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10.   Discourse and organization

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Abstract: Interaction on social media follows certain organizing principles and patterns, as does face-to-face oral conversation. Research has begun to apply and adapt methods developed from and for offline interaction, such as Conversation Analysis and Discourse Analysis, to the sites of interaction that have emerged with the advent of the Internet and mobile phone technology. Our chapter traces the results of this research, encompassing Internet Relay Chats, text-messaging forum interactions, emails, Facebook posts and comments, Twitter, Skype calls and video blogs. This varied range of both spoken and written data has received attention regarding the sequential organization of the users' contributions in terms of both time and space, and it has drawn interest to its implementation of classic motifs in Conversation Analysis, that is, repair, openings and closings. The chapter presents an overview and synthesis of the results of these strands of research.

1.   Introduction

This chapter gives an overview of the scholarly efforts made to illuminate the "central organizing principles of interaction" (Garcia and Jacobs 1999: 339) in computer-mediated communication (CMC), and, more specifically, social media. It reviews and critically evaluates work that applies notions first developed in the Conversation Analytic (CA) tradition to interaction, be it spoken or written, that is mediated through a digital device. Further, it reviews work situated in the Discourse Analytic tradition with a specific focus on topics that touch on the organizational features of CMC.

CA as a discipline is rooted in ethnomethodological sociology (Garfinkel 1967; Sacks 1995), and as such it is interested in the organization of human behavior with a focus on spoken conversation. The basic premise is that human interaction follows a social order whereby interactants co-construct meaningful exchanges and successfully make sense of one another's contributions. In other words, conversation is a site of orderly, that is, recognizably organized, human behavior. Its organizing principles are manifestly oriented to by the participants in a conversation and can be observed and described (e.g. by a researcher). Thus, conversation is not a random or chaotic conglomerate of utterances, but a well-formed composition of contributions that are relevant to and dependent on one another.

The observations of orderly interactional behavior are made on the basis of what is referred to as "members' method" (Schegloff 1995: xxx). This approach

requires the researcher to adopt a participant's understanding of the situation rather than an outside observer's. Each turn-at-talk is understood both as a meaningful and appropriate reaction to the previous turn, as well as an indication of what the next turn could be like to be understood as an appropriate contribution. This method allows a researcher to show the interactants' preferences in the co-ordination and sequential organization of their contributions.

Turn-taking, the metaphor used to represent the instantiation of sequential organization, is a central concept in the CA paradigm. It encompasses and makes relevant the notion of accountability that underlies the design and interpretation of social actions. Seedhouse (2004: 10) exemplifies accountability through the template of the greeting exchange, a greeting-greeting adjacency pair: "when one social actor greets another, a greeting response is the norm or has *seen but unnoticed* status. Failure to respond in this case, however, may be noticeable, accountable, and sanctionable". In other words, because interactants hold each other morally accountable on the basis of established norms, the design of any contribution in the sequence of turns is constrained by virtue of its relation to the previous turn. In the case of adjacency pairs, the normative expectation that the first element necessitates the second is referred to as conditional relevance.

The sequential organization of certain accomplishments in human interaction, such as conversational openings and closings, repair sequences, interruptions and so forth, have traditionally been researched in the domain of spoken conversation. More recently, they have come to attract academic attention with regard to how they are co-constructed in various online settings, where the contextual affordances of the website or service in question may differ significantly from those of face-to-face conversation. In this chapter, we revisit and contextualize these efforts alongside a number of topics that recur in them: Salient issues are the blurring of boundaries between seeming dichotomies, such as written language and spoken language and synchronous and asynchronous communication. These issues give rise to a reconsideration of time as a dimension along which communication is organized. The research reviewed here recognizes space as a dimension that, in predominantly visually mediated interaction, also bears significance for the joint human accomplishment of accountable actions. Accordingly, the notion of turn must necessarily undergo a revision in light of the contexts under consideration. A contextual factor of CMC that researchers increasingly attend to is its inherent multimodality, which offers various affordances that interactants can make use of. After exploring the written/spoken cline and synchronicity as necessary notions in this context, we first focus on predominantly written genres, on repairs, on openings and closings and conclude with spoken CMC.

2.   Written communication and spoken communication in social media

In the investigation of language, researchers in the past have found it intuitive to attend to spoken language first and foremost rather than to written language. Linell (2005: 27) cites Bloomfield (1933), Saussure (1964), Lyons (1981) and Hockett (1958) as expressing the primacy of speech as the object of modern linguistic attention over written language. Following Vachek (1949), Linell nevertheless rejects the primacy of speech and gives both speech and writing the status as situated meaning-making activities (see also Watson 2009). Language use online has predominantly been written language use. As Schandorf (2012: 319) argues, "despite early techno-utopian visions of virtually embodied interactions in virtual worlds, the wide accessibility of mobile phones and VoIP technologies, the popularization of video conferencing (e.g. Skype) and the more recent availability of mobile video communications (e.g. Apple's Facetime), most digital media communication remains firmly text-based". However, this finding may soon be outdated given the dynamics of mediated communication and the development of mobile applications.

Similarly, Herring states that "text-based computer-mediated communication (CMC) enjoys historical precedence, and it remains more popular than VoIP [Voice over Internet Protocol]" (Herring 2010a). In other words, while early CMC was mainly performed as written communication due to reduced access to data transfer technology, the successive spread of high-speed internet and the development of audio- and video-based channels had not overturned the dominance of written language on the web, at least when Herring wrote her statement in 2010. One might argue that in the first decade of the 21st century, the internet still provided a pervasive domain for written rather than spoken interaction, possibly unlike much of our offline communication. Hence, for chronological reasons, the demanding nature of spoken multimodal data, and because of the dominance of writing, there appears to be more research on written online communication than on spoken.[1] This predominance also holds for research on the organization of interaction in CMC.

One aim of research related to the writing/speaking dichotomy is to determine the speech-like character of online language (Baron 2008, 2010; Crystal 2011; Markman 2013) or the extent to which written exchanges can be considered conversational (see the Special Issue of the *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* ed. by Herring 2010b). Jucker and Dürscheid (2012: 44) observe a terminological inaccuracy that leads to the confusion of what they term 'codes' (speech

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[1]   Cf. discussions on the various terms in addition to 'CMC' introduced to denote the object of study and the field of study, which often cover the written code rather than the spoken (Jucker and Dürscheid 2012).

or writing),[2] which are discrete entities, and the degree of distance and immediacy, which is a function of the message style.

