

Forthcoming in *Research on Language and Social Interaction*. Please do not cite without authors' permission.

## Providing Epistemic Support For Assessments Through Mobile-Supported Sharing Activities

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This paper examines how participants in face-to-face conversation employ mobile phones as a resource for social action. We focus on what we call *mobile-supported sharing activities*, in which participants use a mobile phone to share text or images with others by voicing text aloud from their mobile or providing others with visual access to the device's display screen. Drawing from naturalistic video recordings, we focus on how mobile-supported sharing activities invite assessments by providing access to an object that is not locally accessible to the participants. Such practices make relevant co-participants' assessment of these objects and allow for different forms of co-participation across sequence types. We additionally examine how the organization of assessments during these sharing activities displays sensitivity to preference structure. The analysis illustrates the relevance of embodiment, local objects, and new communicative technologies to the production of action in co-present interaction. Data are in American English.

### Introduction

In this paper, we examine one practice for providing epistemic access to an assessable referent: introducing it into the talk using a mobile phone. We focus on the interactional relevance of participants using these devices to share text and images with co-present others, whether by reading (or “voicing”) text aloud from their mobile phone or providing co-interactants with visual access to the device's display screen. The analysis considers one such function of these

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The authors would like to thank the editors of this special issue and three anonymous reviewers for their careful and valuable feedback on earlier drafts of this paper. We are also grateful for comments and encouragement from Cecilia Ford, Ritva Laury, and Elizabeth Pier, and for comments from data session attendees at the Finnish Center of Excellence in Research on Intersubjectivity in Interaction at the University of Helsinki. The research reported in this publication was supported in part by the National Institute of General Medical Sciences of the National Institutes of Health under Award Number R01GM111002. The content is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily represent the official views of the National Institutes of Health.

*mobile-supported sharing activities*, in which they invite assessments by providing co-participants with sufficient knowledge (Pomerantz, 1984) to evaluate the item being shared. Such practices highlight the ways in which the technological affordances (Gibson, 1979; Hutchby, 2001) of modern-day mobile phones—in particular the immediate accessibility they provide to digital photographs and records of prior text message exchanges—are employed in concert with other semiotic resources to support the production of social action. In the context of everyday interaction, the sharing of these texts and images is a joint activity that allows participants to share direct epistemic access to an otherwise inaccessible referent, and provides opportunities for collaborative assessments of this referent.

### **Interacting with Objects**

Mobile phones comprise only one category of objects that social actors routinely refer to and manipulate in ongoing interaction. Multimodal approaches have articulated how a variety of resources—talk, gesture, bodies, spaces, objects, and so forth—are drawn on to coordinate joint attention, turn-taking, action formation, and other core interactional processes (e.g., Kidwell & Zimmerman, 2007; Mondada, 2011; Streeck, Goodwin & LeBaron, 2011). This literature has shown how the use of local objects can be a key resource for social action. For example, these objects may be recruited to support thinking, learning and interpreting; affect orientation or change in the environment; and initiate, organize or monitor courses of action (Nevile, Haddington, Heinemann, & Rauniomaa, 2014). In the present analysis we examine how technological objects, and mobile phones in particular, are treated as a situated resource that affords the production of social action. This perspective highlights the role these objects play within the larger semiotic repertoire available to participants as they conduct their social business.

### **Joint Participation Surrounding Communication Technologies**

In recent decades, the mobile phone has become a commonplace object to which people have constant, untethered access (Ling, 2012). These devices have increasingly provided users with access to functions beyond simply making and receiving calls, such as sending and receiving text (SMS) messages, browsing the Internet, or taking and displaying photographs and videos. Because mobile phones are so frequently present and engaged with in everyday interaction, they provide a rich resource for participant action. This increasing ubiquity of mobile phones has facilitated their use as a focal point for joint participation during face-to-face interaction. For example, Weilenmann and Larsson (2003) document how groups of Swedish teenagers make mobile-supported activities accessible to their interlocutors. Many of the activities that Weilenmann and Larsson examine fall under the scope of what we here term mobile-supported sharing activities, such as reading text messages aloud or sharing text by physically passing the mobile to other participants. Similarly, Brown, McGregor, and McMillan (2015) show how

mobile Internet searches for information may function as more than just a private process for information retrieval. Drawing on video from wearable cameras and mobile screen captures, their analysis reveals how searches are occasioned by both the surrounding talk and local physical environment, with the process and results of such searches shaping the ongoing course of the interaction. Both studies demonstrate the insights to be gained from examining technology in situated use (cf. DiDomenico, Raclaw, & Robles, 2015). While the current study does not utilize wearable cameras or screen captures of participants' mobile phones, it incorporates the methodological benefits of using video-based data of participants' mobile use in context.

### **Assessing Co-present Referents**

Participants in social interaction routinely attend to the states of knowledge to which their co-interactants display having access. Within assessment sequences, this attention to epistemic access is a key component of recipient design, and research has examined how this access is displayed and negotiated during assessing activities (e.g., Heritage & Raymond 2005; Raymond & Heritage, 2006; Pomerantz, 1984). In their discussion of multimodal resources in assessment sequences, Lindström and Mondada (2009) distinguish between assessments of previously experienced objects and events, to which participants may have equal or asymmetrical access, and assessments of local objects that exist in the world around the participants. They argue that, while the assessment of local, co-present referents has received relatively minimal attention in analytic literature, these actions may entail very different practices and resources from those described in seminal work on assessments, which has focused on the assessment of referents external to the local environment. Subsequent research on the assessment of co-present objects (Fasulo & Monzoni, 2009; Mondada, 2009; Monzoni & Laury, 2014) has shown this to be true, particularly with regard to the distribution of epistemic rights and access.

