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**CHATTING ONLINE:  
COMPARING SPOKEN AND ONLINE WRITTEN INTERACTION  
BETWEEN FRIENDS**

by

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A DOCTORAL THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of

Doctor of Philosophy

at

Loughborough University

February 2014

## Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor Liz Stokoe. I could probably write a few pages on what a brilliant and inspirational supervisor Liz has been, but as she has spent the last three years wading through some of my rather lengthy tomes, I shall spare her that here. I thank Liz for many many things – not least, for setting me off down this path with a potentially-not-at-all-chance comment during my Masters. I thank her for then taking on a student who had never heard of conversation analysis before, and - through always showing faith in me, and enthusiasm for my work – somehow getting me to the point of being able to write this thesis. Most of all I thank her for always pushing me to do better, to work harder, to get it right. I am, without a doubt, a better academic because of her.

Secondly, I offer my thanks to Charles Antaki, who kindly took on my supervision, and also took a crash course in Facebook chat. Charles and I spent many – quite enjoyable (for me, at least!) – hours discussing, debating and even – dare I say it – arguing, the finer points of Facebook chat. Charles’ ability to make me think around my analysis has helped me shape the overall story I tell in this thesis, and it is all the better for it.

This thesis would not exist without the unbelievable generosity of my participants, who gave me a little glimpse of their online worlds. I am also grateful to the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) who funded my PhD research.

I have been extremely lucky at Loughborough to meet some wonderful, inspiring people who have helped me along the way. DARG provided a wonderful learning environment, which helped me to hone my conversation analytic skills. I thank all DARG members for giving such insightful comments on my data, and so valiantly contending with my screen capture transcripts.

I'd also like to thank Freddie Attenborough, Louise Bradley, Jackie Goode, Nicky Clarke, Gareth Wiltshire and Jane Pitcher for always being around for a coffee, a chat and a gossip, as well as offering advice and support. I am also grateful to Clara Iversen for looking after me so well on my first solo international conference.

I have been particularly blessed to meet three women during my PhD, who can only really be described as 'feministic for the girls'. I would like to offer my special thanks to Sarah Lewis, Pauline van Romondt Vis and Emma Richardson for so many things: for being there to talk to, offer advice and listen to presentations; for telling me it's ok to say 'cba' sometimes and not to be so hard on myself; for being my partners in numerous excursions to the vending machine/shop for chocolate emergencies; and for putting our gym experience to good use on the dance floor. Oh, and for teaching me more about cats than I ever need to know. Without them, the last three years would not have been anywhere near as much fun.

To my friends outside of university, you all have my eternal gratitude for letting me whinge and whine about how tough a PhD is, and for so rarely telling me to go and get a real job. For that alone, I love you all! I'd particularly like to thank my 'Nottingham' friends (even those of you who don't live there anymore!) – Matt, Stef, Dave Langley, Drew and John for reminding me that there is a world outside of this weird little PhD bubble.

My special thanks go to Hayley and Dave, for regularly reminding me to take a break, and offering advice and encouragement along the way. I am also grateful to my brother Simon, for exchanging numerous amusing (on his part) e-mails with me during the first year of my PhD, which kept me going when I wasn't always sure *where* I was going. Also, to him and my sister-in-law, Jacqui, for offering me weekends away in the countryside when I needed them. I'd also like to thank Becca, for always being there for a chat, with words of comfort, and good advice. And to Martha, Heather and Emma for providing me with much

needed nights out, and also allowing me to forget about the PhD and just enjoy going to the park with you and your kids.

Finally, this thesis is dedicated to my parents. It is a weird thing to be able to thank, in writing, the people who have remained in the background, but who have been so important in shaping my life. So, to Mum and Dad, despite having written a whole thesis, I find it very hard to express how grateful I am to you for always supporting me and being there if I've needed you. Whenever I've needed a break, you have welcomed me home, taken me out for dinner, and even taken me on holiday! But more importantly - whether through 'boring' trips to museums, the ever-present dictionary at the dinner table, or desperately trying to explain various scientific/technical/engineering concepts to me – you instilled in me a love of knowledge, which I have no doubt has led me to this point in my life, where I not only want to gain new knowledge, but to create it. For all of that, and for so much more – this is for you.

Material based on the research undertaken for this thesis has been published in part as:

Meredith, J., & Potter, J. (2014, in press). Conversation analysis and electronic interactions: Methodological, analytic and technical considerations. In: Lim, H. L & Sudweeks F (eds) *Innovative methods and technologies for electronic discourse analysis* (pp.370-393). Hershey: IGI Global.

Meredith, J., & Stokoe, E. (2014, in press). Repair: Comparing Facebook 'chat' with spoken interaction. To appear in *Discourse and Communication*.

*To Mum and Dad,  
With love and thanks.*

## Abstract

This thesis addresses the question of whether or not online interactional practices are systematically different from interaction in other contexts, particularly spoken interaction. I will establish how the organization of online interaction demonstrates participants' orientations to the technological affordances of the online medium. The dataset for the study comprises one-to-one interaction between friends, conducted using the 'chat' application of the social networking site, Facebook. Chat logs and screen capture data were used to analyze how participants engaged in, and managed, their unfolding interaction. The data were analyzed using conversation analysis (CA). CA was developed originally for the analysis of spoken talk, but in this dissertation it provides an empirical basis for comparing Facebook chat and spoken interaction. The thesis demonstrates how CA can be used for analyzing online interaction.

The first analytic chapter provides an overview of how participants organize the 'generic orders' of interaction. The findings suggest that participants draw on their knowledge of both spoken and written interaction when managing the particular interactional constraints and affordances of Facebook chat. The second analytic chapter focuses on chat openings, comparing them to openings in spoken interaction. The findings reveal some similarities, but also systematic differences which orient to the design of the chat software. The third analytic chapter examines topic management, including topic-initiation, topic change and the management of simultaneous topics. The findings suggest that the CA categorization of topic-initiating turns could potentially be extended by also analyzing action-orientation and also the epistemic stance displayed. The analysis also reveals remarkable similarities between topic change in spoken interaction and in Facebook chat. Finally in this chapter I show how organizational components of spoken interaction, such as adjacency pairs

and tying techniques, are used to manage simultaneous topics. The final analytic chapter focuses on self-repair in Facebook chat. The analysis reveals that self-repairs completed during message construction orient to the same interactional contingencies as self-repairs in spoken interaction. However, the affordances of Facebook chat enable these repairs to be ‘hidden’ from the recipient. Visible repairs tend to be corrections, with the affordances impacting the sequential placement of such repairs. Finally, I show how participants self-repair in response to the actions of their co-participant.

Overall, the findings reveal a number of similarities between the organization of Facebook chat and spoken interaction. The analysis also reveals that participants attend to the technological affordances of Facebook in a variety of ways. Finally, this thesis demonstrates that, while there are differences between the interactional practices of spoken and online written interaction, CA can be used to analyze, and subsequently explain, such differences.



# Table of contents

<b>Acknowledgements .....</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>Abstract.....</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>Table of contents .....</b>	<b>vii</b>
<b>Table of figures.....</b>	<b>xii</b>
<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Chapter 1 : Review of the literature on online communication.....</b>	<b>7</b>
1.0 Introduction.....	7
1.1 A brief history of studies in computer-mediated communication .....	8
1.2 Conversation analysis and online interaction .....	12
1.2.0 Conversation analysis and asynchronous interaction .....	12
1.2.1 Conversation analysis and quasi-synchronous online interaction.....	14
1.2.1.0 Multi-party quasi-synchronous ‘chat’.....	14
1.2.1.1 Online worlds .....	19
1.2.1.2 Multi-party quasi-synchronous interaction - summary.....	21
1.2.2 One-to-one online interaction.....	23
1.3 Screen capture and embodied conduct.....	26
1.4 Summary – what do we know and where are we going?.....	29
<b>Chapter 2 : Methodological and technological considerations .....</b>	<b>31</b>
2.0 Introduction.....	31
2.1 Data collection .....	31
2.1.0 Collecting data from the internet.....	32
2.1.1 Type of data collected .....	34
2.1.2 How Facebook chat works .....	34
2.2 Practicalities of collecting data .....	39
2.3 Participant recruitment.....	40
2.3.0 Ethical considerations.....	41

2.4	Data preparation.....	43
2.4.0	Anonymization .....	43
2.4.1	Transcription .....	44
2.4.2	The ‘Meredith’ transcription system .....	46
2.5	Conversation analysis .....	58
2.5.0	Using CA to analyze non-conversational data.....	60
2.6	Analysis.....	63
2.7	Summary .....	63
<b>Chapter 3 : Orders of interaction on Facebook chat.....</b>		<b>65</b>
3.0	Introduction.....	65
3.1	The turn-taking problem .....	66
3.1.0	Speaker-change recurs, or at least occurs .....	68
3.1.1	Overwhelmingly, one party talks at a time .....	74
3.1.2	Occurrences of more than one speaker at a time are common, but brief .....	76
3.1.3	Transitions (from one turn to a next) with no gap and no overlap are common.....	81
3.1.4	Talk can be continuous or discontinuous .....	86
3.1.5	Turn order is not fixed, but varies .....	89
3.1.6	Turn-allocation techniques are obviously used .....	91
3.1.7	Number of parties can vary .....	93
3.1.8	The turn-taking problem - summary.....	94
3.2	The action-formation problem .....	97
3.2.0	Punctuation, prosody and action-formation.....	99
3.2.1	Embodied conduct, facial expressions and action .....	104
3.2.2	The action-formation problem - summary.....	106
3.3	The sequential organization problem.....	106
3.3.0	Disrupted turn adjacency.....	107
3.3.1	Contiguity.....	109
3.3.2	Sequential organization – summary .....	111

3.4 Discussion .....	112
<b>Chapter 4 : Openings.....</b>	<b>116</b>
4.0 Introduction.....	116
4.1 Opening a conversation.....	117
4.1.0 Openings in landline telephone calls .....	117
4.1.1 Face-to-face openings.....	120
4.1.2 Online openings.....	122
4.2 Opening sequences in Facebook chat .....	124
4.3 The summons-answer sequence in Facebook chat .....	131
4.3.0 Greeting tokens.....	131
4.3.1 Personalized summonses .....	132
4.3.2 Topic-initiation.....	134
4.3.3 Combinations .....	137
4.3.4 Summonses in Facebook chat - summary .....	138
4.4 Answers.....	138
4.4.0 Answering a greeting summons .....	140
4.4.1 Answering a personalized summons .....	141
4.4.2 Answering a topic-initiator summons.....	143
4.4.3 Answering a combined summons.....	144
4.4.4 Answering an implicit action.....	145
4.5 Delay in answering a summons .....	147
4.6 Discussion .....	151
<b>Chapter 5 : Management of topic in Facebook chat.....</b>	<b>154</b>
5.0 Introduction.....	154
5.1 The analysis of topic .....	155
5.2 Topic-initiation in Facebook chat .....	159
5.2.0 Topic-initiation in spoken interaction.....	159
5.2.1 Topic proffers .....	162

5.2.1.0 Epistemics .....	164
5.2.1.1 Epistemics and topic proffers .....	165
5.2.2 Unilateral topic nominations .....	168
5.2.3 Topic solicitation .....	170
5.2.4 Topic-initiation - summary .....	172
5.3 Topic change .....	173
5.3.0 Stepwise topic change .....	173
5.3.1 Disjunctive topic change .....	176
5.3.2 Sequential positioning of topic change .....	179
5.4 Simultaneous topics .....	186
5.5 Discussion .....	195
<b>Chapter 6 : Self-repair and Facebook chat .....</b>	<b>198</b>
6.0 Introduction .....	198
6.1 Self-repair in spoken interaction .....	200
6.2 Repair in online interaction .....	201
6.2.0 Message construction repair .....	202
6.3 Self-repairs during message construction .....	205
6.3.0 Repairs of action-formation .....	205
6.3.1 Repairs of person reference .....	210
6.3.2 Repairs of ‘pronunciation’, ‘intonation’ and stance .....	213
6.3.3 Message construction repair - summary .....	219
6.4 Visible self-initiated self-repair .....	221
6.5 Repair in response to the co-participant’s actions .....	228
6.6 Discussion .....	232
<b>Discussion .....</b>	<b>237</b>
<b>References .....</b>	<b>247</b>
<b>Appendix A: Meredith transcription symbols .....</b>	<b>282</b>
<b>Appendix B: Jefferson transcription symbols .....</b>	<b>283</b>

