. While early research characterised iconic emoticons as indicating inner emotions, subsequent research has pointed out that smileys, for example, do not convey actual emotions but rather have a variety of pragmatic functions (Dresner & Herring 2010; Markman & Oshima 2007). That is, studies addressing emoticons – and graphicons in a broader sense – have shown that while these devices may be used for 'emotive work' (Riordan 2017), they are also used to, e.g., modify a tone of a message, mitigate face threatening formulations, or demonstrate a stance taken (Skovholt et al. 2014; Tolins & Samermit 2016; Sampietro 2019).

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This chapter contributes to the discussion on graphicons-in-interaction from two novel standpoints. First, we examine the use of graphicons in an organisational setting. Second, we apply conversation analysis, an approach that has been little used in studies of graphicons but which enables a focus on participants' orientation to the ongoing interaction.

Previous studies have largely focused on the use of emoticons or emojis, although some linguistic studies have also addressed the newer graphicons, such as images and GIFs[2] (Tolins & Samermit 2016; Herring & Dainas 2017). These studies have shown that these graphical elements may be used with additional text or without text, that is, as turn constructional units themselves. As stand-alone messages, graphicons are typically used as emotional reactions to prompts or as responses to other user's comments (Herring & Dainas 2017; Tolins & Samermit 2016). In this study, we show how graphicons may also be used as components of initiations for emotional displays instead of as responses per se.

Previous studies have mostly paid attention to the use of graphicons on platforms such as text messages or chat in mundane interaction to the relative neglect of organisational contexts. In their study, Skovholt, Grønning and Kankaanranta (2014) focused on the use and functions of the smiley face emoticon in workplace emails. They found that it was used as a solidarity marker to modify the tone of the message. Similarly, Darics (2010) showed that emoticons in workplace instant messaging may be used as a discursive strategy to implicate politeness. Such findings indicate that graphicons may be essential elements of relational work in workplace interaction and may also have important roles in accomplishing work-related goals.

Although recent discourse-oriented research has analysed the conversational uses of graphicons, understanding of how these may be studied as conversational actions in their own right is lacking. Previous studies have tended to view graphicons comparatively, analysing them in relation to more traditional forms of interaction. In particular, they have been considered either as non-verbal cues similar to response cries or as substitutes for co-speech gestures in face-to-face interaction (e.g., Tolins & Samermit 2016; Darics 2010; Danesi 2016). The most notable problem with this approach is that graphicons are inevitably intentional, and hence not directly comparable with non-verbal elements, which may also be unintentional. Another problem is that turns in text-based interaction are often crucially different from talk-in-interaction, in which interlocutors can monitor the process of turns by speakers (Markman & Oshima 2007; Gibson et al. 2018). Arminen et al. (2016: 296–297) note that researchers analysing digital interaction should not make overly straightforward comparisons with patterns of face-to-face interaction, as taking talk-in-interaction as a normative form of interaction may lead to ignoring participants' sense of a given digital situation. For this reason, it is important to study digital interaction not as a constrained form of face-to-face talk but as a different form of interaction.

By taking a conversation analytic approach to graphicons, we aim to gain an in-depth sequential understanding of multimodal and multimedial online

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interaction. The framework of conversation analysis has been previously used in the study of emoticons by Markman and Oshima (2007), who analysed emoticons as turn constructional units that were especially used in closing sequences. Similarly, Gibson et al. (2018) studied the sequential placement of a certain laughter emoji and its functions in interaction. König (2019), in turn, looked at sequences of laughter particles and examined the role of emojis in such sequences. Meredith (2019) notes that the multimodality of newer forms of online interaction may be challenging for CA researchers. One challenge pointed out in previous research is the ambiguous nature of graphicons: while interactionally useful for expressing oneself, people do not always agree about their meaning (see Gibson et al. 2018). The ambiguous relation between graphicons' communicative functions and their potential meaning has often been investigated with the tools of speech act theory, the focus of research being to understand the graphicon sender's intended meaning (e.g., Dresner & Herring 2010; Skovholt et al. 2014). In these studies, graphicons have been found to express the illocutionary force of the message, that is, they are used to facilitate guiding the recipient to interpret the message as it is meant to be interpreted. While these studies provide important insights into the ways people use graphicons as contextualisation cues, by ignoring the socially and sequentially constructed nature of actions, they often fail to explain the role of graphicons in the ongoing conversation (see Markman & Oshima 2007).

As conversation analysts, we are not interested in the intended meanings of graphicons but in the ways participants accomplish various actions through these resources in their social interaction. As Gibson et al. (2018: 92–93) note, these online multimodal elements should be analysed in the same way as CA researchers analyse other patterns in any interaction; that is, by focusing on participants' orientation to the ongoing interaction and the structures they themselves make relevant (see Schegloff 2007).

2.3 Emotions in workplace interaction

In this chapter, we focus on a specific organisational situation in which a team is asked to reflect on their feelings about their work. Thus, the situation emphasises the emotional facet of workplace interaction. Whereas organisations were earlier seen exclusively as rational enterprises, there is nowadays wide agreement that emotions play a crucial role in organisations (Fineman 2000: 10–12). Studies of emotions in workplaces have been conducted mainly in disciplines such as psychology or business communication and in large part through interviews (see Kangasharju & Nikko 2009: 101). However, empirical interaction researchers have also become interested in emotions in organisations' daily functioning, particularly in how they are managed during workplace meetings (Kangasharju & Nikko 2009; Samra-Fredericks 2004).

Earlier interaction research on displays of emotion have primarily focused on emotion displays such as laughter and crying, actions that

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seem to be closely related to emotions, e.g., complaints, or broader activities like troubles-telling sequences (Peräkylä & Sorjonen 2012). In the organisational context, Kangasharju and Nikko (2009) and Holmes (2006) have studied laughter in workplace meetings. The findings show that laughter in these settings is used for specific purposes, including building rapport and collegiality. Complaints have also been studied in the context of workplace interaction (Ruusuvuori et al. 2019; Vöge 2010). Ruusuvuori et al. (2019) showed that in appraisal interviews manager and employee construct a joint affective stance in order to facilitate entry into complaining. Further, earlier studies have emphasised the multimodal characteristics of emotional displays: emotions may be expressed through verbal, prosodic or nonverbal, i.e., facial or gestural, means (Peräkylä & Sorjonen 2012; Ruusuvuori 2013). In the workplace context, Ruusuvuori et al. (2019) showed how managers and employees in appraisal interviews use, for example, facial expressions to attain a shared affective stance. In the present study, we looked at a broader activity in a workplace context, viz. a workshop assignment aimed at generating participants' reflections on their work-related emotions. We were also interested in how certain actions such as complaints become part of that activity. Moreover, we widened the perspective from the multimodal to the multimedial. That is, we studied how emotions are managed in a multimedial chain of activities, using different digital technologies, as well as different modes of action such as graphicons, typing and speech.

In organisational settings, participants' displays of emotions and emotion-relevant activities may be constrained by specific norms. For example, ways of initiating complaints, complaining, and responding to complaints is contingent on the participants' positions as managers and employees or on other organisational hierarchies (Vöge 2010; Ruusuvuori et al. 2019). Fineman (2000: 5) argues that this kind of emotion work is essential as it "helps keep the organisation organised". This is related to what Stevanovic and Peräkylä (2014) call the 'emotional order', i.e., expectations with regard to expressing affect in a given relationship. In the workplace context, it is reasonable to assume that specific organisational constraints exist regarding the 'emotional status' of the employees, that is, how they are expected to express and manage their emotions in their role as members of the workplace community. While Stevanovic and Peräkylä (2014) see the emotional order as an essential context for any interaction, whether or not it includes strong displays of affect, the concept is specifically helpful for looking at sequences of action where emotion management is clearly observable, as is the case in our data. Thus, we are able to show how the participants of the workshop orient to and construct the emotional order of their organisation as part of their multimedial activity, and how digital technologies are part of this process.

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3 Data and methods

The data were gathered in the context of a project promoting a major change in the information system of a Finnish white-collar company. In this project, the company is collaborating with a team that is, in principle, separate from but closely connected to the bigger company, and whose work is to plan and organise training on the use of the new system in the organisation. In this study, we focus on the work of this team, which, interestingly, has semi-subordinate, semi-independent status within the project. Regularly organised workshops form an important part of the team's work. During the Covid-19 situation, these workshops were organised through Microsoft Teams, a business communication platform which, among other functions, enables videoconferencing (for a similar setting, see Virtanen and Niemi, this volume). Throughout the project, another digital platform called Howspace was also used during the team's internal meetings. Howspace is a collaborative platform especially designed for facilitator-led workshops and is promoted as a social media-like environment that engages participants in interacting with each other through its chat function (Howspace 2020). The agenda of every workshop, as well as the different workshop materials and assignments, are published and stored in Howspace. In the project, the progress of the workshops is managed by an internal facilitator. Both Howspace and Teams are seen here as digital media that in combination provide a multimedial environment for accomplishing emotion discourse in the workplace.

This chapter reports on one workshop lasting 117 minutes and comprising seven attendees including the facilitator. One member of our research team was also logged in Teams as an inactive participant. The workshop was recorded by the facilitator, which means we have visual access to her screen only. Thus, we can see what happened both in Howspace and in Teams on the facilitator's screen, but we do not have access to other participants' private actions on their own laptops. The data include a video recording of the virtual workshop as well as screenshots from Howspace. Consent to use the video recordings and material from Howspace was obtained from all participants. To ensure anonymity, all names in the extracts are pseudonyms.

The workshop included two assignments that were given on Howspace and accomplished – either partly or completely – during the workshop. The assignments invited the participants to display their positive and negative feelings in relation to the external project they are involved in. Both assignments consisted of questions accompanied by graphicons (either GIFs or images) that participants were expected to address in the chat function of Howspace. The design of the assignments is demonstrated in Figure 1, which shows the first assignment, with the textual instruction and GIFs, on the platform. Below each GIF there is a comment section for the participants' thoughts. After commenting, they discussed the comments orally in Teams. The assignment is analysed in detail in Extract 1a.

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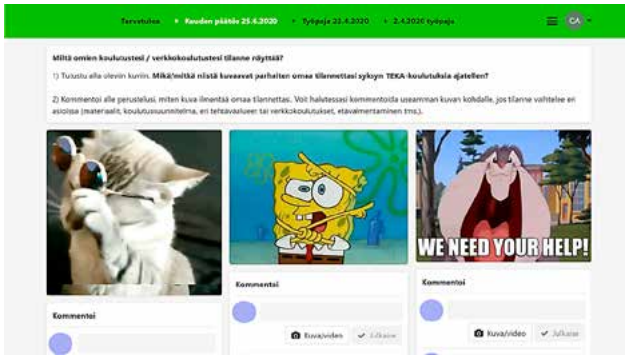

Figure 1. GIF assignment on Howspace[4]

Despite their visible similarities, the assignments were dealt with slightly differently. The assignment with GIFs was given as a pre-assignment, and hence answers had been posted to the platform already before the meeting. In the workshop, the comments were handled mostly by the facilitator who went through them by reading them aloud and adapting them to the organisational context. Sometimes the authors of the posts also elaborated on their texts. In contrast, the second assignment with images was wholly accomplished during the workshop and all the participants were asked in turn to elaborate on their typed messages in the Teams discussion. Therefore, the turn-taking strategies and sequence organisation differed slightly between these two assignments. However, our purpose was not to compare these strategies but rather to show how these sequences through which emotions emerge were negotiated during multimedial interaction.

In analysing the data, we relied on the conversation analytic principle of looking at interaction as a sequentially unfolding social activity. We identified sequential structures on several levels in the data: the structures in the discussions on the Howspace platform, e.g., the graphicons and posts in the chat function as responses to them; the structures in the oral discussions conducted in the virtual workshops; and the sequential structures that extended across the two different media, in particular the assignment introduction and completion of the assignment, first on the platform and then in the workshop.

4 Analysis

The analysis is divided into two parts. First, we show that the multimedial nature of the situation impacts the sequence organisation. In particular, we show how sequentiality is constructed and maintained across the two media. Second, we show in more detail how negative emotions are elicited, designed, and managed in the data. Throughout the analysis, we pay attention to how team members are encouraged to display their current feelings and emotions with the help of graphicons, and how the interaction not only remains on

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Howspace but is expanded in the remote workshop interaction, which is enabled by the affordances of Teams. Through screen sharing, the interaction on Howspace is made visibly accessible to everyone taking part in the video conferencing session. In this way it is possible to integrate these two media platforms.

4.1 Multimedial chain of emotive displays

In this section, we show that emotive sequences are constructed through different stages across the various modes and media: First, the assignment is introduced on Howspace accompanied by six GIFs. In the assignment, participants are asked to describe their current work situation by choosing one or more GIFs. Second, the participants type their answers in the text box below the GIF they have chosen. Third, the facilitator reads these posts aloud and elaborates on them and sometimes asks other participants to explain their posts in more detail. In this chain, GIFs are used as components of initiations through which participants' emotion discourse can be elicited. The posts are then taken as responses that align with the emotive state described in the GIF while also connecting the GIF and its affective display to the organisational reality the participants are involved in. Extract 1 demonstrates the multimedial chain of displaying emotions. Extract 1a shows the assignment and the typed response on the digital platform and Extract 1b the oral interaction.

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Extract 1a. Assignment in Howspace and Heta's written response

Assignment	**Miltä omien koulutustesi / verkkokoulutustesi tilanne näyttää?** 1) Tutustu alla oleviin kuviin. **Mikä/mitkä niistä kuvaavat parhaiten tilannettasi syksyn TEKA-koulutuksia ajatellen?** 2) Kommentoi alle perustelusi, miten kuva ilmentää omaa tilannettasi. Voit halutessasi kommentoida useamman kuvan kohdalle, jos tilanne vaihtelee eri asioissa (materiaalit, koulutussuunnitelma, eri tehtäväalueet tai verkkokoulutukset, etävalmentaminen tms.)	***What is the situation with your face-to-face/online training?*** 1) *Familiarize yourself with the images below***. *Which one/s best represent your situation with regard to the fall TEKA training sessions?*** 2) *Below, give your reasons why the image represents your situation. You may also comment on several images, if your situation changed in accordance with different elements (materials, training plans, various task topics or online education, distance training, or something similar)*
		*Comment*
Heta's written response	Todennäköisesti tältä tuntuu elokuun alussa :)	*It'll probably feel like this at the beginning of August :)*

Extract 1a shows how the assignment is designed to encourage team members to reflect on their work-related emotions and how the dialogue is both multimodally as well as multimedially realised. The assignment comprises two parts. The first is a general typed introduction to the assignment that includes two kinds of first pair parts – both a question ('what is the situation with your training?') and two directive instructions ('Familiarise yourself with the images below' and 'Comment below on your reasons'). The second consists of GIFs representing possible emotive states that employees in this particular organisation may feel ('which one/s best represent your situation?'). Thus, a GIF may be seen here as a visual initiation of an activity where the participants join in a feeling represented by the GIF. Together, these parts form a package of multiple activities, as is common in digital interactions in general (Hutchby & Tanna 2008; see also the introduction of this volume).

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Previous research has also shown that graphicons often occur in openings or closings of discussions, where their main purpose is to elicit a response from co-participants (Al Rashdi 2018; Jovanovic & van Leeuwen 2018). Thus, the introduction and the GIFs constitute a package of first pair parts that project the participants' comments as second pair parts in the chat function.

By commenting on the GIF, Heta produces the projected second pair part. First, the comment may be seen as a response to the instruction ('Comment below'), realised by the act of typing in the text box. Second, the written comment aligns with the GIFs multimodal realisation with the announcement ('It'll probably feel like this'), which establishes an explicit link between the GIF and Heta's probable future feelings. In particular, a link between a chosen GIF and the feeling it is interpreted as conveying is made explicit through the use of the expression 'it'll feel like this'. The pattern may be seen as somewhat similar to quotative markers such as *be + like*, which is often used together with graphicons to represent one's affective stance in digital interaction (Tolins & Samermit 2016; Wikström 2014). In her comment, Heta orients to the chosen GIF as part of the packaged instruction by recontextualising the feeling expressed by the GIF in the organisational situation and displaying an orientation towards shared organisational knowledge that gives a meaning to the emotion. Her words 'at the beginning of August' plus a smiley face at the end of the message intertwine the emotive state to a specific upcoming event. The way the comment is phrased implies that the event is familiar to other members of the team: there is no need to explain what happens in August.

Although the typed comments complete the adjacency pair, they are not treated as sufficient in this particular organisational context. Rather, fulfilling the assignment continues during the Teams discussion, when the comments are elaborated. We can say that the sequence continues in a new medium, as exemplified in Extract 1b.

Extract 1b. Oral discussion in Teams around Heta's written comment

```
01 EVE: *(2.0)
        *EVE SCROLLS DOWN

02      *ja sitte Heta oot kommentoinu  *vielä, et voi
        and then Heta you've also commented, how
        *EVE MOVES THE CURSOR TO THE COMMENT     *EVE MOVES THE CURSOR AWAY

03      elokuun alussa vielä olla vähän sellanen
        at the beginning of August there might even be sort of

04      loppuhetken ehkä  paniikkik(h)in hhh he he,
        a last minute pani(h)c hhh he he

05      [t(h)arvii apua,
        [n(h)eeds help
```


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06 HET: **[.hh n(h)ii hh kaikista muutoksista huolimatta**
[.hh y(h)eah hh despite all the changes

07 **ni täs kohtaa tuntuu et kyl täst suost niinku selvitään,**
right now it feels like we'll survive this slog

08 **mut niinku (.) mie niinku varustaudun jo tähä että,**
but uhm (.) I'm like preparing for this already,

09 **ehkä sit elokuun alus alkaa t(h)untuu s(h)iltä että,**
maybe at the start of August it will begin to f(h)eel l(h)ike,

10 **(0.6)**

11 EVE: **nii:.**
yea:h.

12 HET: **kuinka tässä käy.**
how will this end.

13 **(.)**

14 EVE: **jo[o.**
yeah.

In the shift from Howspace to the Teams discussion, an important aspect of interaction arises regarding how the comment – and thus the emotion – is taken up and discussed in the situation. The meeting's facilitator (Eveliina) has a major role in managing the discussion as she manipulates the screen sharing. By scrolling on the screen and moving the cursor onto the comment (line 1), Eveliina frames the issue that the participants should attend to (see Reeves et al. 2017). Licoppe and Morel (2018) have shown how in a video-streaming platform streamers may use the practice of "read-aloud and respond", through which they can deal with the issue of addressivity. In the same way, in Extract 1 Eveliina uses the typed comment as a resource through which she makes clear which post is to be selected and reformulated. She mentions Heta by name, makes an explicit reference to the activity of commenting ('you've also commented') and repeats part of the comment: 'at the beginning of August'. Her moving of the cursor not only functions as a pointing gesture that picks up the next relevant on-screen item, but it also invites a response from Heta (see Olbertz-Siitonen & Piirainen-Marsh 2021).

Eveliina does not, however, read out Heta's comment verbatim. Rather, she rephrases it, both acknowledging the event mentioned in Heta's comment and describing Heta's possible future emotion in more detail (lines 2–5). First, with 'a last-minute panic' Eveliina shows her understanding of the comment as a reference to an upcoming event in August. Second, by making a more

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explicit reference to the textual and visual elements of the selected GIF that implicate panic and need for help, Eveliina shows that she has recognised the feelings that the event may evoke. Her turn may be characterised here as a formulation (Heritage & Watson 1980). The formulation looks sequentially backward in that it exhibits Eveliina's understanding of what Heta has meant with her typed comment, and forward in that it projects a confirmation or a disconfirmation from Heta. With an overlapping 'y(h)eah' (line 6), Heta confirms Eveliina's formulation of her comment, on which she then elaborates.

Thus, our example shows how an interactional sequence can cross the borders of different media. To produce this sequence means that the participants must understand 'nextness' in multiple ways. In the Teams discussion, actions are positioned in temporal succession. In Howspace, the interaction is asynchronous, with the first and second pair parts being produced in a different time and place. However, the affordances of the platform, particularly the chat function that connects initiations and responses, help in constituting sequentiality. In transferring the sequence from Howspace to Teams, more work is needed to make the sequential structure observable, e.g., naming the comment producers and reading out parts of the relevant comments.

4.2 Management of negative emotions

Previous research on emotions in organisations (e.g., Ashfort & Kreiner 2002) have shown that in the workplace people use various means to regulate socially problematic emotions, such as anxiety or anger. Thus, sequences having to do with negative emotions are particularly illustrative of the emotional order prevailing in a given organisational context, that is, of organisational expectations with respect to the management of emotions. Both assignments in our data include GIFs or images that make such emotions relevant, as already seen in the first extract. In this analysis section, we focus on negative emotions in more detail and show how these are displayed and managed in the data. First, we show how participants make a delicate stepwise entry into negative emotion discourse through graphicons, typed comments and oral discussion. Throughout the entry process, the participants negotiate the emotional order of their organisation by reshaping the emotions described in the graphicons in line with their workplace environment. Second, we analyse how the participants exit from emotion discourse by using a specific interactive strategy that Maynard (2003) has called a 'good news exit'. We argue that the participants in an organisation may have a similar orientation to maintaining a 'benign order of everyday life' (ibid.) as in ordinary news delivery or medical contexts where people tend to intertwine negative information with positive issues (ibid.; Lehtinen 2005).

Entering into emotion discourse

In this section, we show how a stepwise entry to discourse about negative emotions can be accomplished with the help of graphicons. Our data show

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that the workshop participants tended to orient to the graphicons in two ways. On the one hand, they are used as a resource that facilitates entering into troubles-telling or complaining without explicitly verbalising the negative emotion. On the other hand, the graphicons on offer are treated as too intense in the sense that although negative emotions are being solicited, they must be downgraded and neutralised.

In the previous section, we used an example from the GIF assignment. In this section, we use the image assignment. As in the GIF assignment, an overall introduction to the assignment and a graphicon are used together as an initiation package followed by the typing of comments in the chat function and oral discussion of these. Instead of GIFs, however, the assignment is complemented with images of sad, mad, and happy faces[3] (Extract 2).

Extract 2. Assignment

SAD – MAD – HAPPY	***SAD – MAD – HAPPY***
Jos mietit omaa TEKA-työsuunnitelmaasi tästä aina foundation-vaiheen käyttöönottoon 29.8.2020. Mikä suunnitelmassasi mietityttää? Mikä suututtaa tai huolettaa? Mistä olet erityisen iloinen? Kirjaa ajatuksiasi kuvien alle.	*If you think about your own TEKA work plan from now all the way to the launching of the foundation phase on 29.8.2020, is there:* *anything that you feel puzzled about in your plan?* *anything that makes you angry or worried?* *anything that you are especially happy about?* *Document your thoughts below the images.*
	

As Extract 2 shows, in addition to images, the assignment includes verbal descriptions of emotions. In this section, we focus on the 'mad' face image, which is verbalised in the question 'anything that makes you feel angry or worried?'. Coupled with the image, this may be understood as designed to elicit descriptions of negative emotions or experiences from the participants. However, the two different verbal formulations of the mad face image allow participants to express their negative emotions in alternative ways. Extract 3 demonstrates how the image facilitates doing complaining as a stepwise process in which a trouble is first implicated in a written comment below an

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image of a mad face (Extact 3a) and its source then explicated orally (Extract 3b).

Extract 3a. Noora's written comment in Howspace

Mielen päällä on tämän kevät-kesän päivityskierroksen (heikohko) muutostenhallinta eTEKA-matskujen ja koulutusmatskujen välillä… kiinnitetään tähän jatkossa entistä enemmän huomiota. Edit. siis yhdenmukaisuuden osalta!	*On my mind is the (weak-ish) change management between the eTEKA materials and training materials during the spring-summer updating round… let's pay more attention to this in the future. Edit. meaning in the interests of consistency!*

In Extract 3a, Noora has made a comment below the image of the mad face. In her comment, she types that she has 'the change management' on her mind. By evaluating change management as 'weak-ish', she implies that she is not happy with the way the issue has been dealt with. However, she does not elaborate on her feelings or the reason why she raises this issue below the mad face image. Instead Noora uses the graphicon in ways that facilitate the display of this negative and thus potentially delicate emotion (see Ashforth & Kreiner 2002) in an appropriate way, by using the graphicon to frame the comments she is about to make as negatively loaded. Thus, Noora does not have to verbalise her emotion in the typed comment but merely physically link her comment to the mad face image. It should be noted that the affordances of both Teams and Howspace play a crucial role in enabling a cautious entry of this kind. The participants in the interaction draw on the screen-sharing affordance through which they can establish shared visual access to the images as well as the comments on Howspace. This can be seen in Extract 3b. Before this extract Noora has expanded on her comments typed below the sad face graphicon. Now she shifts to her comments below the mad face and uses the metaphor of 'jumping' that draws on the shared screen as a physical entity.