As this research has shown, providing access to an object or entity is a common practice for initiating or inviting assessments. Mobile-supported sharing activities are one practice for inviting this type of co-participation in contexts where the assessable referent is not physically co-present. Aaltonen, Arminen, and Raudaskoski (2014) investigate a similar multimodal practice, also facilitated through the use of a technological object, in which a digital camera is passed around and the displayed photographs are assessed. The authors examine how this use of technology facilitates interaction between aphasic and non-aphasic speakers, with the visible access to a referent provided by the camera serving to manifest the aphasic participant's knowledge of a referent he cannot articulate through speech. The present analysis considers how mobile phones also provide a mediated form of experiential and epistemic access in contexts where this access would otherwise be lacking, thereby accommodating new forms of participation across these sequences.

In the following section we describe our corpus of data and methodological approach. We then examine the use of mobile-supported activities across two environments: (1) those in which mobile phones afford the production of preferred social actions, such as storytellings or positive assessments; and (2) those in which the sharing activities are instead tied to dispreferred social actions, such as complaints or criticisms. Research in conversation analysis has long shown that the production of preferred or dispreferred actions typically calls for different forms of interactional management (e.g, Pomerantz, 1984), and we find similar orientations to preference structure in the ways that participants employ their phones during mobile-supported sharing activities. To wit, sharing activities that initiate preferred actions are organized such that the party who initiates the sharing activity also produces the first assessment of the shared item. In these cases, recipients display immediate alignment with the sharing activity and its associated assessment sequence. Conversely, in sharing activities that initiate dispreferred actions, the sequence is organized such that the first assessment is instead produced by another participant (i.e., a recipient to the sharing activity). In these cases, recipients are more apt to display resistance to the sharing activity and disalignment with the assessments that such activities make relevant. Our analysis of this pattern of mobile phone use and assessing activities resonates with prior observations regarding the general preference structure and sequential organization of assessments (Heritage & Raymond, 2005; Raymond & Heritage, 2006; Pomerantz, 1984).

## **Data and Methods**

Our data are drawn from a collection of approximately 15 hours of video recordings where participants use their mobile phone during face-to-face conversation. These are episodes of naturally-occurring social interaction, and participants were not explicitly told to use their mobiles during the talk. The data are from three corpora of video recorded interaction collected by the authors in locations across the United States from 2011-2014. Because participants used their mobiles spontaneously during these interactions, we did not have access to activity occurring on their display screens. We thus relied on participants' demonstrable orientations to their mobile as relevant to the production of a particular action (cf. DiDomenico & Boase, 2013), as when formulating a complaint while showing a participant a picture of the complainable matter.

Interactions were recorded with full informed consent of participants, and permission to publish transcripts and still images from these interactions was obtained from all participants. The data were transcribed using conversation analytic conventions (Hepburn & Bolden, 2013). Still images were captured from the video recordings and have been inserted alongside transcripts to illustrate the physical environment of the interaction, and point out specific embodied actions relevant to the focal activity described herein.

## **Sharing activities that afford the production of preferred actions**

The shifts in joint attention to the mobile phone that are characteristic of mobile-supported sharing activities are often formulated with sensitivity to being fit within the local sequential context of the talk. For example, in Excerpt 1, five friends have been discussing an electronics accessory each participant owns or plans to purchase.<sup>2</sup> Just prior to this excerpt, some of the participants mention their plans to visit a store that sells this accessory. This is followed by Cam's pre-announcement regarding an electronics purchase that Bob made earlier that day, formulated as a yes-no interrogative that checks whether Bob has told the others about this purchase (lines 26-31). Cam's pre-announcement displays a positive stance toward the purchase through the formulation "the amazing thing you bought," and functions as a prospective indexical (Goodwin, 1996) that projects oncoming elaboration while additionally providing a frame through which the other participants should understand the nature of Bob's purchase. Though Bob initially responds to Cam's question ("Yea:h I told 'em") at line 32, he extends this turn by producing a next turn constructional unit (TCU) that is latched onto the prior unit and formulated as a rush-through (Schegloff, 1982). Here Bob announces that he took a picture of the purchased item while simultaneously leaning back and reaching for his mobile, coordinating multiple semiotic resources to project this public showing of the image to the group.

**(1) VASP03\_pass\_around**

26 Cam: Did you tell 'em:,  
 27 [(0.3)  
 28 [((points towards Dave, Evan))  
 29 Cam: the amazing thing you bought,  
 30 (0.2)  
 31 Cam: today?  
 32 Bob: Yea:h I told 'em=[>I took a picture.<  
 33 [((reaches for mobile))  
 34 (0.4)  
 35 Dave: [((nods at Evan)) ( )]  
 36 Bob: [( ) (brought 'em)]  
 ((16 lines omitted))  
 53 Bob: I like this picture [( )  
 54 [((holds mobile up to Abe)) ← **Figure 1**



**#Figure 1**

<sup>2</sup> Due to multiple instances of schmising (Egbert, 1997) in this five-person interaction, a number of turns from a separate course of action have been removed from the transcript.

55 Dave: Yeah I heard though ((to Cam))  
 56 Bob: They're like [Evan's  
 57 ((points to Evan))  
 58 Abe: [Yeah they're like [his [right  
 59 Bob: [((takes mobile)) [((hands  
 60 mobile to Dave))  
 61 Bob: Yeah but not completely like his.  
 ((2 lines omitted))  
 64 Evan: Where'd you get them [( ) (like/right) now ⇐ **Figure 2**  
 65 Bob: [Hmm?



#Figure 2

66 Bob: eBay.

While Bob accesses his phone to find the image (lines 34-52), a side sequence occurs between Cam, Dave, and Evan (sitting on Bob's left) while Abe (on Bob's right) gazes around the room. This sequence has been omitted from the transcript. At lines 53-54 Bob then proffers the phone to Abe, holding the device within Abe's field of vision to provide access to the image on the phone display (Figure 1).