<b>Appendix C: Participant information sheet .....</b>	<b>284</b>
<b>Appendix D: Participant information sheet - Secondary participants .....</b>	<b>287</b>
<b>Appendix E: Participant instruction sheet - Facebook chat history manager .....</b>	<b>289</b>
<b>Appendix F: Participant instruction sheet - Litecam .....</b>	<b>296</b>
<b>Appendix G: Online consent form.....</b>	<b>303</b>

## Table of figures

Figure 2.1: Facebook chat.....	36
Figure 2.2: Facebook chat list.....	36
Figure 2.3: Chat list availability.....	37
Figure 2.4: Chat window.....	37
Figure 2.5: Conducting multiple chats.....	38
Figure 2.6: Screenshot of Extract 2.1.....	47
Figure 2.7: Screenshot of Extract 2.2, Line 1 .....	49
Figure 2.8: Screenshot of Extract 2.2, Line 3 .....	49
Figure 2.9: Screenshot of Extract 2.2, Line 4 .....	50
Figure 2.10: Screenshot of Extract 2.3, Line 2 .....	51
Figure 2.11: Screenshot of Extract 2.3, Line 2 .....	51
Figure 2.12: Screenshot of Extract 2.3, Line 2 .....	52
Figure 2.13: Screenshot of Extract 2.3, Line 7 .....	52
Figure 2.14: Screenshot of Extract 2.3, Line 7 and 8 .....	53
Figure 2.15: Screenshot of Extract 2.3, Line 7 and 8 .....	54
Figure 2.16: Screenshot of Extract 2.3, Line 9 and 10 .....	54
Figure 2.17: Screenshot of Extract 2.4, Line 2 .....	55
Figure 2.18: Screenshot of Extract 2.4, Line 7 .....	56
Figure 2.19: Screenshot of Extract 2.4, Lines 8 and 9.....	57
Figure 3.1: Conducting multiple chats.....	94
Figure 4.1: Facebook chat list.....	125
Figure 4.2: Facebook chat summons .....	126

## Introduction

The aim of this thesis is to examine the interactional practices of online interaction. There is huge interest, both in academia and in public contexts, in the role of the internet in society. A range of questions and concerns have been raised about the impact of the internet, such as whether it is leading to more social isolation; whether it is changing our brain chemistry, and the role of the internet in political change. The internet is blamed for relationship breakdowns, for bullying and abuse and for leading us to become more abusive and aggressive towards one another. There is arguably a pervasive sense that the internet is in some way detrimental to social life. These questions and issues, amongst others, have been studied across a range of academic disciplines, including criminology, politics, computer science, sociology, and psychology. There is, therefore, an ever-increasing academic literature on the role and impact of the internet on every facet of society.

Equally, there is a concern that the internet is impacting the way we communicate with one another. For example, Turkle (2011) has suggested recently that online interaction is “something that is less than conversation” (p.231). Similarly, in a UK parliamentary debate about children and social networking sites, it was argued that we adapt our talk “to the context and, indeed, the person with whom we are conversing” and that “none of these skills are required when chatting on a social networking site” (S. Greenfield, 2009, c.1285). Thus, the argument made in the media and in academia is that face-to-face interaction is “better” than online interaction, which is deemed “superficial” (Turkle, 2011, p.298). Turkle puts forward claims, such as “we don’t ask the open-ended ‘how are you?’”. She asserts that, instead, we “ask the more limited ‘where are you? and ‘what’s up?’” (p.19). However, these claims are based on anecdotes, rather than any empirical comparison between spoken and online interaction. Similarly, no empirical evidence is put forward to support the implicit

assumption that face-to-face interaction is “better” than online interaction. Thus, the aim of this thesis is to examine online interaction in order to explore whether some of these claims about the way the internet is changing our communicative practices, are actually supported by evidence.

My research uses data from one-to-one online chats between friends, conducted using Facebook chat. The data comprises transcripts of the chats, and also screen capture videos, where participants recorded their screens while they were conducting their chats. Through collecting data in this way, I have access to how participants experience and manage their interaction. Throughout this thesis, I will compare one-to-one online interaction with previous findings from spoken interaction. However, where relevant, I will also make comparisons with findings from other written interaction.

In order to analyze online interactional practices, I used conversation analysis (CA) (Sacks, 1992). CA has, since the 1960s, established a strong empirical body of work which has explicated the organizational practices of spoken interaction. CA bases its findings on data from *actual* conversations, such as recordings of telephone calls or videos of family mealtimes, rather than experiments or interviews. In a similar way, my data consists of *actual* online ‘chats’. Thus, the CA literature can be, and is, used throughout this thesis to compare directly spoken and online interaction.

There has been previous CA work on online interaction, often focused on anonymous, multi-party interaction. This work has identified a number of differences in turn-taking, sequence organization and maintaining cohesion in spoken and online interaction. My research departs from previous studies, as the data are one-to-one instant messaging chats between friends, on which there has been less research. I have further developed the research on online interaction by collecting, and analyzing, screen capture data, which has rarely been used before. I explore whether the instant messaging software impacts the interaction,



through examining the empirical evidence, and establish whether participants themselves display the relevance of technological affordances in their interaction. I will suggest that instead of seeing spoken and online interaction as wildly different, we should see them as forms of speech-exchange systems (Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974) that are different, but related.

The structure of the thesis is as follows. Chapter 1 will provide a review of existing literature which uses CA, and related methods, to analyze online interaction. In this chapter I discuss studies where the focus has been multi-party interaction, often between anonymous individuals. Where there has been research on one-to-one interaction, the analysis has been based, for the most part, on chat transcripts only, rather than screen capture videos. However, I discuss how screen capture has been used in semi-experimental CA studies. This chapter will show how my research builds upon these research findings, but also how the type of data I have collected will allow me to further explore participants' lived experiences of online interaction.

Chapter 2 will offer a more detailed description of the methodological and technological considerations of the thesis. I explain how participants were recruited, how ethical issues were managed, and how data were collected. I also describe specific details of the technical features of Facebook chat. As there is no agreed method for transcribing online interaction, I developed a transcription system specifically for the screen capture data. In this chapter, I provide a detailed and systematic explanation of the transcription system used throughout the thesis. Finally, I explore in more detail the possible challenges and objections to using CA - a method originally developed for, and using, spoken interaction - for analyzing online written interaction.

Chapter 3 is the first analytic chapter. This chapter will lay the groundwork for the rest of the thesis, by describing some of the 'generic orders' of interaction in Facebook chat,

specifically turn-taking, action-formation and sequence organization. The purpose of this chapter is fourfold. Firstly, I examine the basic interactional practices of Facebook chat, with the aim of providing an overview of the organization of the interaction. Secondly, I show that, and how, CA can be used for analyzing online written interaction. Thirdly, I illustrate how participants' practices demonstrate the relevance of the affordances of the chat system. Finally, I compare the findings from Facebook chat to other interactional practices and explore the differences and similarities.

Chapter 4 focuses on how users start Facebook chats and I explore how these opening sequences differ from those in spoken, and other, interactional contexts. Telephone call openings have been studied in detail in CA; however, there is little CA research on face-to-face openings in a non-institutional context. Therefore, I use the literature on openings from telephone calls as the basis for comparison between Facebook chat and spoken openings. I focus predominantly on the summons-answer sequence, which is the first sequence of the interaction and investigate how this sequence displays the relevance of the technological affordances.

Chapter 5 focuses on the management of conversational 'topic' in Facebook chat. In this chapter, I am not concerned specifically with 'what' participants are chatting about. Rather, I examine how participants manage topical talk, such as how they initiate a new topic or how they change topic. Such practices have rarely, if ever, been studied in an online context from a CA perspective. The aim of this chapter is, therefore, to explore how topic is managed in Facebook chat and how this compares to spoken interaction. I focus on three aspects of topic management: topic-initiation, topic change and simultaneous topics. With regards to topic-initiation, I build upon the findings of Chapter 4, and discuss the placement and design of topic-initiating turns. I then go on to examine the sequential position of topic change in online chat, and compare this to examples from spoken interaction. Finally, I

investigate the management of simultaneous topics within a single thread of conversation. Through investigating examples of this phenomenon, I show how participants make use of ‘tying techniques’ and paired actions, in order to maintain coherence in interaction; that is, techniques which display remarkable similarities to spoken interaction.

Chapter 6 focuses on repair in online interaction. The notion that users can spend many minutes editing messages before they are sent is central to the argument that the internet is changing how we interact with one another (Turkle, 2011). So, the aim of this chapter is to explore empirically if, and how, this occurs. Using the screen capture data, I examine how, and in what ways, users repair their messages prior to sending. I also examine repairs which occur in the chat itself, and compare their sequential placement to those in spoken interaction. Finally, I discuss repairs - both during message construction and following message sending - which are responsive to the actions of the other party. I will compare how repair in online chat compares to repair and correction in spoken interaction.

In the final chapter, I summarize the findings from previous chapters and address the questions raised about the extent to which the internet is changing our communicative practices. Finally, I discuss some of the limitations of the study, as well as possibilities for future research.

Throughout this thesis, I will show, firstly, that CA can be used to great effect in understanding and analyzing online interaction. Secondly, I will argue against making presumptions about the ways in which the internet is changing our interactions with one another. Instead, I will demonstrate empirically that online interactional practices show a number of similarities with spoken interaction. Where there are differences, I will suggest that these demonstrate how participants design their interactions to suit the interactional context, in precisely the same way as they might in a doctor’s surgery, a court room, a lecture and so on. This thesis will, therefore, show how participants must maintain mutual

understanding and intelligibility online, as they would in any interactional context, and have a variety of ways of doing so.

## **Chapter 1:**

### **Review of the literature on online communication**

#### **1.0 Introduction**

In this chapter I will situate my research in the context of other studies of online communication, and examine what is, and is not, already known about online interaction. I will discuss how this thesis builds upon previous research but is also distinct from it. There is, of course, a much broader context into which this thesis can be placed. There is a substantial body of literature which delves into the societal, technological, psychological, medical and political consequences and implications of the internet in our everyday lives. As my dissertation focuses just on the impact of the internet on communicative practices, I will only review the literature on online communication. However, it is important to be aware that this is part of a much wider academic interest in the role of the internet in society.

Studies which have used conversation analysis (CA), the method employed in this thesis, to analyze online interaction will comprise the bulk of this literature review. However, I will also provide an overview of research which focuses more generally on the discourse and language of the internet, and show how this research laid the groundwork for later studies of online interaction. This is not to imply that studies which take a more linguistic approach are purely historical; rather, it is to show how research which analyzes online interaction grew out of a concern that linguistic studies were often missing, or ignoring, the interactional nature of the internet. So, in Section 1.1, I will briefly review the history of studies of language and the internet. I will discuss the various trajectories of this field of study, and show how interactional research attempted to address some of the perceived limitations of more linguistic studies. In Section 1.2, I will examine CA studies of internet interaction and show that they tend to be based on multi-party interaction between unacquainted and

anonymous individuals. I will discuss the potential difficulties of comparing online multi-party interaction with previous findings from spoken interaction. The few studies which have been conducted on one-to-one interaction between acquainted parties will be described in Section 1.2.2. This research is often based on chat logs, and I will show how collecting screen capture data may help to further the analysis of online interaction. In Section 1.3, I will discuss previous research which has collected screen capture data, and show how this data tends to come from semi-experimental settings. I will discuss how collecting naturally-occurring data can enable analysis of more ‘social’ chats. Throughout this chapter, I will explain how this thesis builds upon the findings of the research discussed.