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Extract 3b. Oral discussion in Teams around Noora's written comment

01 NOO: **mutta joo no sit mä hyppään tonne**
so anyway now I'll jump over to the

02 **määd-osastolle niin (0.8) lai- (.) tää (.) mun on**
mad section and (0.8) I place- (.) this (.) I need to

03 **niinku avat(h)tava t(h)eille ettei jää väärii**
like expl(h)ain to y(h)ou to avoid

04 **käsityksiä koska tää on siis nytten (0.4) öö**
misconceptions because this is like (0.4) um

05 **eilisen (0.6) eilisen pohdintoja kun laitoin tohon**
yesterday's (0.6) yesterday's thoughts when I jotted down

06 **että mielen päällä on tän (0.8) tän päivityskierroksen**
that I'm preoccupied by this (0.8) this change management

07 **tää muutostenhallinta niin,**
during this updating round

((lines omitted))

08 NOO: **istuttiin kuitenkin tunteja**
we nonetheless sat for hours

09 **alas (.) eri asiantuntijoiden kanssa ja**
(.) *with various experts and*

10 **hinkattiin sanamuodot kuntoon ja, .hh muistan**
polished the correct terms and, .hh I remember

11 **[silloin jo sanoneeni asiantuntijalle että, (.) että**
saying already back then to the expert to, (.) to

12 EVE: **[°mm°**

13 **@muutat↑han nämä samat muutokset sitten (.) sin- (.)**
@plea↑se make the same changes then (.) to (.)

14 **sinne sinun omaan (.) koulutusmateriaaliisi (0.6) [ja**
to your own (.) training materials (0.6) and

15 EVE: **[kyllä.**
[yes.

16 NOO: **näi- (.) näin ei s(h)itten ollut k(h)äynyt eli nyt**
thi (.) this had i(h)ndeed not h(h)appened so now

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17 EVE: **mt**

18 NOO: **n[yt kun sain**
[now when I received

19 EVE: **[oh dear.**

20 NOO: **tämän uuden materiaalin ni siellä oli**
this new material it had

21 **ne samat (0.3) samat jutut mitä hinkattiin silloin**
all the same (0.3) same things we had polished up back

22 **aikasemmin, (.) ja nyt sitten (0.8) öö minulle**
then, (.) and now like (0.8) um the feedback

23 **kohdistettiin palaute että (.) toi- toiselta asiantuntijalta**
was targeted to me (.) by anoth- another expert

24 **että, (.) että täällä e-teka-kurssilla @ei kyllä nyt**
how (.) how here in the e-teka course @they're really not

25 **näy ne (.) sovitut muutokset mitkä viimeksi**
seeing the agreed upon changes we made

26 **tehtiin@, (.) niin (0.6) otin siitä itse vähän**
last time@, (.) so (0-6) I was a bit miffed about that

27 **nokkiini koska koin että se oli sitten**
because I felt that it was

28 **asiantuntijan (.) oma**
solely (.) the expert's

29 **(0.8)**

30 EVE: **kyllä.**
yes.

31 NOO: **oma virhe siinä kohti ettei ollut itse sit**
mistake right there to not have gone and

32 **käyny muuttamassa niitä mitä sovittiin**
changed the things we'd agreed upon

33 **että, (.) se jäi tuossa vähän harmittamaan ja,**
so, (.) that's what soured my mood somewhat and,

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In Extract 3b, after entering into the negative emotion discourse in her comment aided by the graphicon, Noora reformulates her emotion in her oral explanation – this time designing her turn explicitly as a complaint. As Heinemann and Traverso (2009) point out, complaining as an action entails both expressing a negative emotion about something and attributing a moral responsibility to someone for causing that negative emotion. The "someone" may be a person or a collective entity, such as an organisation. In Günthner's (1997) terminology, Noora's contribution can be seen as a complaint story, a narrative that focuses on the morally problematic activities of the antagonist towards the teller of the story. In this case, the antagonist is a person from the bigger project, and thus external to the team.

In lines 1–2, Noora first describes her movement in the multimedial space with the verb 'jump over'. Then, in lines 2–4 she makes a metacomment about her typed comment that reframes it as insufficient on its own: it needs to be elaborated and explained orally. She then narrates her complaint story (see Günthner 1997) in some detail. Lines 8–14 may be characterised as a pre-sequence in which Noora moves from her typed announcement to further elaboration while at the same time prefiguring her complaint. She describes earlier activities relevant to her complaint and, through animating her own earlier talk (lines 13–14), formulates what she understands as the normative standards for organisational work, asking implicitly the other participants to share these norms. In her response on line 15, Eveliina expresses her agreement with these norms. By saying 'this had indeed not happened' (line 16) Noora then reveals the problem, and Eveliina's affiliative response *oh dear* (in English, line 19) shows that she has recognised this normative transgression. In lines 22–26, Noora continues narrating her complaint and presents herself as the recipient of negative feedback by an expert through reconstructed dialogue (see Günthner 1997). In doing this, she slightly changes her tone of voice, thereby marking the feedback as a quotation from the expert. Both the expert's transgression and Noora's own reactions to it – 'I was a bit miffed about that' (line 26–27) and 'that's what soured my mood somewhat' (line 33) – are overtly reported, as has been claimed is characteristic of third-party complaints in ordinary interaction (Drew 1998), although this conflicts with Vöge's (2010) finding that such explicit formulations of transgressions do not occur in business meetings. It should, however, be noted that although these emotions are overtly reported, they are also mitigated ('a bit', 'somewhat'), which shows the participant's orientation to expressing complaints in a professional manner.

Thus, despite the fact that expressions of negative emotions are encouraged, participants often seem to demonstrate caution in accomplishing complaints or troubles-talk (see also Ruusuvuori et al. 2019). That is, emotions displayed in caricatured graphicons seem to be considered too intense or otherwise undesirable and thus often need reshaping to fit into the organisational situation. In Extract 3, this is evident in Noora's written comment, which does not contain negatively loaded words such as 'angry' but chooses a more neutral expression 'on my mind' instead. The following extract provides a more detailed instance in which emotion is neutralised step-by-step. Because the facilitator was sharing her screen, we had access to the typing process,

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which is transcribed below (Extract 4a) following the method introduced by Meredith and Stokoe (2014) in their study of repair in chat interaction. The writing process was, in principle, also accessible to the other participants. However, lacking access to what they were doing in their remote locations, we do not know whether they were watching what was happening on the screen. They were probably engaged on writing their own comments on Howspace. The transcription includes information that enables readers to see how the message is constructed. The writing symbol (✍) indicates the beginning and end of the construction of the message and deletions made by the writer are presented by strikethrough of the words or letters. The completed comment is displayed in Extract 4b and is followed by the oral explanation (Extract 4c).

Extract 4a. Transcript of Eveliina's typing process in Howspace

01 EVE: ✍ **Ei nyt suututua ~~ua~~ a., i ~~.,i~~ , mutta**
I'm not angray ~~ay~~ y., i ~~.,i~~ , but
02 **mietityttää koa ~~a~~ vasti, kuinka hankeen**
it reay ~~y~~ lly puzzles me, how the projet's
03 **~~hankeen~~ osaaminen menee perille.(2.0) Kouluui**
~~projet's~~ expertise is understood. The trainiio
04 **~~ui~~ tukset yksi asia ja ne varmasti menevät**
~~io~~ ngs one thing and they will surely go
05 **hyvin. Mutta miten muut ~~t~~ tuki hankkeelta**
well. But how is the others' ~~s~~ support from the project
06 **käyttöönottoon sujuu ja (11.0) ~~Ei nyt suututa mutta~~**
to the deployment faring and ~~I'm not angry but~~
07 **~~mutta mietityttää kovasti, kuinka~~**
~~it really puzzles me, how~~
08 **~~hankkeen osaaminen menee perille. Koulutukset~~**
~~the project's expertise is understood. The trainings~~
09 **~~yksi asia ja ne varmasti menevät hyvin.~~**
~~one thing and they will surely go fine.~~
10 **~~Mutta miten muut tuki hankkeelta~~**
~~But how is the others s support from the project~~
11 **~~käyttöönottoon sujuu ja~~**
~~to the deployment~~
12 **Huolettaa hiukan ~~hiukan~~ se, miten hanke (1.0)**
I'm slightly ~~slightly~~ worried about how the project
13 **suunnittelee tukimallin koulutusten lisäksi**
plans the support model to supplement the training
14 **eli missä usein kysytyt kysymykset, missä**
meaning where are the frequently asked questions,
15 **saa aoya ~~oya~~ pua, milloin tukiklinikat jne.**
where one can get heko ~~ko~~ lp, when support clinics etc.
16 **Ettei ~~tei~~ tä osaaminen vahvistuu myös koulutukse**
Not to ~~not~~ strengthen expertise after

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17 ~~**kse**~~ **sten jälkeen. (6.0) Tuntuu hiukan siltä, että**
~~*a trai*~~ *the training as well. Feels a bit like*
18 **hanke kuvittelee, että kun ei perusteta**
the project imagines that when they don't establish
19 **tukikav** ~~**Tuntuu hiukan siltä, että hanke kuvittelee,**~~
a support chal ~~*Feels a bit like the project thinks*~~
20 ~~**että kun ei perusteta tukikav**~~
~~*that when they don't establish a support chal*~~

Extract 4b. Eveliina's completed comment in Howspace

Huolettaa se, miten hanke suunnittelee tukimallin koulutusten lisäksi eli missä usein kysytyt kysymykset, missä saa apua, milloin tukiklinikat jne. Että osaaminen vahvistuu myös koulutusten jälkeen.	*I'm worried about how the project plans the support model to supplement the training, meaning where are the frequently asked questions, where one can get help, when support clinics etc. To strengthen expertise after the training as well.*

In the construction of her comment (Extract 4a), Eveliina first refers to the mad face graphicon and one of the verbal descriptions of it ('anything that makes you angry?') by negating it ('I'm not angry'). This negation is followed by a conjunction 'but' (line 1), which signals a divergent position and thus mitigates the strong emotion of anger displayed in the graphicon. However, later in the typing process, she deletes this formulation and edits it first with 'I'm slightly worried' and finally 'I'm worried' (line 12). It is worth noting that before editing the comment, Eveliina stops typing for several seconds (line 6). It seems that during this pause she reads the wording of the assignment, from which she then picks out the expression 'worried' in her message. The emotion is further downgraded in the oral elaboration (Extract 4c), in which she again reformulates the message.

Extract 4c. Eveliina's oral elaboration of her written comment

01 EVE: **ja (1.0) itseeni .mh huolet- huoles<tuttaa> (.) tai ei**
and (1.0) for my part .mh what worri- wor<ries> (.) or doesn't

02 **nyt (.) huolestuta mutta mie- mietityttää ehkä**
really (.) worry but puz- puzzles me perhaps

03 **eniten toi että miten toi hanke .hhhh nyt sitten**
the most is how the project .hhhh now makes

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04 **tosta muusta tukimallista (0.6) mt saa sellasen**
that other support scheme (0.6) such

05 **et ku me (.) me sitä osaamista .hhh osaamisen kartuttamista**
that as we (.) we are starting .hhh are starting the cultivation of expertise

06 **käynnistellään niissä koulutuksissa niin, (.) kaikkihan nyt**
in the trainings it's like, (.) everybody

07 **tietenki tietää että se koulutus on vain yks osa (.)**
obviously knows that the training is just one part (.)

08 **osa sitä osaamisen kasvattamista että, .hh**
part of the accumulation of expertise so, .hh

09 **ymmärtäähän hanke sitten sen muun tukimallin (.)**
hopefully the project then (0.3) understands to plan

10 **ää tätä käyttöönottoo varten sitten (0.3) riittävän (.)**
the uhm deployment of the other support scheme (.)

11 **laajasti suunnitella että,**
on a sufficient (.) scale so that,

In lines 1–2, Eveliina moves to negative emotion discourse first with 'for my part what – worries'. At this point she produces what Couper-Kuhlen and Thompson (2005) have called a 'concessive repair', which consists of first making a concession, 'or doesn't really worry', and then following it with a revised version of the statement 'but puzzles'. As Couper-Kuhlen and Thompson (2005) note, such concessions work on a scale: a more extreme version of a statement is replaced by a more moderate one. In our case, by changing the verb from *huolestuttaa* 'worry' to *mietityttää* 'puzzle', Eveliina transforms the nature of the emotion from intense to more neutral.

This neutralisation also has to do with the nature of Eveliina's action as a potential complaint. During the process of writing her comment (Extract 4a), she starts with her feeling about what the project – meaning the people separate from their team – 'imagines' at the moment (line 18). This sentence seems to be leading towards a description of a transgression by the 'project'. However, she deletes this emerging sentence. In the final Howspace comment (Extract 4b), as well as in the oral elaboration of the comment (Extract 4c), the trouble is presented merely as a concern about the future actions of the personified project, while the reason for her concern is left implicit. Thus, her action is not a clear complaint, since it lacks a clear indication of a transgression. Her insistence on not being 'mad' but just

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'puzzled' or 'worried' also points in the same direction: being mad usually entails a person or other object that one is mad at, while being puzzled or worried does not necessarily require a person or object of the feeling. The work of neutralising the emotion can be understood in relation to Eveliina's role in the team vis-á-vis the project. As a project leader and an important link between the project and the team, she needs to balance between these two groups. By downgrading the emotion, she repositions herself to inhabit that role.

The extract demonstrates how the process of neutralising emotions is accomplished in practice. The mad face image as a caricatured graphical element encourages participants to display delicate emotions through exaggeration while at the same time it represents an emotional state that is too extreme in the organisational context. Seargeant (2019) has also shown in his semiotic analysis of emojis that the emotions displayed by their stylised elements are exaggerated. Our data show that while graphicons can serve people in organisations as a means of expressing negative emotions, instead of increasing one's negative statements, they must be worked on to manage the more delicate display of emotions deemed appropriate in the organisational context.

Exiting from emotion discourse

As Jefferson (1988) has shown in her study of troubles-talk, speakers attending troubles-telling use closing-implicative elements in order to move away from such talk. In situations where people are delivering bad news or talking about their troubles, they often make a transition from such orientations to ordinary talk with sequences that render the trouble somehow brighter (Jefferson 1988; Maynard 2003). Maynard (2003: 177–182) has called this strategy of shifting from trouble talk into other topics or activities a 'good news exit'. In our data, the participants used this strategy as a recurrent practice to achieve an exit from negative emotion discourse. They especially used it during their spoken explanations of their comments in Teams but, in some cases, also in Howspace. Extract 5 shows how the discussion in Teams continues after Noora's complaint (Extract 3) and how Noora finally moves away from troubles-talk through a good news exit.

Extract 5. Oral discussion in Teams

01	EVE:	**ja tässä nyt ei selvästi,=se ei oo tietenkää**
		and this here clearly hadn't=it had not
02		**oo ollut sun vastuulla ja, .hh ja (.) ja (.) ja**
		been your responsibility of course and, .hh and (.) and (.) and
03		**(.) ikävä että se (.) siit on tullu niin ku sulle palautetta,**
		(.) a shame it (.) led to like you receiving feedback,

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04 **.hh #e- e-# että asiantuntija ei oo sitte ite**
.hh #th- th-# the expert did not do

05 **hoitanu hommaansa. (.) toi on tosi harmillista**
their job. (.) that is truly a shame

06 **koska nyt sitte (0.6) mt sä oot vähän niin ku**
because now (0.6) mt you're kind of caught

07 **välikädessä siinä sitte (.) et et mitkä muutokset sä**
in a crossfire there (.) like like what changes will you

08 **nyt sit sinne e-tekaan viet. (.) n- ne nykyiset vai**
make to e-teka now. (.) th- the current ones or

09 **ne vanhat.**
the old ones.

10 **(1.0)**

11 NOO: **juu↑ri näin. (.) mutta (.) mutta us↑kon että**
ex↑actly. (.) but (.) but I be↑lieve that

12 **tuostakin päästään koska saatiin sit taas ne**
we will clear that up as well because we got the

13 **(1.0) #ne# yksityiskohdat (.) tietoomme ja (.) ne**
#the# details (.) down and (.) the changes

14 **vielä sinne muutetaan °että°.**
will be made °so that°.

15 EVE: **.hh joo eli (.) £eli Noora rupee olee tässä valikoimahallinnan**
.hh yeah meaning (.) £meaning Noora is becoming a selection management

16 **as(h)iant(h)untija että j(h)os kaipaatte apuvalmentajaa ni,**
ex(h)pert so in c(h)ase you need an assistant coach well,

17 NOO: £<**kyllä>£.**
£<yes>£.

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First, Eveliina continues underlining the negative emotions reported by Noora in her complaint (see Extract 3). She produces an empathic response to Noora's turn by showing that she has recognised the expert's transgression, thereby co-constructing a moral stance towards this kind of inappropriate behaviour. By saying 'it had not been your responsibility of course' (lines 1–2) and 'the expert did not do their job' (lines 4–5), Eveliina justifies Noora's complaint and negative feelings by drawing on the organisational duties that are relevant with regard to the complainable event. Eveliina also orients to Noora's emotions with affective assessments such as 'that is truly a shame' (line 5), thus displaying her view that Noora has made her complaint within the acceptable organisational boundaries pertaining to the expression of negative feelings.

In line 11, Noora closes the sequence with 'exactly' and starts a new activity with 'but I believe we will clear that up'. The utterance particle 'but' is used here to mark both the transition and contrast to the prior turn (VISK § 801), implying a discursive reorientation. We could say that Noora produces a 'statement of hopefulness' (Maynard 2003) in which she moves her orientation away from emotion discourse to problem-solving. This practice of recasting the trouble in a more positive form may be seen as an 'optimistic projection' (Jefferson 1988; Maynard 2003) and is one way of producing a good news exit. Maynard (2003: 182–184) suggests that underlying this kind of interaction is an orientation towards a benign order, that is, a specific interactional order that needs to be achieved in order to build solidarity among the interlocutants. Eveliina's reaction (lines 15–16) to the good news exit aligns with Noora's new interactional trajectory.

As Lehtinen (2005) points out, while the orientation towards a benign order is common in many institutional contexts, it may have different functions. Our data suggest a tendency to withdraw from trouble talk in order to display oneself as a competent employee able to perform one's duties efficiently and thereby uphold the organisation's norms and social order. Whereas Extract 5 demonstrated how a change in orientation was reached only after processing the complaint in the oral discussion, Extract 6 below shows how participants may display optimistic projection already in their written comment (Extract 6a). The comment is written below the mad face image. The oral explanation is shown as Extract 6b.

Extract 6a. Tiia's written comment in Howspace

Työparini siirtää toistuvasti sovittuja suunnittelupalavereja muiden palaverien tieltä, toivottavasti saan häneltä kuitenkin tarvittavan ajan. Pitää hyödyntää ne hetket tarkalleen, kun saan hänet linjan päähän :)	*My colleague continuously postpones scheduled draft meetings in favor of other meetings, hopefully I can get sufficient time from her. I have to make the most of such moments meticulously, when I finally get hold of her :)*

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Extract 6b. Oral discussion in Teams around Tiia's comment

01 TII: **ja tota: hh no sitte (0.6) mt tosiaan (.) mikä tässä nyt**
and well: hh so then (0.6) mt what (.) really worries me

02 **sitten (.) vähän huolestuttaa, .hh, suunnitelmassanikin**
(.) slightly here, .hh in my plans too,

03 **niin, (.) et mun työpari (.) Tea ni (0.5) se (.)**
(.) is that my colleague (.) Tea well (0.5) she (.)

04 **vähän toistuvasti siirtää (.) meiän sovittuja (.)**
kind of repeatedly postpones (.) our scheduled (.)

05 **tapaamisia muiden palaverien (.) alta pois? .hh**
meetings to make room for (.) other meetings? .hh

06 **että (.) et selkeesti (.) me ehkä hänen kanssaan (.) vä↑hän**
so (.) so pretty clearly (.) the two of us (.) prioritise

07 **priorisoidaan eri tavalla näitä (.) tekemisiä,=ja**
these (.) tasks some↑what differently=and

08 **hänen työpöytänsä totta kai näyttää erilaiselta**
her desk of course looks different from

09 **kun mun työpöytäni, .hh niin tota (.) mietti↑nyt**
my desk so .hh so um (.) just be↑en thinking

10 **vaan et täytyy ite varmistaa sitte (.) sillee että**
that I have to make sure to (.) like

11 **tekee tosi tarkan suunnitelman siitä et mitä**
make super accurate plans about what

12 **mä häneltä oikeesti niin ku tarvitsen jotta**
I like really need from her so

13 **sitten ne ajat kun mä saan hänet £n(h)iin sanotusti**
that during those times I £s(h)o to speak

14 **käyttööni niin£ mä pystyn sit käyttää niin ku**
have her at my disposal£ I can then

15 **tehokkaasti hyödyksi, .hhh mutta se (.) se aina välillä**
use the time efficiently, .hhh but what (.) what annoys me

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16 **vähän harmittaa kun on i[te suunnitellu**
from time to time is when you have planned

18 EVE: **[toi on kyllä**
[that is really

19 TII: **työpäivänsä (.) tietyllä (.) tavalla ja ajatellu**
your work day (.)in a specific (.) way and thought

20 **että sit mä saan näitä eteenpäin ja, (.)**
that you can progress these things and, (.)

((lines omitted))

21 EVE: **toi on tosi harmillinen juttu ja, (.) toivottavasti**
that is a real shame and, (.) hopefully

22 **nyt saat Tiia tota eteenpäin to- (.) tän viikon osalta. (.)**
Tiia you can make progress this Thu- (.) this week. (.)

23 **.hh [et se varmasti auttaa]**
.hh it will surely help

24 TII: **[joo ja kyl mä sitte]**
[yeah and of course I will then

25 EVE: **jos sä suunnittelet sen (.) tosi tarkkaan että ↑£m(h)itä**
if you plan it (.) really carefully about ↑£wh(h)at

26 **sä haluat£ siltä (.) sitte saada.**
you want£ them to do (.) for you.

27 **(0.3)**

28 TII: **joo: ja jos ru↑pee näyttää siltä että aika loppuu**
yea:h and if it starts ↑to look like time is running out

29 **kesken ni totta kai otan niinku .hh järeämmät aseet käyttöön.**
then of course I will like resort to .hh tougher measures.

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In her mad face comment (Extract 6a), Tiia makes an implicit complaint about a colleague who is part of the larger project but outside the team. Again, the complaint emerges in the interaction between the image, its caption (the question) and the written comment. The fact that Tiia's co-worker repeatedly postpones their scheduled appointments is recast in a form that emphasises Tiia's active role in solving the problem rather than her making an explicit complaint about her colleague's inappropriate conduct. The end of the comment, especially, shows that Tiia orients to the problem as one that is solvable. She also softens her critique at the end of the comment by adding the smiley face emoticon (see Skovholt et al. 2014). In the oral discussion (Extract 6b), although designing her turn more explicitly as a complaint, Tiia also moves quickly towards solving the problem. In particular, the emotion of annoyance is expressed more overtly ('it annoys me from time to time', lines 15–16) than in the written comment. However, in lines 6–9, she mitigates the seriousness of the transgression through searching for possible explanations for her co-worker's behaviour.

In line 21, Eveliina produces a complaint-relevant response, 'that is a real shame', which acknowledges the feeling expressed by Tiia. This affiliative response is followed by a hopeful projection (see Maynard 2003: 181–182), 'hopefully you can make progress', which subtly shifts the focus from the negative feeling towards problem solving. Tiia agrees with this projection (lines 24 and 28), and states that she will, if necessary, resort to more effective ways to obtain the necessary information from her co-worker. In exiting the emotion discourse, Tiia thus constructs herself as a solution-oriented employee who does not dwell on her negative feelings.