Prior research on the assessment of local objects has shown that references to these objects, such as the food present during a dinnertime conversation (Mondada, 2009; Monzoni & Laury, forthcoming), are often understood by co-participants as inviting an assessment of the object. Thus, while Bob's showing of the image at lines 53-54 co-occurs with an assessment of the image's quality ("I like this picture"), the sharing activity still provides for the continuing relevance of Abe's assessment of the item pictured on the phone. A distinction can thus be made between the photograph itself and the referent of the image (e.g., the purchased item), and it is the latter which is offered up for assessment during the sharing activities examined here. Though the impetus to assess is seemingly on Abe at this point in the talk, the phone display is in Abe's view for only a half-second before Bob produces a first assessment at line 56. Here Bob assesses the item's perceived similarity to one owned by another participant ("They're like Evan's"). At line 58 Abe displays his agreement through a second assessment formulated as a repeat of Bob's prior assessment ("Yeah they're like his right"). At line 61 Bob modifies his earlier assessment, claiming that the purchase is only partially like the item owned by Evan ("Yeah but not completely like his").

As Abe's agreement at line 58 comes to completion, Bob moves the phone out of Abe's field of vision and hands it to Dave, who positions the phone display to provide visual access to both himself and Evan (Figure 2). Bob's proffering of the phone again invites a possible assessment of his purchase from the recipients. Bob's prior assessments of the item at lines 56 and 61 also provide for another form of response from Evan, who has sufficient knowledge to either confirm or disagree with Bob's prior claim that the purchase was similar—but not “completely” similar—to the item he already owns. Both Dave and Evan have sufficient time to access the picture (gazing at the mobile for 2.5 seconds), though neither party assesses the item. Instead, Evan asks a question about the item at line 64 (“Where'd you get them”). Following Bob's response to this question, Dave passes the phone back to Bob, a move that signals an end to the sharing activity and its associated assessment sequence.

Based on this excerpt a number of observations can be made regarding participation in mobile-supported sharing activities. First, sharing activities may be occasioned by, or otherwise tied to, participants' ongoing verbal activity. Returning to lines 26-33, we see that Bob treats Cam's initial pre-announcement (“Did you tell 'em: ... the amazing thing you bought ... today?”) as providing for the relevance of the mobile-supported sharing activity, allowing Bob to provide more direct access to the purchased item than that offered through verbal description alone. Bob launches the sharing activity by prefacing it with a report at lines 32-33 that he took a picture of the item in question, and employs various turn-maintenance devices (latching, a rush-through) to further connect this preface to the subsequent sharing activity. In this way, Bob frames the sharing activity as being fit to the local sequential context of the ongoing talk.

The excerpt also shows one way that mobile-supported sharing activities—and the assessments that such activities make relevant—may be organized. While initially sharing the picture with Abe, Bob provides a first assessment of the item that invites a confirming second assessment as a preferred response. As Pomerantz (1984) shows, the general preference for agreement in these contexts constrains the response types available to interactants in second position, with agreement being normatively preferred. Abe's engagement with the image shared by Bob at line 58 is thus subject to a notably different preference organization than Evan's later engagement with the photograph at line 64, as Abe is a recipient to Bob's first-position assessment of the purchase (whereas Evan is not). Though Bob's subsequent sharing of the image with Dave and Evan invites *some* form of response from one or both of them, Evan's subsequent question about where Bob purchased the item is treated by Bob as a sufficient response, as discussion of the shared item reaches its conclusion at the end of the transcript.<sup>3</sup> Thus, the sequential organization of assessments in relation to a sharing activity—that is, whether the first assessment is produced

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<sup>3</sup> Though Bob's use of an open-class repair initiator, “hmm?”, at line 65 may treat Evan's question as inapposite or unexpected.

by the sharing party or the recipient—may have consequences for how the assessment of the shared referent unfolds.

The participants' physical management of the mobile phone may also be consequential to how mobile-supported sharing activities proceed. During the initial portion of the sharing activity, Bob provides visual access to the photograph by holding his mobile up within Abe's field of vision. By removing the mobile from view, Bob is able to close the sharing activity at his discretion. This contrasts with Bob's subsequent sharing of the photograph with Dave and Evan, who are given the mobile and allowed significantly more control over the duration and trajectory of the sharing activity. The sharing activity itself is thus facilitated by two affordances of many modern mobile phones: their small size and portability, and their capacity to take and quickly retrieve digital images that may become relevant in everyday interactions.

Excerpt 2 presents another case of a sharing activity that occasions a preferred action: in this case, the telling of a funny story. While the sharing activity in the previous excerpt centered on sharing a photograph, here a mobile phone is used to introduce an episode of directly-quoted reported speech from a participant's prior text message communications. This activity thus exploits a unique affordance of text-based forms of technologically-mediated communication: the permanent and easily accessible textual record of past interactions.

In the excerpt below, Jack and Rob have been talking about a visit that U.S. President Barack Obama had recently paid to their college campus. Following discussion about the security detail posted in their town during the president's visit, Rob reports that he had previously tried to learn about the security detail from his brother-in-law, who is a member of the Secret Service and could thus provide inside information (lines 6-9). Rob accounts for his failure to gain this information by noting that his brother-in-law was unavailable to speak with him at the time (line 15). Rob follows this by launching a telling about a recent conversation he did have with his brother-in-law. This telling is prefaced by Rob's forward-looking first assessment of the story at line 18 ("It was funny though"), as well as descriptions of the story that are articulated with visible smiles and audible smile voice (lines 18-25). Each of these elements shape Jack's expected understanding of the upcoming story as humorous.

**(2) MSA21\_secret\_service**

06 Rob: Yeah >I was [trying< to talk to my brother in law about it  
07 Jack: [hyeah  
08 Rob: cause [he's in the Secret Service.  
09 [((gazes at Jack))  
10 (0.4)  
11 Jack: OH[: really?  
12 Rob: [( )  
13 Rob: Yea:h.  
14 Jack: Whoa[::.  
15 Rob: [Yeah and uh:: (0.5) but I couldn't get a hold of him.  
16 (0.5)



17 Jack: Da:mn.=  
 18 Rob: =It [was funny [though he texted me fthe other dayf,  
 19 [((reaches for mobile in his pocket))  
 20 [((smiles))  
 21 (0.2)  
 22 Rob: and I was like, (0.6) [uh::  
 23 [((brings mobile up))  
 24 Rob: [Hold on I'll read you the text. It's fabout my tattoof.  
 25 [((gazes at and manipulates mobile)) ← **Figure 3**



**#Figure 3**

26 (0.2)  
 27 Rob: And [d-  
 28 Jack: [uhhuhdhuhh  
 ((27 lines omitted))  
 56 Rob: ((looks down at mobile))  
 57 Rob: .hh and he was like  
 58 Jack: Hehh  
 59 Rob: hey Dalai Lama send me a pic of your new ink. I'm drawing  
 60 the line at dreads though. Hope you're doing well. I said  
 61 haha how did you find out and how were those strippers in  
 62 South America?  
 63 Jack: Ehhehh [heh [.hhhhhahhahhah  
 64 Rob: [He was just like we[ak dot dot dot.  
 65 [((gazes up, returns mobile to  
 66 pocket))  
 67 Hah hah  
 68 Jack: That's funny.  
 69 Rob: .hh Yeah.