### **1.1 A brief history of studies in computer-mediated communication**

In this section, I will provide an overview of the trajectory of studies of computer-mediated communication (CMC). The earliest studies of internet communication focused on discovering whether online language was more like spoken or written discourse, or whether it was a new type of language entirely. For example, Ferrara, Brunner and Whitemore (1991) argued that online, written discourse comprised a new register of language, distinct from both spoken and written language (see also Baron, 1998). Crystal (2001) focused on the rise of what he called “Netspeak”, which was described as “a type of language displaying features that are unique to the Internet” (p.18). Crystal argued that “Netspeak” is more like writing, stating that “the actual amount that Netspeak has in common with speech is very limited” (p.41). This assertion is disputed by others who have suggested that electronic language has “strong oral qualities” (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006, p.255; see also Markman, 2009; McDaniel, Olson, & Magee, 1996). One of the criticisms of such linguistic research on internet language is that it tends to be based on “small or even anecdotal samples” (Androutsopoulos, 2006, p.420). In other words, the research is not based on empirical evidence, but rather on

presumptions or assumptions of what might happen online. As will be described below, researchers have attempted to rectify such methodological problems; however, it does suggest that much of what we know from early studies of CMC is not based on large-scale empirical evidence.

Researchers who conducted these early studies on CMC treated internet language as a homogenous entity, and quite distinct from any other form of language (Androutsopoulos, 2006). However, it was soon acknowledged that different technological features impacted upon the language used in a variety of ways (Crystal, 2001; Herring, 2002, 2004b). Researchers began to classify internet language according to its features, such as synchronicity, granularity, number of participants and so on (Herring, 2007). Differing ways also emerged of analyzing the impact of technology on language. Some, such as Crystal (2001), evoked a technological determinist approach; that is, they implied that the technology imposes “itself on the passive human user” (Hutchby, 2001b, p.453), directly determining the linguistic style. The other approach, exemplified by Herring’s (2004a) computer-mediated discourse analysis, considered a number of different technological, social and contextual factors which shape computer-mediated discourse and interaction (Androutsopoulos, 2006). These factors interact to produce linguistic diversity on the internet; in other words, scholars who took this approach argued that it is not simply the technology which produces certain linguistic features, but rather there are a variety of social factors at play.

A number of studies have explored social factors which may impact online language. For example, there has been interest in how social identity, such as gender, impacts the language used (e.g., Herring, 1992; Herring & Martinson, 2004; Herring & Paolillo, 2006; Postmes & Spears, 2002). The findings of these studies suggested there were “systematic differences in the participation patterns and discourse styles of males and females” (Panyametheekul & Herring, 2003, p.6). Yet such studies can be critiqued from the same

position as studies of gender, and other identity categories, in spoken interaction; that is, that they treat the identity category as a “fixed ‘trait’ or property that resides in individuals” (Stokoe & Smithson, 2001, p.218). A different approach is to examine sociological categories as they are constructed by the individuals themselves (e.g., Hester & Eglin, 1997; Schegloff, 2006b; Stokoe, 2012); this approach has also been applied to online discourse (e.g., Androutsopoulos, 2006; Rellstab, 2007; Stokoe, 2011a). Rellstab (2007) investigated how participants ‘do’ gender in quasi-synchronous, multi-party ‘Internet Relay Chat’, and looked at the use of nicknames as well as activities which may be associated (or bound to) particular genders. Nicknames have also been examined in terms of how they play a role in finding chat partners (ten Have, 2000). This research suggested that nicknames not only guide the selection of chat partners, but may also provide information about the topic to be discussed in the chat room. Lawson (2008) also studied online membership categories, and found that they were used to maintain the social order of a chat room. Finally, Vallis (2001) examined categories which were specific to chat rooms, such as ‘ops’ and ‘mods’. Vallis identified certain category-bound activities and predicates attached to the categories, which were made relevant in the interaction.

The analysis of identity categories as constructed *in situ* by participants, contrasts with analysis which assumes some difference between a ‘real-life’ and a ‘virtual’ identity (e.g., Bargh, McKenna, & Fitzsimons, 2002; Herring & Martinson, 2004). The latter approach presumes that there is some difference between ‘online’ and ‘offline’ methods for constructing identity (e.g., Danet, 1998; Ellison, Heino, & Gibbs, 2006; Turkle, 1999; Valkenburg, Schouten, & Peter, 2005). However, the argument can also be made that *all* identities are created through discourse, and “‘virtual identity’ is simply a prosaic term for the identity work that *happens* to occur online” (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006, p.245, emphasis in original). In this latter view, all identities - both online and offline - are constructed through



discourse and language and therefore, the same methods can be used for analyzing the construction of identities both in ‘real life’ and online.

One method which has been used to analyze how identities are constructed is discursive psychology (DP). DP treats all language as action, which is designed for a particular recipient (Potter & Hepburn, 2008; Potter & Edwards, 2013), and this applies to both online written language and spoken talk. Studies which analyzed online forums using DP tended to focus on how individuals construct their identities as, say, a vegan (Sneijder & te Molder, 2004, 2005, 2009) or a vegetarian (Wilson, Weatherall & Butler, 2004), or as someone who is authentically suicidal (Horne & Wiggins, 2009), or depressed (Lamerichs & te Molder, 2003). These researchers used the same analytic approach for analyzing online interaction as is used for offline interaction; that is, they treat talk *as* action, as opposed to a window into the mind of people ‘behind the screen’ (cf., Turkle, 1994, 1997, 1999). However, DP research rarely focused on the implications of this discourse being online, although Wilson et al. (2004) do acknowledge that “there are clear differences between Internet-based discussions and face-to-face conversation” (p.579; see also Section 1.2.0 below). On the whole, though, the analysis tended to treat the data *as if* it were talk-in-interaction (e.g., Flinkfeldt, 2011; Guise, Widdicombe, & McKinlay, 2007; Lamerichs & te Molder, 2003), although it has been suggested that more research is needed on the methodological consequences of doing so (Sneijder & te Molder, 2004).

So far, then, I have shown that studies of online communication have gradually moved away from the view that online language is unique. CMC scholars have also moved away from a technologically determinist approach, which presumed some sort of homogeneity of language, and now acknowledge the social factors which might impact people’s use of language. Instead of there being a presumption that the technology definitely impacts the language, research has shifted to empirically examining the extent to which this

is the case. There has also been a methodological shift away from using anecdotal data, to examining online discourse using the same tools and analytic approaches as used for spoken language, as exemplified by studies using DP. Research on online communication has also started to analyze online discourse as designedly interactional, which has resulted in a number of CA studies which examine the interactional orders of online communication.

## **1.2 Conversation analysis and online interaction**

In this section I will discuss a number of studies which describe the interactional practices of participants in online interaction. In Section 1.2.0, I will focus on studies of asynchronous interaction which use CA as their analytic method. In Section 1.2.1, I will discuss research which uses CA to analyze multi-party, quasi-synchronous interaction. I will firstly focus on multi-party chat rooms (Section 1.2.1.0), and secondly, I will review CA research which focuses on online worlds, where users have some sort of virtual body (Section 1.2.1.1). In Section 1.2.2, I will provide an overview of the limited research on one-to-one interaction between friends. The studies reviewed in this section provide a clear foundation on which my research is based.

### ***1.2.0 Conversation analysis and asynchronous interaction***

Some of the earliest CA work on asynchronous interaction focused on newsgroups and examined how they were made to seem ‘conversation-like’ (D. Reed, 2001). Reed suggested that the use of features such as ‘quoting’ allowed users to maintain the sequential integrity of the thread and thus the turn-taking system. Some researchers use CA to study asynchronous interaction, but occasionally this work seems to simplify the constraints of online interaction, suggesting that features of spoken talk such as pauses, turn-taking and self-repair are simply not present in online interaction (Guise et al., 2007). However, for the most part, research has

examined how technological and interactional features are oriented to by participants.

For example, Stommel and Koole (2010) took a case-study approach to analyzing interaction with a new member of a forum. They noted how an opening post may include a number of actions that seem like first pair parts (FPPs) of an adjacency pair. However, these FPPs are not positioned at a turn boundary, such as at the end of a post, so the requirement to respond is relaxed. Stommel and Koole (2010) also found some misalignment between the actions of the original poster and the responses. While the original post requested ‘permission’ to post in the forum, the responses treated it as requesting advice. This type of sequential misalignment is also found by Vayreda and Antaki (2009) in their work on a bipolar disorder forum. They found that “forum responses privileged advice, even though the user wanted (or claimed to want) something much less directive” (Vayreda & Antaki, 2009, p.940). However, they also found that this mismatch was not problematic for participants. Antaki, Ardévol, Núñez, and Vayreda (2005) also examined opening posts, and show that an opening post can be clearly designed for a single recipient in a public multi-party forum. Other work on turn-taking in online forums has similarly suggested there is a ‘constitutive ordering’ of discourse within a post, which can impact upon the types of response (Gibson, 2009). Gibson also found that while contributions were often non-chronological, there were still ways of maintaining sequential order, such as designing posts for a particular recipient in the thread.

The findings of both CA and DP work on online forums and newsgroups suggest that, firstly, users are capable of managing the potential interactional constraints of asynchronous interaction. Secondly, and importantly for this thesis, the researchers draw upon CA notions of sequence organization, turn-taking, recipient-design and so on. The prior research suggests, then, that it is possible to use CA to analyze online interaction, and that it can provide interesting insights into the interactional order (see also Stommel, 2008; Stommel &

Meijman, 2011). However, CA has not been used as widely as DP to analyze asynchronous interaction, which is perhaps unsurprising considering that DP analyzes sequential issues, but also “extends more readily to studies of written text” (Potter & Edwards, 2013, p.702). In the following section I will discuss CA studies of quasi-synchronous interaction.

### ***1.2.1 Conversation analysis and quasi-synchronous online interaction***

The aim of this section is to provide an overview of what we already know about the interactional practices of quasi-synchronous interaction. By quasi-synchronous, I mean interaction in which the parties have to be online at the same time to participate<sup>1</sup> and that the messages are constructed and transmitted separately, message-by-message. In other words, there is no possibility to monitor a turn-in-progress, nor can there be immediate, synchronous feedback as in spoken interaction (the relevance of these features will be discussed further in Chapter 3). I will explore the strengths and limitations of studies of quasi-synchronous interaction, as well as showing how their findings have impacted upon the trajectory of my research. There are two different types of interaction covered in this section: firstly, I will review research on multi-party chat rooms, and secondly, I will discuss CA research of online worlds, where there is a virtual body available to a user, which allows for some embodied conduct. Where relevant, I will also briefly discuss studies which focus on online synchronous, spoken interaction.

#### ***1.2.1.0 Multi-party quasi-synchronous ‘chat’***

Multi-party quasi-synchronous interaction most often takes place in public chat rooms where the parties are anonymous, often using pseudonyms (Bechar-Israeli, 1995; see also Stommel,

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<sup>1</sup> At the time of data collection, Facebook chat was quasi-synchronous, although this has since changed and Facebook chat can be either quasi-synchronous or asynchronous.

2007). There are also an unlimited number of participants, so there may be hundreds (or even thousands!) of people interacting. Much of the early research on chat rooms tended to focus on how users manage an interaction when there are no physical or contextual cues available. Many authors have described how smilies (or emoticons) can be used to convey the mood or attitude of the speaker (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006; Crystal, 2001; Werry, 1996). Smilies convey “to the hearer how the message should be read”, to avoid “possible offence” (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006, p.263). Oshima and Markman (2007) examined cultural variation in the use of smilies, finding that the Japanese form, Kaomoji, had a much wider range of uses than smilies. Overall, the findings of research on smilies suggested that users have found ways of adapting to the lack of physical and contextual cues. One key finding is that smilies should, as is the case with all aspects of talk, be analyzed in their interactional context, as they have specific meanings depending on their sequential positioning. Other research has investigated in more detail the functions of graphical representations of laughter in online chat (del-Teso-Craviotto, 2006). The use of smilies and typed representations of vocal sounds will be of relevance throughout my thesis, as they do not appear to have been studied in one-to-one interaction between previously acquainted parties. Thus, my thesis will develop the previous findings from multi-party chat, and extend them to one-to-one interaction.