Going beyond the written/spoken binary, one can understand any situated interaction as a convergence of multiple modes, that is, different materialities in which meaningful elements can be represented (Bublitz 2017). Spoken language is therefore represented in the phonic mode and written utterances in the graphic mode. Also, the notion of 'text-only' is in need of revision in an online context. Any text is situated in a system of affordances (Hutchby 2001: 447–449): the black on white appearance of printed text on paper is superseded by a pixelated representation on a screen that is movable, clickable and changeable. This has considerable implications for the semiotic system that writing is a part of, and both designers of social media and their users adopt the new functions that are available.

CA, as the approach most known for its interest in uncovering the workings of the sequential organization of turns in spoken language, seems to be predestined to be applied to analyses in a largely two-sided, dialogic or polylogic context. However, Have (1999) explains that central concepts of CA such as gap and overlap are not readily applicable to written language. With regard to the fundamental analytic strategy that uses a subsequent contribution to identify the participants' jointly negotiated understanding of the meaning or function of a turn (next-turn proof procedure), he states: "In some forms of CMC, one could use a similar strategy, in that, for instance, later contributions to a 'thread' in a 'news group' or 'discussion list' can be used to inspect at least some members' analysis of previous postings" (Have 1999: 276). Thereby, he provides a justification for the extension of an approach developed for the analysis of spoken language to written interaction (also see Gibson 2009 for a comparison of written interaction to spoken conversation in online forum discussions).

3.   Synchronicity

In addition to the spoken-written dichotomy, which has been challenged in a CMC context, in technologically-mediated environments synchronicity needs to be taken into consideration when analyzing the interactional organization of these discourses. As previously mentioned, types of CMC are often classified as synchronous or asynchronous (Baron 2010; Crystal 2006), where synchronous communication refers to interaction in "real-time" (Crystal 2006: 135) and asynchronous communication to "postponed time" (Crystal 2006: 134). Herring (2007) explains:

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[2]   Note that we will use the term 'mode' in the following when referring to the materiality of messages (cf. Bublitz 2017).

Asynchronous systems do not require that users be logged on at the same time in or-
der to send and receive messages; rather, messages are stored at the addressee's site
until they can be read. Email is an example of this type. In synchronous systems, in
contrast, sender and addressee(s) must be logged on simultaneously; various modes of
"real-time" chat are the most common forms of synchronous CMC.

Baron (2010: 1) lists chat, Instant Messaging (IM) and computer conferencing
as synchronous, and email, text-messaging, bulletin boards, blogs and social net-
working sites (SNS) as asynchronous, but not without remarking that depending
on the interactants' practices, the boundaries can blur. Email, for example, can be
used synchronously if interactants respond immediately, and IM can be used asyn-
chronously if the response is delayed (Baron 2010: 1, 2004; Darics 2014; Herring
2007).

Garcia and Jacobs (1999: 339) use the term 'quasi-synchronous' (QS-CMC)
to differentiate further: "[A]lthough posted messages are available synchronously
to participants, the message production process is available only to the person
composing the message. Thus the process of message transmission (posting) in
QS-CMC is not synchronous with message production." This distinction between
posting and production of a message is significant for the understanding of the
organization of the unfolding interaction, as "information about real-time turn
development is not revealed" (Jones 2013: 490). Thus, the concept of the transi-
tion-relevance place as found in face-to-face conversation (Sacks, Schegloff and
Jefferson 1974) is "more nebulous in chat", as Markman (2013: 543) points out.
Overlap and interruption in the traditional sense are not possible (Herring 1999;
Markman 2005; Jones 2013). Likewise, the interpretation of pauses in the interac-
tion is complicated by the lack of access to an interlocutor's actions (Rintel, Pittam
and Mulholland 2003).

As a logical consequence of this more refined notion of synchronicity, that is,
the inclusion of the 'quasi-synchronous concept', some studies used as data for
their analysis not just the chat-log or record of messages exchanged, which would
mean analyzing the finished product alone, but they also included information on
the production process, for example through screen-capture technology or vid-
eo-recordings (see Garcia and Jacobs 1999; Markman 2005, 2009, 2013; Jacobs
and Garcia 2013; Jones 2013; Meredith and Stokoe 2014; Reeves and Brown
2016). In these cases, researchers make use of information that is not available
to both (or all) parties of the interaction, but only to the respective producer of a
contribution. Thus, they access information on a core difference between medi-
ated and unmediated (face-to-face) interaction, the separate production process.
This represents an asymmetry of information when comparing the status of the
producer of the message and the researcher to that of the recipient of the message.

It is worth considering a brief theoretical aside: A CA approach to the organ-
ization of talk-in-interaction focusses on only the bare transcript of the interac-
tion, leaving aside contextual information that the participants do not accountably

orient to. Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974: 729) explain that "the display of [interlocutors'] understandings in the talk in subsequent turns affords a resource for the analysis of prior turns and a proof procedure for professional analyses of prior turns, resources intrinsic to the data themselves". Any editorial work on a chat interactant's part that comes before the transmission, such as typing, erasing, re-typing and so forth, is unavailable to the receiver(s) of the message, making it inaccessible as an interpretative resource for them. Therefore, using it as an interpretative resource for research would then represent a deviation from the members' method as established in Ethnomethodology and CA (Garfinkel 1967; Schegloff 1995; for similar reasoning, cf. Tudini 2014). However, as Meredith and Stokoe (2014: 186) argue by drawing on Drew, Walker and Ogden (2013), in the case of self-corrections, editorial work in chat contributions is indicative of an interlocutor's sense of what is appropriate in the sequential position to be filled. The analytical advantage gained from this demonstrates that such an expansion of data is a useful approach to quasi-synchronous, mediated interaction.[3] Reeves and Brown (2016) argue that investigating data beyond the interaction unfolding on the screen, that is, the embeddedness of CMC in off-line communication, allows insights into the integration of SNS into day-to-day life.

Multi-channel online services, such as Google Wave,[4] which encompassed collaborative work on documents, email, instant messaging *et cetera*, enable participants to see when their interlocutor is typing, an affordance called "typing indicator" (Auerbach 2014). One implementation involves a "keystroke-by-keystroke" (Trapani 2010) transmission, where any keyboard action is instantly visible to the parties involved.[5] In other formats, the prospective receiver of the message sees an automated system message indicating that the interlocutor is currently involved in some keyboard action.[6] A typing indicator grants all participants in the interaction access to the same information, thereby eliminating the asymmetry of information. An analysis of such data compared to data collected through screen capture or video-recording would demonstrate how users treat this affordance when both author and receiver of a message perceive its construction simultaneously. This would enable the observation whether such devices enhance the projectability of utterances in written CMC, in other words, whether the contributions were temporally more fine-tuned with smaller pauses between contributions.