As Rob initiates his pre-telling assessment of the story at lines 18-19, he simultaneously reaches for his mobile phone, which has been in his pocket. As Rob searches for his phone, he turns his gaze to Jack and smiles before producing a prefatory description that characterizes the story as a text message exchange between his brother-in-law and himself (“he texted me the other day”). This contextualization of the story, as well as Rob’s visible search for his mobile, project Rob’s use of the phone as a resource for telling the story, framing the shared text exchange as the appreciable “punchline” to the story.

Rob initially formulates this part of the story as an episode of reported speech while raising the mobile to eye-level (lines 22-23). His subsequent manipulation of the phone, presumably a search for the text message, is simultaneously produced with his announcement that he will read the text aloud (lines 23-24; Figure 3). Prior to reading the text, Rob initiates an insertion

sequence: an understanding check to see if Jack had heard of a recent prostitution scandal involving Secret Service agents in South America, which is relevant to the story's punchline (omitted from the transcript). Following this sequence, Rob's gaze shifts from Jack to his mobile (line 56), signaling the possible initiation of the telling proper. Through Rob's continuous coordination of his visible bodily attention to his phone along with verbal actions that preface his telling, he marks his upcoming sharing activity as being fit with the local sequential context.

At line 57 Rob uses a quotative marker, "he was like," to introduce his reading of the text. Although the nonstandard quotative *be like* is often assumed to display ambiguity or uncertainty toward the accuracy of, or epistemic commitment to, a reported quotation (Buchstaller, 2001), here it is used to literally read the original speech that is being reported.<sup>4</sup> From lines 59-60 Rob voices the first message his brother-in-law had sent, and Rob voices his response to his brother-in-law at lines 60-62. This section of the telling invites laughter from Jack, an affiliative move in line with Rob's prior laughter-relevant practices. At line 64 Rob voices his brother-in-law's response to his text, looking up from his mobile partway through this action to gaze at Jack, inviting his response. As Rob does so, he also begins to return his mobile to his pocket, and follows this with laughter at line 67. Each of these moves—Rob's shift in gaze away from his mobile and toward Jack, his move to return the phone to his pocket, and his subsequent laughter—projects the story's likely completion. Jack's response at line 68, an affiliative positive assessment of the story's punchline ("That's funny"), is also closing-relevant.

In voicing both sides of the text message exchange, Rob provides Jack with more direct access to the story, effectively making Jack a ratified overhearer (Goffman, 1981) to Rob's earlier exchange rather than a simple story recipient. Though Rob could have recounted the exchange as a story told through recollection rather than the direct access provided through the affordances of his mobile phone, there may be a preference for providing this direct access through these devices when it is available. This may also reflect a larger structural preference in interaction for providing co-participants with direct or first-hand knowledge over indirect or second-hand forms of knowledge. This finding would be consistent with research on similar phenomena in reporting speech, where presenting talk "as direct" is a practice for displaying epistemic priority (Clift, 2006). In the exchange between Rob and Jack, recalling past events with the aid of a mobile phone displays that Rob is using the maximal epistemic and technological resources available to him at that moment.

As with the use of a mobile-supported sharing activity in Excerpt 1, in the voicing activity seen here a mobile phone enables a sharing activity that makes assessment relevant. Here too the initial first assessment of the shared entity is produced by the sharing party. For the purposes of the analysis at hand, we thus group together the sharing of both text and images under the

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<sup>4</sup> In this case, then, the quotative *be like* may function to invite a more emotional response from the telling recipient, display an equal-status stance toward the recipient, or show an orientation to the informality of the conversation (Blackwell & Fox Tree, 2012).

general practice of sharing activities, given their overlap in providing expanded epistemic access to an assessable referent as a resource for guiding recipients toward alignment and affiliation. We do, however, acknowledge that the sharing of these discrete forms of media (text and images) may also offer different forms of epistemic access to recipients, and additionally entail sensory and phenomenological distinctions in the forms of access that they provide; we address this point further in our concluding remarks.

Throughout the sharing activity in Excerpt 2, Jack displays an affiliative orientation to the humor of Rob's telling by producing invited laughter. Jack's second assessment of the story following its completion ("That's funny") is also affiliative, and is even formulated as a partial repeat of Rob's pre-telling first assessment of the story from line 18. A similarly quick move to affiliate with the sharing party is also seen by the initial recipient in Excerpt 1, Abe. Notably, we do not see this same move to affiliation in that excerpt from Evan, who is a recipient of the sharing activity but is not positioned as a recipient to Bob's first-position assessment of the shared photograph. We will return to this point regarding affiliation and sequential organization in the following section, which examines sharing activities that occasion the production of dispreferred social actions: third-party complaints. In these cases, and in contrast to the prior two cases, the sharing party does not produce a first assessment of the item being shared.

### **Sharing activities that afford the production of dispreferred actions**

In the previous section we examined how mobile-supported sharing activities, whether showing an image or voicing text, are organized to facilitate the production of preferred actions: the assessment of a friend's new purchase and the sharing of a funny story. In those cases, the sharing party produces the first assessment, leaving the recipient of the sharing to produce an assessment in second position as an aligning response. In the current section we present cases in which sharing activities afford the production of dispreferred actions, namely third-party complaints. In these contexts, it is instead the *recipient* of the sharing activity who produces the first assessment. These cases thus provide further explication of the ways in which the situated use of mobile phones augments the available resources for action and are made consequential for the ongoing interaction.