Another trajectory of research on multi-party interaction has focused on sequence organization and maintaining coherence. Researchers have found that chat room interaction can be fast-moving, and slow typists can often be disadvantaged (Reid, 1991). In order to manage the speed of the interaction, participants will “break up” their turns as a “practical measure to provide some text for the recipient to begin reading” (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006, p.265; see also Simpson, 2005). Werry (1996) showed that participants “desire to create a language that is as ‘speech-like’ as possible” (p.48). Conversation analysts have studied practices such as sequence organization and examined if, and how, participants do create a

‘speech-like’ form of interaction. The research has suggested that one way in which it is not ‘speech-like’ is due to non-linear sequentiality and disrupted turn adjacency (A.C. Garcia & Jacobs, 1999). Disrupted turn adjacency results when the two turns of an adjacency pair are not actually adjacent, but rather are interrupted by other threads of conversation. Various strategies are used to maintain coherence, such as addressing the intended conversational partner by name, also known as *addressivity* (P. M. Greenfield, Gross, Subrahmanyam, Suzuki, & Tynes, 2006; Herring, 2001; Schönfeldt & Golato, 2003) and the use of conjunctions or discourse markers to show that one utterance is linked to another (J. Park, 2007). What is particularly interesting is that most of these studies find that users rarely have difficulty in following and tracking multiple conversation threads (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006). In fact, even if there are difficulties in understanding, users have developed ways of dealing with them (O’Neill & Martin, 2003; Schönfeldt & Golato, 2003).

Turn-taking in multi-party chat rooms has also been explored. As message construction and transmission are separate, researchers have noted that turns cannot be monitored for possible completion points (A.C. Garcia & Jacobs, 1999; Markman, 2009). However, other studies identified some similarities in how a next ‘speaker’ is selected. The current turn-taker can nominate the next by, for example, using an address term (Herring, 2001). Writers may also self-nominate (Panyametheekul & Herring, 2003), or as noted above, writers may ‘break up’ their turns and so take a number of turns consecutively. However, unlike in spoken interaction, other participants are not able to see when another party has started constructing a message, and so may also self-nominate, leading to disrupted turn adjacency and potential incoherence. These findings demonstrate a number of similarities between turn-taking in spoken and online interaction. However, while the turn-taking system identified in multi-party chat rooms may be different from spoken interaction, it is not inconsequential to the interaction (A.C. Garcia & Jacobs, 1999; Negretti, 1999). In fact, it has

been argued that the online turn-taking system could simply be understood as a different speech-exchange system (O'Neill & Martin, 2003). Research has, then, started to address how turn-taking and sequences are organized in online interaction. However, it is all focused on multi-party interaction between unacquainted individuals. I will build upon this research by addressing these practices in one-to-one online interaction between acquaintances.

The bulk of the CA work on multi-party online interaction has focused on turn-taking and sequential organizational practices. This is perhaps unsurprising; after all, these practices were some of the first outlined in relation to spoken interaction as well (Sacks et al., 1974; Schegloff & Sacks, 1973). However, other practices which have interested conversation analysts, such as openings (Schegloff, 1968) and repair (Schegloff, Jefferson, & Sacks, 1977) have also been studied in multi-party chat rooms. For example, Rintel and Pittam (1997; see also Rintel, Mulholland, & Pittam, 2001) studied openings in multi-party chat rooms. They found that technological features which were specific to the chat room, such as an automatic notification when someone appears online, impacted the opening sequence of an interaction. I will draw upon this research when investigating openings in Facebook chat (Chapter 4). Researchers have also studied repair in multi-party chat and have found that it is used to deal with trouble which arises from a lack of coherence (O'Neill & Martin, 2003). Others have found certain trouble-sources which are only applicable to online interaction (Markman, 2008; Schönfeldt & Golato, 2003). I will add to, and question, this research on repair in Chapter 6.

The work discussed above focuses on public online interaction, specifically using chat rooms. There is, however, some research on multi-party private interaction, for example, in the workplace. As many workplaces now use instant messaging as a means of communication, this research has an applied focus. Both dyadic (Epperson & Zemel, 2008) and multi-party (Markman, 2009) workplace interaction have been studied. Some researchers

have explored how participants use instant messaging as part of their working habits. For example, studies by Nardi, Whittaker and Bradner (2000) and Woerner, Yates and Orlikowski (2007) noted that workers could multi-task while using instant messaging and this was found to be less distracting than a telephone call. Such research bears similarities to CA research on human-computer interaction (e.g., Frohlich, Drew, & Monk, 1994; Good, 1990; Luff, Gilbert, & Frohlich, 1990). The sub-field of human-computer interaction broadly focuses on how individuals manage the role of technology *as a part of* their everyday, spoken interaction. So, analysts have focused on, for example, how individuals ‘interact’ with a computer screen when conducting work on the computer (Greiffenhagen & Watson, 2009). Others have examined how technology is made relevant in spoken interaction, for example, through responding to summonses (Licoppe, 2010) or using a video game as a resource in interaction (Aarsand & Aronsson, 2009). The trajectory of this research is relevant, and interesting, for examining the role of technology in everyday conversation. However, the focus is not necessarily on the online interaction itself, but rather on how people interact with a technological device, or how it can play a role as an object in spoken interaction. However, there are exceptions; for example, Nardi et al. (2000) examined the lack of greetings in instant messaging chats in the workplace. Similarly, Woerner et al. (2007) and Markman (2008, 2009) examined how individuals create coherence in instant messaging chats, through addressivity and lexical repetition, and use repair to deal with any trouble which arises.

So, the previous research which uses CA to analyze multi-party online interaction suggests that users are managing the same interactional issues as in spoken interaction, and are adapting their practices to suit the constraints of the online medium. In fact, the findings suggest that users of multi-party chat rooms are “incredibly competent at managing the systems” (Negretti, 1999, p.76). The following section will describe work on online worlds, which has built on research on multi-party chat rooms.



### *1.2.1.1 Online worlds*

Online worlds, where users interact via text and chat, as well as having virtual bodies, include ‘massively multiplayer online role-playing games’ (MMORPG), such as World of Warcraft, where players have tasks and quests to complete (Collister, 2008). There are also online ‘worlds’ where the only purpose is to interact with others, such as The Sims Online (Martey & Stromer-Galley, 2007) or Second Life (Pojanapunya & Jaroenkitboworn, 2011). There are a great many studies of online worlds or online games in the broader social sciences, but very few focus just on the communicative aspects (although see Paul, 2010; Pulos, 2013), and even fewer explicitly examine the interaction. However, studies which do focus on the ‘chat’ find that it is very similar to chat room talk. Both have turn-taking systems which show a number of similarities and differences to that of spoken interaction. Likewise, participants in online games do not seem to have difficulties in negotiating the potential constraints of the medium and managing any potential issues with incoherence.

One of the earliest studies of chat in online worlds which used CA was Cherny’s (1999) work on multi-user dimensions (MUDs). MUDs either had ‘chat’ as their primary aim, or they were, in the same way as MMORPGs, task-oriented (Cherny, 1999). The key difference between MUDs and chat rooms was that in MUDs there were objects available that users could orient to. Cherny’s work suggested that there were similar interactional practices in MUDs as in chat rooms. For example, Cherny described the turn-taking system and noted that multi-threading is possible. She identified a number of repair mechanisms available to deal with potential trouble. In addition to these observations, Cherny argued that while interaction ‘in real time’ is the norm, it is not always necessary, and silence is not attributable to the respondent. As a MUD is a very early form of online game, there is no possibility of gaze or gesture playing a role, and therefore users will, as with chat rooms,

direct speech to a particular recipient to establish who they are speaking to. However, participants can make use of objects, which may have commands associated with them, and these “provide information to the occupants of the room when someone interacts with them [the objects]” (Cherny, 1999, p.141).

Cherny’s work has been developed by others who have studied ever-more sophisticated online worlds. Collister (2008, 2011) for example, examined World of Warcraft and analyzed turn-taking and repair. She found differences between chat in online games and spoken interaction, which were partly a result of how the chat system in an online game is designed. Another difference was that chat in a virtual world tended to be more task-based, as the players needed to co-ordinate actions (Nardi & Harris, 2010; Williams & Kirschner, 2012).

Cherny and Collister focused specifically on the ‘chat’ of online games, and did not focus in detail on the embodied conduct. Other studies have focused on how the availability of a virtual body, or avatar, impacted the interaction. For example, a study of closings in Second Life (Pojanapunya & Jaroenkitboworn, 2011), found that users made their avatars ‘walk away’ from an interaction following closing, suggesting that players may rely on face-to-face interactional norms when they have a virtual body (see also Martey & Stromer-Galley, 2007). Brown and Bell (2004) also noted how avatars can be moved to shift gaze and to indicate unavailability. In the world they studied, called ‘There’, the text a player types appears word-by-word in a speech bubble above their head. This means that, unlike some other online worlds, if the avatars are not standing close together the text cannot be read. It is therefore possible to have conversations ‘overheard’ by other participants whose avatars are nearby. It also means that other participants can see long pauses in message construction and can potentially interrupt or overlap with another player’s turn.

More recent studies have focused on synchronous, spoken interaction in online games

(Halloran, 2009). One finding of Halloran's (2009) research is that even when spoken interaction occurs online, there is evidence of trouble in maintaining coherence. Equally, despite having virtual bodies, there are still problems with directing talk to particular players or referring to objects. Such research suggests that some of the difficulties encountered in both synchronous and quasi-synchronous online interaction may be a result of the lack of physical co-presence.

### ***1.2.1.2 Multi-party quasi-synchronous interaction - summary***

The research on chat rooms and online worlds suggests that users have adapted their interactional practices to manage the particular constraints and affordances of these media. The research has also revealed that the separation of turn construction and transmission means that the production of messages cannot be monitored. There has been considerable work on maintaining coherence, particularly in terms of how users manage disrupted turn adjacency. This research has found that the lack of coherence is rarely problematic for participants, and users of chat rooms or online worlds seem to have a variety of methods for dealing with any interactional trouble. We also know that users manage turn-allocation in a similar way to spoken interaction. Finally, we know that users of online worlds have an avatar, or virtual body, which is used by participants to replicate interactional functions which might occur in face-to-face interaction. However, the availability of an avatar does not reduce all of the problems inherent in a lack of physical co-presence.

However, there are some potential limitations in this work. Firstly, there is really no corresponding type of mundane spoken interaction which could be compared directly to multi-party chat rooms, as these involve an unlimited number of participants, who do not know each other offline. There are a limited number of situations which might be comparable in spoken interaction. We could imagine, perhaps, interaction at a large dinner party, but

there the conversation is more likely to split into smaller, more practical, conversational groups, as opposed to potentially the whole dinner party having a group conversation which everyone has access to. There are also large multi-party interactions in more institutional settings, such as classrooms, although institutional talk in general has been found to be organized differently from mundane interaction (Heritage, 2005). While there is research on more mundane multi-party interaction in spoken talk (e.g., Egbert, 1997a, 1997b; Lerner, 1993; Mandelbaum, 1993); it does not focus on groups of more than five or six people. There appears to be, then, little empirical evidence of large-scale, mundane multi-party conversations in spoken interaction (if, indeed, these actually occur). Therefore, comparing multi-party online interaction with spoken interaction is complicated, as there is no directly comparable interactional practice outside of institutional talk. This is not to say that analyzing online forums or multi-party chat rooms using CA is not valid; clearly it is. However, if we want to explore if, and how, the internet has changed our communicative practices, it is best to try to compare data which are fairly similar. One way of finding similar data would be to compare interaction in written chat rooms with that found in spoken chat rooms (e.g., Jenks & Brandt, 2013). Another way is to focus on smaller multi-party online interaction (e.g., Markman, 2009; Nardi et al., 2000). While there has been previous research on such chats, this tends to focus on workplace interaction, so it is often task-based. In other words, it is what would be described in CA as institutional talk (Heritage, 2004, 2005). Comparing task-focused multi-party online chat with spoken 'social' chat may also be complicated. As the bulk of research on CA focuses on one-to-one interaction, particularly over the telephone, then using a similar type of online interaction for comparison would seem logical. My thesis takes this route, and uses a corpus of one-to-one interaction conducted using Facebook chat. I compare my findings from Facebook chat directly with previous findings from spoken interaction. There is a limited amount of CA research which has focused on one-to-one online

interaction, which I will review in the following section.