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[3]   See also Beißwenger (2008a, 2008b) and Jones (2004, 2013) for discussions of what contextual dimensions to consider in CMC research.

[4]   Note that Google Wave was introduced in May 2009 and terminated on April 30, 2012, thus it is no longer in service (cf. Google Help 2015).

[5]   E.g. in Google Wave, VAX system Phone Utility (Anderson, Beard and Walther 2010) and Unix talk (Auerbach 2014).

[6]   E.g. in WhatsApp (Dürscheid and Frick 2014: 167), Gchat, Google Talk, iChat (Crair 2014), Skype chat, NatWest web chat.

With the development and spread of new affordances in written CMC, the concept of synchronicity must be viewed carefully, especially with regard to attempts to understand the sequential unfolding of an interaction. After all, 'no gap, no overlap' as a basic preference in oral conversation refers to a temporal domain, in that the sounds through which this communication is transmitted are predominantly situated on a temporal plane. However, writing also contains a visual, that is, spatial, component. In fact, our conceptual understanding of the coherence achieved in chat and IM interactions would benefit from building on the arguments made for a more comprehensive collection of data, thereby acknowledging the significance of spatial constraints and affordances for the sequential organization of written data.

4. Turn-taking in predominantly written CMC: Chats, Instant Messaging, blogs/vlogs and comments, Twitter, Facebook

With regard to both quasi-synchronous and asynchronous written multi-participant CMC, Herring (2010a) writes that "normal face-to-face (F2F) patterns of turn-taking are disrupted […], resulting in disrupted turn adjacency and overlapping exchanges" (also cf. Garcia and Jacobs 1998; Herring 1999; Panyametheekul and Herring 2003; Anderson, Beard and Walther 2010).

(1)
1   \<ashna\>   hi jatt
2   *** Signoff: puja (EOF From client)
3   \<Dave-G\>   kally i was only joking around
4   \<Jatt\>   ashna: hello?
5   \<kally\>   dave-g it was funny
(Herring 1999: 3)

In this interlaced exchange the greeting from line 1 is only returned in line 4, while line 3 is responded to in line 5. In other words, interactional contributions that are situated next to each other on the screen may not be designed by the interlocutors to be interactionally coherent, and vice-versa, contributions designed to reference one another may not be spatially adjacent. Delays (lag) caused by technical parameters may result in the display of contributions in a different order than they were produced in. Greenfield and Subrahmanyam (2003: 718) explain that "chat requires strategies for identifying relevant utterances that is, responses that follow earlier utterances in a coherent conversational thread".

Interactants use terms of address to make a directed contribution and thereby nominate the "intended next 'speaker'" (Panyametheekul and Herring 2003) as a way of compensating for the lack of audio-visual cues, in comparison to face-to-face communication (Werry 1996; see also Greenfield and Subrahmanyam 2003: 729 for their observations on "vocative cues"). This strategy of addressing an

interlocutor directly and thereby selecting next 'speaker' proved to be the most frequent turn-allocation strategy in Panyametheekul and Herring's (2003) data set from a Thai chat room. Hence, the authors posit a similarity in the turn-allocation behaviors of interactants in oral conversation and in chat room interaction. In newsgroups, however, where messages are also generally public, "the newsgroup system's infrastructure requires that users specify their addressees and the positions of their messages in the sequential organization of the discussion" (Marcoccia 2004: 116). In other words, the affordances in Marcoccia's dataset leave the user no choice but to specify the cohesive ties of their contributions in a certain format, whereas in chat rooms the users have more freedom in this respect.

For synchronous ("keystroke-by-keystroke") written multi-participant CMC, Anderson, Beard and Walther (2010: 15) observe that the participants in their study tend to self-select. Their interaction contains both phases of overlap, where several participants typed simultaneously, and long pauses where the previously posted messages were strategically decoded.

(2)
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23  C:           a   stop: ::::(4)we need to store some of this info.....(23.7)
24                   do we      know how?
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(Anderson, Beard and Walther 2010: 8)

In Example 2, C self-selects after a pause of 23.7 seconds. Interruption, in the sense of preventing an interlocutor from finishing their contribution, proves impossible in this environment. This represents a clear deviation from the 'no gap, no overlap' ideal in spoken conversation.

Baron's (2010: 12) research on IM conversations between college students reveals that they can be "fairly lengthy" on average, and that they can contain extended pauses of up to several minutes, displaying a significant difference from face-to-face communication regarding temporality (2010: 24). Baron explains that while oral conversation is typically a foregrounded activity, IM interactions are not, that is, they may be just one of several activities requiring an interactant's attention. Regarding the comparability of research on IM (and other quasi-synchronous CMC), the interactant's focus in a 'real-world' setting might differ from that in more experimental settings (Baron 2010: 24), which relates back to the discussion of the contextual information that researchers should take into account. Closings in Baron's data appear similar to those of oral conversation. Darics (2014) presents research on IM as a communicative tool in the workplace, where team-members who are based in different locations interact. She, too, characterizes IM interaction as intermittent, but in her data, openings and closings seem less prolonged than in Baron's. Darics points out that norms may not yet have been established for these practices, or they simply are of a variable nature depending on a range of factors (2014: 17).

Berglund (2009) highlights the significance of sequencing in IM as a tool for the creation and maintenance of coherence. On the one hand, she identifies adja-

cency pairs whose first and second pair parts are not spatially adjacent but never-theless recognizable as two parts of the same unit, and on the other hand, first pair part structures can be repeated (e.g., several questions) before the second pair parts are provided (i.e., several answers) (2009: 23).

(3)

Line	Mode	Time	From	To	Message
1	MSN	17:40:18	BEAY	FeliciaSmith	hey baby, are u goining home with simon today
2	MSN	17:40:28	BEAY	FeliciaSmith	i 'mean.. if u wll be in school
3	MSN	17:40:34	BEAY	FeliciaSmith	can i cook for u guys?
4	MSN	17:40:37	FeliciaSmith	BEAY	like home to austria you mean?
5	MSN	17:40:38	BEAY	FeliciaSmith	u and him
6	MSN	17:40:50	BEAY	BEAY	mm. i think we were going out to eat
7	MSN	17:40:53	BEAY	FeliciaSmith	Ookie

(Berglund 2009: 13)

In Example 3, a first pair part (line 1) is visibly oriented to by the repetition of 'home' in the response line 4.