Our analysis thus shows that, in exiting emotion discourse, participants orient to an organisational emotional order that foregrounds a solution-centred approach to negative emotions experienced at work. That is, while it is acceptable for the employees to feel bad, and even complain about (absent) co-workers, they are nevertheless expected to be professional with regard to their feelings and display an orientation towards solving the work-related problems that cause them negative emotions. In this respect, even though solution-centeredness can be already displayed on the digital platform, oral discussion seems to be particularly important. Thus, extending the sequence across media seems to contribute towards resolving emotion-laden issues.

5 Conclusions

In this study, we examined workshop activities involving graphicons from a conversation analytic perspective. Specifically, we analysed how the participants in a multimedially organised workshop drew on a given set of graphicons when managing emotion discourse. The findings contribute to several areas in the field of digital interaction and discourse studies. First, they contribute to the rapidly expanding research on graphicons. Some prior studies have addressed the multimodal nature of sequences (Jovanovic & van Leeuwen 2018) and the sequential placement of graphicons in interaction

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(Markman & Oshima 2007; Gibson et al. 2018; König 2019). Our findings show that graphicons may be used in an organisational workshop context as part of initiative actions that are responded to in a comment section on a digital platform. That is, instead of being affective responses they are used to elicit employees' emotion displays. Moreover, in contrast to prior studies that have tended to focus on the use of graphicons in one specific medium, our study sheds light on their deployment in a more complex setting where people are operating in several media and modalities at the same time. We show how responding to task initiations that include graphicons extends from the digital platform on which they are posted to video-mediated talk-in-interaction.

Second, our results provide deeper insights into expressing and managing emotions in workplaces. Whereas prior research studied different multimodal characteristics of emotional displays, such as facial expressions and prosody (see Ruusuvuori 2013; Peräkylä & Sorjonen 2012), our study demonstrates that GIFs and images can also be used to manage emotion discourse in online workplace interaction. In addition to some of the multimodal characteristics of emotional displays, our study shows how emotions can be elicited and constructed across different media. Our findings also further understanding of how organisational emotional orders are interactionally managed through showing how the organisational roles, duties and knowledge of workshop participants informed how they expressed and talked about negative emotions. The findings suggest that while they were expected to express negative emotions regarding their work, such displays were constrained by specific organisational norms. In this respect, graphicons are interesting in that they often represent rather strong, stereotypical emotions. In our study, while the use of graphicons created a supportive environment for the members of the team to express their negative feelings, the exaggerated nature of the emotions depicted in the images was oriented to as too extreme for the organisational context, and participants needed to moderate the emotion in line with their role in the organisation. Thus, our study suggests that analysing the use of digital media and such modes as graphicons may be revealing about the emotional order of an organisation.

Third, we contribute to the ongoing discussion on applying conversation analysis to digital data, in particular through our analysis of a multimedial activity. Our results show that, in such activity, sequential structures exist at various levels. On the one hand, each media has structures specific to it. For example, we found that the chat comments under the graphicons formed a second pair part to the task assignments featuring the graphicons, and in the Teams discussion we found, for example, complaint-response pairs. On the other hand, however, some sequential structures extend across media. This was seen in our study in two ways. First, comments induced by the graphicons extended across the two media. That is, the Howspace comments were elaborated in the Teams discussion. Thus, actions such as complaints were processed in both Howspace and Teams. Second, the assignment introduction, consisting of both the graphicons themselves and the instruction on how they should be commented on, formed an overarching

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multimedial sequence. All the discussion in both Howspace and Teams can be seen as a response to the assignment introduction.

It must be noted, however, that the digital practices we have described are not wholly new. As Herring (2013) has noted, although novel practices sometimes emerge in the new media context, some of these practices are 'familiar' from other contexts, and sometimes old practices are 'reconfigured' in new media contexts. Similarly, Orlikowski (2000) has discussed how adopting new technologies in the workplace context may lead to what she calls 'application', a situation where new technologies are used to conduct old practices in a slightly new way, alongside the adoption of genuinely new practices. Reflective assignments in workplaces have previously been studied in face-to-face contexts. For example, Nielsen's (2012) study of a brainstorming session showed that such activities can also be multimedial. In that study, participants wrote down their individual ideas on coloured cards (first medium). The cards were then placed on a second medium, a board, and then discussed in a third medium, the participants' voices, in talk-in-interaction (for a similar assignment, see Nissi & Pälli 2020). The graphicon assignment reported in our study contained familiar elements, but at the same time the affordances of the new digital media make it possible to reconfigure the way they were used. While space constraints do not allow for a comparison with earlier practices here, we can list some features of the technologies used in our data that seem to be consequential. The digital platform (Howspace) easily affords the embedding of graphicons, including moving-image GIFs. The graphicons and comments on the platform can easily be accessed by all participants before, during and after the workshop. The application for video-mediated meetings (Teams), in turn, affords screen-sharing and hence also the sharing of graphicons and comments during meetings. Thus, new kinds of multimedial practices are afforded by the new digital tools.

Multimediality also has an effect on how orientation to nextness is achieved. If we think about nextness within a given media, its accomplishment is constrained by the affordances of that media. For example, whereas in the oral Teams discussion the first and second pair parts appeared adjacently, in Howspace nextness was accomplished through the platform's chat function. Achieving nextness across the two media, however, requires more effort. For example, in elaborating on their Howspace comments, participants have to refer explicitly to their comments. The affordances of Teams can also be used, particularly the screen-sharing affordance. This enables the facilitator sharing the screen to scroll to the appropriate place on the Howspace platform and highlight relevant parts of the comments. This intermedial nextness does not produce clear adjacency pairs, as the assignment introduction and the graphicons in Howspace do not project specific kinds of contributions during the workshop. In a more diffuse way, however, some kinds of relevant next actions are projectable through knowledge of the kind of activity in question: in reflective assignments, individual contributions are customarily followed by a joint discussion about them (see, e.g., Nielsen 2012). This is supported by the fact that the assignment is part of the workshop program, and the participants can thus expect their contributions on the platform to form a basis for discussion during the workshop.

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We also showed how access to the participants' computer screens can be helpful in the analysis, as it opens a window on processes of repair during the comment writing phase, allowing us to show how the writer calibrated her contribution in relation to the emotional order of the organisation already during the writing process. However, digital writing of this kind raises some methodological considerations. For example, conversation analysts are usually interested in participants' publicly observable orientations; however, digital contexts differ from face-to-face contexts in what can be observed and by whom. In most cases, digital writing cannot be seen by the other participants, who thus cannot orient to it (see Meredith and Stokoe 2014). The situation is different if the writer's screen is shared in some way, but even then there are differences in how public other participants' orientations to the writing are. In a case like ours, where the participants were in remote locations and participated solely through the audio channel, only their potential verbal responses to the writing are observable to the other participants. This contrasts with the situation in a face-to-face context, where the embodied orientations of the participants, e.g., gaze, are also observable. Thus, the affordances of the technologies, and the participants' choices in utilising these affordances, are highly relevant with regard to how digital activities can and should be analysed.

Our study thus offers an example of how conversation analysis can be used to analyse workplace practices in the 21st century, in contexts where participants need to navigate in a network of different media, and where digital media are intertwined both with each other and more traditional media. In particular, we have shown how an orientation to sequentiality that can extend across different media is an important resource for participants in such complex contexts. Unlike most conversation analytic studies of digital interaction, which have concentrated on interaction in one medium at a time (see, Meredith 2019), our study points to the potential of conversation analysis as a tool for tackling complex multimedial activities.

Notes

1 This work was supported by the Academy of Finland (project number 322733). We would like to thank the reviewers for their constructive comments on our chapter.

2 GIFs (graphical interchange formats) are animated images that typically draw on popular culture. They may also include text.

3 The image for 'sad' is not a stereotypical sad image. It is a 'grimacing' face that usually conveys, e.g., awkwardness. There is no simple answer to why such an image has been chosen, and since our focus is on the 'mad' image, we will not attempt to answer it here. Suffice it to say that while using a popular 'sad mad glad' retrospective technique, the facilitator seems to orient to it as not entirely suited to this particular situation. This can be seen, for example, in her choice of image for 'sad' and in her use of the word *mietityttää* 'puzzled' instead of 'sad' in the verbal assignment.

4 In Figure 1, as well as our extracts, the animated GIFs are represented as screenshots. In our analysis, the fact that the image is moving is not relevant, as this feature is not oriented to by the participants and because our purpose is not to compare the different types of graphicons.

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Thanking and positive assessments in video-mediated workshops

Managing creativity exercises remotely

Abstract

This chapter investigates the use of positive assessments and expressions of thanks in video-mediated workshops, and the way and extent to which the technological context is made relevant in the accomplishment of these actions. Specifically, we focus on how the co-located workshop hosts respond to the remote attendees' exercise performances and other activities by utilising different forms of assessment and thanking. We explore the design and sequential position of these actions and their contribution to the management of interactional space in mediated settings. The main data consist of screen-view video recordings of two art-based workshops held for employees working in a Finnish kindergarten. The workshops were hosted via Microsoft Teams video-conferencing system, complemented by a whiteboard application accessed via tablet computers. Our findings indicate that the practices of thanking and assessing are not shaped only by the sequential environment or the situated roles of the participants but, crucially, also by the fractured ecology of the technology-mediated setting. Overall, this chapter furthers the understanding of the ways in which mediation technologies can transform the practices of institutional interaction.

1 Introduction

Workshops that are hosted by artists and based on art-based practices and media, such as photography, music or theatre, are a fast-growing trend in contemporary working life (see e.g., Johansson Sköldberg et al. (Eds.) 2016;

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Lehikoinen et al. (Eds.) 2016). Artistic interventions are expected to encourage the participants to reflect on and challenge the established practices of their organisations, to try out new approaches and, more generally, to experience meaningful work (Berthoin Antal et al. 2018: 377). In this chapter, we study video-mediated workshops that two independent entrepreneurs, both with a background in applied theatre, offer to an organisational customer. These art-based workshops consist of different types of creativity exercises that are conducted in small groups or individually. To encourage attendees to interact and express themselves in novel ways in a workplace environment, the hosts need to nurture a positive, confidential atmosphere. As this chapter will show, central tools for accomplishing this are expressions of thanking and positive assessments. These resources enable the hosts to respond to the attendees' contributions, make them relevant as creative accomplishments, and steer the overall activities. Moreover, the two actions often co-occur in the same sequential slot – as third position receipts after an attendee contribution – and share similarities in their design (e.g. both in intensified form).[1]

Although workshops were long held mainly in face-to-face settings, in 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, they were quickly transformed into virtual workshops, hosted via video-conferencing systems such as Teams or Zoom. As we shall show, new practices of thanking and assessment have emerged in these mediated environments, as the remote attendees not only participate to the workshop activities but also simultaneously do the additional of work of enabling, maintaining and controlling their mediated presence (e.g., adjusting the webcam, muting oneself in turn-closure). Moreover, as some of the participants might be co-located in a shared physical environment, video-mediated interaction often constitutes a hybrid formation in which the boundaries between mediated and face-to-face interaction become blurred (cf. Oittinen 2020). For example, remote workshops can also include video-mediated physical on-site exercises in small groups.

The current chapter aims to advance conversation cnalytic understanding of video-mediated interaction by focusing on thanking and assessment practices in remote workshops that serve human resource development through art-based methods.[2] In studies of institutional interaction, thanking and positive assessments have been observed to be key resources in segmenting the flow of agenda-driven interaction (see e.g., Koivisto 2009; A. Lindström & Heinemann 2009; J. Lindström et al. 2019; Mikkola & Nissi, submitted). Moreover, the significance of complimenting to various professional activity types, ranging from helpline calls to survey interviews, has been demonstrated (see e.g., Gathman et al. 2008; Shaw & Kitzinger 2011). In our contribution, we explore how, and to which extent, the mediated nature of the interaction is made relevant in and through the hosts' thanking and positive assessments of the remote workshop attendees (cf., Arminen, Licoppe & Spagnolli 2016). That is, we consider technology and mediation from a member's perspective and observe the ways in which the hosts make them meaningful and salient aspects of the ongoing interaction and its agenda. To the extent our screen-view video data allow, we study the hosts' conduct from a multimodal perspective by taking into account how embodied and technological resources (e.g. gaze and body

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movements; turning the webcam on/off) are combined and arranged with the verbal ones.

We begin by introducing the background of our study and presenting the data and method used. In the second part, we examine closely three activity contexts where the hosts systematically employ thanking and positive assessment: i) turn-allocation, ii) responding to attendees' exercise performances and iii) responding to attendees' maintenance of mediation technology (e.g. webcam adjustment). We will show that in each context thanking and assessment follow different verbal and embodied practices and, moreover, orient to the relevance and procedural consequentiality of mediation differently.

2 Background

2.1 Video-mediated interaction

In their current state of development, mainstream video-mediated technologies allow social interaction in a more or less 'fractured ecology' (Luff et al. 2003) that constrains, in comparison to co-present interaction, the ways through which the co-participants can achieve and maintain intersubjectivity and reciprocity of perspectives. Importantly, in video-mediated interaction (VMI), distant co-participants have restricted access to each other's visual environment, as they can only monitor the part of the environment that is currently framed on the screen. (Arminen et al. 2016: 297–299.) This can limit the possibilities of co-orientation and collaboration and create a need for additional workspaces. For example in our data, a virtual whiteboard is used in tandem with the video-conferencing system (see Section 3). Furthermore, the current video technology makes it impossible to use certain embodied resources such as eye contact to allocate turns in multiparty interaction. Asymmetrical visual access also restricts the use of pointing and other gestures as well as posture and body movement as interactional resources. However, CA's interest in VMI lies not in the features (let alone deficiencies) of the mediation technology itself but in the ways in which the technology and mediation are – and can be shown to be – relevant and consequential in the organisation of talk and action (Arminen et al. 2016). Thus, CA investigates VMI and other forms of technology-mediated interaction from an emic standpoint.

Interaction in video-mediated environments often intertwines with interaction in the local physical space. This is particularly true in multi-party VMI in which some participants are co-located – the workshops examined in this chapter being a paradigm example. Focusing on video-mediated business meetings, Oittinen (2020) shows how co-located participants can construct alliances by using multimodal resources that are only available in the local interactional space (e.g., eye-to-eye-gaze, some forms of gestures). Her findings suggest that junctures such as technical problems, silences and disagreements are likely to invite interaction in the local space and to create oppositional alliances ('local us' versus 'remote them'). We expand on Oittinen's (2020)

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study by investigating the ways in which physical and technology-mediated interactional spaces are made relevant in remote human resource development workshops, particularly during the thanking and positive assessment of the attendees. The notion of interactional space was originally introduced by Mondada (2013) for the interactional analysis of the material and spatial environment of talk. The notion approaches space as both action-shaping and action-shaped and allows us to take into account e.g. the spatial and embodied dimension of participation framework (ibid.). While Mondada has considered the embodied aspects of "space work" in physical settings, Oittinen (2020) has extended the notion to video-mediated settings.

2.2 Assessing and thanking in institutional interaction

As institutional interaction is characterised by participants' orientation to an agenda (e.g., Koivisto & Niemi 2020), it comes as no surprise that prior studies on thanking and assessment in institutional settings have highlighted the employment of these actions to serve task-oriented functions. To begin with, studies on thanking in activity types such as service encounters (Koivisto 2009) and online psychotherapy (Ekberg et al. 2013) have shown that thanking is routinely used as a boundary or closure marker that marks the successful completion of a sequence, task section or entire activity. To offer a case example, Koivisto (2009) shows that in Finnish kiosk encounters, salespersons use routinely thanking in their responses to display that the payment phase is successfully completed. Thanking can also be used to treat the overall activity as potentially completed and ready to be brought to closure (ibid.).

Regarding positive assessments in institutional interaction, it has been noted that they can be used as boundary markers in a similar way to thanking. This is obviously so when they function as part of a turn-internal discourse pattern through which the institutional party does two things consecutively: first, they can be used to mark the completion of an interactional unit, and second, initiate a move to the next unit (see Antaki et al. 2000). As the authors (ibid.) argue, high-grade assessments (e.g., *brilliant*) in this environment do not evaluate the content of the preceding talk but signal that the talk has "successfully met its local criteria for acceptance as completing a stage", thus signalling "institutional impersonality" (ibid. 258–259). The pattern is highly institutional in that it marks "a display of control of the interactional sequence" (Antaki 2002: 21). Another line of research has shown that low-grade assessments (e.g., 'good') can be used to mark the completion of smaller subtasks (e.g., requests for information in box offices), whereas high-grade assessments can be used to bring larger sections to closure and initiate a move to the next one (e.g., purchase) or to closing (J. Lindström et al. 2019; see also A. Lindström & Heinemann 2009). In addition, A. Lindström and Heinemann (ibid.) note that in care work, both assessing and thanking are used in similar responsive contexts to accept proposals of task completion; the latter perhaps placing more emphasis on relational work and rapport.

As regards the design features of positive assessments, the aforementioned studies have shown that particularly low-grade assessments are often

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formulaic, structurally simple and utilise a downgraded prosody (e.g., fast tempo, low volume). Moreover, they can be accompanied by embodied features that signal sequence completion (e.g., averted gaze, bodily movements). (A. Lindström & Heinemann 2009; J. Lindström et al. 2019.) The opposite design features (e.g. multi-unit structure, upgraded prosody), however, have been observed to be characteristic of positive assessments functioning as compliments as they need to be accepted as being genuine and sincere, not formulaic and scripted.[3] Indeed, Shaw and Kitzinger (2011: 226) argue that the sincerity of compliments depends upon their being heard as "individually recipient designed – specific to just this recipient in particular, at just this place in the interaction". This is also evident in our data (see Section 5). As Gathman et al. (2008) argue, a key sequential method for substantiating assessments is to provide accounts.

Studies of the impact of communication technology, particularly video-mediation, on the institutional practices of assessment and thanking are still quite scarce. However, Stommel and her colleagues (Stommel et al. 2020) have recently studied the practices of medical assessment in post-surgery video consultations and compared them to those of in-person consultations. A key difference is that whereas wound showing is expected in healing assessments during in-person consultations, during video consultations it is predominantly replaced by talk-based assessment sequences that involve questioning rather than showing. This results in physician's assessments that are evidentially framed as lacking direct access to the assessable, thus displaying less diagnostic authority. Our study furthers the understanding of the ways in which mediation technologies can transform the practices of thanking and assessment in institutional settings.

3 Data and method

The data consist of two video-recorded human resource development workshops that are organised via Microsoft Teams video conferencing system. In addition, a collaborative whiteboard application called Flinga is utilised. Of the three similar workshops, we were only able to record the last two. The first workshop that we recorded has nine attendees, while the second has seven. Both workshops last roughly two hours (125 minutes and 127 minutes) and are hosted by the same two hosts, to whom we will refer as Jan and Eva. Both are entrepreneurs and professionals in art-based interventions with a degree in applied theatre. They offer their services to organisational customers both individually and in collaboration with other service providers, as in the current case. The attendees are employees of a kindergarten, and their manager (referred to as Laila) also participates in both the video-recorded workshops. The language used in the workshops is Finnish.

According to our retrospective interview with the hosts, the objective of the workshops was to boost the kindergarten workers' mental well-being, to introduce to their colleagues a more personal side to their personalities, and to enforce team spirit. To reach these goals, the hosts assigned the attendees

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different tasks, which included both individual and group exercises. Some of them aimed for verbal performance as their outcome, while others also involved a non-verbal dimension (e.g., sharing a photograph, creating an on-site collage). Another difference was that some exercises were mainly self-reflective, while others aimed for an extensive creative process and output.

A member of our research project gathered the data, and was logged in as a participant of the Teams session. At the beginning of the workshops, she introduced herself and informed the attendees of the research project. After this, she remained an inactive participant. The participants have given their consent to be audio- and video-recorded for research purposes.

The hosts are co-located and sit side by side at a table, facing a laptop computer and its webcam. As researchers, our visual access to the workshop is based on the video-recorded Teams screen view that shows the current speaker(s). Thus, our perspective of the hosts and their actions is similar to the remote attendees' perspective. The remote attendees are co-located in the premises of the kindergarten equipped with three laptop computers for interacting in the Teams environment. The Teams screen view is also projected onto a large screen with a video projector. Thus, the attendees can constantly monitor the hosts and follow their instructions. In addition, the attendees have several tablet computers for sharing text-based and photographic content in the Flinga application.

To examine the video-mediated interaction, we apply the methods of CA to investigate interaction as temporally and sequentially evolving collaboration in which the participants draw on their cultural understanding of language and embodied action to produce and interpret social actions (e.g., Clift 2016). Furthermore, our analysis is informed by the extant CA research on mediated interaction and assessment and thanking as social actions, as discussed earlier.

4 Remote chairing: multimodal practices of thanking and positive assessment

In this section, we analyse how thanking and positive assessments are facilitated in the progression of primarily verbal exercises in a specific sequential place that we refer to as mid-exercise position. As the workshops had multiple attendees, the exercises received a series of attendee contributions. In a mid-exercise position, there will be other participants to produce their contribution after the current speaker has finished. The verbal exercises included simple tasks such as expressing one's current thoughts and feelings in a few words, but also more demanding collaborative exercises using a particular improvisation technique. Consequently, the attendees' contributions varied from clausal or single clause utterances (e.g., 'I'm excited') to extended, multi-unit stretches of talk.

In both the simple and more demanding verbal exercises, it was the task of the hosts to obtain the attendees' contributions and initiate the transition

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to the next attendee. Due to the restrictions of video-mediation, verbal resources are dominant, whereas bodily resources are less suitable. For example, the hosts cannot rotate their body from the current speaker to the projected next speaker or direct their gaze to another participant and thus signal the selection of the next speaker.