### ***1.2.2 One-to-one online interaction***

Before discussing one-to-one quasi-synchronous interaction, it is worth noting briefly that one-to-one asynchronous interaction, such as e-mail has also been analyzed using CA.

Duranti (1986) examined the openings of e-mails, and noted that greetings were used in a similar way to spoken interaction. As e-mails were still quite new at the time of his research, he found that users made mistakes, such as typing the message in the subject line, while getting used to the system. Duranti noted that users may “bring in information and expertise from other communicative domains while at the same time learning to exploit the explicit properties of the medium” (p. 65). There has been relatively little CA-based research on private e-mails since Duranti’s, although McWilliams (2001) drew on CA when examining how users used conjunctions to link e-mails. In this sense, she was concerned with how sequences of e-mails were organized. Skovholt and Svennevig (2006) also drew upon CA methods when analyzing the practice of ‘copying’ e-mails in the workplace and more recently, the use of e-mails in counselling sessions has been analyzed using CA (Harris, Danby, Butler & Emmison, 2012). This research further demonstrates the utility of analyzing online interaction using CA, but also shows the need for further investigation of one-to-one interaction.

Research which examines one-to-one quasi-synchronous online interaction can be split into three broad categories. The first category focuses on the relationship between online and offline interaction, and therefore bears more similarities to work on human-computer interaction. For example, Aarsand (2008) examined how a group of students used the instant messaging programme MSN. The students were using MSN, but were in the same computer room and were sometimes switching between using MSN and speaking to one another

offline. Aarsand suggested that the lines between online and offline are sometimes blurred, but that young people are adept at switching between the two forms of interaction. This type of research does examine the actual practices of using instant messaging, but is focused on how that relates to the offline world and to the wider interactional context.

The second type of work on one-to-one online interaction tends to use some CA terminology, such as turn-taking and adjacency pairs, but then applies this to other sociological features. In other words, this research analyzes online interaction, but is interested in how social factors impact upon the interaction. For example, some researchers have examined how gender impacts the number and length of turns taken in instant messaging chats (e.g., Baron, 2004). Similarly, Woerner et al.'s (2007) study of workplace online interaction focused on the topics of instant messaging chats compared to the topics of face-to-face or telephone interaction.

Studies located in these first two categories may look at the actual interaction, but this is not necessarily the main focus of their analysis. In the final category of research, the focus *is* the interaction. In some cases the interaction is analyzed *as if* it were spoken interaction, with no consideration of the online context (e.g., Epperson & Zemel, 2008). In other cases, the aim of the study is to explore the differences between online and offline talk; however, some of these studies do not provide clear examples to support the assertions made (e.g., Neuage, 2004; Pangtay-Chang, 2009). Danby, Butler and Emmison (2009) do discuss the differences between online and offline talk. They analyzed one-to-one interaction in an institutional setting; that is, online counselling. They specifically explore the differences between the opening sequences of online and telephone counselling sessions. They found that due to the quasi-synchronous nature of the interaction, the counsellor was unable to do 'active listening', such as response tokens, while the client was formulating their problems. They argued that "the sequential organization of turn-taking in online counselling has

implications for the types of therapeutic strategies used by counsellors” (p.110).

There are also researchers who use CA to analyze instant messaging chats between friends and take the technological affordances into account. Rawclaw (2008) studied how the closings of instant messaging chats between friends compared with CA’s canonical closing. One type of online closing sequence clearly resembled a spoken closing. However, Rawclaw noted that a difference occurred as a result of the medium; that is, once a person had closed a chat they could either log off or switch their status to ‘away’. Switching status triggered an automated message for the recipient, which informed them of their co-participant’s action. The second type of closing sequence made use of this automated message, in that there was a pre-closing but no terminal exchange. Instead the automated message is triggered, effectively closing the chat. Rawclaw, then, used CA to address a specific issue in instant messaging chats, comparing closings with spoken interaction. He also addressed how the affordances of the medium have been adapted to by participants.

Berglund (2009) also studied instant messaging chats between friends and focused on disrupted turn adjacency. The findings suggested that even though there were only two participants in the interaction, there were still issues with maintaining coherence. However, participants used a variety of different interactional resources, including conjunctions, lexical substitution and lexical repetition to maintain coherence in their chats.

The research discussed in this section has provided us with some knowledge about instant messaging chats, particularly how coherence is maintained and opening and closing sequences are engendered. However, these studies have all been based upon chat logs, which provide information about what is actually happening in the chat. Berglund (2009) notes that a limitation of relying on chat logs is that there is “no way of knowing whether participants do manage to pay attention to information appearing on screen while preparing their own messages, other than by investigating their contributions to the subsequent interaction”

(p.10). Berglund argues that it is not necessary for the analyst to have this information as it “is not available to the other participant in the interaction either” (p.10). However, with most instant messaging programmes it is possible for a user to see when their co-participant is writing a message, and - as will be discussed in later chapters - this impacts the interaction. Equally, other aspects are available for the participant, such as their own message construction, the number of chats they are engaged in, and other programmes open on their computer. These activities may be relevant to the participant when using instant messaging, even if they are not relevant to the co-participant. Therefore, if we wish to more fully understand how individuals use instant messaging, and what they orient to when doing so, then screen capture data can be provide that additional insight. The relatively few studies which use screen capture specifically to examine interactional practices will be discussed in the next section.

### **1.3 Screen capture and embodied conduct**

There has been a slow move in research on online interaction to collect data which examines the on-screen activities of the participant and also the embodied conduct of people using a computer. Researchers who have collected screen capture data have argued that “we need to study these interactions directly, rather than merely studying printouts of the conversations” (A.C. Garcia & Jacobs, 1998, p.301). Garcia and Jacobs (1998, 1999) used video-taped recordings of students’ computers to study turn-taking in multi-party interaction. They found that participants may take on a number of ‘roles’ throughout the chat, such as message constructor, message poster, waiter, reader and worker. In other words, they found that even if a participant was not actively constructing or posting a message, they could still be attending to the interaction. Similarly, as they had access to message construction, they observed that “the posting box and printout, therefore, often do not accurately represent the



actual sequence of turns at talk intended by participants” (A.C. Garcia & Jacobs, 1998, p.303). I will show throughout this thesis how having access to screen capture data can, in fact, help to illuminate the ways in which participants manage online interaction.

Markman (2005, 2008, 2009) collected screen capture data to analyze multi-party virtual meetings. She found that there are often gaps in the interaction, which the screen capture data showed were the result of participants scrolling through the chat to check prior messages (Markman, 2009). In another study, six chat participants had their screens recorded and, as they were all in the same room, a video recording was also made (Markman, 2005). Based on the screen capture data, Markman identified ‘false adjacency pairs’; that is, when a turn looks responsive to its prior, but actually the second pair part was already being constructed when the first was posted (see also A.C. Garcia & Jacobs, 1998, 1999). However, we must be wary of presuming that false adjacency pairs are relevant unless participants orient to them in the chat (Greiffenhagen & Watson, 2005). Markman (2005) also studied repairs during message construction, but only those which were *responsive* to a co-participant’s post (see also A.C. Garcia & Jacobs, 1999). Both Markman and Garcia and Jacobs argued that these types of repair are evidence of conversational monitoring, rather than a repair phenomenon. This assertion will be explored, and questioned, in Chapter 6.

The majority of work which uses screen capture has been on multi-party, rather than one-to-one, online interaction. However, Marcoccia, Atifi and Gauducheau (2008) used both screen capture and video recordings to collect a corpus of one-to-one interactions. The data were, however, semi-experimental as the participants were recruited to take part in an experiment, placed in adjacent rooms and given a number of topics to talk about. From their video recordings Marcoccia et al. suggested that we should not presume that there is an ‘active’ sender and a ‘passive’ recipient. Rather, they noted that users seem to be oriented to the interaction at all times. They also suggested that, based on their screen capture data,

overlaps do occur in instant messaging, potentially contradicting previous findings. However, they acknowledged that the form of overlap in instant messaging is very different from that found in spoken conversation, but can still impact the organization of the interaction.

Beisswenger's<sup>2</sup> (2008) study of one-to-one online interaction was also based on semi-experimental data. He set up a free online counselling session with an 'e-bay expert' and collected both screen capture and video data. While Beisswenger made strong claims about the benefits of conducting multi-modal analysis, the analysis itself is not definitively CA. In fact, he concluded that "turn organization should be regarded as a structuring device specific to *oral* conversation" (p. 16, emphasis in original). In Chapter 3, I will suggest that turn organization *is* important in online interaction, but that it does differ in many ways to the organization of spoken interaction. Beisswenger also suggested that online interaction is, in fact, an individual activity, as participants are making decisions about their contribution without knowing their co-participant's actions. In this thesis I will demonstrate that there are occasional issues mutually co-ordinating actions; however, I will suggest that, based on my data, online interaction is still a collaborative achievement between participants.

The use of screen capture videos is slowly enabling us to learn more about how participants actually manage their online interaction. However, there are a limited number of screen-capture studies, although these do suggest that, once we have screen capture data, there are important consequences for analyzing interactional practices such as turn-taking and sequence organization. However, much of the research which uses screen capture is semi-experimental, meaning that participants are recruited to participate in an experiment, and are asked to chat, sometimes about a specific topic, for a certain amount of time. As others have noted previously (e.g., Potter 2004), by collecting data via an experiment the researcher takes

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<sup>2</sup> Beisswenger has published other work which uses screen capture data for both one-to-one and multi-party chats; however, as it is in German, it has not been possible to cover it in detail here.

the users away from their everyday, lived experiences. Instead data is effectively collected on how an individual interacts online during an experiment. Such data can be useful in some contexts, but as this thesis aims to understand online communicative practices in participants' everyday lives, it was necessary for me to move away from using semi-experimental data. There are studies which are less experimental, although participants do tend to be placed in a particular room for ease of recording (A.C. Garcia & Jacobs, 1998, 1999; Markman, 2008). This thesis, does, though build upon the knowledge gained in those studies.

Previous studies which have used screen capture tended to focus on task-based interaction. In fact, Beisswenger (2008) argued that “a ‘social chat’ scenario seemed to be inadequate for observing chat under experimental conditions” (p.9). However, as both Rawclaw (2008) and Berglund (2009) showed, instant messaging programmes are regularly used for ‘social chat’. Thus, in this thesis, I collect data from a chat system which was used for social conversation.

#### **1.4 Summary – what do we know and where are we going?**

In this chapter, I have briefly discussed the history of studies of CMC. I have shown how it is a broad and varied discipline, which uses approaches from discourse analysis, DP, linguistics, and CA to understand the ways in which the internet is changing our communicative practices. There has been a gradual move towards viewing online language as designedly interactional, and CA studies of online interaction are becoming more common. Research has revealed that there are differences in turn-taking and sequential organizational practices in both asynchronous and quasi-synchronous multi-party interaction. Equally, participants have found ways to compensate for the lack of physical co-presence. When users have a virtual body available, their embodied conduct shows similarities with face-to-face interaction. There has been more limited research on other interactional phenomena, although there have

been studies of repair and openings. However, most of what we know comes from studies of multi-party chat rooms, where the interaction is between unacquainted people. It is also based on an analysis of chat logs, rather than screen capture data.

There are far fewer studies of one-to-one quasi synchronous online interaction. Previous studies have focused on the analysis of chat logs, and have provided some knowledge about interactional practices, such as turn-taking, repair, openings and so on, in one-to-one online interaction. Other studies have shown that there are benefits to using screen capture to analyze online interaction. Therefore, in this thesis I seek to provide a more detailed analysis of online one-to-one social ‘chat’, but also use screen capture data to analyze how participants organize their interaction in real time. My research will add to what is already known about online turn-taking, sequence organization and repair, but I will analyze one-to-one interaction as opposed to multi-party chat. These interactional practices have rarely been studied in one-to-one instant messaging chat, and have, to the best of my knowledge, never been analyzed using naturally-occurring screen capture data.