For data from a gay chat room, Jones (2013: 500) identifies a particular rhythm in the interactions, namely "bursts and breaks". He argues that interactants move through a pattern of topics, thereby negotiating a potential meeting, where longer pauses between the topics occur because interactants may be involved in several interactions at the same time, and because pauses can have different implications, such as lack of interest or display of a "high market value" (2013: 506) (cf. also Fritz, Ch. 11, this volume). Again, as in other data discussed so far, we find a deviation from the 'no gap, no overlap' ideal. Rintel, Pittam and Mulholland (2003), on the other hand, approach pauses or "non-responses" in internet relay chat (IRC) as morally and interactionally implicative, regardless as to whether they are caused by the transmission system (e.g. lag) or by the interactants themselves. The following example from their study illustrates the conditional relevance of, for example, greetings and hence moral implicativeness, in that a user is held accountable for not responding.

(4)

427. [sammi] ran you there
448. [sammi] RAN you there
503. [sammi] Ran: HELLO!
505. [Ran] Sammi: ya, I'm here, I was just backtracking to see what I missed, I can't keep up with this

(Rintel, Pittam and Mulholland 2003)

Markman (2005), whose data includes information on the production process of individual messages in quasi-synchronous chat, shows that the reversal of the floor claiming and message production order leads to phantom adjacency pairs, where question and answer pairs that are seemingly coherent only appear so by chance, as the production of the second pair part precedes the production of the first pair part.

Skovholt and Svennevig (2013) have conducted research on email communication in the work place. They focus on the conditional relevance of messages containing speech acts that in face-to-face conversation regularly require more than a minimal response, for example a question or a greeting. Their study concludes that emails that contain a request for information or for action make a response conditionally relevant, that is, if the addressee(s) do(es) not respond, a 'second pair part' is noticeably absent. However, there is a tolerance for delay in the response (Skovholt and Svennevig 2013: 598). In the case where the request is for comments or corrections to a proposal, a missing answer is read as acceptance of the proposal. Hence, a response is not conditionally relevant in this case, as is also the case for emails that do not contain requests or questions (Skovholt and Svennevig 2013: 598).

Text messaging, as a form of CMC that is not genuinely web-based but dependent on a mobile device such as a mobile phone or a smart-phone, has been shown to follow interactional norms regarding its sequential organization and especially the conditional relevance of replies to certain types of messages (Laursen 2005, 2012). Laursen, investigating interactional practices of 14-year-old Danish adolescents, identifies initiating messages as inducing conditional relevance, making a reply necessary: "among adolescent mobile users, there is a dominating norm that dictates that an SMS receives a response" (2005: 53). Only if the initiating message is a "night-time message" or a forwarded chain message, the interactants do not orient to the initiating message as requiring a reaction (2005: 71). The time delay between initiating message and reply that the interactants orient to as acceptable depends on the relationship of the interactants, ranging from merely a few minutes for best friends and couples, to a few hours for more distant relationships (2005: 71). Failure to respond within the acceptable time frame can result in reminders being sent; these are usually framed to reflect a candidate interactional problem along four dimensions: transmission problems, recipient problems, content problems, and relationship problems (2005: 71). For instance, by resending the message, the interactants imply that there might have been a transmission problem. A candidate relationship problem is exemplified in the following exchange:

(5)
Michael   13:03 pm   What's up beautiful are you coming over to my place by my mother.
*   morten and I can't be bothered to go to training. Michael*

Susanne   –   –

Michael   16:28 pm   Heydi/hey there. are you doing something on friday. now we haten't seen each other in a long time.. I thourght you had plenty time when we started going out but –><– I was maybe wrong ... I don't know can you answer me. miss you michael

Susanne   16:59   Hey Mick! I just got back from school ... Did you think I had more time?? Im a busy train train girl ... Hey r you upset about it? What are you doing? *Your Girlfriend*

(Laursen 2005: 61)

Laursen further explains that text message dialogues rarely contain formal opening or closing procedures, and that in case of a non-initiating message or one that does not constitute a first-pair part, it is the receiver's decision whether to continue or discontinue the dialogue. In other words, text message exchange closings are not (always) interactionally negotiated, but can be unilaterally implemented (Laursen 2005: 65).

Text-message dialogues do not necessarily occur in interactions that involve text-messages only, but contributions to the interaction may well be enacted through, for example, a telephone call (Laursen 2005, 2012; Hutchby and Tanna 2008). While the change from text-message to telephone call does not require any additional interactional work (Laursen 2012: 83), it can be initiated through a directive in the last text-message ("call me!"), or the recipient may choose to switch to phone call without such a prompt (2005: 65–67).

Rather than focus on the sequential unfolding of several text messages, Hutchby and Tanna (2008) demonstrate that there is a detectable orderliness within text messages. Text messages can be simple or complex in structure, where "in 'complex' formats, more than one identifiable action is bundled up in one text" (2008: 147). Package-texts contain multiple units fulfilling multiple interactional functions, such as in the following text message where we find greeting, inquiry, announcement and question/invitation (one action per arrow).

(6)
1→→   morning u, hows the
2   pampering going?:-)
3→   stu's tryin 2 organise
4   something next
5→   friday..can u come
6   out?
(Hutchby and Tanna 2008: 153)

Hutchby and Tanna identify as an affordance of the technology the option to compose such multi-unit texts, which in spoken language would result in the production of several transition-relevance places "since a recipient only has access to a message once it is fully composed, sent, and received by their handset, the

opportunity for response only exists at that point rather than at the completion of any individual unit" (2008: 154). When package-texts are responded to, a significant difference to oral conversation manifests itself regarding the order in which the individual elements are taken up. Whereas in oral communication there is a preference for contiguity, that is, the last element in the previous turn is responded to first, texters seem to respond to elements in the order found in the previous text message (2008: 157).

Dürscheid and Frick (2014) differentiate between text-messages and WhatsApp communication, where the latter can be further distinguished into SMS-like messages and chat function. The chat function requires "co-presence of the interlocutors at the keyboard" (2014: 170), in other words communication is quasi-synchronous. They argue, since WhatsApp indicates whether an interlocutor is online or not, this knowledge creates the expectation of timely responses (2014: 171). At the same time, messages that cohere through their propositional content may not appear next to each other on the screen (2004: 170; cf. Herring's 1999 disrupted adjacency).