We find that when one attendee finishes their contribution in a mid-exercise position, the hosts first and foremost orient to the progressivity of the exercise. This is particularly clear when the exercise sets an expectation for a short, single-unit contribution. Due to their orientation to the exercise's progressivity, the hosts draw on a two-part discourse pattern consisting of simple thanking (*kiitos* 'thank you') and the initiation of speaker transition (e.g., *sitte Piia* 'now Piia') when receiving the attendees' contributions. We refer to this format as a *chairing pattern*. While producing it verbally, the hosts typically gaze at the camera or computer screen and thus orient to the Teams-mediated interactional space. In Extract 1, the workshop is coming to its end, and the attendees have been asked to briefly describe their current feelings. The attendees make their contributions in front of a laptop computer and turn off the audio- and video-connection after they have completed their contribution. In line 1, Johanna begins the round.[4]

Extract 1 (1/7/0.28–01.15)

```
01 JOH: mm: no tällä hetkellä on sellanen (0.2) * ↑innostunut
        PRT PRT right now I feel                    excited
                                                 *ATTENDEE VIDEO APPEARS,
                                                 GAZE AT LOCAL SPACE
02      ja   *luova fiilis. ((nods))
        and creative
             *GAZE AT LAPTOP
03      (0.2)

04 JAN: kiitos, (0.4) sitte (.) Suvi, *
        thank you     now      Suvi
                                      *JOH TURNS OFF THE WEBCAM
05      (4.0; JAN SMILES AND LIFTS GAZE AT SCREEN)

06      (3.0; ATTENDEE AUDIO ACTIVATED)

07 SUV: °no mulla on päällimmäisenä itsessäni *uusia asioita
         PRT my strongest feeling is that I've realised new
                                                *ATTENDEE VIDEO APPEARS;
                                                GAZE AT LAPTOP

08      oivaltanut (.) olo°.
        things about myself

09      (0.4)
```


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```
10 JAN:  ↓kiitos, (.) sitte Nai*ma, ((host video not showing))
          thank you    now Naima
                                *SUV TURNS OFF AUDIO AND VIDEO

11       (5.0; ATTENDEE AUDIO ACTIVATED; VIDEO NOT ACTIVATED)

12 NAI:  (saanks mä sanoa) että olen myös kans innostunut täst(h)ä.
         (can I say) that I am also excited about this as well

13       (0.8)

14 JAN:  kiitos. (0.2) sitten ↓Niina? ((gaze at screen))
         thank you     now Niina
```

Allowing room for potential elaboration, Jan waits a moment after an attendee has seemingly completed her contribution (lines 03, 09, and 13). He then receives the contribution using the chairing pattern [*kiitos* 'thank you' + *sitte*(*n*) 'now' + first name of the selected next speaker] (lines 04, 10, and 14). By employing this pattern, he not only evaluates the individual contributions but, importantly, orients to the progression of the exercise. The first part of this pattern, *kiitos*, 'thank you', is a boundary marker that signals acceptance of the description and discharges the prior speaker from her task (see Zinken et al. 2020). At the same time, it concludes an attendee's contribution and initiates a transition to the next speaker. This transition is further enforced in the subsequent part of the formula, consisting of the particle *sitte*(*n*) 'now' and the first name of the selected next speaker. Moreover, Jan's gaze at the screen (lines 05 and 14) maintains the relevance of the common mediated interactional space for the ongoing activity.[5] Following an extended gap (see lines 05–06 and 11) during which the next selected speaker approaches the laptop computer and turns on the microphone (and webcam), the next selected speaker produces her contribution, thus supporting the relatively smooth progression of the video-mediated exercise.

Next, we discuss an exercise that assigns the attendees to produce a more extended contribution. In this exercise, the hosts receive the contributions in a slightly different way: instead of using a simple 'thank you', the hosts add either the first name of the speaker (e.g., *kiitos Hanna* 'thank you Hanna') or the adverb *paljon*, 'a lot' (*kiitos paljon* 'thank you very much') to their thanks, arguably demonstrating their appreciation to the speaker for producing a more extended contribution. Yet, as in Extract 1, the hosts orient first and foremost to the progressivity of the exercise. They might also offer a low-grade positive assessment (e.g., *hyvä* 'good') after a contribution in a mid-exercise position. This is a particularly clear option in cases in which the participants are encouraged to share personal opinions.

In Extract 2, the attendees were instructed to upload a personal photograph to the Flinga workspace to sum up their conceptions of creativity. This arguably projects an extended, multi-unit response in the discussion

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round. Prior to the excerpt below, Eva has initiated the exercise by talking about her own picture and how it reflects her understanding of creativity. She then chose the next speaker. In the first line of Extract 2, the selected next speaker takes the turn.

Extract 2 (2/1/13:20–14:29)

01 ANN: **joo:. te:rve,**
yes hello

02 EVA: **moi?**
hi

03 ANN: **An*ne? Hämäläinen, mitäs mä* (.) kerron itse*stäni heh he he – –**
NAME NAME *what should I tell you about myself*
*ATTENDEE VIDEO APPEARS *GAZE AT LAPTOP *GAZE AT CO-PARTICIPANT

((9 *lines omitted; ANN describes her position at work and her photograph*))

12 EVA: **joo,**
yes

13 ANN: ***joku semmonen ihanat muistot siitä ne luo *mulle siitä sellasen et**
like great memories of it they make me feel that
*GAZE AT LAPTOP *GAZE AT NOTES

14 ***tässä on hyvä olla.**
it's good to be here
*GAZE AT LAPTOP

15 EVA: **jes. hyvä. ↑kii*:tos. kelle* sä haluat Anne laittaa viestin seuraavaksi.**
yess good thank you to whom would you NAME *give the turn next*
*VIDEO ENDS *HOST VIDEO APPEARS; EVA GAZES AT NOTES

16 **=mille kuvalle. ((*simultaneously writing notes on paper*))**
to which picture

Anne initiates her turn by acknowledging her position as the selected next speaker (*joo* 'yes', line 01) and by greeting the hosts. We argue that her greeting (*terve* 'hello', line 01) is connected to the context of the workshop as a video-mediated workshop: by producing a minimal turn that creates a sequential expectation of an answer (a second greeting by the hosts), she is able to check that the video-mediated connection works (cf. Licoppe 2017b). Indeed, Anne receives a reciprocal greeting from Eva (line 02), signalling that Anne is heard. Only then Anne introduces herself and initiates an extended contribution (lines 03–04). During her turn, she shifts her gaze between the computer screen and her co-located colleagues, thus

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displaying simultaneous involvement in dual interactional spaces. When Anne's extended contribution has reached a point of possible closure (data not shown), Eva marks her understanding with *joo* 'yes' (line 12). Second, after Anne completes and summarises her contribution (lines 13–14), Eva marks Anne's contribution as completed and implies her satisfaction with it as suitable for the exercise (*jes* 'yess'). A low-grade positive assessment (*hyvä* 'good') is used in this connection (*jes. hyvä* 'yess. good', line 15). As *jes* 'yess' was already deployed to mark Anne's contribution as completed, *hyvä* 'good' clearly adds something to it. We argue that the low-grade positive assessment *hyvä* in this sequential position offers the host's appreciation of the extended contribution in a mid-exercise position, while also implying a transition to the next speaker. Thus, we conclude that low-grade assessment, while offering a positive evaluation, is also related to the hosts facilitating the sequential progression of the ongoing exercise. Finally, the host confirms the conclusion of Anne's contribution by thanking her, but in a different way to the thanking that we saw in Extract 1. Here it is emphasised by a high pitched initiation of the word and a lengthening sound (↑*kii:tos.*), adding a more appreciative tone to it (cf. Koivisto 2009).

In this section, we have seen that in a mid-exercise position of a multi-participant exercise, the hosts draw on a simple 'thank you' and low-grade positive assessment to facilitate exercise progressivity and a smooth transition to a next participant. More specifically, the hosts mobilise these resources to treat the preceding performance as sufficient and satisfactory (= low-grade assessing) and/or completed (= simple thanking) and thus to project closure and transition to the next performance. Moreover, we observed that the hosts regularly direct their gaze to the screen (or webcam) to make the video-mediated space relevant for the ongoing activity.

5 Complimenting the remote attendees: co-located hosts in collaboration

In this section, we turn to examine how the hosts utilise intensified thanking marked with a prosodical and/or lexical emphasis (e.g. *voi <kii:tos.>* 'oh thank you') and high-grade assessments (e.g. *todella kaunista* 'really beautiful') when responding to the attendees' exercise performances. We show that the employment of these resources serves a dual function. Similar to low-grade assessment and basic thanking, they initiate a closure. Additionally, they function as compliments by treating the exercise performance(s) as an accomplishment that is worthy of further attention from the hosts. That is to say, when attendee performances are responded to by the hosts with upgraded forms of thanking and/or assessment, they are typically followed by an account that substantiates them, e.g., verbalises the merits of the performance(s).[6] Moreover, we will show that these actions are typically produced jointly – in unison – by the two hosts so as to further emphasise the meaning of accomplishment. Importantly, the joint production relies often on the embodied affordances of the local interactional space that the

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hosts share (e.g. eye contact and overlapping talk). This, in turn, highlights the hybrid nature of video-mediated interaction in situations where two or more participants are co-located as one mediated party.

We begin by examining how the photo exercise discussed in the previous section (see Extract 2) is brought to closure by using thanking and, in particular, high-grade assessment. Extract 3 begins with the host's (Eva) responsive turn, which accepts the previous participant's contribution and proceeds to give the floor to the last participant – in this case, the other host.

Extract 3 (2/1/20:52–22:41)

```
01 EVA:  joo. hyvä, kiitos Esra. ja: (.) *eiks niin että
         yes  good  thank you NAME       and isn't
                                         *HOST VIDEO APPEARS;
                                         GAZE AT SCREEN

02       siel on vielä* (.) yksi kuva. ((looks at JAN))
         there one more picture
                     *GAZE AT NOTES

03       ((0.2; EVA GAZES AT JAN))

04 JAN:  *joo. ((smiles))
         yes
         *GAZE AT EVA

05 EVA:  se on Jan* [hh he he he kuva,
         it is NAME              picture
                  *GAZE AT NOTES

06 JAN:  [*se on mun kuva he he he
         it's my picture
          *GAZE AT LAPTOP

07 JAN:  kyllä. eli siellä, siellä kuva (.) sillalta.
         yes    so there   there's a picture from a bridge

         ((12 lines omitted; Jan describes his photo))

20 JAN:  ja *tää kuva kuvastaa sitä mulle.*
         and this picture represents that to me
            *GAZE AT WEBCAM              *GAZE AT SCREEN
```


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21 EVA: ***hyvä. kiitos Jan.** *
good thank you NAME

*HOSTS' MUTUAL GAZE *EVA GAZES AT SCREEN
22 **(0.2) ((video freezes, only audio available))**

23 EVA: **↑jes, .hhh hei ihan mahtavaa oli (.) koska nyt**
yess hey that was absolutely wonderful because now

24 **täs kuultiin jotenkin ihan ↑uusia piirteitä joistakin >tai**
we heard some completely new sides to some people or

25 **tuli< yllätyksiä >@hei se on ↑mun kuva@< ja sitten oli**
were surprised hey that's my picture and then

26 **tunnistettavia piirteitä paljon.**
there were a lot of recognisable traits

27 JAN: **mm-m.**

28 EVA: **ja, ↑kiitos.=olipa hauskaa.**
and thanks that really was fun

29 **=olemme tutustuneet teihin jo hieman ja:, tässä (.) parin**
we've gotten to know you a little already and

30 **tunnin aikana lisää. .hh tota mut hei tehdään**
now in the next hours more but hey let's

31 **seuraavaksi – –**
next – –

Following Eva's response that employs the chairing pattern discussed in the previous section, Jan describes the photo he has chosen and reveals his conception of creativity in relation to it (lines 7-20). In line 21, Eva responds to the performance by again using the aforementioned pattern (with the exception of next speaker allocation). While producing the chairing pattern, she negotiates performance closure by gazing at Jan. Eye contact makes him relevant as a co-present participant, as opposed to the remote attendees. This is followed in line 23 by *↑jes* 'yess' that suggests readiness to move on (see also Extract 2). Eva continues by initiating a new line of action, as signalled by the attention-getter *hei* 'hey' (see Schegloff 1968: 1080). What follows is a high-grade assessment in clausal form (*ihan mahtavaa oli* 'that was absolutely wonderful'). The format of the assessment is salient - it stands out in comparison to the minimal *hyvä* 'good' assessments discussed

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in the previous section. We argue that the high-grade assessment serves to bring the whole exercise to a successful closure by treating the exercise as a collective accomplishment (see also A. Lindström & Heinemann 2009: 326). The past tense in particular distances the current assessment from the activity of assessing the immediately prior performance and suggests a summative orientation: the zero-referenced assessable (*ihan mahtavaa oli* [0] 'truly great-PAR is-3SG-PST [0]') applies to the prior exercise as a whole. Further evidence supporting this interpretation is that the assessment is followed by an account that gathers up the overall achievements of the performances (lines 23–26: 'because now we heard some completely new sides to some people or were surprised [...]'). Jan follows with an affiliative response (line 27: *mm-m*). That is, the hosts subtly negotiate a shared positive stance and by doing so, render themselves as one unit.[7]

After the account, Eva brings the exercise to closure by thanking and giving a reprise of the summative high-grade assessment, again in past tense (line 28: 'thanks that really was fun'). Together, Eva's positive high-grade assessments, and the account in the middle, resemble the 'compliment sandwich' discourse pattern discussed by Gathman et al. (2008). The pattern consists of a compliment followed by an account and a compliment restatement (ibid. 286–288). Importantly, the restatement in the end allows the speaker to enumerate the merits of the performances without offering them for further discussion. Indeed, Eva continues her turn by referring to the overall agenda of the workshop and by introducing the following exercise (lines 28–30).

Overall, Extract 3 fits well with the division of labour between low-grade and high-grade positive assessments described by J. Lindström et al. (2019) focusing on request-delivery sequences in service encounters. According to them, low-grade assessments are used for negotiating the completion of "sub-tasks" (in our case, individual performances), whereas high-grade assessments come into play when bringing the more overarching "task section" (i.e. whole exercise) into closure. However, as Extract 3 demonstrates, an important aspect of the closure of the workshop exercises is the assessment of the attendees' performances. That is, the hosts employ high-grade assessment not only to bring the section to closure but also to provide collective feedback for the attendees. Thus, in the example high-grade assessment serves not only 'task-oriented' but also 'content-oriented' function, to use the terminology of J. Lindström et al. (ibid.). The latter function is highlighted in the example by two features. First, the high-grade assessment is substantiated by providing an account that verbalises what has been achieved through the exercise. Second, the validity of the positive assessment is jointly negotiated by the hosts to give it more weight and credibility.

So far, including the previous section, we have shown examples from fairly simple exercises in which the attendees are asked to share their thoughts and feelings fairly straightforwardly ("prosaicly") without much preparation. Next, we will examine an exercise that calls for more creative approach and demands co-operation between the attendees. In this exercise, the chairing pattern is not used, but each performance is assessed thoroughly

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immediately after its delivery. In this sequential context, high-grade assessment and intensified thanking are employed to treat each individual performance as a unique, creative achievement. Extract 4 offers a case in point. The extract originates from an exercise in which the participants are first asked to observe things in their immediate sensory world such as 'shadows' or 'something that is indistinct', and then to make notes on the associations that spring to mind. In the second part, they are instructed to form pairs or small groups and discuss their observations. Finally, the groups are asked to present their observations to the hosts by using an improvisation technique called *Yes, and*. The aim is that each participant builds on what the prior one has said by initiating their responsive turn with the phrase 'yes and' (*joo ja* in Finnish). Interpreted interactionally, the phrase displays alignment (*joo* 'yes') and projects continuation of the prior activity (*ja* 'and').

In Extract 4, the exercise is performed by a group of two in mid-exercise position; there are other participants that are yet to provide their contribution. Prior to line 1, the pair has performed five rounds of 'yes and', although not strictly following the format.

Extract 4 (2/2/19:05–19:54)

```
01 MAR: *ja sieltä näkyy meidän yhteinen luovuus (.) *kaunis puu.
        and you can see our shared creativity    a beautiful tree
        *GAZE AT NOTES                               *GAZE AT LAPTOP

02      (0.2; MAR GAZES AT SCREEN AND SMILES)

03 SAN: joo ja meidän yhteiset (.)  rakennuspalikat.
        yes and our joint           building blocks

04      (0.6)

05 MAR: *palikka (.) tule boksin ulkopuolelle.
        block/fool   come outside the box
        *GAZE AT LAPTOP

06      (0.6; MAR GAZE AT SAN, BOTH LAUGH) ((subdued laughter))

07 JAN: ihanaa:
        lovely

08      ((JAN and EVA applaud))

09 MAR: heh he he

10 EVA: voi* <kii:tos.>
        oh thank you
           *HOST VIDEO APPEARS; GAZE AT LAPTOP
```


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11 **(.)**

12 EVA: **hei, [hei**
hey hey

13 JAN: **[*aivan mieletöntä.**
totally amazing
*GAZE AT SCREEN

14 EVA: **ihan mieletön *niinku, siis nää ↑molemmat* mitä ollaan**
absolutely amazing like both of these that we have
*JAN GAZES AT EVA *JAN AND EVA GAZE AT LAPTOP

15 **kuultu >ja kohta< kuullaan vielä lisää. .h niin ne on**
heard and soon we'll hear more they are

16 **jotenkin aivan valmiita ihan kuin te oisitte miettineet**
somehow so complete as if you had planned them

17 **sata tuntia niitä ja kiteyttäneet jotenkin**
for a hundred hours and crystallised

18 **sellaisen oleellisen ((*gaze all the time at laptop*))**
the essence somehow

19 **((JAN *performs a head sway with closed eyes*))**

20 EVA: **.h ni tää on parhaimmillaan mitä niinku**
so this is what at best can be

21 **salamatekniikalla saa *aikaseks**
accomplished with the lightning technique
*GAZE AT JAN

22 **tavallaan luovuudesta.* ((*JAN nods*))**
on creativity
*GAZE AT SCREEN

23 EVA: **oi oi [oi mun,**
PRT PRT PRT *my*

24 JAN: **[tosi kaunista.* [ihanaa.**
really beautiful wonderful
*GAZE AT EVA

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```
25 EVA:                          [menee ihan kylmät väreet.
                                 I even get shivers

26 JAN: kyllä.
        indeed

27 EVA: *↑mutta. nyt meillä on vielä Esra, *Kati ja Anna
        but    now we still have NAME NAME and NAME
        *GAZE AT NOTES                    *GAZE AT SCREEN

28      eikö totta.
        don't we
```

After performing two rounds of 'yes and' exchanges, Mari creates a new association by recycling the lexical item *palikka* 'block' from Sanna's previous turn in line 3. In her turn, Mari possibly utilises another, colloquial meaning to *palikka*, denoting 'a fool' (line 5). Support for this interpretation seems to be available in mutual laughter (line 6). The hosts then take the floor. First, Jan produces a high-grade assessment (line 7: *ihanaa* 'wonderful'), followed by the hosts' joint applause (line 8), Eva's intensified thanking - produced at a markedly slow tempo (line 10: *voi <kii:tos.>* 'oh thank you') – and another high-grade assessment from Jan (line 13: *aivan mieletöntä* 'totally amazing'). In comparison to the typical design features of the chairing pattern, the current assessments have a markedly complimentary quality to them. Likewise, the thanking is produced in a more "sincere", non-formulaic manner. Resembling the chairing pattern, the upgraded forms serve a task-oriented function in negotiating the closure of the performance. However, we argue that the forms simultaneously treat the individual performance as an accomplishment that stands out on its own. This orientation is emphasised in Eva's subsequent turns in which she provides an account that elaborates on the merits of the performance (lines 14–22). However, the positive remarks are subtly extended to cover also the preceding performance as well those yet to come, which makes it clear that the hosts' assessments serve other purposes than ranking (see lines 14–15).

The account is followed by a compliment restatement similar to Extract 3, but this time utilising appreciatory sounds (line 23: *oi oi oi*) and a description of one's physical reaction (lines 25: 'I even get shivers'). In terminology introduced by Edwards and Potter (2017), these compliments can be described as 'subject-side assessments' that "predicate something of the subject, that is, the person making the assessment" (ibid. 9). In the current sequential context, they can be heard as highlighting the sincerity of the compliments. Overall, the account and the compliments surrounding follow the 'compliment sandwich' pattern introduced above. Following the pattern, Eva returns to the overall agenda and gives the floor to the remaining group of attendees (lines 27–28). The turn-initial high-pitch ↑*mutta* 'but' (line 27) marks the resumption and suggests that the resumed activity has priority over the intervening one (see Mazeland & Huiskes 2001).

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Extract 4 resembles the prior one (Extract 3) in that it highlights the hosts' collaboration and negotiation of a shared stance in the local space that offers additional affordances for interaction (cf. Oittinen 2020). For example, in line 24 Jan supports Eva's just-prior compliment by producing an agreeing second compliment' (on second compliments, see Golato 2005, Chapter 5).[8] The second compliment is produced in overlap – an affordance of the local interactional space – that further strengthens the alignment between the hosts (see ibid. 165).[9] Likewise, while Eva is providing the account, Jan performs an overlapping head sway with closed eyes (line 19) to display agreement and emotional affiliation (i.e. being equally impressed). Two lines later, Eva takes further advantage of the local space affordances by using embodied means to negotiate a shared stance with Jan. That is, she turns her head away from the laptop screen and shifts gaze towards Jan and, in doing so, seeks confirmation for her assessment and, moreover, orients to him as a co-present participant. Jan responds with an agreeing nod (lines 21–22).

In this section, we have investigated the use of high-grade assessment and intensified thanking in the hosts' responses to the attendees' exercise performances. We focused on two sequential positions: mid-exercise and exercise final. We argued that in mid-exercise position the main difference between simple thanking and low-grade assessment and intensified thanking and high-grade assessment is that the latter ones not only negotiate the closure of the performance (cf. Section 4) but also claim the performance as an accomplishment that is worthy of further scrutiny before moving on to the next one. This content-oriented function (see, J. Lindström et al. 2019) is expressed via non-formulaic, "authentic" design of the intensified thanking and high-grade assessment and via accounts that follow them as discussion of the merits. Indeed, it seems that the account is the primary responsive slot in which the hosts seek to influence the attendees' conceptions of and attitudes toward the workshop topics. However, as the hosts routinely "sandwich" the account by restating the compliment (see also, Gathman et al. 2008), the claims are not offered for further discussion, let alone debate. In the exercise final position, upgraded forms of assessment and thanking have a similar dual function. However, they display orientation to bringing the whole exercise to closure by treating the prior activities as a collective accomplishment – a joint endeavour.

Another key observation in this section is that while the task-oriented responses that primarily pursue exercise progression are typically performed by only one of the hosts (see Section 4), the content-oriented responses that also evaluate exercise performances are produced collaboratively. That is, the hosts routinely pursue agreeing second assessments from each other to add more weight to the compliments and, presumably, to maximise the positive and supportive atmosphere in the workshop. The collaboration of the hosts, in turn, brings to the fore their simultaneous involvement in both physical and online environments. Indeed, as Oittinen (2020: 91) has stressed, interactional spaces are "multi-layered constructs that can be attended to simultaneously, rather than as something that the participants make relevant with a separate set of actions".

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6 Service appreciations: responding to remote attendees' activities as webcam operators

In the final analysis section, we examine practices related to webcam-oriented thanking and assessment and, more generally, video-mediated presence in remote workshops. In contrast to the findings of the previous sections, here we highlight the mobilisation of markedly appreciatory forms of thanking and assessment that treat the attendees' conduct as a service performed for the benefit of the hosts. In other words, these forms display orientation to a beneficiary-benefactor relationship (see Clayman & Heritage 2014) that holds between the hosts and the remote attendees. Syntactically, the focus is particularly on constructions with a complement that explicates the reason for expressing gratitude (e.g. *kiitos kun* X 'thank you for X'; *kiva että* A *teki* X:*n* 'it's nice that A did X'). As the examples show, in expression of appreciation the distinction between thanking and complimenting can be blurred (see also Golato 2005). In our data, many uses of these formats of appreciation highlight the technological agency of the attendees. That is, by using them the hosts treat the attendees as autonomous to decide whether to be present in the workshop in video-mediated form. More generally, these actions make the mediated nature of the interaction relevant for the ongoing activity and, moreover, treat the mediated interactional space as fragmented and fragile accomplishment.

In the workshops, appreciative thanking and assessment are typically part of a larger sequence in which the hosts give the attendees supportive feedback during the exercises and inform them of how much time they have left. In one of the exercises, the attendees are instructed to jointly create an onsite collage by means of selecting and arranging material on a large paper canvas. The theme of the collage is 'how creativity is maintained in your work community'. As mentioned previously, the remote site is equipped with three laptop computers that have built-in webcams through which the hosts can monitor the attendees' physical activities. However, sometimes – presumably unintentionally – the webcams are not activated, or they are positioned away from the focal area of activity. Consequently, during the physical onsite exercises, the remote attendees have an additional task of securing the video-mediation of their activities.

We begin the analysis with Extract 5, in which the attendees have just begun their work on the collage after being instructed by Jan. In the extract, Jan interrupts the process after a minute by producing a webcam-related request. The Teams screen shows that the attendees currently have only one webcam activated and that it is facing a wall, meaning that the hosts are unable to monitor the onsite exercise. The request makes appreciative thanking and assessment relevant as third position responses, which the hosts also later produce.

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Extract 5 (2/4/06:59-07:17 and 15:21-15:46)

01 JAN: **.hhh jos te haluutte niin ois tosi kiva jos voisitte**
if you like it would be really nice if you could

02 **kään*tää (.) tietokoneita silleen että me nähtäis vähän**
turn the computers so that we could see
*HOST VIDEO APPEARS; GAZE AT LAPTOP

03 **sitä ↑tilaa, isomminkin nii .mh nii tiedetään ((*smiles*)) et**
the space a bit more so so that we know

04 **£minkälaisessa vaiheessa ootte menossa£ (.) suurkiitos.**
what phase you are at thanks a lot

05 **((*one of the attendees adjusts the webcam position*))**

06 **((*attendees work for 8 minutes and 7 seconds*))**

07 JAN: **työskentely näyttää ihan <↑hirveen hyvältä.>* (.) voitte**
your work looks really great you can
*HOST VIDEO APPEARS; JAN AND EVA GAZE AT SCREEN

08 **jatkaa samaan malliin.=otetaan vielä viitisen minuuttia**
continue in the same way let's have about five minutes

09 **tähän yhteiselle työskentelylle ja katotaan sitte .hh**
for this collaborative work and then see

10 **mitä on saatu ai↑kaan,**
what we've accomplished

11 **(0.2)**

12 JAN: **ihan älyttömän hyvännäköstä (0.2) tekemistä.**
really great-looking work

13 EVA: **kyllä. ja kiitos kun on ne ↓kame↑rat siellä eri**
yes and thank you for having the cameras there facing

14 **suuntiin nii (.) tosi kiva katsoa,**
different directions really nice to watch

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In lines 1–4, Jan requests the attendees to adjust their webcams. The design of the action consists of both a conditional-volative and appreciatory frame ('if you like, it would be really nice if you could […]'). In Curl and Drew's (2008) terms, this design displays 'low entitlement' to make the request. That is, the host indicates that the request is not a routine or unproblematic action. This might indicate awareness of the cameras as a potential threat for privacy – particularly because video access is not requested for interpersonal interaction but for monitoring the doings of the remote party. Additionally, the request design can be heard as displaying awareness of the 'contingencies' (ibid.) that may be associated with the requested action – the request is treated as a distraction. This shows in the way the host orients to minimising the burden of the request: he wishes to see the remote space only 'a bit more'. Moreover, the request is accompanied by an account that explains the reason for the requested action (lines 3–4: 'so that we know what phase are you at'). As has been shown in previous studies (e.g., Antaki 1994), accounts are markers of dispreferred actions or actions which are departures from routine practices. In our case, the account addresses the legitimacy of the requested action by expressing how it would benefit the hosts in steering the exercise. Jan finishes the request with intensified advance thanking (line 4: *suurkiitos* 'thanks a lot') with which, despite orienting to the participants' willingness to co-operate as being likely, he treats the requested action as a service that, most directly, benefits the hosts. Shortly after the request, one of the attendees complies by moving the laptop (see line 5) and also the other webcams are soon turned on. After this, the participants work on the collage for approximately eight minutes without communicating with the hosts.