In the next chapter I will discuss a number of methodological issues in more detail. Firstly, I will outline the technological features of Facebook chat, which is the site of my data collection. I will also discuss the practical and ethical issues relating to data collection. Secondly, I will provide details of the ‘Meredith transcription system’, which I developed specifically for transcribing and presenting the screen capture data. This chapter will also include an overview of CA, particularly focusing on the issues around applying CA - a method developed for, and using, spoken interaction - to online written interaction. Finally, I will discuss the analytic steps taken to analyze the corpus.

## **Chapter 2:**

### **Methodological and technological considerations**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

In this chapter, I will describe the data corpus collected for this thesis, and also the analytic method used to analyze it. In Section 2.1, I will start by explaining the conversation analytic approach to collecting naturally-occurring data, and I will subsequently explain how I collected such data for this dissertation. Following this, I will describe how the chat application on the social networking site, Facebook, functions. Section 2.2 will provide information on the practicalities of collecting data; that is, how the participants collected both chat logs and screen capture data. In Section 2.3, I will provide an overview of participant recruitment and will discuss ethical issues around data collection. In Section 2.4, I will explain how I prepared the data. In particular, I will describe the transcription system I developed for the screen capture data, which is used throughout the thesis. In Section 2.5, I will describe conversation analysis (CA) and will focus particularly on the challenges of applying CA to non-conversational data. In the final section, I will describe the analytic process.

#### **2.1 Data collection**

In this section, I will discuss some of the limitations of the data used in previous studies of online communication and I will argue for collecting naturally-occurring data. I will then describe the methods of data collection employed for this study. Finally, I will illustrate how Facebook chat works.

### ***2.1.0 Collecting data from the internet***

The internet is still relatively new territory for social research. While there are a number of books and articles which address collecting internet data, (e.g., Fielding, Lee, & Blank, 2008; Hine, 2000, 2005; Miller & Slater, 2000) as yet, there are no standardized procedures for doing so (Hewson, 2008). Some researchers use the internet to administer offline methods, such as surveys or focus groups (e.g., Berg, Ross, Weatherburn, & Schmidt, 2013; Grov, Gillespie, Royce, & Lever, 2011; Peel, 2010). However, these researchers are not interested in online behaviour, but rather use the internet as a platform for investigating offline behaviour. Conversely, those who *are* interested in online behaviour often use offline methods, such as interviews, focus groups or surveys, as their method of data collection (e.g., Bowker & Tuffin, 2002; Turkle, 2011). Other studies use a mixture of approaches, including participant observation, interviews, surveys and textual analysis (Hine, 2008), in order to provide, the researchers argue, a more complete account of online activities (e.g., Baym, 1999, 2009; Turkle, 1995).

The use of such methods has been critiqued by discursive psychologists and conversation analysts for being researcher-driven (e.g., Houtkoop-Steenstra, 2000; Potter & Hepburn, 2005; Rapley, 2001). It is the researcher who decides on the questions to be asked, the topics that are important or unimportant, and the overall agenda of the research. So, the research environment is flooded with the researcher's expectations, understandings or beliefs (Potter & Hepburn, 2005). Similarly, participant observation involves researchers writing down *their* view of the relevant actions (Mondada, 2013), meaning that some of the "linguistic and contextual detail that is essential for successful analysis" is lost (Heritage, 1995, p.395). Most importantly, interviews and focus groups provide data that is "reflective, anecdotal, and off-stage, about life in some other place, and what speakers may think about it, at least when asked" (Edwards & Stokoe, 2004, p.503). In other words, studies which use

interviews or focus groups to collect data about internet behaviour, are effectively asking people *retrospectively* to describe their online experiences, rather than collecting the actual, 'real life' behaviour as it occurs.

Thus, to date, 'online' research has often aimed to understand the people 'behind the screen', rather than their online activities. However, if we want to understand how social interaction is organized online, we need to examine "actual details of actual events" (Sacks, 1992, p.26). CA's approach is that data should be *naturally-occurring*. In other words, these data should not be 'got up' by the researcher but rather should be as natural as possible (Potter, 2004). This approach also applies to internet interaction; to analyze what people actually do online, and how they interact, we need access to their real-time unfolding interaction. In Chapter 1 I noted that the majority of previous studies have relied upon chat logs. However, chat logs do not represent the entire interaction as it unfolded for the participants. As Greiffenhagen and Watson (2005) argue "if we want to get at the cultural knowledge in on-going joint action, we need to capture how participants actually assemble that interaction through time" (p.94). What I will show in this thesis is that *screen capture* enables us to record and analyze the production of written text, as it appears - or disappears - from the screen (Laurier, forthcoming). Previous studies which have collected screen capture videos have tended to be semi-experimental, or at least have not collected data from the participant's own computer (e.g., Beisswenger, 2008; Marcoccia et al., 2008). Instead, they have required participants to use a particular computer, often in a certain place, because it had all the relevant software downloaded. I collected naturally-occurring data from one-to-one instant messaging chats between acquaintances. Participants provided chat logs and also downloaded screen capture software on to their own computers, to record their screen whilst they were conducting chats. While I obtained consent from participants (see Section 2.3.0), the data still pass Potter's (1996) "dead social scientist test" (p.135) as the chats would have

occurred whether or not I had been involved. In the following section, I will provide more detail on the type of data collected and will also explain how Facebook chat functions.

### ***2.1.1 Type of data collected***

The data collected for this thesis come from instant messaging chats. There are a variety of different design features of instant messaging programmes; therefore, for the purpose of this dissertation, I focused on a single chat programme. Before starting to collect data, preliminary inquiries were made of students to ascertain which chat programmes were used most frequently. Without fail, Facebook was the most commonly used. Studying Facebook chat makes a contribution to the existing - and ever growing - literature about Facebook. However, my research is only incidentally 'about' Facebook; rather, Facebook chat was chosen because of its dominance, at the time of data collection, as a chat system.

The chats collected are, firstly, dyadic, which contrasts with the bulk of previous research on multi-party chat. Secondly, they are 'social' chats; that is, chats which occur between friends or acquaintances, and are not specifically task-oriented (cf., Stommel & van der Houwen, 2013) or situated in a workplace or other institutional setting (e.g., Danby et al., 2009; Licoppe, 2010, 2012). Thirdly, they are 'quasi-synchronous'; in other words, unlike some other instant messaging programmes (McKinlay, Procter, Masting, Woodburn, & Arnott, 1994), the interlocutors cannot see what their co-participant is writing, or offer simultaneous feedback.

### ***2.1.2 How Facebook chat works***

Facebook users have their own personal profile and they add 'friends' who are able to see and make comments on this profile. One of the key features of Facebook is that users cannot use pseudonyms.



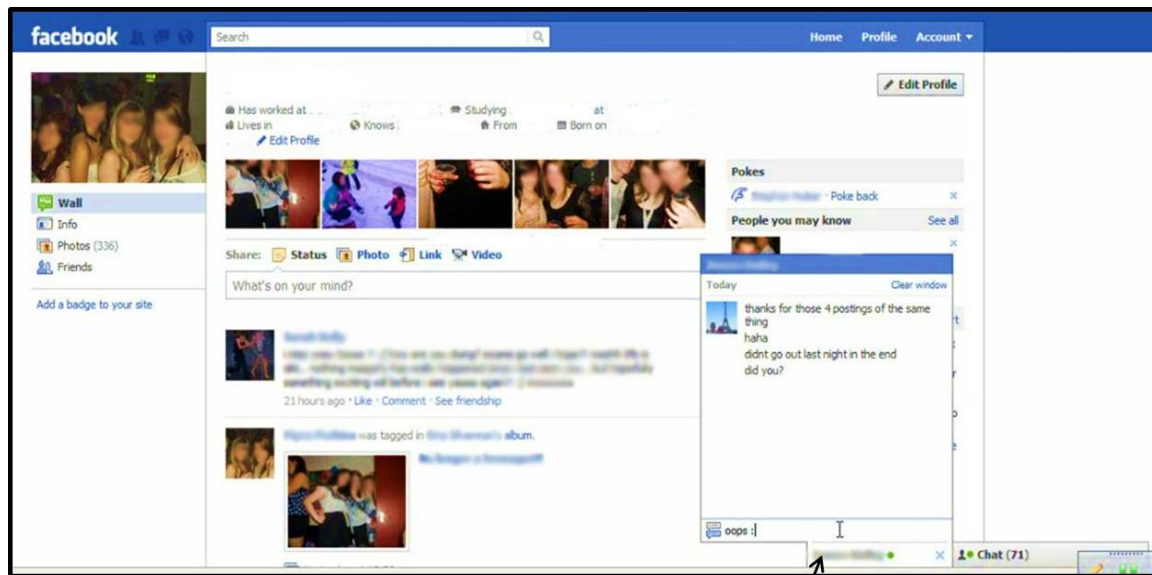
We require everyone to use their *real first and last names* so that you always know who you're connecting with. To keep our community safe and trustworthy, we block the use of certain names when you create an account. This helps prevent people from creating fake or malicious accounts that may hurt your ability to enjoy sharing with your friends (<http://www.facebook.com/help/issues/signup>; emphasis in original).

The use of real names is a key difference between Facebook and chat rooms, in which participants may use pseudonyms. The matter of the precise relationship between users and those listed as friends is, of course, an empirical one. However, as users have to add someone to their 'friend' list to be able to chat, it is likely that they are in some way previously acquainted (Aarsand, 2008). The chat facility on Facebook appears at the bottom of a user's profile, as shown in Figure 2.1 below. This chat programme allows users to talk to their friends 'in real time'<sup>3</sup>. A user can chat only to a friend who is also online and available; a list of potentially available interlocutors is accessible at the right hand corner of the screen (Figure 2.2 below).

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<sup>3</sup> Since data collection, Facebook chat has changed its software, so that the asynchronous private messaging and quasi-synchronous 'chat' have been combined. However, at the time of data collection, Facebook chat could only be used as a quasi-synchronous medium.