Excerpt 3 is from a conversation between Andy and Mick that occurs in Mick's university dorm room. Prior to the excerpt Mick had asked Andy why a mutual acquaintance from the same dorm, Sally, was currently doing her homework in Andy's room instead of the dorm's public lounge. At line 12 Andy provides a possible account for Sally's actions that entails a laughable complaint about another mutually-known party, Franny. Mick responds with a second complaint about Franny at line 14, and he follows his complaint with a pre-telling at line 16 regarding a text message he received from Franny earlier that day. Mick's organization of this telling directly following the complaint sequence projects its topic matter: an objectionable request that Franny had recently made to Mick.

(3) MSA31\_the\_circumstances

12 Andy: Yo and Franny just spoils ( ) outta those fu(h)to(h)ns.  
13 (0.5)  
14 Mick: Franny's stressing me out.  
15 Andy: ( ) (the laundry) ( )  
16 Mick: .hhhh Yo did I tell you what she did today?  
17 Andy: Wha[:t  
18 Mick: [She ↑text↓ed me.  
19 Andy: Why:.  
20 (0.7)  
21 Mick: fAsked for a ri:~def.  
22 (0.7) ⇐ **Figure 4**



#Figure 4

23 Andy: HHXHHH=  
24 Mick: OHHH  
25 Andy: Hehhhe[hhhehh  
26 Mick: [fNot only tha:tf,  
27 [(reaches for his mobile))  
28 Andy: hehhhhh .hhh [yo even if I asked you [for a (ride) ( )  
29 Mick: [Let's lis- [>Let's lis-<  
30 [let's listen yo: >let's listen< to the circumstances here.  
31 [(gazes down at and manipulates mobile))  
32 (0.2)  
33 Mick: No: that's not fully true if it was something like  
34 important obviously I'm >not gonna be< a pri:ck but like,  
35 [(0.2) .hh yo will you drive me to the store so I can get  
36 [(looks up from mobile))  
37 some foo:d=  
38 Andy: =Hehhh[hehh [hhhhhhehh  
39 Mick: [NO:: FUCK YOU: GO on your own [fuckin time.  
40 [(gazes at mobile))  
41 Andy: ↑Hehh .hhhh  
42 Mick: Alright let's see.  
43 Andy: ((coughs))  
44 Mick: What she said to me.  
45 (0.6)  
46 Mick: [So in the end it- she said actually never mind a couple  
47 [(gazes at Andy))

48 minutes later [bu:t, (0.5) she goes (.) u:h hey Mick it's  
 49 [(gazes at mobile )]  
 50 Franny, (0.2) I was wondering if you could give me a ride  
 51 (.) Sunday morning at nine thirty to my  
 52 [dad's house in Stratham.  
 53 [(gazes at Andy))  
 54 Andy: HHHHH=  
 55 Mick: ↑OHHH.  
 56 Andy: Hehh fdid you respondf?  
 57 Mick: I don't- pffft  
 58 Andy: Ehhehh  
 59 Mick: I don't- (0.2) pffff  
 60 Andy: Hehhhehh  
 61 Mick: No: ehhheh  
 62 Andy: hehhhehh  
 63 Mick: I was like- (0.4) ah- so many things went through my head,  
 64 I was like, (0.3) you gotta be shittin me.  
 65 Andy: Would you- w- would you have done it?  
 66 Mick: Hell (.) no.  
 67 Andy: Ehhehh  
 68 Mick: Ehheh (.) A, I can't [stand her,  
 69 Andy: [Ni~ne thi~rty.  
 70 Mick: A, I can't stand her, B it's nine thirty, C I'm going out on  
 71 Saturday night, (0.5) .hhh fuckin D (0.4) fI DON'T NEED TO  
 72 DRIVE YOU IN YOUR DAD'S HOUSE IN STRATHAMf.  
 73 (.)  
 74 Mick: fUnless he's likef dying then maybe but like, (.) I hope  
 75 he's not dying,  
 76 Andy: Ehhehhhehh  
 77 Mick: Li(hh)ke  
 78 Andy: That is ridiculous

At lines 18-21 Mick prefaces the telling by announcing that Franny had texted him earlier that day to request a ride. Mick's announcement is articulated with numerous features that display his orientation to Franny's request as laughable and potentially accountable: the significantly raised pitch on the word "text" at line 18, the laughter-relevant features that accompany his description of the request (smile voice and audible "wobble"; Ford & Fox, 2011), and the smile and open-mouthed expectant expression that Mick directs toward Andy following the announcement that Franny asked for a ride (Figure 4). Though Andy's response to Mick's announcement (a guttural laugh at line 23) is affiliative, it is produced with significant delay, possibly marking Andy's reluctance to affiliate with Mick at this point in the talk. Perhaps in response to this delay, at lines 26 and 29-30 Mick begins to expand the complainable component of Franny's request by providing additional details ("Not only that ... let's listen to the circumstances here"). This action is delayed by Andy's overlapping talk at line 28, in which Andy claims that Mick would not give him a ride either, as well as Mick's partial rejection of this claim at lines 33-39.

As Mick begins to expand on his complaint at line 26 (“£Not only tha:t£,”), he simultaneously reaches for his mobile phone, located on a drawer next to the bed where he and Andy are seated. As Mick further prefaces this expansion at lines 29-21 (“let’s listen yo: >let’s listen< to the circumstances here”), he shifts his gaze from Andy to his mobile and manipulates the device, presumably searching for Franny’s message. Both of these embodied moves project his sharing of the text message with Andy.