In lines 7–12, Jan briefly interrupts the exercise by giving encouraging feedback and by informing the attendees of the time remaining. For the feedback, he employs evidentially marked assessments that highlight the host's mediated visual access to the collage ('your work **looks** absolutely great', 'absolutely great-**looking** work'). In line 13, Eva displays agreement. Importantly, she goes on by thanking the attendees for providing a multi-camera view to their site (lines 13–14). The thanking comes in an expanded form, as it specifies what the host is grateful for ('thank you for having the cameras there facing different directions'). In other words, it explicates the assessable. This design suggests that the thanking resumes the earlier request sequence by providing a late third position response. Indeed, the thanking can be heard as reactivation of the role-relationship previously in play (e.g., hosts as beneficiaries, attendees as benefactors). Moreover, the deictic adverb *siellä* 'there' makes the mediated and fractured nature of the interaction relevant in the context of the current exercise. Finally, Eva produces a positive subject-side assessment to further highlight the hosts' appreciative stance (line 14: 'really nice to watch').

Overall, Extract 5 demonstrates how the hosts can use thanking and assessment as service appreciations, that is, as responses that orient to the attendees' prior activity as a service that is performed for the benefit of the hosts. Thus, service appreciations differ from the uses discussed in the previous sections in that they activate a benefactor–beneficiary relationship between the parties – or, as in Extract 5, sustain it. In the example, a

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benefactive relationship was initially activated in the hosts' request for camera adjustment by employing a request format that displays low entitlement and high contingency. Together, these benefactive actions make the hosts' role as mediated participants relevant in the current activity and, most importantly, display the hosts' dependence on the technical assistance of the remote attendees.

Although the camera actions can be requested by the hosts, they can also be initiated and volunteered by the attendees. In such cases, a benefactive stance is construed retrospectively through the hosts' displays of appreciation. To demonstrate this, we present Extract 6, which is drawn from the same collage exercise as the previous one, taking place roughly fifteen minutes later. In the example, one of the attendees voluntarily presents the near-finished collage to the hosts by moving the laptop camera along the collage to reveal its details. Thus, she can be seen as initiating a 'showing sequence' that projects an uptake from the hosts (see Licoppe 2017a). Prior to the showing, there has been no interaction between the hosts and the attendees for two minutes.[10]

Extract 6 (2/4/13:15-14:16)

```
01 LAI:  ¤(2.0) ¤ ¤ ¤ ((does a trucking shot along the collage))
   CM1:  ¤Cam6.1
   CM2:          ¤Cam6.2.1 ¤Cam6.2.2 ¤Cam6.2.3

02 LAI:  ((sits in front of the collage, says something inaudible and

03       gazes smilingly at the camera))

04       (7.5) ((Jan unmutes the hosts' microphone))

05 JAN:  näyttää tosi <hienolta> kiva että (.) Laila (.) autto vähän
         looks really great      it was nice of NAME to    help

06       meitäkin näkemään lähempää, oli tosi< (.) upeen näkös↑tä,=
         us too have a closer look, it looked really fantastic

07 EVA:  =mm-m, ((nods))

08       (0.2)

09 JAN:  onks siellä vielä pahasti kesken?
         do you still have a lot left to do?
```


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Cam 6.1

Cam 6.2.1

Cam 6.2.2

Cam 6.2.3

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In line 1, Laila performs the trucking shot by moving the laptop camera along the collage, starting from the upper right corner and moving on slowly to the upper left corner (see Cam6.2.1, Cam6.2.2, Cam6.2.3). Image *Cam6.1* offers an additional view from another laptop camera placed on a table; the circle highlights Laila's hands holding up the laptop at the beginning of the trucking shot. Next, Laila sits down, says something inaudible (one or two words) and gazes smilingly at the camera (lines 2–3). It can be argued that through this embodied conduct she projects an uptake from the hosts (see, Licoppe 2017a: 64). After a lapse of 7.5 seconds, Jan unmutes the hosts' microphone and responds with a high-grade assessment (line 5: 'looks really fantastic'). As in the previous example, the assessment utilises a perception verb that highlights the hosts' visual access to the collage (*näyttää* 'looks'). In his assessment, Jan makes a non-overt reference to the assessable ([0] *näyttää tosi hienolta* '[0] looks really great'), indicating that a joint orientation to the referent has been established (see Golato 2005: 66).

The high-grade assessment is followed by another assessment that functions as service appreciation, directed to the "mediator" Laila (lines 5–6: 'it's nice that Laila helped us to take a closer look'). Laila's showing is categorised as assistance ('help'), which construes an explicit benefactor–beneficiary relationship between her and the hosts. Jan goes on to provide a third assessment that highlights the value of the close-ups provided in the trucking shot (line 6: 'it looked really fantastic'). The use of the past tense targets the assessment at the previous trucking shot, not the current static webcam view. The use of evidential marker (*upeen* ***näköstä*** 'lit. fantastic-**looking**') again makes relevant the hosts' role as mediated viewers. In line 7, Eva provides an affiliative response. Here, the *mm-m* and the nod construe a shared stance between the hosts, which adds more rhetorical weight to the positive assessment and renders the hosts as one unit – they are now jointly accountable for the appreciative stance. After this, Jan treats the reception sequence of the showing as completed, by initiating negotiation on the further continuation of the exercise (line 9).

In sum, Extract 6 demonstrates how the remote attendees can volunteer showings and display awareness of the hosts' needs as remote participants, and how the hosts, in turn, perform service appreciations that acknowledge the benefactor-beneficiary relationship associated with the camera action. In the example, this relationship was explicitly oriented to by categorising the camera action as an instance of 'helping'. Moreover, in service appreciations, given the slot in the showing sequence, the distinction between thanking and assessment can be blurred as also assessments can alone be used to express appreciation (see also Golato 2005: 113–116; Clayman & Heritage 2014: 63–64).

In the previous examples, the hosts positioned themselves as beneficiaries with regard to a specific camera action of the attendees, either requested or volunteered. In addition, however, the sole video-mediated presence of the attendees – keeping the webcams on – can be made relevant and appreciated by the hosts. In these appreciative responses, the video access is not given an instrumental, agenda-serving function, but an interpersonal one: the video access is treated as a resource for achieving a sense of 'being together'

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remotely. Extract 7 offers a case in point. The example is drawn from the association exercise that was introduced in Section 5. The extract begins with Eva introducing the next theme for association.

Extract 7 (1/2/15:03–15:45)

```
01 EVA:   *↑jotain joka ei <kuulu> tähän (0.2) mitä havainnoin. katson.
          something that doesn't belong here  that I'm observing  looking at
          *GAZE AT SCREEN

02        (6.0) ((monitors Teams screen and begins to smile))

03        (4.0)

04 EVA:   £hei ↑ihanaa kii:tos kun näytätte kuvaa (.) tosi kivan näköstä£
          hey wonderful thank you for remaining visible looking really nice

05        *kun nähdään kaikkien siellä *työskentelevän (.)
          to see everyone in there absorbed in the task
          *GAZE AT JAN                 *GAZE BACK AT LAPTOP

06        eli ↑tää oli tää jotain poikkeavaa mikä ei <kuulu>.
          so this was the "something that doesn't belong"
```

In line 1, Eva introduces 'something that does not belong here' as the next observable. After six seconds of monitoring the attendees through the video frame, Eva begins to smile (line 2). She keeps smiling for four seconds, after which, in line 4, she initiates a turn by employing an attention-getter (*hei*) that initiates a departure from the exercise agenda.[11] She continues by producing a positive high-grade assessment with a subject-side emotional focus (*ihanaa* 'lovely'). The assessment is followed by a display of appreciation. This action comes in the form of expanded thanking that also reveals what is being appreciated, namely, the attendees' decision to keep their cameras on during the quiet association (line 4: 'thank you for remaining visible'). In other words, the host makes relevant the technological agency of the attendees by displaying that constant video-mediated presence is appreciated, but not taken for granted (see Zinken et al. 2020). The host elaborates the appreciation by producing an evidentially-marked assessment that, similar to Extracts 5 and 6, highlights the hosts' role as remote observers (lines 4–5: 'looking really nice to see [sic!] everyone in there absorbed in the task'). Together, the appreciative thanking and the elaboration can be considered an implicit negotiation of the preferred way of being remotely present in the workshop. The appreciative side-track is brought to closure by a recap of the current theme, prefaced with the marker *eli* 'so' in line 6.

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In this section, we have shown how thanking and positive assessment are used in the workshops as technological service appreciations that reflect and construe a "fractured" interactional space (Luff et al. 2003) in need of constant maintenance. In particular, we have focused on the hosts' appreciatory responses to the attendees' webcam adjustments and more complex manipulations (e.g., trucking shots) during exercises. As their distinguishing feature, these thankings and assessments make relevant a benefactor-beneficiary relationship between the parties. At its most explicit, this can be done by categorising the attendees' camera actions – requested or volunteered – as 'helping'. Finally, we showed that also the mere video-mediated presence of the attendees – i.e., their decision to remain visible at all times – can be acknowledged by the hosts with thanking and positive assessments. This practice makes visibility relevant as a resource for enhancing a sense of 'being together' remotely. More generally, it reveals that the norms related to video-mediated presence in digital interaction are still unstable and culturally "in the making".

7 Conclusion and discussion

This chapter adds to the existing research on video-mediated interaction by showing how the practices of thanking and assessing are not shaped only by the sequential environment or the situated roles of the participants but, crucially, also by the fractured ecology of the technology-mediated setting. The findings illustrate how practices previously observed in face-to-face interaction are adapted and extended in this digital environment. As expected, our study shows that many of the thanking and assessment practices that the hosts use are borrowings or slight adaptations from co-present interaction. For example, the ways in which basic thanking (e.g. *kiitos* 'thank you') and low-grade positive assessment (e.g. *hyvä* 'good') are used in a *chairing pattern* for moderating a conversation in Teams resembles the way the resources are used in on-site workshops (see Mikkola & Nissi, submitted).

Importantly, however, our analyses have also shed new light on how interaction in video conferencing platforms has transformed or brought additional features to the already observed practices of thanking and assessment. In particular, our study contributes to the understanding of how physical and technology-mediated interactional spaces are upheld and made relevant in and through thanking and assessment sequences. For example, basic thanking and low-grade positive assessment as used within the chairing pattern serve, before all, the smooth progression of agenda-based activity in the shared technology-mediated space. Manifesting the emphasis on the shared space, the chairing pattern involves the hosts' gaze directed at the screen. Another example of how thanking and assessment practices can be connected to the management of interactional space(s) is how the workshop hosts operate as a party when giving the attendees positive feedback on their creative performances. In this activity context,

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the hosts regularly make the local interactional space relevant by employing resources not (fully) available in the mediated space. As a case in point, we showed how the production of second compliments relies heavily on the use of eye contact and overlap – both resources that only co-located participants can fully utilise. While previous studies of video-mediation have observed that co-located participants often form alliances in problematic situations (e.g. in case of technological problems or disagreements; see Oittinen 2020), in our workshop data, the local interactional space is made relevant from the point of view of displaying *shared accountability* (see Djordijilovic 2012: 124) and, thus, adding more rhetorical weight to the positive stances put forward.

As a further dimension of the procedural consequentiality of mediation, we have highlighted how the hosts mobilise thanking and positive assessment as *service appreciations* to merit the attendees' maintenance of the mediation technology (e.g. webcam adjusting) or their decision to keep the webcams on at all times. This observation highlights the nature of video-mediated interaction as a form of multi-activity that requires constant double engagement from the participants; in addition to participating in the actual social interaction, one has to do the extra work of operating the technology (see also, Heath & Luff 1992). Importantly, by responding to technology maintenance with service appreciations, the hosts acknowledge the attendees' cooperation as not based on obligation but on autonomous decision and general helpfulness. This accentuation of what we have referred to as *technological agency* resembles the way in which another's assistance is oriented to in casual interaction between family and friends: another's effort is not taken for granted but, instead, recognised as a favour (see, Zinken et al. 2020: 273–274). In our data, this orientation suggests that technology maintenance is something that is not expected from the workshop attendees – it is treated as going beyond their "category-bound" activities (cf., Sacks 1992: 406–408). This, in turn, suggests orientation to video-mediated interaction as a joint achievement that is not based on orders and commands but, rather, voluntary cooperation.

As described in Section 3, our study is based on video-recordings of screen views of the video-conferencing platform. Admittedly, the data is restricted with respect to the participants' activities in their physical environments. For example, we did not have access to the ways in which the hosts accessed the additional digital workspace (Flinga) through their tablets in parallel to their Teams-mediated activities. Nevertheless, we find this data suitable for our analytical purposes. As our primary interest lies in the hosts' mediated turns as recipient-designed for the remote attendees, the data depict the hosts' conduct exactly as it was audio-visually perceivable to the recipients (see also Olbertz-Siitonen 2015). In other words, our aim was to explore the observable practices of mediated social interaction. A study with a more ethnomethodological perspective would certainly have benefitted from additional video data that covers further aspects of interaction in the physical environment.

Thanking and positive assessments are ubiquitous actions in workshops, and their manifold uses can be considered a professional skill. As we have demonstrated in this chapter, technologised environments bring an

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additional layer to the practices of thanking and assessment. In other words, technology-mediated workshops do not simply reproduce the practices of in-person workshops but also reconfigure them and generate new ones, thus making the technological context procedurally consequential (cf. Arminen, Licoppe & Spagnolli 2016; Marmorstein & König 2021). However, as the Coronavirus pandemic caused a sudden proliferation of video-mediated interaction in 2020, the significance and stability of the practices present in our data remains to be seen – and re-examined at a later stage.

Notes

1 Some forms of positive assessment can even blur the distinction between assessment and the expression of appreciation or gratitude, as will be demonstrated in Section 6 (see also, Golato 2005: 113–116; Clayman & Heritage 2014: 63–64).

2 We would like to thank the two anononymous refereers as well as Aino Koivisto, Esa Lehtinen, Riikka Nissi and Elina Salomaa for their apt comments and suggestions. The study presented in this chapter is part of the research project "Coping strategies: communicative practices of mobile specialist professions in service and gig economy" funded by Kone Foundation.

3 With regard to the relationship between positive assessments and compliments, our understanding is that complimenting a recipient is one specific function of positive assessment. Complimenting, in turn, can be done also by many other means than positive assessing (Shaw & Kitzinger 2011: 216–218 and references therein).

4 In all our examples, target lines are highlighted in grey.

5 Jan employs a chairing pattern also on line 10, but here we do not have video image from the hosts and thus cannot tell whether Jan gazes at screen.

6 Previously, similar observations have been made by Gathman et al. (2008) who focused on compliment sequences in survey interviews.

7 Unfortunately, due to a weak Internet connection, the video freezes from line 22 onwards for half a minute. This means that we cannot tell whether Jan's affiliative response was pursued by Eva through eye contact (cf. Example 4).

8 Following Golato (2005: 134), we define second compliments as compliments that are "paid by speakers who are neither the compliment recipient nor the giver of the first compliment".

9 In video-mediated interaction, due to transmission delay, overlap as an interactional resource is fully available only for co-present participants. Needless to say, transmission delay can also cause unintentional overlap.

10 The showing is not prefaced with a verbal introduction, which positions the hosts as knowledgeable recipients in terms of the 'show-worthiness' of the object. Licoppe (2017a: 78–80) refers to this form of showing as 'evocative showing'.

11 Following Kaukomaa et al. (2013), it can be argued that this kind of extended smiling construes "an emotional transition" and projects a verbal clarification of the stance.

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Human-computer interaction IV

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Computer as a conversational partner

Responding to the uncomprehending computer

Abstract

This chapter explores a particular type of human-computer interaction, namely situations where people respond verbally to the turns by a computer, even though the computer lacks a voice recognition function. The data come from a computer-mediated learning environment (LanCook), in which the human participants follow the instructions given by a computer that can produce verbal turns as output but cannot process verbal turns as input. In particular, the chapter focuses on first pair parts of adjacency pairs (questions, compliments) produced by the computer, which project a second pair part as the next relevant turn in human interaction. By examining the verbal and multimodal responses the computer's turns evoke from the human participants, the analysis shows that the computer's first pair parts do not have a similar projection for a second pair part; the absence of a second pair part is not a "noticeable absence", as it does not have trajectories in the progress of the subsequent sequence. However, occasionally the human participants respond to the turns by the computer. By answering the computer's questions, the speaker can stage the computer as an alleged interactional partner, thereby enacting a performance in which the computer is credited with a role as a conversational partner with interactional rights and responsibilities. Including the uncomprehending computer in a conversation as an interactional partner becomes a resource for performative actions for the users. It will be shown how the users, by responding to the computer's turns, add a layer of performativity into their mutual interaction.

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1 Introduction

In the increasingly digitalising world, interfaces between people and computers have become commonplace. People interact with computers through a myriad of technologies and devices, and differences in these technologies shape the character of human-computer interaction (HCI). For example, some technologies and devices are verbally unidirectional: they produce verbal turns as output but cannot process verbal turns as input – a typical example of such technology is a navigator that offers instructions about the best route based on the location of the user. In this chapter, we will focus on interaction in this type of unidirectional situation, where the computer produces verbal turns but lacks a voice recognition function.[1] The technology is a computer-mediated learning environment called LanCook, which was developed to combine language learning with authentic activities of cooking (see Seedhouse 2017a).

The LanCook kitchen involves two learners of a language who are cooking a dish according to the verbal instructions given by a computer program. Thus, the interactional situation includes two human participants who can talk to each other, as in any face-to-face encounter, plus verbal turns from a computer which does not understand speech. Yet, the human participants occasionally respond verbally to the computer's turns. Using Conversation Analysis (CA) as a method, we will explore instances where the LanCook users provide verbal responses to the turns produced by the computer, even though the users know that the computer cannot understand the turns or respond to them.

The LanCook kitchen produces three kinds of conversational actions: it gives instructions, it asks if any help is needed, and it provides compliments about the progress of cooking. These turns – directives, questions, and compliments – can be seen as the first pair part of adjacency pairs, which in human interaction project a second pair part as the next relevant turn (e.g. Schegloff & Sacks 1973, Schegloff 2007). A characteristic feature of adjacency pairs is their normative dimension, the fact that a first pair part makes a certain second part "conditionally relevant". As Schegloff (2007: 20) puts it, this means:

> If such a second pair part is not produced next, its non-occurrence is as much an event as its occurrence would have been. It is, so to speak, noticeably, officially, consequentially, absent.

This noticeability of the absence and the consequences that follow from it are based on the idea of the members' competences shared by the participants; the participants in interaction are taken to share the members' practices involved in being a user of a language (see, e.g., Heritage 1984), such as recognising the absence of the second pair part. In contrast, a unidirectional computer cannot notice any absence (or presence) of verbal responses. Thus, even though the computer produces turns that can be classified as first pair parts, these turns do not create a similar conditional relevance for subsequent turns – the absence of a verbal response (or a "wrong" type of response, for that matter) will not be observed or interpreted by the computer in any way. Against this backdrop, a question arises about the

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(potential) sequential relevance of the turns by the computer: what kind of reactions, if any, do the computer turns evoke? In this chapter, we will investigate *if*, and *how*, the human participants react to the turns by the computer, which in human interaction would strongly project a second pair part as a response. We will show that in cases where the human participants react to the turns by the computer, they do so in order to manage their own reciprocal interaction. In other words, the turns by the computer are used as material for human interaction. We will begin by presenting our data and the LanCook environment, along with the framework it allows for HCI. Subsequently, we present and analyse the different ways the participants in the LanCook kitchen respond to the turns by the computer.

2 The LanCook kitchen and human-computer interaction research

The LanCook kitchen was developed as part of a EU-funded project (see Seedhouse 2017a; Kurhila & Kotilainen 2017), the aim of which was to promote situated language learning. From a pedagogical perspective, LanCook applies the principles of task-based language learning (see Ellis 2003; Skehan 2003), combining language learning with the authentic activity of cooking, that is, the task of cooking an actual dish.

The LanCook kitchen consists of a computer programme with motion sensors that run in a tablet positioned in a real kitchen. The sensors are attached to the kitchen utensils and ingredients that are needed in the recipe which is programmed into the tablet. The cooking proceeds according to the oral instructions given by a computer (i.e. the tablet) in the target language. Even though the computer gives oral instructions, it lacks a voice-recognition function and thus cannot understand verbal responses. Instead, the LanCook system is able to monitor the progression of the cooking task through the motion sensors: it recognises the movement of a relevant sensor after the instruction. In other words, if the computer instructs the learners to "peel seven potatoes", the program monitors whether or not the sensors that are attached to the jar of potatoes and the peeling knife are moving. This information is used, for example, to suggest help when the learners do not move the expected ingredients or utensils, or to ask whether the learners are ready to move on when the system has recognised movement.[2] The help that the learners can get includes a repetition of the instruction and a picture illustrating the correct cooking action. The learners can also request help any time they want – there is a "help sensor", and moving it activates the help functions. (About the pedagogical design of the LanCook system, see Seedhouse 2017b; about the underlying technology, see Seedhouse 2017c.)

The LanCook learning environment accommodates two learners at a time. There is no teacher in the kitchen during the cooking sessions, but the student pair is always accompanied by a research assistant (RA). The RA is mainly present should any technological problems arise, and they are responsible for the video recording of the sessions. The RA has been instructed to be as unnoticeable as possible and not to help the learners with their task. In most

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sessions, the RA is rather invisible after they have introduced the system to the learners. Occasionally, however, the learners may orient to the RA by shifting their gaze to them and/or saying something to them.

Our database consists of 29 video-recorded cooking sessions in the LanCook kitchen. One session is approximately 45–60 minutes. Each session begins with a pre-test that involves the computer providing names for specific utensils and ingredients (from approximately 15–20 different options, depending on the recipe), and requesting that the learners identify them by moving the relevant utensil. The pre-test is then followed by the cooking phase, after which the learners can eat the food they have prepared. The target language in the sessions of our data is Finnish, and the learners are predominately university students with language skills varying from level A1 to C1 in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

As for human-computer interaction, the LanCook environment operates by registering physical movement: whether or not the sensors are moving. The human participants can influence the progress of the computer program through the tablet screen or by moving items that have a sensor attached. Previous research on how humans talk to artificial agents has mainly focused on situations in which human actions (potentially) have an effect on the outcome of the artificial agent's actions (e.g., a special issue on how people talk to robots and computers in *Journal of Pragmatics* 2010; see especially Wrede et al. 2010; Yamazaki et al. 2010; and recent CA studies such as Rollet & Chavet 2020; Korbut 2018; see, also, Suchman 1987 for an early ethnomethodologically oriented investigation of human-machine communication). In contrast, we will focus on a situation where human participants produce verbal actions that cannot influence the actions by the artificial agent. Addressing the artificial agent verbally could thus be seen as "unnecessary", but the analysis of such instances can provide insights into the social and interactional resources that the participants can mobilise (Fischer 2010: 2349). We will show that even though interacting with technology is constrained by the affordances of the respective artefact (Fischer 2010: 2351), the participants can create another, verbal layer of interaction, in which they include the non-comprehending computer as a conversational partner for the human participants' mutual interpersonal purposes. In the following, we will examine the turns produced by the computer and the verbal (and multimodal) responses they evoke from the human participants.