Honeycutt and Herring (2009) identify Twitter as a noisy environment with a large number of tweets posted at a high speed. Therefore, disrupted turn-adjacency is to be expected, making the @-sign as a marker of addressivity a useful and frequently used tool to enable coherent exchanges. Besides the @-sign, the authors mention the use of third-party clients and individual Twitter homepages as aides in using Twitter for coherent interaction (2009: 9; cf. also Zappavigna, Ch. 8, this volume).

Bublitz and Hoffmann (2011) identify quoting as a source of coherence across several types of CMC: online discussion forums, blogs and their comments, and social networking sites. Depending on the affordances of the site in question, users have at their disposal semi-automated if not fully automated acts (2011: 438–440), whereby a user, through clicking on the 'like button' on Facebook, or the 'Quote' hyperlink in a forum, activates functions that create or relocate text passages (cf. also Eisenlauer, Ch. 9, this volume). Greenfield and Subrahmanyam (2003: 721), in a similar vein, describe repetition as a strategy to create coherence in a multi-party chat environment.

With regard to contributions on Facebook, Androutsopoulos (2015) explains that spatial adjacency on a given wall may not necessarily coincide with sequential coherence: the multimodal configuration and the multiple authors of these spaces makes a prediction of shape and content of any next contribution impossible. Frobenius and Harper's research (2015) on written contributions and comments in status update sections differentiates between various norms that interactants orient to. In their data, Facebook users show a tendency to treat spatial immediacy (rather than temporal adjacency, as is the case for spoken interaction) as a central norm users adhere to in the creation of meaning and sense, whereby they manipulate their language use to make up for a failure to produce spatial immediacy (e.g.,

by employing addressivity). Facebook users have been shown to orient to what the authors tentatively termed 'personal immediacy' when using the personal profile of an interlocutor to indicate relevance structures. This research treats space as a dimension of its own, rather than as a mere representation of the temporal unfolding of contributions to an interaction through time. In fact, space provides resources that allow interactants to disregard notions of temporal adjacency to a degree.

Finally, gender has an impact on the practices in CMC: Herring's many studies illustrate such differences in that men receive fewer responses than women in synchronous CMC and, vice versa, women fewer responses than men in asynchronous CMC (for an overview, see Panyametheekul and Herring 2003). In a study on a Thai chat room, similar turn allocation was found in that women make "greater use of the preferred strategy to create coherence and orient to their conversational partners, and males initiating more turns independently, as well as initiating more flirtatious exchanges" (Panyametheekul and Herring 2003).

Turn-taking in CMC is shaped by two forces that are somewhat different in their nature. First, the affordances of the technological systems[7] may enable, impede or even make obsolete certain mechanisms governing face-to-face talk-in-interaction. While the lack of gaze and body posture in written CMC often requires extra work by the users to single out addressees, for instance, newsgroup systems have an inbuilt mechanism that allows and requires the specification of the addressee(s). The rule of not having gaps or overlap may also be waived when there is no competition for the floor because, for example, simultaneous typing is possible. Space in CMC may not always be a reflection of time, but it comes with its own affordances depending on the specific technology used.

On the other hand, users can draw on the richness of language, on a repertoire of forms, to understand the coherent nature of the unfolding CMC text and to create cohesive contributions themselves (cf. Schubert, Ch. 12, this volume). Just as a prolific language user can use different linguistic forms or strategies to convey similar ideas in a pub or at work, they can also adapt to different technological environments. Linguistic forms used in CMC contexts include terms of address, lexical repetition, lexical substitution or quotations. Furthermore, just like in non-computer-mediated contexts, language allows people to adapt to different exogenous circumstances or to recreate them in their discourses. For instance, whether some behavior is seen as morally implicative can not only depend on the interlocutors' relationship, but also the context of use (e.g. institutional vs. non-institutional settings) or the gender of the participants which may be relevant or be made relevant by the users.

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[7]   These may in turn be shaped by the users' preferences during their development.

5.   Repair

Just like in face-to-face conversation (Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks 1977), there is a need to correct one's own and others' mistakes or errors, or to solve other communicative problems such as word searches in communication involving technologies. Schönfeldt and Golato argue that in multi-party chat interaction, "participants take practices from ordinary conversation and apply them to their interaction within this new form of communication" (2003: 275). Specifically, they show that in chat as in spoken interaction, there is a preference for self-initiation and self-correction in repair (2003: 272).

(7)
(288)	Kaetzchen_F:		Okeeeee … muss mal wieder looohoooos!
			okaaaay ... must once again gooooooo!
			okay i have to leave again!
(336)	Bebbi:		Winke mal zum Ketzchen
			wave once to the ((name))
			wave to Ketzchen
=> (349)		Bebbi:	Winke mal zum Kaetzchen
			wave once to the ((name=little cat))
			wave to Kaetzchen

(Schönfeldt and Golato 2003: 257–258)

Here Bebbi self-initiates a self-repair by correcting a misspelled name. However, Schönfeldt and Golato point out that they as researchers, as well as the other chat participants, have no access to the message production process, which means they cannot comment on self-repair that occurs before the completion and sending of the contribution. Thus, the first repair initiation position they can identify in the data "is the next possible turn (message) after the turn containing the trouble source" (2003: 273). Garcia and Jacobs (1999) and Meredith and Stokoe (2014), whose data also encompasses the production process, found self-initiated, self-completed same turn repairs (for instance, the editing of messages while typing). Finally, chatters use repair to gain access to an ongoing interaction between other chat participants, as do conversationalists in spoken interaction (Schönfeldt and Golato 2003: 272).

(8)
(323)	cousine1:	calv: moment …sicher bin net sauer aber total ent- täuscht hab gedacht ich wärs *heul*
		*calv: moment ...certainly am not sour but totally disappointed have thought i was+it *cry**
		*calv: wait ... i am certainly not mad but totally disappointed i thought i was the one *sob**
=> (354)	sonnenblume72:	cousine: was bist du? *neugierigfrag*
		*cousine: what are you? *curiously ask**
		*cousine: what are you? *curiously asking**

(Schönfeldt and Golato 2003: 270)

Here Sonnenblume72 enters the conversation by performing an other-initiated repair.