At lines 42 and 44 Mick continues to preface his sharing of Franny’s text (“Alright let’s see what she said to me”). There is a half-second of silence at line 45 as Mick seemingly reads Franny’s text message to himself, after which he announces her follow-up to the request at lines 46-48. This is followed by Mick’s voicing of Franny’s text message at lines 48-52. Though Mick had previously described Franny’s request and his response and his response to it, his voicing of the text message may highlight some aspect of the way Franny’s request was formulated that makes it especially complainable. For example, in voicing the greeting and self-identification from the text message (“u:h hey Mick it’s Franny”), Mick is able to highlight Franny’s self-presentation as someone other than a close friend (who would not need to identify herself), which compounds the inappropriateness of her request for a ride. Mick’s direct voicing of the text also allows him to provide minute details of his conversation with Franny, such as the exact time that Franny requested a ride (“Sunday morning at nine thirty”) that additionally frame the request as both accountable and complainable. In these ways, the precise citation of the original text message becomes procedurally consequential.

Up to this point, Mick has displayed a negative stance toward Franny’s request through laughter and the organization of his sharing activity following a sequence of complaints about her. However, in contrast to Excerpts 1 and 2 in the previous section, Mick (as the sharing party) has not yet provided an on-record, first assessment of Franny’s actions. Though Andy has displayed some degree of affiliation with Mick by laughing with him both prior to the telling (lines 23, 25, 28) and immediately following it (line 54), Andy does not immediately respond in a way that confirms that Franny’s actions are, in fact, complainable. Rather, at line 56 Andy follows the telling by asking Mick if he responded to Franny. After Mick’s response at lines 57-64, Andy poses another question, asking if Mick would have actually given Franny a ride to her father’s house. Andy treats Mick’s response, an extreme case formulation (“Hell (.) no”), as a laughable, though Andy’s laughter still resists confirming that Mick’s telling was complaint-worthy—a move to affiliation that Mick continues to pursue in the talk that follows.

In partial overlap with Mick’s talk, Andy produces a repeat of the time that Franny requested the ride (“Ni~ne thi~rty”), a move that acknowledges one of the bases for Mick’s initial complaint about Franny. While this action is arguably affiliative, Mick responds by recycling his prior turn as he expands on his earlier response to Andy’s question at lines 68-75. During this turn Mick formulates a list of reasons why Franny’s request deserved complaint, and following this action

Andy finally produces an affiliative first assessment of Mick's telling: "That is ridiculous" (line 78).

The sharing activity in Excerpt 3 thus unfolds in a markedly different way from Excerpts 1 and 2, in which the sharing party produces a first assessment during the initiation of the sharing activity. Here, Mick's formulation of the sharing activity instead treats the complainability of the telling as self-evident. While the sharing activities in Excerpts 1 and 2 are prefaced by first assessments that offer clear expectations for how the recipient of the sharing activity should understand the shared text or image, in Excerpt 3 this is done far more implicitly through Mick's use of intonation and embodied stance displays, which leaves Andy to produce the first on-record assessment of the shared text.

We argue that this organization of the sharing activity—in which the recipient (Andy) is offered the sequential slot to produce the first assessment—displays an orientation to the dispreferred nature of the complaint afforded by Mick's sharing of the text. Given the general preference for agreement in interaction, recipients to complaints are placed in a potentially delicate position, in which their aligning response also entails their complicity in a structurally dispreferred action (i.e., the complaint). Complaints are thus, as Maynard (2013) describes them, a "risky" type of action that may be formulated with a sensitivity to avoiding potential trouble with reciprocity. By initiating the sharing activity without an accompanying first assessment, as Mick does in Excerpt 3 above, the sharing party provides the recipient with greater freedom in responding. Such a move may anticipate problems in securing affiliation from the recipient of the complaint (cf. Maynard, 2013). Though Mick's sharing of the text in Excerpt 3 successfully invites an affiliative response from Andy, this response is notably delayed, and is only forthcoming following significant work from Mick to affirm the complainability of the shared text. Again, the dispreferred and potentially disaffiliative nature of the complaint may call this additional interactional work to garner joint participation in the negative assessment of an offending party.

Excerpt 4 shows a similar case. As with Excerpt 1, the sharing activity involves a participant providing access to their mobile phone in order to show an image. In this excerpt, Ali has been involved in a troubles-telling about a man she has been casually dating who has recently shown interest in another woman (lines 1-5). Prior to the completion of this telling, Sara shifts her gaze to her mobile phone, which has been sitting on the table in front of her, and begins manipulating the device's touchscreen display (Figure 5). From other details of the interaction before and after this excerpt, it is likely that Sara is searching for the image she is about to share from a digital photo album hosted on the social network site Facebook.

**(4) MSA14\_holding\_her\_roll**

01 Ali: So (>it's like<) >I don't really want to< continue things with  
02 him when like his friend is like (0.8) super into it you know  
03 [but then it's like [I don't know

04 Sara: [((gazes down at mobile)) [((manipulates mobile)) ⇐ **Figure 5**



**#Figure 5**

05 (0.6)  
06 Sara: I just don't really kno:w he's just (.) >got< like a really  
07 good body so:  
08 (.)  
09 Sara: Theta Xi gu:y?  
10 (0.8)  
11 Ali: I mean yea:h.  
12 (0.3)  
13 Ali: Yea:h [no: but \*Mart:n\*. ((sniff))  
14 Sara: [hhh ((gazes at Ali, slides over mobile))  
15 (0.7)  
16 Sara: ((Picks up phone)) [((shows mobile to Ali))  
17 Sara: [He ignored me: for that girl:.  
18 Ali: [((takes up mobile / gazes at display screen))  
19 [(2.0)  
20 Ali: Ehe(h)w::! [hhhh hhhhhh hh hh  
21 Sara: [hhhhh=li:(h)ke .hhhh  
22 Ali: [((swipes through digital photo album on mobile))  
23 ((shows phone to Sara))  
24 Sara: [I'm ju-  
25 Ali: [huhuhuh  
26 (0.2)  
27 Sara: ↑uhhhe[hh  
28 Ali: [Look how-  
29 (0.4)  
30 Sara: I don't kn[o:w, I don't kno:w l:ke,  
31 Ali: [She~'s  
32 Ali: What the fu::ck, [she's >literally< hu:ge.  
33 Sara: [Like-  
34 Sara: Li::ke (.) he's trying to like hold her wai:st? but she doesn't  
35 have on:e? so he's holding her ro::ll?  
36 (1.2)  
37 Ali: Oh[: my ↑go:d.  
38 Sara: [Like (.) does that make sens:e?  
39 (0.6)  
40 Sara: I don't kno:w. ↑I ↑don't ↑under[stand  
41 Ali: [Oh:: my go::d.  
42 (1.2)