3 Responding to first pair parts by the LanCook computer

The LanCook program produces three types of verbal actions: directives (e.g. "peel seven potatoes"), questions (e.g. "do you need help"), and compliments (e.g. "you cook excellently"). Even though all these turn types can generally be categorised as first pair parts, they are also different from each other. For example, in the LanCook context, the directives that the computer provides are imperative sentences that instruct the users to perform one part of the recipe (e.g. "peel seven potatoes"). Hence, the expected next action is a

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physical rather than a verbal response; after a computer directive, the users typically start physically performing the action, or at least start searching for the ingredients and utensils mentioned in the directive, or negotiating the best way to proceed. Given the strong embodied projection of the directives, we decided **not** to focus on these turns. Instead, we focus on questions and compliments which more clearly project verbal responses.

Asking a question – an information request – and producing a (positive) assessment (i.e. a compliment) can both be categorised as response relevant actions (Stivers and Rossano 2012). An information request with interrogative syntax is in many ways a canonical first pair part that strongly projects a second pair part, but assessments can also mobilise a response from the recipient (Stivers and Rossano 2012: 77–78). The response that the different turns mobilise (i.e. the "relevant next") varies according to the first pair part.

The questions that the computer produces are syntactically polar interrogatives (i.e. 'yes/no-questions'). In terms of content, they concern potential problems (*sujuuko kaikki hyvin* 'is everything going alright', *tarvitsetko apua* 'do you need help', *voinko auttaa* 'can I help'), and the progress of cooking (*jatketaanko* 'shall we continue', *mennäänkö eteenpäin* 'shall we move on'). Polar interrogatives are questions that "present whole propositions as hypotheses, requesting that the recipient affirm/deny them" (Couper-Kuhlen & Selting 2017: 224). Polar questions have been investigated extensively within CA in recent years (e.g. Raymond & Heritage 2021; Enfield et al. 2019; Stivers 2018; Enfield, Stivers & Levinson 2010; Raymond 2003; Sorjonen 2001b). Research has identified different ways to respond to polar questions, and more generally, how speakers manage both informational and relational dimensions through their answers (Stivers 2018). Three primary types of answers to polar questions have been determined based on English data: interjections, repetitions, and transformations (Stivers 2018; 191). Stivers establishes that by choosing one of the responses, the recipient positions herself differently with respect to the question asked as well as with respect to the questioner (ibid. 192). Enfield et al. (2019) specify that the primary, unmarked, way to respond to polar questions is an (affirmative) interjection.

As for the compliments, the computer produces positive assessments concerning the activity of cooking (*kokkaat hienosti* 'you cook excellently'). In Finnish conversation, the most typical response to a compliment (i.e. a positive assessment of the co-participant's personality, looks, or actions in certain situations) is to accept the compliment (Etelämäki et al. 2013: 472). Minimally, this can be done by an affirmative particle, but the particle is often followed by some account for the quality that is being praised. Also, it is typical that through their accepting responses, the recipients display independent epistemic access to the stance that shows that they have already come to the same positive evaluation on their own (e.g. "isn't it?", "I think so, too"; see Etelämäki et al. 2013: 474).

In sum, both polar questions and compliments typically yield affirmative, agreeing responses in human interaction. Polar questions can be confirmed straightforwardly through an affirmative particle or a repetition (see Sorjonen 2001b), whereas compliments more often also include other elements, such

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as accounts or explanations. In the following, we analyse the responses that polar questions and compliments evoke when they are uttered by a computer.

4 Analysis

4.1 Second pair part missing

A clear difference between human interaction and our data is that the questions and compliments by LanCook are not necessarily responded to in any way. In social interaction, first pair parts are overwhelmingly followed by second pair parts; for questions, both those asking a question as well as their co-participants orient to the normative expectation within the adjacency pair (Heritage 1984: 248–249). In our data, in contrast, it is common that the participants do not react to the questions by the LanCook computer in any way. Extracts 1 and 2 illustrate such instances.

Extract 1. The previous instruction by the computer (KIT in the transcripts) was to "cut the salmon into pieces that are approximately the size of the potatoes".

```
01 Ling:  .hh [as the  s:]ame size a:s [the ]
02 Chen:     [potatoes?,]                [pota]toes?,
03 Ling:  potatoes kuin: (0.3) perunat.
                    as          potatoes
04        (0.7) ((Chen takes a knife))
05 KIT :  ((help sound))
06        (1.3) ((Chen starts cutting salmon))
-> KIT :  sujuuko kaik↑ki hyvin.*
          is everything going alright
                                  *Picture 1
=>        (1.4)* ((Chen cuts salmon))
                *Picture 2
09 KIT :  hyvä?,
          good
10        (3.6) ((Chen cuts salmon, Ling watching))
11 Ling:  .mthh se on (.) tosi (.) i:::#so:#.
          .mthh it is     really   bi::g.
```

Picture 1

Picture 2

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Extract 2

```
01 KIT:  lohko perunat leikkuulaudalla (.) pieniksi paloiksi.
         chop the potatoes into small pieces on the chopping board
02       (26.2) ((Jay cuts potatoes, Tom stands next to him))
03 Jay:  hhh .hh
04       (14.8) ((Jay cutting potatoes))
-> KIT:  ↑hienoa. (0.3) siirrytäänkö eteenpäin.
         excellent      shall we move on
=>       (0.5)*(8.0)%(3.9) ((J cutting potatoes, T stands next to him))
                *Picture 3
                      £Picture 4
07 Jay:  you can just wash this, ((points to potatoes))
08 Tom:  mm hy,
```

Picture 3

Picture 4

Both instances are similar in that the computer poses a question (lines 7 and 5, respectively) while the user is engaged in a physical action (i.e. cutting fish or potatoes according to the instruction by the computer). Neither the participant performing the action nor their co-participant produces any kind of verbal or embodied response to the question. In Extract 1, Chen has just started cutting the fish, and in Extract 2, Jay has cut two potatoes and has five left when the computer asks the question. Chen and Jay both lean over the chopping board while cutting; neither of them raises their head or stops cutting when the computer asks the question, let alone says anything. It seems that they orient to completing the physical action they are engaged in, and the verbal turns by the computer can be ignored before the task is completed. The fact that Chen and Jay continue with their physical activity can, however, be seen to display that the answer to the question would be negative: they know what to do (i.e. they do not need help) and they are not ready to move on. They continue with their activity in progress undisturbed by the computer's questions; the lack of any response to the computer's

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question does not become a "noticeable absence" which would be reflected in the progress of the interaction.[3]

The next example aptly illustrates the difference between questions posed by humans and by the LanCook computer:

Extract 3. Chen is cutting the fish, Ling stands next to her watching

```
01 Ling:  pie- pidätkö (0.3) lo- hi lo- (.) [hista.   ]
          do you like       sal- mon (nominative case) sal-(.)mon (elative case)
02 KIT:                                              [o↑ikein hy]vä.
                                                      very good
03        (0.4)
04 KIT:   mennäänkö eteenpäin.
          shall we move on
05        (0.6)
06 Ling:  lohista?
          salmon (elative case)
07        (0.7)
08 Ling:  [pidät]kö.
          do you like
09 Chen:  [joo. ]
          yes
```

While Chen cuts the salmon, Ling begins small talk, asking if Chen likes salmon (line 1). Her turn is somewhat discontinuous, given that Ling searches for the correct inflection of the noun *lohi* ('salmon'), but after some cut-offs she finds the target case (elative). After Ling's question, the computer poses another question (line 4). Chen does not react to either of the questions; she is still oriented to the pieces of salmon in front of her. The absence of Chen's answer results in Ling repeating (parts of) her question: first Ling fluently utters the target case she sought in her previous turn (line 6), and as no response follows (line 7) she repeats the remaining part of the question – the second-person form of the verb that includes the interrogative morpheme (*pidät-kö*). Ling's actions are illustrative of the "procedural relevance" created by a first pair part: repeating the question (in truncated form) is one of the typical ways to show that "the answer to the original question was 'due' and is thus noticeably or 'officially' absent" (Heritage 1984: 249). Simultaneously with Ling's second repetition, Chen provides an answer to her question (line 9).

This example demonstrates how the absence of the second pair part affects the progress of the interaction. Not receiving a response to her question, Ling orients to this "noticeable absence" by repeating (parts of) the question until the normative expectation of providing an answer is fulfilled. In contrast, the absence of any response to the computer's question (line 4) does not have interactional consequences. The participants do not pay attention to the computer's turn; instead they continue with what they have been engaged in prior to the question. The LanCook computer remains silent; its verbal turns – both their content and timing – are the same regardless of how, or if at all,

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the users verbally respond to its questions. The computer is not able to make inferences based on what the human participant is saying (or not saying). It is evident that the (pre-programmed) questions by the LanCook computer do not have the same procedural relevance as the questions in the turn-by-turn emerging interaction between human beings. Nevertheless, despite the one-sided and pre-programmed nature of the computer's turns, from time to time the users do respond to these turns. Why do they do this, given that all users know that the computer cannot interpret their verbal turns? In the next section, we will investigate these instances.

4.2 Responding to the computer's first pair part

Even though the users may ignore the first pair parts by the computer, from time to time they nevertheless verbally respond to the turns by the computer. The next extract illustrates the same users as in Extract 2. This time, however, Jay answers the computer's question:

Extract 4

```
-> KIT:  voinko auttaa.
         may I help you
02       (0.8) ((Tom tries to scrape potato skin from chopping board to bin))
=> Jay:  <ei>, h
         no
04       (1.0) ((J begins smiling and gazes quickly at RA, T continues cleaning the chopping board))
05 Jay:  hihhh .hhh
06       (1.3) ((J puts a piece of potato skin into bin))
07 Jay:  m (.) okay, h ((J stops smiling, picks a knife from the table, starts walking towards sink))
```

One difference between this extract and Extract 2, where Jay did not respond, is that here Jay is not actively involved in any physical cooking activities. When the computer poses the question (line 1), Tom has bent down over the rubbish bin, trying to shovel pieces of potato skin from the chopping board into it, whereas Jay stands straight, apparently waiting for Tom to finish his action. As Jay has no ongoing parallel activities, responding to the computer can be seen as a way to modify the participation framework (Goodwin & Goodwin 2004) so that he becomes a ratified participant (Goffman 1981) despite his physically passive role. By uttering a negative answer to the computer's question (line 3), Jay displays involvement in the ongoing project.

Having answered the question, Jay starts smiling, shifting his gaze towards the RA.[4] Jay glances at the RA quickly in line 4, after which he continues to smile while exhaling audibly (line 5) and is smiling until he begins a new action by picking a knife from the table and starting to walk towards the sink (line 7). Glancing at the RA may stem from the RA's temporarily activated role and recent presence, but the reason behind Jay's smile is a more interesting issue to consider. It could be related to the irony of this particular situation: the computer has caused some problems which the RA has helped

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to fix, and now the computer is asking if any help is needed. However, it is worth noting that smiling and/or laughter occur typically in instances in which the LanCook computer's turns are responded to, even without any previous technical problems. Extract 5 illustrates such a case:

Extract 5

```
01 Sara:  mitä jos me ote[taan ]
          what if we take away
02 KIT :  [((suc]cess sound))
03 Sara:  *[5]sitä keltasta pois ehkä,
          that yellow stuff perhaps
          *S takes onion half from chopping board,starts peeling "yellow stuff" with her hand
04 Nina:  [°joo.°]
          yes
-> KIT :  [ kokka]at hieno%sti,
          you cook excellently
                              %N takes the other half from chopping board, starts peeling
=> Sara:  j£oo °kiitos vaan, hi hih .hh°£
          y£es °well thanks hi hihh .hh°£
07        (0.7) ((N and S peeling onion))
08 KIT :  lisää sipulisilppu kattilaan.
          add the chopped onion into the pot
```

This extract differs from the previous one in that Sara is actively involved in a physical activity – peeling the "yellow stuff" from the onion – when the computer provides the first pair part (compliment, line 4). Sara continues with the activity undisturbed, holding her gaze at what she is doing, but nevertheless responds to the turn by the computer. She accepts the compliment with the turn-initial particle *joo* and thanks for it (line 6), which are both reported ways to accept a compliment in Finnish everyday conversation (Etelämäki et al. 2013: 474). However, prosodically Sara's turn (line 6) is more marked. She utters the turn with a soft voice, smiling and ending the turn with small laughter. No controversial incidents have taken place, so it seems that Sara uses a smiley voice and the low volume of her speech as contextualisation cues (see Gumperz 1982), that is, enacting a certain – humorous – context for the interpretation of her utterance (Auer 1992: 25). Even though Sara (in Extract 5) and Jay (in Extract 4) verbally respond to the computer's first pair part in a way which is "typical" (i.e. conforming to or accepting the projection by the first pair part), they both frame their turns with a smile/laughter. The possibly non-serious framing is in fact also reflected in Sara's lexical choices in her response turn. She not only produces a straightforward "thank you" but also adds a modal particle (*kiitos vaan*, translated as "well, thanks"); this particle occurs in ritualised contexts in which it diminishes or disparages the meaning (ISK § 828).

Thus, while the participants may respond to the first pair parts by the computer as if these turns were produced by human interactants, in these

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cases the participants typically contextualise their turns with prosodic cues, thereby guiding the interpretation of the utterance. A recurrent contextualisation cue in the data is a smiley voice and/or small laughter, which not only mark the turn's "otherness" (Auer 1992: 31) but also guide the interpretation in a non-serious direction. The humorous dimension is also related to the participation framework (Goodwin & Goodwin 2004): even though Jay and Sara act as if they were involved in a "conversation with the computer", responding to its questions or compliments, the smile/laughter displays their orientation to a humorous mode (see also Haakana 2010). This mode can be shared by the human participants, in which case "talking to the computer" becomes a joint source of humour. Thus, instead of solely responding to the computer's turn, the speakers provide their responses as performances for the co-present human audience.

The next excerpt illustrates how the non-serious contextualisation and the participation framework are linked together:

Extract 6

```
-> KIT :  sujuuko kaikki    ↑hyvin,
          go+Q    everything well
          is everything going alright
=> Sara:  jooh *[sujuu,  hi hi hi hi mts .hhh]
          PRT  go
          yes it is
                *Picture 5
03 Nina:        [hehhh he *he he he he he he ] .hih .hih .hhhhh
                           *Picture 6

04 Sara:  .hih
-> KIT :  kokkaat hienosti.
          you are cooking fine
=> Sara:  kiitos. krhih ha [ha ha ha ha ha ha]
          thank you
07 Nina:                     [*hi hi hi hi hi   ]
                              *Picture 7

08 KIT :  la[ita pe][runa]lohkot [siivilään.]
          put the sliced potatoes into the sieve
09 Nina:     [.hhh  ]
10 Sara:              [.hhh]
11 Nina:                           [.hhhhhhh  ] (.) .hh
12              (.)
13 Sara:  >ai mitä [se sanoi?<] mä en *kuullut.
          PRT what did it say   I didn't hear
                                        *Picture 8

14 Nina:             [(--)      ]
15        (0.8) ((N and S look at the screen))
```


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```
16 Sara:  sanoks se (et) kattilaan vai,
          did it say into the pot  or
17        (1.0) ((N shakes her head))
```

Picture 5

Picture 6

Picture 7

Picture 8

When the computer poses the question (line 1), Sara is chopping the potatoes and Nina is standing next to her. Sara answers the question by confirming it with both response alternatives in Finnish (see Sorjonen 2001a): the particle (*joo*) and the repetition of the verb (line 2; Picture 5). Her voice quality is breathy (indicated by the *h* in *joo*), which gives an impression of her sighing, as if being bored to answer continuous questions. Nina reacts to Sara's response by starting to laugh; she laughs cheerfully, tilting her head backwards (Picture 6). Sara joins her laughter (line 2) and continues chopping the potatoes. Next, the computer produces a compliment (line 5). Sara responds to this turn as well (line 6). She thanks for the compliment, after which she starts laughing loudly, approximately at the same time as Nina starts to laugh (line 7). Sara turns towards Nina and they share a cheerful moment laughing together (Picture 7). Thus, the pattern has been the same up to this point: the computer provides a first pair part (question and compliment), and Sara responds to the computer by providing a second pair part, after which the participants laugh together.

Subsequently, the computer produces the third type of turn in its repertoire, the directive (line 8). This time, the response by the participants is clearly different. When the computer gives the instruction (line 8), both participants are still chuckling, their laughter gradually fading away. This may be the reason why they do not hear the instruction properly. Having a problem of hearing, Sara responds by making explicit her problem (line 13,

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Picture 8). Thus, Sara's response (line 13) initiates repair (see, e.g., Schegloff, Jefferson & Sacks 1977), as can be expected when encountering a hearing problem.

However, the repair initiation differs from Sara's two previous responses as regards the addressee of the turn. In the former instances, Sara can be seen to ostensibly address the computer, given that her second pair parts are similar to human interaction. In the last instance, Sara produces an open class repair initiation (see Drew 1997), but not the "default" open class initiation in Finnish (i.e. *mitä* 'what'; see Haakana 2011), which is addressed to the producer of the trouble turn (see also Haakana et al. 2016). Instead, Sara uses a syntactically fuller version with a verb and a subject ('what did it say'). By using the third person, Sara excludes the possibility to address the computer with her turn.

Why does Sara talk **about** the computer rather than talk **to** the computer in this last case, given that her previous response turns were (ostensibly) addressed to the computer? The difference can be explained by the different sequential implications of Sara's responses. Confirming a question and thanking for a compliment are clearly second pair parts which bring a sequence – an adjacency pair – to completion. These second pair parts do not create an expectation of a particular next turn that should follow. By contrast, a repair initiation is a first pair part with strong sequential implications: it signals fundamental trouble in interaction – hearing or understanding the co-participant – which needs to be resolved before the activity in progress can be continued. (About repair organisation, see, e.g., Schegloff, Jefferson & Sacks 1977; Hayashi, Raymond & Sidnell 2013.) Thus, Sara is in a situation where she needs to find out what was said in the previous turn, but addressing the LanCook computer verbally has no effect on its behaviour. Therefore, Sara formulates her turn so that she poses a question, referring to the computer in the third person ("what did it say?"), thereby addressing her human co-participant rather than the producer of the trouble turn. In so doing, she shares her insecurity with her co-participant and invites her to resolve the trouble. Sara continues with another co-participant-directed repair initiation: a candidate understanding (line 16). Again, she prefaces her utterance with a question referring to the computer in the third person (*sanoks se et* 'did it say').[6] Similarly to her previous turn, Sara displays problems in hearing by referring to the computer, not by addressing the computer. In sum, when Sara aims for interactional consequences (such as a repetition or explanation of the trouble turn), she addresses her co-participant, whereas her turns that respond to the first pair part of the computer are ones that do not require responses.

It is worth noting that the participants' responses to the LanCook computer's turns are different, not only with respect to the addressee of the turn but also with respect to the laughter that follows (or does not follow) the turns. The turns that evoked joint laughter from the participants are the turns that are addressed to the computer: the answer to the question (line 2) and the response to the compliment (line 6) (see also Pictures 1–4). That is, the participants laugh in those instances where Sara responds to the computer as

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if it was a "normal" partner in conversation. By treating the uncomprehending computer as a conversational partner (as far as responding to its first pair parts in a way that is similar to human interaction), the participants enact a shared humorous context. The humour is, at least partly, created by manipulating the participation framework in the situation: by choosing the computer as the ostensible recipient of her second pair parts, the speaker can stage the computer as an alleged interactional partner, to the amusement of her co-participant. In other words, by addressing the computer, the speaker can create a performance that is directed at her co-participant. We will consider this performative aspect through one final example from our data. In this case, the human participants treat the computer as a conversational partner, even though the computer has not provided first pair parts or any other verbal turns.

4.3 Talking to the computer as a performance

As shown through the excerpts thus far, talking to the LanCook computer often involves enacting a humorous context and aspects of performance. Performances in language use have been investigated from various perspectives, from the Goffmanian theatrical perspective where all talk is performance and speakers are social actors who play roles (Goffman 1981) to performances as verbal art (e.g. Bauman & Briggs 1990). Characteristic of all performances is that they are audience-oriented, which also means that performances entail a risk of failure and losing face (Rydell 2018: 64). At the heart of performances is agentive action and intentional representation of language and other modalities in the service of social meaning (Bell & Gibson 2011: 559).

With respect to different types of performances, Bell and Gibson (2011) have made a distinction between everyday and staged performances. In everyday performances, a "performer-audience situation is created spontaneously in the midst of an otherwise everyday language situation" (Bell & Gibson 2011: 557). The instances in our data fit into this category: in the midst of preparing a dish, the participants may respond to the turns by the computer, thereby creating a short episode that often involves a smiley voice quality and a gaze shift to the human co-participant (but not necessarily, see Extract 5). The co-participant can be seen as the audience of the performance, and as they typically react by smiling and/or laughter, the performances can be considered successful. Since the computer regularly produces first pair parts, these turns offer an arena for performances – treating the computer as an equal conversational partner. However, responding to the computer's turns is not the only way to construct the computer as a comprehending member in interaction. The next excerpt illustrates how the human participants create a performance based on the computer's role as an interactional partner, even though the computer does not provide any verbal or multimodal turns.

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Extract 7