Figure 2.1: Facebook chat



Facebook chat

Figure 2.2: Facebook chat list

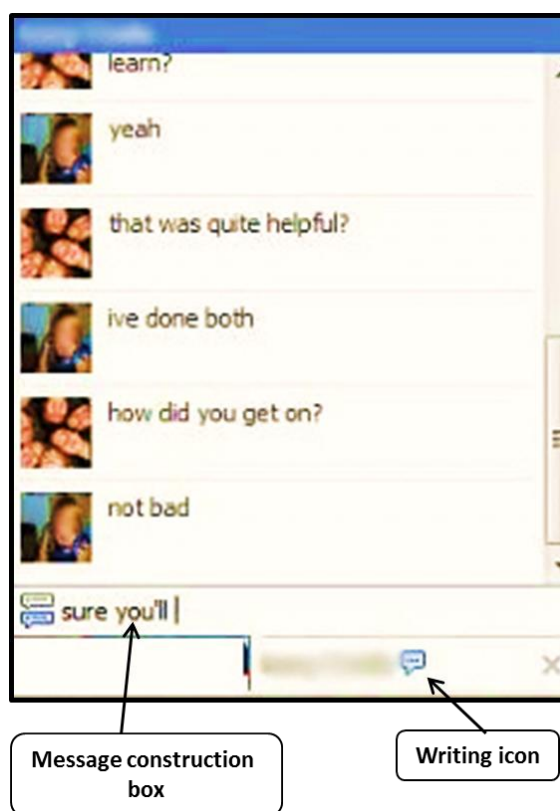


Facebook chat list

Figure 2.3: Chat list availability



Figure 2.4: Chat window



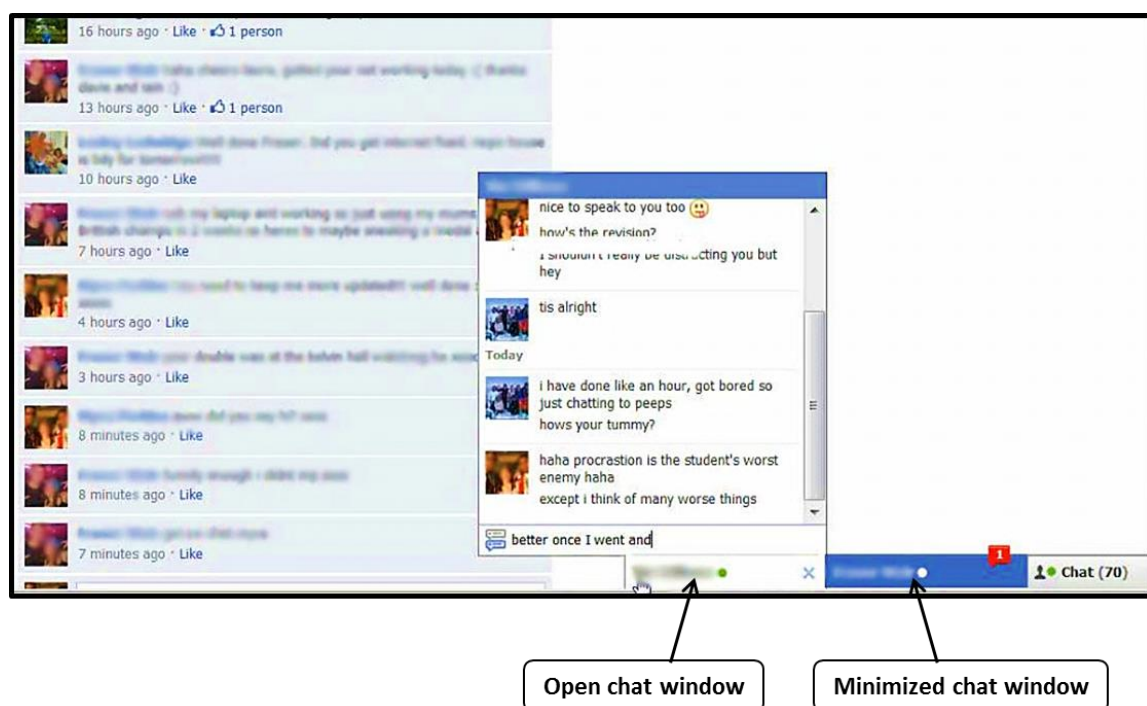
As shown in Figure 2.3 above, potentially available interlocutors are indicated in the chat list by a green dot. If the person is online but has been inactive or ‘away’ for a length of time, a crescent moon is shown beside their name. To chat with someone, the user clicks on the name and the chat window appears next to the chat list (see Figure 2.2).

The chat window is shown in Figure 2.4 above. The user types their message in the ‘message construction’ box. The person to whom they are chatting cannot see what is being written here. In other words, the construction of messages is separate from the transmission or sending of messages. If the other person is writing, a small writing icon will appear next to their name. Once a message is sent it appears in the chat window and is visible to *both* participants. The messages remain in the chat window and users can - if they wish - scroll up through the messages at any time during the interaction.

While each interaction is dyadic, it is possible to conduct more than one chat at once,

as shown in Figure 2.5 below. We can see that two chats are being conducted. The chat window is open for one on-going chat, while the other is minimized. The minimized chat window is highlighted when a new message is sent by the co-participant. There is also a small number above it; this informs the recipient how many messages have been sent since they last opened that window.

*Figure 2.5: Conducting multiple chats*



In this section, I have described how Facebook chat functions. However, as Crystal (2001) notes, it now seems to be a standard convention for studies of online technology to “begin or end by warning their readers that everything they contain is going to be soon out of date” (p. 224). My thesis will not be the exception to that; since the data were collected, there have been changes to the functionality of Facebook chat, including the fact that the asynchronous and quasi-synchronous aspects of Facebook chat have been combined. However, when reading data extracts it is important to remember that for participants Facebook chat functioned as I have described above. In contrast to Crystal, though, I would not necessarily

argue that this means my research is ‘out of date’, any more than the invention of ‘caller ID’ or mobile telephones means that CA research on telephone interaction is ‘out of date’. Rather, the analysis shows how participants organized their online interaction, taking account of specific interactional and technological contingencies, at that point in time.

## **2.2 Practicalities of collecting data**

In this section I will discuss the practical aspects of collecting both chat log files and screen capture data and I will provide details of the programmes used to do this. At the time of data collection, Facebook did not automatically store chat history. Previous studies of instant messaging chats have relied on participants simply copying the text of their chats into a programme like Microsoft Word (e.g., Berglund, 2009). However, in collecting data this way, chat timings were not recorded accurately and sometimes not recorded at all. As I wanted an accurate, timed transcript, participants downloaded a programme called ‘Facebook chat history manager’. The chat history manager worked as an ‘add-on’ in the internet browser Mozilla Firefox, so participants needed to use this browser for the duration of the data collection period. This programme automatically logged the participants’ chats, including the precise timings, to the nearest second, of each message. In order to submit their chats to my empirical database, the participants simply had to copy or export the data, including timings, to a Microsoft Word document.

In addition to providing chat logs, participants were also asked to record their computer screens (‘screen capture’) while conducting their chats. Screen capture software called ‘Litecam’ was used, because it was free and easy to use. Participants downloaded the software on to their own computer or laptop. Having the software on their own computer meant that they could collect the data wherever they would normally use Facebook chat, rather than having to go to a computer lab or use a specific computer (cf., Beisswenger, 2008;

A.C. Garcia & Jacobs, 1998, 1999). Participants simply had to start up Litecam and record their entire screen while they were chatting on Facebook chat. Once the participants had completed data collection, the screen capture files and chat history logs were saved onto DVD. In the next section I will discuss some of the ethical issues raised by this type of data collection.

### **2.3 Participant recruitment**

Participants were initially approached in their university classes and given brief details of the research, as well as my contact details. If they volunteered to participate, they were given participant information (see Appendix C) and instruction sheets (see Appendix E and F). This information included a link to an online consent form and also information about the software they needed to download.

Potential participants were informed that they would be paid twenty-five pounds for participating. There is some concern in the literature that offering payments may “constitute an undue inducement to participate” in the research (Alaszewski, 2006, p.51). However, other researchers suggest that it is unethical *not* to offer payment, as participants are giving up their time to take part in the research (Ryen, 2004). For my study, participants were required to spend time collecting chats, as well as getting consent from their friends, and then collating the chats and storing them on DVDs. Thus, payment was appropriate in recognition of the time required and the potential inconvenience of collecting data.

Despite requesting 50 chats per participant, in practice the number returned was between 15 and 25, which was mostly a result of difficulties in getting consent, as well as technical issues. Some participants only returned the basic transcripts, so there is no corresponding screen capture for those chats. The following table provides a summary of the data collected.

*Table 1: Summary of data corpus*

	<b>Main Participant<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>Number of ‘secondary’ participants<sup>5</sup></b>	<b>Number of chats in total</b>	<b>Number of chats with screen capture</b>	<b>Total hours</b>
	Isla	18	32	31	14 hours, 46 minutes
	Katie	6	16	16	9 hours, 18 minutes
	Beth	7	15	0	5 hours, 30 minutes
	Mary	2	12	0	8 hours, 11 minutes
<b>Totals</b>	4	33	75	47	37 hours, 55 minutes

### **2.3.0 Ethical considerations**

The ethics of online research are much debated within the broader social science literature (e.g., Bassett & O’Riordan, 2002; Eysenbach & Till, 2001; Flicker, Haans, & Harvey, 2004; Frankel & Siang, 1999; Sharf, 1999). The focus is generally on whether the data are public or private and, consequently, whether or not informed consent needs to be obtained (Bassett & O’Riordan, 2002; Eysenbach & Till, 2001). This debate most strongly relates to open forums or chat rooms (Bassett & O’Riordan, 2002; Frankel & Siang, 1999). In my research, though, the data are private since, firstly, the chats come from an individual’s private Facebook page

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<sup>4</sup> For some researchers it would be relevant that all the research participants were female, and thus that the ‘sample’ is not representative. In response, I would argue that, firstly, their interlocutors were often men. Secondly, this is not an experimental piece of research with variables, and nor am I interested in the differences between men and women’s internet use (cf., Herring & Martinson, 2004; Herring & Paolillo, 2006; Panyametheekul & Herring, 2003). Finally, as this is a study grounded in ethnomethodology, the analysis would focus on how membership categories, such as gender, are oriented to and produced on a moment-by-moment basis (Butler, Fitzgerald, & Gardner, 2009; Stokoe, 1998).

<sup>5</sup> The ‘main’ participant is the person who was recruited to collect their chats. A ‘secondary’ participant is someone who the ‘main’ participant was chatting to.

and, secondly, only chat participants have access to the interactions. Therefore, to conform to the British Psychological Society guidelines (2007, 2009), I ensured that informed consent was obtained from all participants, both those collecting data and the people they were interacting with on Facebook chat. Following advice from Loughborough University ethical advisory committee, an online consent form was developed for all participants to complete (see Appendix G).

The information sheet included details about the research project and ethical issues such as confidentiality, anonymity and withdrawal from the study. A key ethical issue in online research is how to obtain informed consent when you do not have face-to-face contact with the participants (Hewson, 2008). In my research, I did not have any direct contact with the friends of my participants. However, the ‘main’ participants were given a simplified participant information sheet (see Appendix D) which they could send to their friends. This ‘secondary participant information sheet’ included details on the study and information on ethical issues such as confidentiality and anonymity. It also made clear that the ‘secondary’ participant could choose not to complete the consent form, and their friend (the ‘main’ participant) would not be informed. Both the ‘secondary participant information sheet’ and the online consent form included my contact details, so participants could contact me if they had any concerns.

Laurier (forthcoming) notes that there may be particular ethical issues around using screen capture, in terms of how researchers manage the possibility of capturing confidential or sensitive information. I made it clear to my participants that they had control of the screen capture software and could turn it off if they did not wish certain information to be recorded. I also assured them that only data from Facebook chat would be analyzed as part of the research.



## **2.4 Data preparation**

In this section I will discuss how the data were prepared for analysis, particularly focusing on anonymization and transcription. I initially cross-checked the returned data against the online consent forms, to ensure that only chats from individuals who had consented remained in the data set. The transcripts and screen capture videos were also checked to ensure that they corresponded. In some cases, due to technical issues, no transcripts were available, so the transcript was produced from the screen capture video. I will discuss the subsequent steps of data preparation - anonymization and transcription - in the following sections.

### **2.4.0 Anonymization**

Anonymizing the transcripts involved removing or obscuring names and other identifying features from the data, to ensure that participants could not be identified (Tilley & Woodthorpe, 2011). I chose to anonymize all names in the transcripts, although I retained the gender, style and length of the names. In the Jefferson (2004) system for transcribing spoken conversation, it is standard practice to choose a pseudonym which has the same number of syllables as the real name. This practice means that transcribing features such as stress on individual syllables is not complicated by having a pseudonym with a different number of syllables to the real name. As I was transcribing writing, it was necessary to choose a pseudonym which had the same number of *letters* as the real name. The reason why I decided to match letters rather than syllables is because participants sometimes deleted letters from names during message construction, and this needed to be transcribed accurately. If a writer were typing a five-letter name and deleted the last three letters, the pseudonym could not be only three letters, as the transcript could not be produced accurately. Therefore, I needed to choose a pseudonym with the same number of letters as the real name. If names could potentially have shortened or informal versions (for example, 'Joanne' can be shortened to

‘Jo’), I tried to find a pseudonym which could also be shortened.

As well as names, other potentially identifying information was anonymized. Participants mentioned names of towns, university courses, athletics events, clubs, bars and so on. It is here that researchers must balance the necessity for anonymity with the necessity to provide enough contextual information (Tilley & Woodthorpe, 2011). Therefore, I made decisions throughout the anonymization process about how to accurately represent participants and the nature of their interaction, whilst preserving anonymity. For example, I have anonymized names of small towns, but larger towns - such as London or Birmingham - have remained unanonymized. I also anonymized the ‘screen capture’ data. For still images (such as the ones produced above) I used Adobe Photoshop to blur names and faces. For the screen capture videos, I used Adobe Flash Professional to anonymize different parts of the screen as necessary.