Meredith and Stokoe (2014) investigate self-repair in quasi-synchronous Facebook chat. Within the category of self-initiated self-repair they identify two types: visible repair and message construction repair. In their data, the former is performed in a contribution immediately following the trouble source or in third turn position. The latter occurs during the typing of a message and before sending it, making it unavailable to the recipient(s). Thus, the authors reveal that message construction repair constitutes a type of repair unavailable to interlocutors in spoken interaction. The functions that message construction repair has in Facebook chat resemble those that it has in spoken interaction, namely repairs on stance, prosody, and action formation (2014: 202). Visible repair, on the other hand, mainly functions as error correction of spelling or typing (2014: 202).

Jacobs and Garcia (2013), whose data consists of video tapes of multi-party intranet chat, also find self-repair in the construction of messages. In their data, the placement of a contribution in relation to the one it responds to is a much more salient issue, as several interactants potentially type at the same time and thus compete for the same slot on the screen. In other words, failure to place a message adjacent to the one it relates to can be seen as a trouble source.

Lazaraton (2014) reports on repair in weblogs as a resource for humor and language play. In her data, commenters playfully orient to the passive voice as standard language use, and failure to meet this standard regularly results in self- or other-initiated repair, where other-initiation/repair is significantly more frequent than in spoken interaction. Unlike Meredith and Stokoe (2014), Lazaraton (2014) analyzes the finished contributions to the interaction, data that is available to all participants in the interaction, rather than its production process. The comparably small number of instances of self-repair in relation to other-repair might be explained by the blog (comment) authors' option to check contributions before posting to eliminate potential trouble sources in this asynchronous type of inter-action (Lazaraton 2014: 114). Using block-quotes to cite passages from another poster's contributions containing trouble sources is a repair strategy which initiators use to create coherence. It is a consequence of the blog software's affordances because they allow texts to be positioned sequentially adjacent despite temporal gaps (2014: 114). Collister (2011) presents evidence for the existence of a morpheme which is specific to written online language which initiates repair, namely, the asterisk (*). Chatters in the online game *World of Warcraft* use it both for self- and for other-initiation in the repair of typos and production errors (2011: 919), and the author further identifies the ^-symbol as an apparent alternative, which has the same functions.

Harrison (2003) justifies the use of CA as an approach to analyze written data: drawing on Have (2000), she argues that online communication is increasing and that this interaction which takes place in a virtual environment can be seen as an

extension of the original object of study for CA, spoken conversation. She then applies the CA-model of repair to data from email discussion lists, revealing that all combinations of self- and other-repair and completion occur, with email specific trouble sources such as missing attachments or blank emails, but also misspellings and personal attacks (flaming) that are disguised as repair.

Tanskanen and Karhukorpi (2008) report on a specific type of repair in asynchronous email use, that is, concessive repair. This practice entails an "overstatement and a successive repair sequence" (2008: 1591). In emails, concessive repair only occurs in one position, the actual location of the trouble source itself, that is, same turn (2008: 1598). Therefore, the authors argue, this type of repair has implications for the interactive nature of these exchanges in that it demonstrates the author's adopting the readers' perspective and pre-empting their potential criticism.

(9)
For the central Europeans it is perfectly normal that their mother stayed at home until they went to school, when we in Finland are used to the fact that both of the parents work, basically from the day we are born (well, not exactly but you know what I mean).
(Tanskanen and Karhukorpi 2008: 1592)

In Example 9, the early return to work of Finnish parents is first exaggerated and then directly repaired to anticipate potential criticism from other users.

Again it can be seen that strategies used in spoken face-to-face talk-in-interaction are being reproduced in CMC and also how the specific affordances of the technologies cause an adaptation of such practices. A preference for self-repair (even though not always visible to the other interlocutors) remains, implying similar ideas about politeness in these data as in face-to-face interaction. CMC specific practices exploiting technological opportunities emerge, such as the use of blockquotes to draw attention to a trouble source, or asterisks or other symbols as repair markers. New trouble sources also appear such as one's typing speed, which may have direct consequences for the placing of messages in the ongoing conversation and hence for the coherence of the unfolding text.

6.   Openings and closings

As with any other communicative exchange, people have to enter and leave situations unless they assume an "open state of talk" where "participants have the right, but not the obligation to initiate a little flurry of talk, then relapse back into silence, all this with no apparent ritual marking" (Goffman 1979: 10).

Rintel and Pittam (1997) investigate IRC openings and closings, comparing them to casual group face-to-face interaction. They find similar patterns such as greetings on the one hand, but also quite different ones such as choice of nicks (nicknames with which to be identified on the platform) on the other. Practices

identified in either setting serve similar functions (1997: 527), for example, the use of exclamation marks or capitalization is compared to gestures, facial expressions or tone of voice (1997: 514–515). Some features of embodied interaction may even be transferred into written action descriptions, as in the example below.

(10)
6. 344 [DISP-#penpals][ACTION] metal shakes Jacstra's hand
7. 349 [DISP-#penpals][ACTIONl Bobby *hugaz* his big sis!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
8. 481 [DISP-#penpals][ACTION] melba hugs her lil broother Bobby
9. 553 [DISP-#penpals][ACTION] Megasta *hugggggggggaz* his big sister
10. 86 [DISP-#australia][ACTION] JaKe waves to all the new folks …
(Rintel and Pittham 1997: 515)

For both openings and closings, Rintel and Pittam's data reveals that there are no fixed sequences, but that the order of elements is fluid. In fact, some elements may not occur at all, which, apparently, is not oriented to as a flaw in the sequence by the interactants. Rintel and Pittam (1997: 527–528) identify a number of stages that IRC interactants pass through when entering an exchange: (1) a server announcement, (2) a greeting to someone or no-one in particular or a question or statement in lieu of a greeting, (3) an optional exchange of verbal representations of non-verbal gestures of recognition and greeting as commonly used in face-to-face interaction (see example above), (4) transition to the next phase in the interaction.

Greenfield and Subrahmanyam (2003: 734) find a strategy in teen chat rooms they call "slot-filler", which has the "functional properties of adjacency pairs from oral conversation (Schegloff and Sacks: 1973), but without the formal property of adjacency". Slot-fillers are information requests about a potential interactant's identity that follow the fixed format a/s/l (age/sex/location). While the authors demonstrate that this strategy is oriented to as an opening device in chat interactions, they do not discuss whether or not the property of conditional relevance holds for slot-fillers as much as for what is traditionally considered a first pair part of an adjacency pair. Thus, the analysis suggests that slot-fillers are a fail-safe option for interactants to secure a chat partner's response, which seems to contradict the findings discussed in Rintel and Pittam (1997) and in the research below.