43 Ali: What is this fro:m.  
44 (0.6)  
45 Sara: ((lip smack)) Uh:: that's A-Chi-O's forma:l.  
46 (0.8)  
47 Sara: [He moved there.  
48 Ali: [Oh: she- she's an A-Chi-O:?  
49 (0.3)  
50 Sara: Yea::h.  
51 Ali: Yeah you have no(h): worrie(h)s du(h)de.  
52 Ali: OH: my GO:D this girl's in my [English class  
53 [((hands mobile to Sara))  
54 she's so: fuckin annoying.  
55 Sara: Yea::h.  
56 Sara: [(0.3)  
57 [((begins swiping through images on mobile))  
58 Ali: She trie:d to grade my English paper >one time< I >was just<  
59 like,  
60 Sara: Didju-? >Look at< the ro:ll. I'm sorry did you see (at)  
61 this [one, with the ro:ll?  
62 [((shows phone to Ali))  
63 Ali: [°What is this:°  
64 Ali: [((smiles and takes phone))  
65 (0.3)  
66 Sara: [Aw:.=  
67 [((hangs head))  
68 Ali: =Can I zoom in on the roll?  
69 (0.8)  
70 Sara: °May:be°  
71 Ali: .hhhh °That's rou(h)gh°.  
72 (0.2)  
73 Ali: °That is literally pretty rough°.  
74 (0.3)  
75 Ali: °(I'm gonna) (keep going) through this shit°.=  
76 Sara: =Ehhehheh hehh .hhhh=  
77 Ali: =Du:de sh[e:'s like she's  
78 Sara: [I don't know.  
79 (0.4)  
80 Ali: decently [huge.  
81 Sara: [Sh::  
82 (0.8)  
83 Ali: She's just ↑hu:ge.  
84 (0.8)  
85 Sara: I just don't understand.  
86 Ali: Whaddaya mean he ignored you for her:.

At lines 6-7, Sara accounts for her continuing involvement with this man, formulating this account as an assessment of his looks (“he’s just got like a really good body so:”). Following a short silence at line 8, during which Sara continues to scroll through her phone display, Sara initiates repair on the referent of Ali’s assessment at line 9 (“Theta Xi guy?”). Sara’s repair

initiation offers a candidate understanding of whom Ali has been talking about: a mutually-known acquaintance from the fraternity Theta Xi that Sara has also been interested in. Though Ali's response at line 11 is formulated with an agreement token that confirms that the Theta Xi guy also has a good body ("I mean yea::h"), Ali extends this turn at line 13 to complete the repair, clarifying that her telling has actually been about another man named Martin. However, Ali's repair is organized in overlap with Sara's initiation of the mobile-supported sharing activity at line 14, and Sara continues to reference the Theta Xi guy, and proceeds with the associated sharing activity, despite Ali's repair.

Sara initiates the sharing activity by sliding her phone, which has been resting on the table, toward Ali. As she does so, Sara produces a potentially laughter-relevant burst of aspiration. When these moves do not solicit Ali's gaze toward the phone (line 15), Sara raises it and holds it up within Ali's field of vision. This occurs concurrently with Sara's announcement that the Theta Xi guy "ignored her" in favor of the girl now pictured on her phone display (line 17).

Sara's announcement is organized as a "second story" (Ryave, 1978), an action that is touched off by Ali's initial troubles-telling and provides a claim to a similar experience (being rejected in favor of another woman). As with the sharing of a text message in Excerpt 3, Sara's showing of the image invites Ali's assessment and affiliation on a complainable matter. Though the context of the talk at this point infers Sara's negative stance toward the woman in the photograph, she does not produce a first assessment. In many ways, the organization of the sharing activity thus parallels that seen in Excerpt 3, in which Mick also withholds an explicit assessment of the referent of the sharing activity.

After Ali gazes at the image on the phone (lines 18-19), she produces a negative, though non-specific, assessment of the girl in the photograph ("Ehe(h)w::!"). The assessment is formulated with interpolated particles of aspiration and followed by laughter at line 20 that Sara joins at line 21. Ali continues to produce negative assessments of the girl in the photograph while circulating through the pictures of this girl in the digital photo album (lines 22-41). Though Ali's assessments display her shared stance with Sara toward the girl in the picture, significantly, they do not display Ali's troubles-recipientcy (Jefferson, 1984). That is, while generally affiliative, the assessments do not attend to the heart of the complainable matter: the fact that Sara was rejected in favor of the girl in the photo.

Though Sara also produces a negative description of the girl's appearance at lines 34-35 ("he's trying to like hold her wai:st? but she doesn't have on:e? so he's holding her ro::ll?"), she follows this action at line 38 with a question that invites Ali to move towards troubles-recipientcy ("Like does that make sens:e?"). When Ali displays no uptake of this question in the silence at line 39, Sara claims her own lack of understanding ("I don't kno:w. ↑I ↑don't ↑understand"), which further invites Ali's troubles-recipientcy. However, displaying continued troubles-

resistance and disalignment, Ali instead asks Sara where the pictures in the digital photo album are from (line 43). Following Sara's response (lines 45-50), which describes the girl in the photograph as a member of a local sorority, Ali claims the girl is "nothing to worry about" (line 51). Ali's claim does display troubles-recipientcy, as it frames the girl in the photo as being no real threat to Sara. However, following this turn Ali initiates another disaligning course of action: a side sequence that introduces a complaint about another girl pictured in one of the photographs Ali has found (lines 52-59). After Ali hands the phone to Sara to share this new photograph (line 53), Sara begins to swipe back through the images on the phone display to return to an image of the girl that Sara initially shared with Ali.