```
01 Ben:  ja:: (.) [  var]maan minä arvaisin että
         and         probably I would guess that
02 Eva:           [°mm.°]
03 Ben:  .hhh että viimeinen ohje olisi
              that the last instruction is
04       (0.9) ((B lifts bunch of dill))
05 Ben:  uu- ((B drops the dill to the table))
06 Ben:  [uups ]* ((B backs off))
          oops
                *Picture 9
07 Eva:  [hhehh] hehhh
08 Ben:  [iiks sori,     ]* ((makes a grimace))
         oops sorry
                           *Picture 10
09 Eva:  [.hhhh hi hi hi]
10 Ben:  £.tsk£ ((gaze to the computer, rolls his finger next to his forehead))
11 Eva:  hhh (.) .hh
12       (1.9) ((B shifts gaze to dill, makes "calming" gesture with his hand))
13 Eva:  ei se ↑sanonu £mitään£,
         it didn't say anything
14 Ben:  £joo.£
         yeah
15 Eva:  mhihh
16 Ben:  £whiuu£
17       (0.5)*
               *Pictures 11a & 11b
```

Picture 9

Picture 10

Picture 11a

Picture 11b

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The users have added all the ingredients to the fish soup (which is simmering on the stove) according to the computer's instructions; the only ingredient that is left on the table is a bunch of fresh dill. Ben assumes that the last instruction has to do with the dill (lines 1 and 3), but instead of formulating the turn verbally, he uses a gesture to complete his turn (see Mondada 2015). Instead of mentioning the ingredient, Ben grabs the dill from the table (line 4), but then he accidently drops it on the table (line 5). Ben reacts to this incident through embodied actions: he takes a step back and makes a "calming" gesture with his hand – patting his hand downwards with fingers apart (picture 9) – with his gaze directed at the bunch of dill (which has a sensor attached to it; line 6). Eva starts laughing (line 7), and Ben continues with his apologising behaviour: he grimaces and produces an explicit apology (line 8, Picture 10), after which he turns his head towards the computer smilingly, smacks his lips and makes a rolling gesture with his index finger next to his forehead (line 10), after which he shifts his gaze back to the dill and reproduces the calming gesture with his hand (line 12). Through his apologising and calming verbal and embodied turns, Ben portrays the computer as someone who "might get angry"; he enacts the role of a person calming down a (potentially) hot-tempered interactional partner (or perhaps the role of a strict teacher who might rebuke students who misbehave). Eva joins in the scene created by Ben, treating the computer as someone who could rant at Ben: she assures Ben that the computer 'did not say anything' (line 13). Ben responds to Eva's turn first verbally (line 14), after which he exhales as if being relieved (line 16) and produces yet one more gesture: a wiping movement with his right hand in front of his forehead, as if wiping sweat off his brow (line 16, Pictures 11a & 11b).

It is worth noting that Ben's gestures are animated and recognisable, even to the extent of being caricatures of embodied behaviour to calm someone down (palm with an open hand towards the person, as if holding someone back, and withdrawing to a "safe distance"), or to display relief (wipe sweat off one's forehead). Ben is thus relying on identifiable (embodied) resources, which is a performer's way to index social meanings and construct associated personas (Bell & Gibson 2011: 569). In other words, Ben uses canonical gestures as a resource to create a performance in which he stages himself and the computer as protagonists. He enacts a setting in which the computer is an unpredictable, potentially dangerous actor – a villain – and himself as a hero who survives despite the threat. Eva acknowledges and appreciates this set-up by laughing when Ben produces the gestures (lines 7, 9, 11), and goes along the scene by reassuring Ben that the computer did not rebuke him (line 13).

In sum, even though the LanCook computer did not produce any turns during this extract, the human participants "talked it into being" as an interaction participant, by apologising to it and calming it down. The computer does not react in any way to any of the turns, but instead of treating its silence as a trivial pre-programmed pause between two instructions – consistent throughout the recipe – the participants orient to the computer's silence as their victory, namely, a meaningful "non-occurrence" of an outburst of anger. Thus, even though "noticeable absences" (Schegloff 2007)

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do not exist for the uncomprehending computer, the human participants can assign meaning to the silence of the computer, thereby constructing procedural relevance for the interaction as part of their performance.

4 Conclusions and discussion

In this chapter, we have explored interaction involving human participants and a computer that can produce verbal turns as output but cannot process such turns as input. In particular, we focused on adjacency pairs, given that adjacency pairs consist of normatively organised first and second pair parts (Schegloff 2007). Through our analysis, we demonstrated that the computer's first pair parts do not have similar procedural relevance as the first pair parts by human participants; the absence of a second part to the computer's question is not a "noticeable absence", as it does not have trajectories in the progress of the subsequent sequence. However, even though the computer's turn **need** not be responded to, they **can** be responded to. The participants can treat the unidirectional turn by the computer as a "normal" first pair part and provide a response to it, thus portraying the computer as a(n ostensible) participant in interaction. When responding to the turns by the computer, however, the participants contextualise their turns with a smile and/or laughter, thereby guiding the interpretation of the turn towards non-serious or ironic direction.

The humour around the action of talking to the computer stems, at least partly, from attributing agency to the non-comprehending computer. Question-answer sequences inherently create interpersonal asymmetries between the participants (the questioner and the answerer), and one such asymmetry concerns sequential agency (Enfield et al. 2019). Enfield et al. define first pair parts as a form of social coercion, which they explicate as follows:

> When Person A asks a question, she is unilaterally directing the course of the conversation, by setting constraints on what the other person should or can say next. This coercion is so minor and low-cost that we hardly notice it, but it is there. When Person B says Yeah […], he is effectively yielding to Person A's sequential agency, acquiescing to Person A's unilateral imposition on him to produce an utterance of a certain kind, at that moment. (Enfield et al. 2019: 286)

Thus, when responding to the questions or compliments produced by the computer, the human participants yield to the computer's sequential agency, acquiescing to the computer's unilateral imposition on them. However, as the non-comprehending computer cannot know their acquiescence (or their resistance, had they not answered), the human participants can be seen to accomplish other functions through their responses. By answering the computer's questions, or by apologising to the computer, the participants enact a performance in which the computer is credited with a role as a conversational partner with interactional rights and responsibilities, and

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possibly with feelings and emotions (see also Branigan et al. 2010: 2360). The performance is set up by playfully modifying the participation framework: even though the participant producing the second pair part is ostensibly addressing the computer, they simultaneously provide the turn as a performance for their human co-participant. For the performance, it is crucial that there is more than one human participant; the performance needs an audience (see Rydell 2018). The non-serious character of the performance is reflected in the voice quality of the participant addressing the computer: they typically contextualise their turns with a smiley voice or laughter.

Talking to a computer can thus be a humorous performance. An important aspect of performances is that they make visible established cultural norms (Rojola & Laitinen 1998: 27). By performing a sequentially projected action towards the uncomprehending computer, the speaker deploys the normative link between first and second pair parts in interaction. The humour is related to the fact that the normative character of an adjacency pair requires shared membership – shared knowledge and intersubjectivity between the participants. By interpreting and anticipating the computer's actions as if responding to the turn-by-turn unfolding talk, the human participants establish alleged intersubjectivity between themselves and the computer. By so doing, they highlight the contradiction between a dumb, non-comprehending computer and a fully fledged conversational participant with social and moral obligations.

Notes

1 This research has received funding from the Kone Foundation.

2 In addition, the users may signal that they are ready to move on to the next instruction by using the tablet screen or moving an additional sensor called an "OK sensor".

3 It should be noted that the acknowledgment token *hyvä* ('good'; Extract 1, line 9) is related to the design of the LanCook program and not to the ongoing interaction. LanCook has been programmed to give positive feedback when the users move the sensors relevant for implementing the required instruction. In this case, the system has noticed movement in the sensors attached to the knife and to the chopping board.

4 There has been a problem with the computer program shortly before the extract (the computer has skipped one instruction), and RA has come to fix it. He has just returned back to his position in the back of the room.

5 The asterisk and the percent sign indicate when Sara and Nina take their respective onion halves from the chopping board. Having picked up the halves, they both start peeling the outermost skin of the onion with their hands. Both continue with this peeling activity throughout the excerpt.

6 Typically, candidate understandings in Finnish conversation consist of a noun phrase and an initial/final particle (Haakana et al. 2016: 274). Such candidate understandings are addressed to the speaker of the trouble source; a prototypical example could be *ai kattilaan vai* 'you mean to the pot?'.

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Unknowingly conversing with a non-human

How can a bot deceive a telescammer?

Abstract

In this chapter, we analyse a conversation between a telescammer and a robocallee bot called Sally. Sally is essentially a collection of pre-recorded lines of talk that is designed to waste telemarketers' and telescammers' time. We investigate what makes it possible that a rudimentary bot like this can lure a human into thinking they are talking to another human and how it succeeds in its effort to waste time. We conclude that essentially the reason can be found in the overall structure of the telemarketing call and the design in which the bot's scripts alter between ones that display orientation to the agenda and ones that sidetrack the discussion believably.

1 Introduction

Humans having conversations with machines is not – and has not been in a good while – just a scenario of science fiction. Many of us regularly face a situation where we end up interacting with a bot, usually a service assistant. In these discussions, were they desirable for us or not, we at least know that we are interacting with a machine and can adjust our behaviour accordingly. We are in charge. But is there a possibility that sometime in the future we will not be able to say for certain whether we are talking to a human or a bot? This chapter examines a situation where a human is unknowingly interacting with a bot, and investigates how a bot might succeed in deceiving a human being.[1]

Chatbots or social bots (here we use the word *bot* for shortness) are programs that mimic human conversational patterns, and they can

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use either written or voice user interfaces (text-to-speech). All bots are designed for a purpose, e.g. customer service, education, or amusement. The bot investigated in this chapter is a robocallee bot designed to waste telemarketers' and telescammers' time[2]. In simplicity, it is a pre-recorded tape that tricks the telemarketer into thinking that they are performing their sales pitch to a human. A bot like this is mimicking a phenomenon between grassroots activism and amusement, where people discuss with prospective telescammers to annoy them and keep them from deceiving other people. There are now several companies that sell an automated service – a bot – to do the job, and it is also possible to record one's voice to make a robocallee bot. To keep the phone call going, the bot needs to be able to disrupt the caller's agenda, meanwhile giving them the motivation to continue the phone call without hanging up. Thus, these are not just any recordings, but bots that are designed for this particular context and purpose.

Seen from an ethnomethodological point of view, a conversation emerges from collaborative practices where one turn of talk is built on another. Actions relate to each other reflexively: each action is adapted to the context in which they occur, and at the same time they renew the context; thus, actions are context-shaped and context-renewing (Heritage 1984: 242). When the other interactant is a pre-recorded tape, its turns are not in the least context-shaped, which we as outside observers have first-hand knowledge of. On the other hand, if the other party is not aware they are talking to a recording, the bot's turns will be interpreted as context-shaped and thus they manage to renew the context as long as the other party keeps collaborating. However, the question remains: how does the other party keep up with the conversation without realising that there is no human at the other end of the line? Through investigating the structure of a whole conversation between a robocallee bot and a caller, we investigate what makes it possible that a human can be deceived by a recording.

The composition of this research question is in a sense placed upside-down in comparison to the most typical CA study. CA studies typically concern either activities, actions, and practices, or structural units through which actions and activities are performed in everyday life. In this chapter, we are looking for an explanation of the peculiar phenomenon of robocallee bots by analysing the related interactional structures. We hypothesise that the reason why this particular bot succeeds in its endeavour can be found in the overall structure (see Robinson 2013) of a telemarketing call and how the bot is designed for this particular context. We will show that as both parties supposedly orient to the telemarketer's project being unfinished, it is practically impossible to end the call in a socially acceptable way.

2 Human-bot interaction

Previous research on human-computer interaction and AI-based dialogue systems shows that advanced bots are already capable of relating to humans

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in a way that creates a sense of connection between the human and the bot in one-on-one interaction (e.g., in text-based customer chats: Araujo 2018). This is achieved by enriching the bot with social cues (e.g., using a name, avatar, and suitable greetings: Feine et al. 2019; Van Pinxteren et al. 2020), which lead to responses similar to those in human communication (Von Der Pütten et al. 2010). Bots are increasingly capable of also simulating contextual awareness of the conversation in one-on-one interaction due to technological advancements, e.g. by producing a turn that would be a likely continuation to previous turns in interaction with their human interlocutor (e.g., Liu et al. 2015; Adiwardana et al. 2020). This contributes to the concept of human-likeness in bot development. The term "chatbot" is often used to refer to conversational systems capable of extended chats mimicking human-like interaction, whereas the term "dialogue agent" or "conversational agent" describes task-oriented service systems like Siri that help a user achieve a goal (Jurafsky & Martin 2021). Here we refer to Sally as a bot due to the interactional characteristic of the system.

The fact that dialogue agents or bots can identify the perceived user intent[3] (e.g., Meng & Huang 2017) allows the realisation of conversation patterns in quite a similar fashion as is characteristic of human interaction, including for instance adjacency pairs like question-answer, as well as the recognition and execution of user requests. Intent recognition allows dialogue agents to more efficiently serve human customers, and also to follow the distinct norms of human conversation. Furthermore, more advanced technology such as recurrent neural networks can be used to give a bot the ability to base their turns in dialogue on previous turns, what might seem like having a "memory", more accurately referring back to what their interlocutor has said before (e.g., for chatbots: Adiwardana et al. 2020; for dialogue agents: Liu et al. 2015).

Humans often orient themselves to computers through human social categories (Nass & Moon 2000), possibly anthropomorphising them and thus resorting to human social behaviour patterns to interact with them. Arguably, human users' need for human-defined interaction dynamics even in communication with non-humans (e.g., with robots: Fink 2012) might make humans susceptible to see intentionality even in actions devoid of intention, like pre-taped audio input. It is noteworthy that although in some contexts people sometimes react positively to bots (Clément & Guitton 2015), in other contexts, especially with customer service bots, humans have often been reluctant to knowingly interact with bots, for instance, due to bias against them (Ishowo-Oloko et al. 2019).

Bots have demonstrably been able to deceive humans into believing the text they produce has been produced by another human (e.g., the chatbot Eugene Goostman: cf. Warwick & Shah 2016; deceptive texts by bots: Everett et al. 2016). With richer embedded social "knowledge" (e.g. Feine et al. 2019) that is used to develop better conversational bots, individual bots can more easily pass as humans. As bots are increasingly capable of performing turns in conversation by seemingly following social norms, at least under specific contextual constraints, this further conditions human interlocutors to interpret bot contributions through the lens of intentionality.

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Such interpretation is likely if the bot is not identified as a bot, and if bot design efficiently takes advantage of social expectations and the common characteristics of human conversations. Such characteristics could include, specifically, the structure of phone conversations with strangers as discussed in this study. This predisposition to interpret turns in interaction through human terms to explain conversational failures or misunderstandings makes it possible for the conversation to continue despite possible discrepancies. We analyse how a bot, even one based on a very simple technological design, might manage to deceive a human and what strategies allow it to maintain the conversation.

3 Data

The data for this chapter consists of a phone call between a telescammer, a phony telemarketer looking for monetary gain through an illegal scheme, and a Jolly Roger robocallee bot. Jolly Roger Telephone Co. is an American company that offers a service to thwart telemarketers and telescammers. The idea is that instead of speaking with the customer the telemarketer ends up conversing with a pre-recorded robot voice, whose only purpose is to waste the caller's time.

The owner of the company selling the Jolly Roger bot service has published the conversations online and permitted us to use them as research data. It should be noted, though, that even though we have permission from the owner and the publisher of the call, we have no way of knowing whether the only human speaking, the caller, would have agreed to us using the call for research purposes. In addition, as the caller is recorded unknowingly and deceived by a robocallee bot, the data is presumably sensitive. We have considered thoroughly the ethics of analysing and publishing this conversation. As it is priorly published both in a blog and on YouTube, and there is no identifying or personal information included in the conversation, we consider the use of the data to be within ethical limits. However, we think that a setting like this places a higher responsibility for the analyst to present the participant respectfully and discreetly.

Jolly Roger has a line of different bot characters for both consumers and businesses, and all of them are designed to have their own personalities and scripts. The bots react to the caller's speech by playing a pre-recorded and pre-ordered set of lines, which are usually not responsive to what has been said previously in the conversation. Some of the later-created bots make an exception to this as they can recognise keywords and reply with a line fitted to a particular topic. When the set of lines has been played once, the recordings will start from the beginning. This means that in a longer call, the caller may hear the same lines several times. In their study on a similar open-source bot called Lenny, Sahin et al. (2017) noted that in 72 % of 487 calls Lenny repeated his scripts more than once. The scripts are typically general enough that they are not recognised even when repeated, and the

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conversation can go on undisturbed by the repetition. In the case analysed in this study, only one line of the script is repeated. However, in this case, it may have a detrimental effect on the continuation of the conversation.

Our analysis is based on five conversations between a telemarketer or a telescammer and a Jolly Roger bot, and in this chapter we present and analyse one specific case. The single-case analysis is a well-established method in CA (e.g., Schegloff 1987), and it allows us to examine an entire conversational event from its beginning to end. The conversation under investigation is a seven-minute-long call between an acclaimed credit card company representative and a bot. The caller presents himself as an obscure card services representative and offers to lower the prospective customer's interest rate, which is a well-known scam call type (Federal trade commission 2011), which provides a good reason to describe him as a telescammer instead of a telemarketer. The length of the call, seven minutes, is on the average range of the calls depicted by Sahin et al. (2017): the average length of a call between Lenny and a telescammer was around seven minutes. On the other hand, a call between Lenny and any caller, including genuine telemarketers, is a bit longer and lasts on average 9:43 minutes. Of course, as we have not done a quantitative investigation, we have no way of knowing whether the length of a call with Lenny compares to the length of calls with different Jolly Roger bots, but the bots function similarly enough to assume that they could yield similar effects.

In this study, the telescammer ends up speaking with a bot called Salty Sally. On the Jolly Roger web page, Salty Sally is described as follows: "Sally is a busy mom doing her best to pay attention to unsolicited calls, but her teenage daughter keeps distracting her. Let's try not to get her mad!" Sally is a somewhat responsive bot, by which we mean that she can recognise some keywords from the lowering interest offer and react accordingly, i.e. produce an utterance or several utterances that are likely to sound as if she would be taking up what the caller is suggesting.

4 The premises of the conversation

Before showing how the conversation between the telescammer and the bot unfolds, we will review the technological and institutional premises and limitations of the discussion. Firstly, the medium of the conversation is the telephone, and thus the discussion is technologically mediated with features that differ from face-to-face discussions (Arminen et al 2016). Secondly, the institutional task of the call, the sales discussion, sets its restrictions on the discussion compared to a more free-form everyday conversation (Koivisto & Niemi 2020). Lastly, the bot is a technological design that brings additional affordances and limitations to the conversation. We will also point out what kind of an effect these premises have on the overall structure of the conversation.

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4.1 The phone call

The discussion is held via telephone, which sets its prerequisites to it. The conversation is spoken and synchronic, so each turn is expected to be reacted to promptly. The parties cannot see each other or know beforehand whether the other party is in a situation where they are free to have a conversation. These facts set constraints on *the overall structure* of the conversation. The overall structure of a conversation is a sequential organisation of a single conversation (Robinson 2013), the beginning and ending of which can be easily identified in a typical telephone call (cf. "continuing state of incipient talk" in instant messaging, Virtanen et al. 2021). Together with the more local means of organising and managing interaction, such as turn construction, sequence organisation, and sequences of sequences, it creates the coherence of the entire episode of interaction. The overall structure of a telephone call roughly consists of an opening, closing, and "something in between", i.e. topical talk (Robinson 2013). The "something in between" part in the case analysed here is the sales discussion in what is supposed to be a telemarketing call, the advancement of which is the telescammer's task.

4.2 The telescammer's task

The telescammer is the only human making inferences in the analysed discussion, though they are likely not aware of it. They are not, though, drawing inferences freely, but based on their role which is built around the sales discussion. They also need to be able to trust that the call-taker is also at least somewhat familiar with telemarketing discussion, which is created through a particular set of turn-taking practices and activities that set the roles of the caller and call-taker as asymmetrical: the telemarketer and the prospective client (Freed 2010). Here we have to build upon the assumption that the typical telescamming call resembles, at least in most of its features, a typical telemarketing call, though the result for the victim is an undesirable one. When a telescam call is successful, the callee is not able to distinguish it from a telemarketing call.

A telemarketer's *project*, their "plan of action" (see Levinson 2013; Linell 2010; Vepsäläinen 2019), is to proceed through a set of activities in order to sell something using what Whalen et al. (2002) have described as an improvised choreography in teleservice settings: some of their turns are likely to be pre-designed and practiced but they also need to react to the prospective clients' turns (Mazeland 2004; De Stefani 2018; Freed 2010). The telemarketer (and the prospective client) may diverge from the formal style (Reiter 2009) and even from the institutional into a personal talk (Freed 2010), but ultimately this is done in service of the sales project.

4.3 The bot's task

The robocallee bots succeed in their task to waste time remarkably well. According to Sahin et al. (2017), only 5 % of the callers talking to Lenny recognise that they are talking to a bot[4], and the calls can last up to an hour, though most of them are significantly shorter. Unlike the telemarketer's

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sales task, the bot's task cannot be described as a project. Even though CA is agnostic about the intentions of the individuals partaking in a conversation, the concept of project presumes a rational thinker that works towards a goal, which the bot is not. Even if the situation where the conversation takes place would change entirely, the bot would continue doing what it is programmed to do, without any rational decision-making. This does not, though, exclude the fact that there is human intention behind its design. In addition, when successful, the telemarketer or telescammer discussing with the bot is not aware of what the bot is designed to do or that the bot is even designed. In this chapter, when we refer to the bot's project, we mean the bot's design and purpose.

Ultimately, besides greeting/summoning, Sally produces two types of turns: continuers and go-aheads, which prompt the telemarketer to continue with their marketing speech, and noticings and tellings, which sidetrack the sales discussion into other matters. These turns have been purposefully designed (Jolly Roger Podcast, episode 1) to maximise the time that the telemarketer or telescammer spends talking to the bot. They also make the unfolding of the conversation's overall structure difficult: how is one able to open the discussion, further their project, and eventually close the call with an interlocutor with this limited set of actions at use? In the next section, we will show how this conversation unfolds and what makes it possible for the bot to succeed in engaging the telescammer.

5 The unfolding of the conversation

The telephone conversation between the telescammer and a bot called Salty Sally begins when the original receiver of the call transfers the call to the bot, though the telemarketer is presumably unaware of this. The overall structure of this seven-minute-long conversation consists roughly of three parts, opening, topical talk (i.e. "sales discussion"), and closing, none of which are similar to a typical human-to-human conversation. The topical talk, in this case, bears what should have been the sales discussion which most likely would have consisted of several parts. In this case, the caller does not manage to pass the presentation of the product, due to the conflicting projects that the caller and the bot have. Bearing in mind that the bot's pre-recorded turns consist of a limited set of scripts, in what follows we will analyse how the different activities can be achieved, taking into consideration both the bot's design and the telescammer's project.

5.1 How is the opening achieved?

Both opening and closing of a telephone call are interactional achievements between two parties, and these activities take several turns to accomplish. In a typical call, opening sections are used to ensure that both interactants are available and engaged and to make sure they both are aware of the nature of the call (Schegloff 1986). In this section, we

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will take a closer look at how the opening unfolds in a call between a bot and a telescammer.

The call, as far as we know, begins with what at first sight looks like a greeting but is, in reality, a summons by the bot, Salty Sally (S).

Extract 1

```
001 S:  Hel[lo:?
002 T:     [Card services how are you doing today,
003     (.)
004 T:  Hello? (.) Card services how are you doing [today,
005 S:                                             [Hello:?
006 S:  Yeah.
007 T:  How are you doing today ma'am, (0.2) Hello? (0.3) Hello? (0.3)
008     ((Mam)) my: microphone is not on mute (.) so I believe that
009     you [can hear me.
010 S:      [Uh-huh?
011 S:  Okay, 'Cause it's like, like u- I'm kind of in the middle of
012     something so if you could speed up like what the story is
013     about? Like what you're selling?
014     (.)
015 T:  ((Well)) ma'am I'm not selling you anything? This is about your
016     credit card interest rate.
```

The opening is a crucial point for a telemarketer's and also for a telescammer's work, as that is where it is decided whether they are permitted to execute their sales talk and try to convince the prospective customer into buying a product or a service. In lines 2 and 4 the telescammer (T) presents himself as *card services*, thus laying the ground for providing his reason for the call, after which he would need to have some kind of a go-ahead from the prospective customer as a sign that they are at least willing to hear the sales pitch.

Sally, on the other hand, does not take part in the opening routines. Her task, in the opening section of the call, is to pass as a human and to establish a situation where she is in a conversation with the caller. To take part in the opening routines, Sally would need to be able to greet and present herself timely as the call-taker, recognise the ongoing activity and actions of her interlocutor and respond accordingly. As Sally does not have that kind of capability, she needs to be able to pass the opening routines credibly.

The strategy that Sally uses to pass the opening part of the call is to display hearing problems (lines 1 and 5), to which the caller orients in lines 8–9 by reporting that their microphone is not on mute. Stating that one has hearing problems seems to be a successful strategy when the speaker does not want – or like in this case, is not able – to produce an action. In his first lecture, Sacks (1992, volume 1, lecture 1) describes how in calls to the emergency psychiatric hospital turns like "I can't hear

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you" are used as devices for skipping a move in the discussion and thus avoiding saying one's name. A quick look at other bots like Sally reveals that this is a common strategy used in their design. Rilieu et al. (2019) investigated the opening patterns of Lenny, who introduces himself in his first turn (*hello:: uh this is lenny.*) and then resorts to displaying hearing problems (*ha uh sso- sorry, I'c- (0.3) I can barely hear you there*). They observed that the caller manages to preserve the progressivity of the call despite having to deal with the hearing problem. If the conversation is to continue, they need to do this, since the bot will not assist them in pursuing their project.

Sally, though, does give a nudge ahead in her next turn (lines 11–13), where she states that she is in the middle of something and requests the telemarketer to proceed in telling what he is selling. Thus, she moves from the opening of the call to the next step, providing the reason for the call, thus ensuring this way that the caller will proceed with their agenda. The telemarketer replies by denying that he is selling anything and then producing the first part of his sales talk. He introduces the reason for the call, which is the prospective customer's credit rate interest. In the end, though the opening routines are avoided, the grounds for beginning the sales discussion are established.

5.2 How is the sales discussion achieved?

The next part in the overall structure of the telemarketing and telescamming phone call is what we will call the sales discussion, which most likely would consist of several parts. The sales call has a script, i.e. an expected overall structure, which is a specialised variation of a phone call's overall structure and probably varies slightly between different types of telemarketing calls. Mazeland (2004) identifies five parts of a successful phone call between a prospective client and a telemarketer selling an appointment to a financial adviser: 1. Opening, 2. Introduction to the reason for the call, 3. Presentation of the product, 4. Making an appointment, and 5. Closing. Here we assume that our telescammer attempts to go through somewhat similar steps, though he never manages to get past the presentation of the product. Sahin et al. (2017) divide the opening and introduction to the reason for the telemarketing call into six parts: 1. Greeting, 2. Self-identification, 3. Company identification, 4. Warm-up talk (e.g. "How are you today"), 5. Statement of the reason for the call, and 6. Callee identity check. They also point out that the callers, both telemarketers and telescammers, often use phrases assuring the legitimacy of the business, make several promises throughout the call and ask several questions. Telescammers may also begin with a threatening scenario or make an offer that is available for a limited time only, which pressures their interlocutor to make fast decisions. It is also typical that the callers make offers that leave no room for declining ("Do you want an appointment at 2:00 p.m. or 3:00 p.m.?") (Sahin et al. 2017.) In this way they aim at leading the

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conversation into a direction where the prospective client is most likely to commit into buying a product or a service.

Based on this data, we cannot tell how this discussion would unwrap if it were to be had with a real person but, building on Mazeland (2004), we assume that the sales discussion would consist of at least a presentation of the service, signing up to it and/or possibly, depending on what type of a scam this is, providing card information or transferring money. In this conversation, the caller does not get past the first part – the presentation of the service – which already in the opening of the call is described as "card services" and supposedly has to do with the lowering of the prospective customer's interest rate. The bot, on the other hand, is designed for a different task. Its mission, now that the conversation has been established, is to keep it going and prevent it from reaching a closure. In order to achieve this, Salty Sally produces roughly two kinds of utterances: ones that "sidetrack" the sales discussion and ones that prompt the telescammer to continue.

This twofold orientation can be seen in Sally's first turn in Extract 2 which continues directly from where Extract 1 ended. Sally first announces that she is in the middle of something (line 18), which could be interpreted as an account for why she is disoriented or why she cannot take the call, after which she directly moves into questioning, whether what the caller has said is the real reason for the call (line 19). The caller is at the same time continuing the introduction of their agenda. There is, of course, no guarantee, that by the time Sally will say this, the caller will already have stated the reason for the call. However, judging from the opening structure of a (telemarketing) call and Sally's previous question on what the caller is selling, it is highly likely that the reason for the call will have been introduced, as is the case in this phone call.

Extract 2