Rintel, Pittam and Mulholland (2003) investigate IRC openings more closely. Their investigation highlights the central role that server messages play in an "automated joining event (AJE)" (2003). Drawing a comparison to telephone call openings, the authors state that the automated joining announcement (JA) is significantly different from the ringing of the phone in that it does not entail conditional relevance. Therefore, the JA is not oriented to as a summons that requires an answer from another party. The authors explain that if a JA possessed the same conditional relevance the ringing of the phone has, "every JA would have to have been followed by a greeting from every channel member, leaving little room for any further interaction! Such a rigid summons-answer situation is clearly an untenable option in a group medium" (2003).

(11)
    1987. [SERVER] NASA!xx@xx.xx.xx.xx has joined this channel
    1988. [ACTION] NASA – hi to everyone
    2040. [SERVER] Clown!xx@xx.xx.xx.xx has joined this channel
    2044. [ACTION] NASA – is here anyone who would like to talk with me?
    2089. [Clown] hello there everyone
    2099. [Clown] Hello?
    2107. [Clown] Be sociable!
    2111. [ACTION] NASA – talk to me too?
    2120. [Clown] NASA: hello.
    2131. [NASA] Clown-at least one who … umm, hi …:)
    2145. [SERVER] NASA has left this channel
    2148. [Clown] NASA: hi what's going down?
(Rintel, Pittam and Mulholland 2003)

As in the example above, the data under consideration reveal that a considerable number of initiating attempts and greeting exchanges did not lead to further exchanges, demonstrating a demand for a multitude of interaction attempts to secure one (or several parallel) strands of interaction (see Have 2000 for an exploration of the use of membership categorization devices (MCD) in the chat partner selection phase).

Closings, similar to openings, are enacted through a number of stages. (1) The closing phase is initiated; (2) as a medium-specific option, the IRC "/action" command is employed for a textual rendering of actions; (3) phatic communion tokens are exchanged; (4) parting gestures are expressed in text form; (5) automated (and optionally adapted) server message appears (Rintel and Pittam 1997: 529).

Markman, in her research on chat data of virtual team meetings, describes a two stage process involving an "opening move" and an "agenda setting turn" that interactants go through in the openings of their team chats (2009: 155). She found interactional practices in these openings that resemble those of face-to-face encounters.[8] Closings were, again, enacted through a two-stage process, where the first consisted of an "explicit closing remark/summary statement" and a "turn projecting future action" (2009: 161). Both opening and closing sequences as described in these chat data were subject to delays caused by intrusive turns, owing to the "disjointed temporality" (2009: 161), which is one of the parameters of this type of interaction.

For two-party IM interactions, Raclaw (2008) identifies two main patterns which closings regularly follow, the expanded archetype closing and the partially

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[8]   Note that these observations were not made on the basis of the actual first interactional contributions, but the process of moving from non-task related talk to meeting talk, i.e. transitional moments. Hence the term 'opening' is not entirely congruent with its usual use in CA research here.

automated sequence. Whereas the former resembles conversational closings in that there are pre-closing and terminal exchange adjacency pairs, it can also include a medium specific element, the post-closing. This is a message posted by the software as a consequence of a user's signing out of the program or setting their status to unavailable, and it may appear below a previously finished interaction. The partially automated sequence, on the other hand, necessarily includes a message that is automatically posted by the software to complete the closing sequence. Interactants negotiate a pre-closing either through extensive pauses between contributions or by giving reasons for leaving the computer/the interaction, which is then followed by an interlocutors' automated away-message.

(12)
1 metonym: so i should like, probably start writing my paper (11.0)
2 pudding: yeah i should probably go to bed (8.0)
3 metonym: so i will talk to you tomorrow, jah [yes]? (7.0)
4 pudding: jah [yes] (6.0)
5 pudding: good luck writing!!! (2.0)
6 metonym: thanks! (2.0)
7 pudding: latahz [i'll talk to you later] (3.0)
8 pudding: haha, bye (9.0)
9 metonym is away
(Raclaw 2008: 9)

In this example, a pre-closing in the form of an exchange of accounts (lines 1 and 2) is followed by an arrangement for a future meeting (lines 3 and 4), a reference back to the accounts (lines 5 and 6), the terminal exchange (lines 7 and 8) and finally the post-closing in the form of an automated message by the system (Raclaw 2008: 10).

With regard to text messaging, Spilioti (2011), for her Greek data, describes closings as part of politeness. She analyses when participants consider the use of closings appropriate and which formulae they use. Closings taken over from face-to-face interaction or from written or other mediated genres were used to signal degrees of immediacy and proximity. This is in line with earlier research on closings in text messaging where the social presence of the interlocutors was also signaled in this way (Laursen 2005; Ito and Okabe 2005; Spagnolli and Gamberini 2007).

Generally it appears that ritual opening and closing sequences are less expected in technological environments than outside of CMC, which may be a reflection of a more 'open state of talk' or of a lesser commitment to the social encounter. However, it also transpires that there are local rules in different formats depending not only on the technology used, but also on sociocultural factors such as age or gender. Comparing the wealth of studies on embodied spoken language and paper-based written genres to the number of studies on current CMC based interactions, in the main, one has to conclude that much more research is necessary to capture

the exact factors that may or may not make a closing or opening section expected elements in a given environment. One feature of closing and opening phases in CMC stands out, namely automated system messages that cannot be sidestepped. In multiparty face-to-face interaction, there may be degrees of participation (Goffman 1979) and people use an array of bodily, vocal and verbal means to signal their participation status. There is no one obligatory single signal for the co-interlocutors which convey that he or she is there/he or she has gone.

7.   Spoken CMC

With regard to spoken CMC, one may expect a smaller impact from the technologies used. For instance, comparing Skype calls to classic telephone calls, one can assume that because of the added visual information, skyping might be even closer to face-to-face talk-in-interaction. Barron and Black (2015) contribute research on Skype call openings between native speakers and non-native speakers using English. For example, their analysis of listener behavior in the form of back-channels is less indicative of particular practices pertaining to the Skype context, but linked to individual learners' proficiency in their L2. Considering that Skype offers simultaneous audio-visual and text-based interaction between users, further investigation of these interactional events would be particularly desirable with respect to the use of multi-modal features for the organization of such interaction. This would include switching between audio-visual and spoken modes when, for example, there are interactional troubles caused by a poor internet connection; but possibly more importantly, the sequential (and not only in a temporal sense) unfolding of the simultaneous use of these channels should be explored in terms of the norms that are then oriented to by the interactants.