At line 60, Ali retopicalizes the girl from the initial photograph by directing Ali's attention to the "rolls of fat" visible in the photograph, which Sara had previously described at lines 34-35. Following this shift in joint attention back to the subject of the photograph, Ali begins to attend to the talk as a troubles-recipient, producing an initial sympathetic assessment of Sara's troubles at line 71 ("That's rou(h)gh") and an upgraded repeat of this assessment, formulated without laugh-relevant aspiration, at line 73 ("That's literally pretty rough"). The troubles-telling moves toward resolution at line 86 when Ali asks for more details ("Whaddaya mean he ignored you for her:").

In Excerpts 3 and 4, the party who initiates the sharing activity withholds any explicit assessment of the item being shared, leaving the recipient of the sharing activity to produce the first assessment. Both cases feature a sharing activity that invites the recipient's assessment and affiliation on a complainable matter—a dispreferred and potentially disaffiliative action—and notably, both excerpts feature significant delays in progressivity. In Excerpt 4, Ali's troubles-recipientcy is only successfully invited after significant work from Sara, which parallels the interactional work that Mick conducts in Excerpt 3 to affirm the complainability of the shared text message. While sharing activities produced without an accompanying first assessment provide sharing recipients greater freedom in responding—which may be preferred in cases where alignment with the sharing activity also entails aligning with a dispreferred action—these formulations may not be conducive to securing alignment and affiliation. As Excerpts 3 and 4 illustrate, mobile-supported sharing activities can thus serve as both a vehicle for, as well as a possible hindrance to, inviting alignment and affiliation across different sequences of action. Across all of the cases that we examine in this paper, however, it is the technological affordances of the mobile phone that make it possible for participants to gain direct access to the referents being assessed. This constitutes another way in which the technology at hand becomes interactionally consequential.

## **Discussion and Conclusions**

In this paper we examined how participants coordinate spoken action, embodied practice, and the affordances of mobile phones to invite co-participation in the assessment of a shared referent. Within these contexts, the sharing of images and text is a situated resource for providing co-participants with sufficient knowledge to assess a referent that is not locally accessible. Our data show that these mobile-supported sharing activities occur across a range of sequence types, as when used to invite co-participation and affiliation during third-party complaints, announcements of news, or storytellings. In the examples examined here, these sharing activities are fit to, and occasioned by, the immediate sequential context.

In using the affordances of a mobile phone to provide access to an assessable referent, these sharing activities allow for more direct access to this referent than would otherwise be possible in most everyday discourse environments (cf. Aaltonen et al., 2014). There may be a parsimonious advantage to providing this direct access insofar as showing images or quoting text may be more efficient than simply describing the referent. Though we group together the sharing of images and texts within the analysis under the general practice of sharing activities, we acknowledge that the sharing of these discrete forms of media also offer different forms of epistemic access to recipients. Offering visual access to a shared image entails a layer of interpretation that is of clear interactional consequence to participants (cf. Goodwin, 1996), while the ability to produce reported speech as directly quoted speech has consequences for adding another dimension of epistemic authority and authenticity (e.g., Clift, 2006; Holt, 2000) to mobile-supported tellings. The distinction between sharing images and voicing text is not only a matter of sensory and phenomenological distinctions, but also differences in the manner in which images and texts are shared: when text is being shared, participants in our data generally voiced the text rather than showing or passing the device as they would when sharing in image. However, our analysis shows that the sharing of both text and images overlap in the way that they provide *expanded* epistemic access to an assessable referent that is ultimately used to guide recipients toward alignment and affiliation. In this way, mobile phones transform participants' ability to furnish recipients with the necessary knowledge to jointly engage in actions where assessment is made relevant.

In the data examined here, the sharing of text and images provides for the relevance of an assessment of the shared referent. We show how sharing activities that initiate preferred actions are organized so that the party who initiates the sharing activity produces a first assessment of the shared item, while in sharing activities that initiate dispreferred actions, the first assessment is instead produced by a recipient to the sharing activity. In line with prior research on the organization of first and second position assessments (e.g., Heritage & Raymond, 2005; Raymond & Heritage, 2006; Pomerantz, 1984), sharing activities in which the sharing party produces the first assessment quickly progressed toward alignment and affiliation. In these cases, the sharing activity successfully invited a display of shared stance from the recipient shortly after the activity's initiation. By contrast, in cases where the recipient of the sharing was left to

produce the first assessment of the shared object, both alignment and affiliation were delayed, and the sharing party conducted significant interactional work to move the sharing recipient toward these interactional goals.

If producing a first assessment is more conducive to inviting alignment and shared stance displays, why then does this particular organization of assessment not routinely occur across all contexts in the data? We argue that this has to do with the “risky” (Maynard, 2013) nature of the dispreferred actions facilitated by sharing activities in our data (i.e., complaints), which are formulated with a sensitivity to avoiding potential trouble with reciprocity. Furthermore, while the assessables in the first two excerpts we examine are relatively unproblematic sorts of things to assess (a purchased object, a lightly entertaining story), in the latter two excerpts the assessments are focused on mutually-known third parties, which may add to their delicacy. By withholding a first assessment, yet providing the recipient with sufficient access to produce a first assessment on their own, the sharing parties in Excerpts 3 and 4 thus create an environment that affords joint participation in the complaint while limiting the potential for disaffiliation during an interpersonally sensitive activity. This suggests that mobile-supported sharing activities afford participants with further resources for not only making assessments relevant, but also guiding recipients toward a more jointly aligned stance during the production of complaints and possibly other dispreferred actions.

In sum, our analysis reveals how the often-ubiquitous presence of mobile phones allows for their use as situated resources that facilitate the accomplishment of social action. These devices provide participants with unique interactional affordances relative to other sorts of commonly-carried objects. The everyday use of mobile technology in interaction is still relatively unresearched, and much of what exists has not attended to the use of these technologies alongside the production of social action in face-to-face conversation. The present analysis addresses this area of inquiry by offering insight into the specific ways that mobile phones may be deployed in ordinary conversation toward a range of interactional achievements.

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