```
017      (.)
018 S:   Like I-I'm [kind of like in the middle of something,=
019 T:              [Are you paying a high interest rate?
020 S:   =Is this like what are you exactly calling abou[t?
021 T:                                                  [Wha-wait wha-,
022      =And what were you doing ma'am,
023      (0.2)
024 S:   Oh:. Ah:. You know ah:, oh my gosh.=You called at a time like
025      I'm, I'm watching one of my shows? And it's like I-I'm we just
026      [ ((- -))                  a new cable th]ing? Like you know like
027 T:   [Okay,=I'm so sorry to bother you ma'am,]
028 S:   you have different cable (.) kind of company where you are?
029      (.)
030 T:   N:o no no no,=That's not who we are. (.) Well it was about your
```


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```
existing Visa and Mastercards on which you are paying in high
interest rate.
S:  =Uh-huh?
T:  About, about dropping down the interest rate on which (.) credit
    card would you think you would owe the most balance.
S:  O:h yeah? (.) Well I'm just gonna [tell you, =My son made me
T:                                    [On which card-
S:  switch to this new thing. I'm having such a hard time trying to
    figure out all the, the how to record my show, and my favourite
    show is on now [and I'm- I don't even know if it's recording.
T:                 [Okay ma'am-
S:  I'm trying to figure it out. Like do you know all that
    [stuff? Like can you, can you do it, I-I-I know I'm totally
T:  [Okay ma'am.
S:  getting away from what you are asking me but like these are one
    of my favourite shows so (.) I don't know. I- like you know what
    I m[ean?
T:     [I can- I can help you in that. I can help you in that.
    (0.5)
?   (-)
T:  So (.) do you wanna record your show?
S:  Well >anyways< =I think it's recording, =I'm not sure, =I'm kinda
    missing it. I- you know, Yeah. Just anyways. Just, start over
    and I'm gonna concentrate on what you're saying to me.
    (.)
T:  Okay? (0.2) Because ma'am it shows me here that from past six to
    eight months you have been making your payments on ti[me? .h
S:                                                       [Uh-huh.
```

After Sally's first turn with two actions that are latched together, the caller has two options: he can either orient to the side-tracking and possibly closure relevant issue of Sally being busy or the fact whether the reason for the call he has stated is a genuine one. Whether or not having to do with the fact that he knows that the business he is forwarding is a scam, he decides to orient to what is making Sally busy at the moment (lines 21–22). Orienting to other things than the business at hand is not unheard of in telemarketing calls; in Freed's (2010) data a significant portion of some telemarketing calls consists of personal talk, which is unusual for institutional conversations as their goal is to perform an institutional task. The telemarketers – or in this case, the telescammers – seem to struggle between two types of preferences: a preference for overall progressivity, which drives into forwarding one's agenda, and the preference for generally responding to what has been said, regardless of whether it is forwarding the project. If the telemarketer drives

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their agenda too strongly, they may risk losing the customer, and if they allow for too much divergence from the agenda, they may end up wasting time that is valuable to them. Sally's design utilises this tension in keeping the caller occupied by producing turns and utterances of which roughly every other is *side-tracking*, and every other is *agenda-oriented*.

Sally of course cannot respond to the caller's question about what she is doing. The question is followed by a gap, which is not uncommon in robocallee discussions, as the bot deciphers it is its turn to produce a line only after the other party has stopped speaking. Here, a hearer who is not aware that Sally is not a person might for example take it as an indication of Sally being occupied with something outside the call. This interpretation would be supported by the fact that she has stated that she is in the middle of something, as well as her next side-tracking turn (lines 24–28), which begins with an exclamative reaction to something outside the call (*Oh:. Ah:.*). She then proceeds to explain how she was just watching her favourite show, a line of talk which then seems to be stalled for backroad information about a new cable television system, after which she proceeds to ask something about cable companies from the caller. This builds an impression of a rambling conversationalist who is not concentrated on the agenda at hand, thus providing an account for why the sales agenda is not progressing. With a question (*Like you know like you have different cable (.) kind of company where you are?*), she gives the floor back to the caller, who is to make what he can with it. He interprets Sally's ambiguous question as an inquiry on whether he is calling from a cable company, and thus finds another opportunity for explicating the reason for the call, which still has not been reacted to adequately.

The next turn by the bot in line 33 (*Uh-huh?*) is a prime example of an agenda-oriented utterance. She claims to hear and understand what the caller is saying and urges him to continue. Turns like this are built upon an expectation that the caller will continue to explain their cause until they together with the prospective customer reach some kind of mutual understanding. The caller continues talking about the possibility of lowering the interest rate until the next long turn by the bot (lines 36–47) turns the attention back to Sally's side project of trying to record her favourite show. Interestingly, the caller offers to help her in her recording problem (lines 48 and 51), which is left without response as Sally, in her subsequent turn (lines 52–54) informs that she thinks her show is recording and subsequently prompts the caller again to continue with their project.

The "middle part" of the phone call continues like this, thus giving the caller brief occasions to continue with their sales pitch and then again side-tracking the discussion with something else. To succeed in keeping the telescammer occupied, this 'something else' needs to be an issue that can be solved and after which attention can be turned to the main agenda. By utterances that ask the caller to return to the matter or to start over, Sally also displays orientation to the sales talk as the main line of talk. Sally is designed to deceive any kind of telemarketer or telescammer regardless of

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what kind of product or service they are selling. Because of that, and the fact that her turns are all pre-ordered, the distracting strategies we have seen from her by far have been quite general, i.e. in reality she is not responding to the caller.

Unlike many other similar bots, Sally, though, has rudimentary speech recognition, and, as can be seen from Extract 3. In her turns on lines 66–72 and 75–76, she recognises correctly, that the caller is talking about credit cards, and acts accordingly.

Extract 3

```
056 T:  Okay? (0.2) Because ma'am it shows me here that from past six to
057     eight months you have been making your payments on ti[me? .h You
058 S:                                                       [Uh-huh.
059 T:  never miss any payment and sometimes you try to pay more than
060     the minimum payment. So on the basis of your good credit [((-))
061 S:                                                           [>Okay<
062 T:  today you are eligible to get a lower rate. Okay?
063     (0.4)
064 T:  Ma'am you're listening?
065     (.)
066 S:→ ↑Oh okay.=I'm gonna go get my credit card now. (.) Oh it-it's
067   → gotta be in my purse here somewhere. I- I'm, I'm gonna find
068   → it. Ah:. (.) I'm, I'm looking. I'm looking. It's it's gotta be
069   → here somewhere. My credit card has to be in my purse. I-I can't
070   → find it. I don't know where it is. It's gotta be in here
071   → somewhere. Ah. Just bear with me.
072     (.)
073 T:  Okay,
074     (.)
075 S:→ I could use help to pay off my credit cards. Money's been an
076   → issue. I-I need some help with that. A loan would be great.
077 T:  Okay,
078     (0.2)
079 T:  Okay,.
```


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Even though Sally now reacts to what the caller is saying, her turns are still not strictly speaking responses. They do, on the other hand, create an impression that she understands what the caller is offering and is very interested in it. In addition to displaying understanding with *oh okay* she refers to a topical element in the caller's turn (*credit card*), and, furthermore, makes a move towards a next step which can be achieved after she has found her card. Talking about recording a television show, like in Extract 2, does not reveal whether Sally is interested in the service but there is a possibility that the caller might infer that she is not likely to be interested as she is directing her attention to other things. On the contrary, Sally's engagement in finding her credit card after it has been mentioned by the caller creates an expectation that Sally really could be a potential customer. The caller reacts to Sally's prolonged informings with level intonation *okay*s, which in this context conveys that the information has been understood but it's not yet sufficient for current pragmatic purposes, thus working as a continuer (Betz & Deppermann 2021). Though Sally now expresses her interest in signing up for whatever service is being sold, which could allow the caller to proceed in his endeavour, she also says that she is looking for her credit card (lines 66–71), which implies she may be expected to give some more information once she has found it. This leaves the caller once again in a position where he is waiting for something to happen before the sales discussion can proceed.

In the sales discussion part of the conversation, which continues for over two minutes after line 79, the caller's project fails, as he is barely able to present the service he is trying to offer. The bot's task, on the other hand, succeeds, and the telescammer is kept occupied for several minutes while the caller does not terminate the call. This is made possible by the careful design of turns that both distract the caller from fulfilling their agenda and at the same time keep them under the impression that they still may eventually achieve their goal of selling the service. The pre-recorded general turns seem to work well for this, but the ones utilising speech recognition and thus enabling showing enthusiasm towards the service being offered might make the bot even more successful.

5.3 How is the closing achieved?

The closing section, consisting of several carefully placed turns, is where the participants together reach the decision to close the discussion (Schegloff & Sacks 1973). Sally's job is to prevent the call with the telescammer from reaching its closure, and she succeeds in it quite well. The sales discussion never reaches a point where it could be seen as fulfilled, that is, it does not reach a termination point and a place where the closing routine of the call could begin. However, the call cannot continue forever, and it needs to end somehow. Sally is designed to continue doing what she does, producing the same scripts again and again, which makes it the caller's responsibility to judge when the call has come to a point it needs to be terminated.

Closing, just like opening, is a mutual achievement. In a typical conversation, the activity of closing is preceded by the completion of 'possibly-last topics', which ensures that both parties agree that all the topics

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on the agenda have been touched upon. In a sales discussion, this might have something to do with providing information on how to proceed with acquiring the product or service or confirming that no deal has been made. After this, the participants have reached a closing-relevant environment and can proceed to the closing section, which typically consists of a possible pre-closing sequence (e.g. *okay – okay*) and finally a terminal sequence (e.g. *bye – bye*). (Schegloff & Sacks 1973; Robinson 2001, 2013.) One cannot decide to open an interaction alone without the interlocutor's agreement – or at least it will be problematic – and closing the call without mutual agreement is, even though possible, undesirable. Deciding unilaterally on the closure can threaten the interlocutor's yet unspoken agendas and it is thus considered accountable (Schegloff & Sacks 1973; Dersley & Wootton 2000).

Sally, as a pre-recorded collection of scripts, is not able to take part in a proper closing section – and that is not what she is designed for. This means that the caller has to terminate the call without a mutual understanding of closure. Closing an interaction unilaterally is an accountable action, and it is avoided whenever possible, as people generally do not want to seem rude. In the case of telemarketing, the caller also has to be sure that the interlocutor is not and will not be a potential customer before hanging up on them. For the caller, to terminate the robocallee call, there needs to be a *change in the footing*, i.e. a change in how the caller positions himself towards the bot. He shifts from a professional doing their work to a victim.

Extract 4 begins a bit over two minutes (2 minutes 18 seconds) after the end of Extract 3. In lines 144–146 the caller, who is still trying to push forward the sales discussion, asks for the fifth time on which credit card Sally owes the most balance.

Extract 4

```
144 T:  Ma'am I am asking on which credit card you owe the most
145     balance. Is that your Visa Mastercard American Express or
146     Discover account.
147 S:  ↑Oh okay.=I'm gonna go get my credit card now. (.) Oh it-it's
148     gotta be in my purse here somewhere. I'm, I'm, I'm gonna find
149     it. Ah:. (.) I- I'm looking. I'm looking. It's it's gotta be
150    here somewhere. My credit card has to be in my purse. I-I can't
151     find it. I don't know where it is. It's gotta be in here
152     somewhere. Ah. Just bear with me.
153     (0.3)
154 S:  Yeah.
155     (0.2)
156 S:  Hello:?
157 T:  Hello.
158 S:  Uh ye:s?
159 T:→ Ma'am are you serious in getting the lower rates,
160     (0.2)
161 S:  Oh- Oh do you need my credit card number now? Do- do you need
162     me to go get my credit card?
```


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```
163 T:  I'm just asking on which credit card do you owe the most
164     balance,
165 S:  O:kay yea:h?
166     (0.2)
168 S:  Yeah<
169     (.)
170 T:→ Ma'am, I want you to grab all of your cards,=Are you listening?
171 S:  Yeah?
172 T:→ I want you to grab all of your cards an:d shove it up your ass.
173     Okay?
174 S:  Uh-huh?
175 T:→ Can you do that for me,
176 S:  ↑Yes
177     (.)
178 S:  Yeah?
179 T:  ((Hangs up))
```

For some reason, in lines 147–152 after the caller's inquiry about her credit card balance the bot plays again the same turn as in lines 66–71, but the caller's reaction does not indicate whether or not he recognises it as the same script. In fact, he does not respond at all at this point. Sally gets to produce two of her turns in lines 154 (*Yeah.*) and 156 (*Hello:?*) until he reacts with *hello*. This may indicate that he is getting disengaged and frustrated with the discussion that seems to be heading nowhere.

In line 159 (*Ma'am are you serious in getting the lower rates,*) there is a change in footing (Goffman 1981: 124–157). The caller moves from the position where he is forwarding his project into holding the bot accountable. He also, for the first time, utters an interpretation about why Sally is behaving the way she is: she may not be serious and is thus deceiving the caller for the sake of amusement. In this way, he acts like the subjects of Garfinkel's famous breaching experiments, providing the breeching of a social norm an account through which it can be rationalised (Heritage 1984: 78–84). By presenting his suspicion as a question he still gives Sally an opportunity to account for herself and move the sales discussion back on track. If the change would be favourable, Sally might respond to this with something like *yeah*, which could keep the conversation going yet a while, but this does not happen this time. Instead, Sally's speech recognition system recognises a keyword again, and she inquires whether the caller needs her credit card number now and whether he wants her to get the card. This leads to the caller, now through a repair, asking his question about the card on which Sally owes the most balance for the sixth time (lines 163–164). This time Sally responds with *okay yeah?* and *yeah* after a gap, thus prompting the caller to continue. This kind of non-response might have passed in the earlier stages of the call, but now Sally's accountability for her behaviour and suspicion of her sincerity has been brought to the surface, and withholding a response will not suffice.

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Starting from line 170 there is another change in the footing. This time the caller requests the caller "to grab all of [her] cards and shove it up [her] ass". This vulgarity indicates that he has concluded that Sally's behaviour towards him is purposefully inappropriate and he responds in a similar vein, thus sanctioning Sally for the breaching behaviour and the lack of explanation for it. At this point, the caller has stepped out of the conceived telemarketer's role and project and adopted another one. For the lack of a better description, the activity could be described as an aggressive argument. Reverting to vulgar language is not unheard of in other similar conversations, as 10 % of telescammers conversing with Lenny use swear words and 89 % hang up without a goodbye (Sahen et al. 2017). Coincidentally Sally happens to respond to the caller's inappropriate request with an eager *yes*, confirming the interpretation that she is mocking the caller, and the caller hangs up. In a context like this, hanging up seems like a perfectly reasonable and appropriate action, that works both as a sanction for Sally and an escape from the abusive situation for the caller.

6 Discussion

In this study, we have investigated what makes it possible for a pre-recorded bot to deceive a human being and keep the conversation going on, i.e. how the interaction between a bot and an unsuspecting human is achieved. We set out to search for the answer from the overall structure of the telemarketing call – and most likely also telescamming – call, as well as the bot's design and the caller's project. Although the bot is rather simple in its design, and its turns remain similar throughout the call, different aspects of conversational design turned out to be important in the three parts of the conversation: opening, sales discussion, and closing. In the opening part, both the caller and the bot could be described as having the same goal: to start the discussion and continue it. Here the design of the bot and the sequential structure of the opening routines play an important role. Since the structure of the opening is very routinised and tied to timing, a simple trick such as implementing a repair breaks the structure and causes some steps to be missed. The caller moves into the reason of the call seamlessly without noticing that their counterparty is lacking entirely sequential orientation, i.e. the bot is producing turns without actually responding.

In the sales discussion, on the other hand, the bot's and the caller's goals diverge. The caller wants their project, which in this case is either to sell a service or to get the card information from the victim, to succeed, and the bot is designed to keep the caller occupied and the call from reaching its closure. The bot's turns alter between ones that sidetrack the sales talk and ones that prompt the caller to continue. The driving force in the success of the bot is the caller's project and the fact that in telemarketing discussions the caller takes the lead in pushing the conversation forward. As the bot is designed to prevent the call from terminating, the closing of the call could be seen as a

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failure in its success. On the other hand, the call has to end at some point, but the reason for its ending is only partially due to the bot's design. The driving force for the closure is the caller's interpretation of the other party's behaviour and the fact that they are not able to pursue their agenda. For the closing to happen unilaterally, i.e. without a proper closing section, there needs to be a change in the footing; the bot's role changes from a potential customer or – in the case of scamming – victim to an aggressor whose behaviour is best responded to with a likewise aggressive move of hanging up.

Overall, having a specific restricted conversational context and interpretational frame seems to lead people into being more inclined to interpret the bot's actions and comments – even odd ones – to the bot's advantage, to explain their aberrant behaviour through the lens of social actions we may often encounter within that context. Many human therapists, for instance, could not distinguish PARRY the paranoid bot from actual paranoid humans (Colby 1971), although the bot itself was based on a highly simple rule-based system. This is arguably because they did not know they were conversing with a bot, and because the frame for their discussion offered various acceptable explanations for the bot's unconventional behaviour. A similar explanation can be applied to human-bot interaction in the case of Eugene Goostman, a bot that was partly able to deceive humans into thinking he was indeed human for (Shah et al. 2016: 284). As he is presented as a 13-year-old Ukrainian boy conversing in English, there are many available and acceptable explanations e.g. his incorrect answers, typos, and somewhat odd comments. For Sally, on the other hand, the common problems humans experience with phone calls with strangers provide a vast resource for explaining conversational discrepancies. The bot's personality design plays a part in building this interpretative frame as well. Then again, bots lacking in personality arguably provide less interpretative context for their behaviour and are thus less believable.

More open-ended conversations would, however, be harder for the bot and would arguably result in more failures in capturing the human's attention. Such deception would be very likely possible in less specific or less predictable discussion contexts if the bot would be more "context-aware". Even Sally's topic word detection provides some ability for the bot to make contextual references and thus to make an impression of referring to the telescammer's input. For example, intent identification techniques in bot design allow for the bots to recognise what type of goals their interlocutor might have (for customer service bots it is essential to identify requests, for instance), and thus to be more interactive. Such bots are likelier to pass as humans and would also be able to perform tricks such as Sally's under more difficult or open-context circumstances, as well as drag on the futile conversation even longer (see also Vepsäläinen et al. 2021).

Automated conversational pushback seems to offer an efficient solution for conversation-based evildoings, such as telescamming, though it also raises the question of whether human-likeness in bot design is ethical if not made transparent enough. This discussion has, for example, been revolving around the case of Google Duplex (Leviathan & Mathias 2018), which can smoothly handle simple restaurant or appointment reservation calls. Its design that

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includes hedging and hesitation makes it sound extremely like a human and perhaps in these calls indiscernible from a human customer. Although bot-made reservations might be more efficient when not made transparent (Ishowo-Oloko et al. 2019), the bot has raised sharp criticisms stating that such interactions should be made known to the human interlocutor (Hern 2018). Such technological solutions also, unfortunately, have the propensity to be exploited with malicious intent, like phishing, ill-intended trolling, or opinion manipulation. In the case of bots working against telescamming, though, the use of bots that pretend to be human can be seen as justified, but it is evident that more research both on the conversational and ethical perspectives is required.

7 Conclusion

We started this investigation from the concept of dual contextuality, which determines conversation: every action is produced in a specific context and is both context-shaped and context-renewing. In this sense, Sally cannot have a conversation. For conversation, we need at least two parties that can make observations and deductions based on others' actions. Sally's success, though, is due to the fact that its design relies on a broader sense of context, i.e. a structure that goes beyond individual actions and sequences of actions. The unsuspecting human is left to take care of the local management of the discussion, thinking that they are indeed having a conversation with someone accountable for their actions. Indeed, if the telescammer would know they are speaking with a bot, we might conclude that a discussion with a pre-recorded bot like Sally is an interaction, a somewhat reciprocal manipulation of a system, but not a conversation. However, in our case-study, the telescammer trusts that they are engaging in a real conversation. Based on this trust, the bot succeeds in luring them into giving meaning to even somewhat unfitting turns and constructing coherence within the interaction, something that only a human is capable of.

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Notes

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2 Telescamming can be defined as hoaxing done via telephone. Hoaxes are "deceptive utterances that occur in one-to-many speech situations" (Heyd 2012), such as hoax emails. Though telephone conversations are dyadic, the deception itself is targeted at several people that are called one after another.

3 Intent in bot design refers to the perceived pragmatic objective of an utterance, and intent recognition is the prerequisite for a bot to be able to interact with a human in a somewhat reflexive manner. It should be noted, though, that this clashes somewhat with how we understand the reflexiveness of actions in CA: the type of the action is determined by the interlocutor though their next turn, and it is not predetermined by the form of the utterance. Nevertheless, intent recognition helps bots manage a conversation as naturally as possible by current technologies commonly used.

4 It is possible, though, that for most telemarketers a robocallee call is successful only once or twice, as they will eventually notice a pattern.

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Transcription symbols

.	falling intonation
,	level intonation
;	slightly falling intonation
?,	slightly rising intonation
?	rising intonation
↑	rise in pitch
↓	fall in pitch
en	emphasis indicated by underlining
:	lengthening of a sound
[	utterances starting simultaneously
]	point where overlapping talk stops
(.)	micropause, less than 0.2 seconds
(0.5)	silences timed in tenths of a second
> <	talk inside is done with a faster pace than the surrounding talk
< >	talk inside is done with a slower pace than the surrounding talk
en<	glottal stop
a-	cut off
=	"latching", i.e. no silence between two adjacent utterances
#e#	creaky voice
°en°	talk inside is said quieter than the surrounding talk
hh	audible exhalation
.hh	audible inhalation

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Abstract

Conversation Analytic Perspectives to Digital Interaction

Practices, Resources, and Affordances

Edited by Aino Koivisto, Heidi Vepsäläinen, and Mikko T. Virtanen

This book offers a collection of state-of-the-art conversation analytic work on the impact of different types of digital technologies and media on social interaction. It furthers our understanding of whether and to what extent the varying practices of digital interaction can be considered adaptations of the basic organisations and resources of co-present face-to-face interaction. The chapters explore the emerging practices in contemporary digital interaction and in interaction related to digital technologies. The volume is organised into four sections according to the platform or type of digital interaction: mobile messaging, social media, video conferencing, and human-computer interaction. Each of the chapters highlights an interactional or linguistic phenomenon – an action, a practice, a sequence, or a larger structure. Some of these are unique to online environments, such as emojis or hashtags, whereas some occur in both online and offline interaction, such as repair initiators and proposal sequences.

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