In this vein, Licoppe and Morel have identified a norm that interactants regularly orient to in Skype calls: the current speaker should be seen on screen. The "talking-heads" (2012: 399) arrangement or "'simplest systematics' to the organization of video calls" (Licoppe and Morel 2014: 137–138) is the default on Skype. This means that anything else that comes to be shown in these calls – and an increasing mobility through the use of mobile devices allows for objects, or even buildings or sites to be shown – is under scrutiny for its relevance to the ongoing interaction. In other words, a camera movement towards an object or the surroundings is an accountable action (2012: 405).

Licoppe and Morel (2014) identify these showing sequences as elements that require joint interactional work in that they have to be prefaced by the shower or requested by the viewer and then ratified by the other participant. This preparatory collaboration functions as a suspension of talking-heads norm and allows for potentially irrelevant images to be shown until a first relevant view can be produced and identified as such. The co-ordination of the audio-visual stream in

Skype calls is therefore a "collaborative and joint interactional process" (2014: 158).

In addition to research into one-on-one Skype conversations, there is also research on interaction involving audio-visual communication between more than two parties. Sindoni explores data from Camfrog, a software that allows "multiparty web-based video chat" (2014: 327) where several users meet in a virtual room and can use both spoken language and typed messages to communicate with one another. However, unlike face-to-face interaction, Camfrog allows only one person to speak at a time. In other words, speakers have no option to create overlap and are thus tied to this part of the 'no gap, no overlap' ideal. Sindoni remarks that the software allows for another type of overlap conditioned by the use of written chat message to open 'parallel floors', where the speakers turn into authors and engage in another interaction while, possibly but not necessarily, listening to the one who is speaking (2014: 327). This study gives ample space to considerations of multimodal issues in the sequential organization of contributions in multi-party video chat, a focus that is well worth pursuing in CMC research in an effort to better understand what impact the contextual setting offered by a web space has on human interaction in general (for studies of floor management issues in multi-party video interaction using experimental data, see Sellen 1992 and Heath and Luff 2000).

Frobenius (2011) investigates openings in video blogs, which represent interesting data with regard to the co-construction of interaction in that the spoken part is clearly asynchronous and monologic. Her data set shows two clear tendencies, the first being a unilateral mirroring of sequential conversational openings with greetings and terms of address, and the second being the lack of both greeting and term of address. Other more established monologic media such as TV news, radio shows, or answering machine messages also influence language use on vlogs, with vloggers using the available editing options to provide written opening credits, for example. For closings, Frobenius (2014) finds that many vloggers replicate the conversational pattern of pre-closing and terminal exchange adjacency pairs, by providing only the first pair parts of each. Clearly, vloggers draw on conversational patterns in the organization of their monologues, despite the fact that a synchronous collaborative unfolding is impossible in this contextual setting.

Of particular interest in video blogs posted on video-hosting platforms such as YouTube that are characterized by an inherent multimodality, is how interactants manage to switch from one mode to another without a loss of coherence. On the one hand, YouTube offers what they call a 'deep link'. This affordance lets commenters insert hyperlinks in their written texts which, when clicked on, takes the reader to a specific point in the video and thereby allows a commenter to link their comment to a specific point in the audio-visual material. On the other hand, vloggers have adopted practices to incorporate written material from their viewers' comments into their audio-visual recording: they can read out loud comments

and reply to them in speaking, and they show screenshots of comments while producing a reaction to them in a voice-over (Frobenius 2014). YouTube clearly represents a complex contextual setting where interactants' creativity in the joint production of meaning and sense is instantiated in novel ways.

With the increase of spoken interaction in CMC, the studies discussed here, in the main, make manifest a desire for more, empirically based, thorough analyses of the practices or norms that evolve as new technologies are used as resources for communication, identity construction, or community building by their users. The cases previously discussed indicate that a full picture of the organization of spoken discourse in mediated settings needs to have a broader database as a foundation. At this point, it mainly transpires that people are well aware of the affordances of different technologies as enabling or constraining factors for the social actions they wish to engage in.

8.   Outlook

There is a progression in our understanding of the dimension along which types of CMC are organized. We leave behind binary distinctions like spoken-written and especially synchronous/asynchronous to enrich our view through a more fine-grained model that distinguishes production, transmission and reception. This progression is taken further to include space as a dimension that interactants orient to, where, for example, screen space produced and seen by the interactants feeds into a spatio-temporal organizational feature. Additionally, the multimodal contextual configuration of interaction sites is beginning to be understood as yet another component of this organizational conglomerate. While research into the interactional organization of social media indicates a move away from the time-centric 'no gap, no overlap' ideal postulated for face-to-face conversation, there is still a great deal to explore with regard to what interactants actually orient to when faced with multitudes of ways to communicate – be it different modes, different platforms, and so forth – to create a coherent exchange between users. This process of streamlining multimodal online interaction is necessarily heavily influenced by website features and design, making the contextual factors or affordances a starting point for any pragmatic analysis. With another fundamental shift in online contextualization options in the near future, namely augmented reality in the form of, for example, three-dimensional projections (see devices such as Google Glasses or Oculus Rift), we will be faced with a range of novel interactional sites and practices.

With the constant development of said affordances, it is to be expected that interactants will either incorporate these into their orderly, organized communication processes, or not use them at all. An obvious candidate for pragmatists' research agenda is to continue to create an inventory of such practices in any setting that is accessible; beyond this ongoing task lies a more holistic (and perhaps

elusive) complex of questions: what regularities do we find across all settings? How can we successfully adapt the Conversational Analytic approach with its powerful but restricted reach to the online setting(s) we want to research? With CA as sociological endeavor, it would possibly be fruitful to focus less on individual technologies and their organisation, and more on the social fabric that is created with the help of technologically-mediated communication. Some of the questions that are raised by current research such as the status of openings may well be furthered by taking groups or networks of people and their use of technology across platforms as a starting point.

CMC as well as social media are very much a feature of the globalised world and a necessity for many of its inhabitants. The question therefore arises in how far the organisation of communication might be more universal than in more traditional genres. It would be interesting for future research to compare the use of social media between cultures and languages to answer the question as to whether, or to what degree, there are local social media practices which have developed against the backdrop of the specific behaviour patterns from other genres (cf. for instance Panyametheekul and Herring 2003). This could make the necessary and minute descriptions of the use of different devices or tools in social media and in different languages and cultures more relevant for the over-riding questions in linguistics in general.

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