#### **2.4.1 *Transcription***

In this section I will discuss how data is presented throughout this thesis and how I developed a system for transcribing the screen capture data. There are a number of benefits to transcribing data. As Hepburn and Bolden (2013) comment, a transcript is “compact, transportable and reproducible, and provides for easy random access unlike audio or video records” (p.75). Similarly, for my research, transcribing the data allowed me to work with, and present, the data more easily. However, clearly no system of transcription can ever capture all the details of a recording - whether visual or audio - and should not be seen as an adequate substitute for watching or listening to the recorded data (Hepburn & Bolden, 2013; Heritage & Atkinson, 1984).

In CA, spoken interaction is most often transcribed using the ‘Jefferson system’ (2004, see Appendix B). The use of video data in CA has also led to the development of a

number of systems for transcribing or representing embodied conduct (e.g., Goodwin, 1980, 1986; Heath, Luff, & Svensson, 2007; Heath, Hindmarsh, & Luff, 2010; Heath & Luff, 2013; Hindmarsh, Heath, & Fraser, 2006). There is, though, no standard transcription system for text-based data (Rawclaw, 2008). Researchers who have studied online interaction have developed a variety of transcription systems for presenting data. Some of these systems are based purely on chat logs, but vary in terms of the amount of information provided. Some authors (e.g., Berglund, 2009; Hutchby, 2001a) do not include any timings at all, most likely because they did not have access to these. Other research includes the timings simply as they appear on-screen (Rellstab, 2007), whereas some authors manually insert gaps between turns into the transcript (Rawclaw, 2008). For screen capture data there is even more variety. In some studies, pictures or screenshots are used to demonstrate the activities on-screen (Greiffenhagen & Watson, 2009), whereas in others a specific transcription system is developed for all the available data (e.g., Beisswenger, 2008; Marcoccia et al., 2008). Many of these ‘multi-modal’ transcription systems use a table format, with various different actions split into different columns; that is, typing appears in one column, posted messages in another, and embodied conduct in another (Beisswenger, 2008). I decided not to use columns for different actions in my transcripts, because it breaks up the linearity of the interaction, and it is therefore difficult to accurately indicate phenomena like overlaps. These transcription systems have all proved instructive in the task of developing a system for transcribing the screen capture data. One of the problems with many of these systems is that they can be quite complicated, especially if they include actions such as mouse movements (Laurier, forthcoming). While I do not expect that mine is uncomplicated, I have tried as far as possible to base it on Jefferson’s system. The following section describes the ‘Meredith’ transcription system in more detail.

### 2.4.2 *The 'Meredith' transcription system*

In this section, I will use data extracts, alongside screenshots, to illustrate the main transcription symbols of the 'Meredith' transcription system. Throughout this thesis, two different types of transcript will be used. The first is what I have called a 'basic' transcript. The basic transcript is based on the chat logs exported from the 'Facebook chat history manager'. Basic transcripts include, effectively, what occurs in the actual chat, as well as the gaps between turns. Extract 2.1 below is an example of a basic transcript.

#### Extract 2.1: JM/IS10/B: 3-66

3 Isla: there's a letter for you at the union 😬  
(6.0)

6 Dave: oi oi!  
(2.0)

10 Dave: interesting?  
(6.0)

13 Dave: by the look of it?  
(14.0)

18 Isla: erm blood donation?? >  
(386.0)

64 Dave: arrghh god  
(5.0)

66 Dave: i just want an interesting one!!

This extract only includes the turns which appear in the chat window, as well as the gaps, in seconds, between turns. Following Jefferson's conventions, the time gap is indicated in brackets. We can see from Figure 2.6 (below) how this extract appears on-screen for the participants. There are some differences between the chat as it appears on-screen and in the transcript. In the transcript, users are represented by their names; however, on-screen the users are represented by their profile pictures. When a participant sends more than one turn consecutively, they all appear alongside the picture of the sender. For example, the three

turns sent by Dave in lines 6, 10 and 13 are presented separately in the transcript, but on-screen they are grouped together next to his picture. The layout of turns on-screen means that participants do not necessarily have access to the length of time between turns. In other words, Isla may know broadly when Dave sent each individual turn, but unless she has been attending to notifications as they come in, she will not know exact timings.

Figure 2.6: Screenshot of Extract 2.1



However, I have access to these timings

through the data provided by the 'Facebook chat history manager'. The gaps provided in the basic transcript are less precise than those in a Jefferson transcript, where gaps and pauses are timed to tenths of seconds. However, in Facebook chat, as will be discussed further in Chapter 3, tenths of seconds are less relevant and so gaps are timed only to the nearest second.

The line numbers in Extract 2.1 are not sequential, because the line numbers in a basic transcript correspond to those in the full transcript and, as will be shown below, full transcripts include information about what occurs *between* turns. Ensuring the line numbers correspond makes it easier to compare the details of the two transcripts if necessary. However, throughout this thesis, unless a direct comparison between transcripts is relevant, data extracts will be numbered sequentially, in basic and in full format.

Once I had the basic transcript, I started to develop a transcription system for the screen capture data. The first step was to watch the screen capture videos and transcribe any details which seemed to be of relevance to the participants (Sidnell, 2010). I had to choose

symbols which would best represent the action occurring on-screen. I sometimes relied on the symbols used in the Jefferson system (e.g., square brackets for overlap). However, for phenomena which were internet-specific, I chose symbols which were not used in the Jefferson system, and also, to avoid any confusion, were not used in everyday written language. To explain the transcription notations I will work through a number of examples in detail. Extract 2.2 below shows some of the basic features of a full transcript.

Extract 2.2: JM/IS6/F: 37-41

1	2	3	4	5
1	2.17	0.15	Isla:	wait wait wait
2				(2.0)
3			I*:	☞ i ±    (2.0)    ☞
4	2.23	0.06	Callum:	new

Before examining the transcription symbols, I will firstly explain the layout of the transcript. For the purposes of this example the transcript includes both column and line numbers, for ease of reference. However, full transcripts will not normally include column numbers. Column 1 consists of line numbers. Column 2 is the cumulative time elapsed since the beginning of the chat (2 minutes 17 seconds; 2 minutes 23 seconds). Column 3 is the gap between turns (15 seconds; 6 seconds). The gap between turns should correspond to the gap given in the basic transcript. In some extracts in the thesis, only the gap between turns is given when the cumulative time is not relevant. Column 4 is the name of the participant. When the line refers to a turn which has been sent to the chat, the participants' full names are used. When only an initial with an asterisk is used, as in line 3, the information is taken directly from the screen capture and refers to some action which is occurring on-screen.

Highlighted turns (lines 1 and 4) are those which have been sent to the interaction, and so correspond to those in the basic transcript. Figure 2.7 below shows line 1 in Extract 2.2 where Isla has sent the message “wait wait wait” to the screen. In the transcript, that turn is highlighted in grey in column 5, and Isla’s full name is used in column 4.

In line 2 of Extract 2.2, there is a pause in the interaction, as indicated by the number in brackets. In the full transcript, a gap which appears in column 5 is a period in which *neither* participant is doing anything on-screen, although of course they could still be attending to the chat itself, for example, reading sent messages.

Figure 2.7: Screenshot of Extract 2.2, Line 1



Figure 2.8: Screenshot of Extract 2.2, Line 3



In line 3 of Extract 2.2, Isla starts to construct a new message (shown in Figure 2.8 above), which is not visible to the recipient. In the transcript this is shown by the writing symbol ✍ which appears at the beginning and end of the turn. Isla then deletes the start of her message, which is shown by the strikethrough of the letter “i” in line 3. There is then a 2-second pause in message construction, which is also shown by the number of seconds in brackets. If the

pause is shorter than a second then, in a similar way to micro-pauses in spoken conversation, it is indicated using (.).

During the pause Callum posts his message “new”; this is shown in Figure 2.9.

Here we can see that the message construction box is empty, so the start of Isla’s turn has been deleted. Isla is not typing anything, as indicated by the pause in the transcript.

Callum has, though, just posted a message at the same time as the pause; this is indicated in the transcript by || || . The use of these

symbols, and the comparison with overlap, will be discussed further in the next extract. Extract 2.3 further illustrates some of the transcription symbols already used, as well as demonstrating some of the other most commonly used symbols.

Figure 2.9: Screenshot of Extract 2.2, Line 4



Extract 2.3: JM/IS6/F: 42-55

1			I*:	<i>erm i <del>i</del> m what was i gonna sya</i>
2	2.34	0.11	Isla:	erm what was i gonna sya
3				(2.0)
4			I*:	<i>she said she ran shit?(.)! :-S</i>
5	2.41	0.07	Isla:	she said she ran shit?! :-S
6				(1.0)
7			I*:	<i>and (.)i'm[ meant to be a <del>a</del> watching]</i>
8			C*:	[ <i>writing</i> ]
9	2.49	0.08	Callum:	still a pb 😊
10			I*:	<i>↔    that    too i think</i>
11	2.51	0.02	Isla:	and i'm meant to be watching that too i
12				think



As was also shown in Extract 2.2, when a message is being constructed, and is therefore not visible to the recipient, the ✂ symbol occurs at the beginning of the line (lines 1, 4, 7 and 10 in Extract 2.3 above). What is being written by the participant recording their screen is written in italics (in line 1 for example). During message construction, parts of the turn may be edited or deleted. Deletions are shown by the strikethrough of the letters. For example, in line 1 Isla writes “erm i”, as shown in Figure 2.10. She then deletes the letter “i” as well as the letter “m” of the word “erm” (Figure 2.11). In the transcript this deletion is shown by a strikethrough of the letters “i” and “m”. Neither the construction nor deletion of the messages is available for the recipient.

*Figure 2.10: Screenshot of Extract 2.3, Line 2*



*Figure 2.11: Screenshot of Extract 2.3, Line 2*



Figure 2.12: Screenshot of Extract 2.3, Line 2



Figure 2.13: Screenshot of Extract 2.3, Line 7



When a participant has finished constructing their message, another ✍ symbol is used to denote this in the transcript. So, at the end of line 1 Isla completes her turn, and the writing symbol is used to show that this is the end of her message construction. In the transcripts, I do not tidy up or ‘correct’ any spelling errors or typos. Thus, in Figure 2.12 Isla has typed - and sends - “sya” instead of “say”; this misspelling also appears in the transcript.

Extract 2.3: Lines 7-8 (Reproduced)

7 I\*: ✍ and (.)i'm[ meant to be a ☹ watching] ↔  
 8 C\*: [ ✍ writing ✍ ]

In line 7, Isla starts constructing a message, as is shown in Figure 2.13 above, and is the only party writing. However, once she has written “and i’m”, Callum starts to write a message. On-screen this is indicated by a writing icon appearing next to his name, as shown in Figure 2.14 (below).

Figure 2.14: Screenshot of Extract 2.3, Line 7 and 8



There is a notable difference in the transcript between Callum’s message construction and Isla’s; that is, we can see what Isla is writing because she is recording her screen. However, while it is possible to see *that* Callum is writing, this is only available from the ‘writing’ icon, and we cannot see *what* he is writing. Therefore, in the transcript the fact that Callum is writing is shown at line 8 using the same ✍ symbol as for Isla’s turn construction, but the actual content of his message construction is not available, either

for Isla or the analyst. In the transcript, overlapping writing is indicated by square brackets, as in the Jeffersonian system. It is worth noting that very occasionally square brackets are used in basic transcripts to indicate when turns are sent at exactly the same time; in other words, there is no gap between them.

Extract 2.3: Lines 7-10 (Reproduced)

7		I*:	✍ and (.)i'm[ meant to be a ✍ watching] ↔
8		C*:	[ ✍ writing ✍ ]
9	2.49	0.08	Callum:    still a pb 😊
10		I*:	↔ ✍    that    too i think ✍

Once Callum has finished constructing his turn, the ✍ symbol is used, and the square brackets are closed. We can see from Figure 2.15 (below) that the writing icon is still visible. However, as Isla types the word “that” Callum posts his turn “still a pb” (shown in Figure 2.16 below). In the transcript this appears in lines 9 and 10, with the || || symbols used to

denote that Callum’s entire turn appeared at the same time as Isla wrote the word “that”.

Note that Isla’s message construction does not stop, but rather is just presented over two lines in the transcript. This is indicated by a double-headed arrow (↔) placed at the end of line 7 and at the beginning of line 10 to show latching.

Figure 2.15: Screenshot of Extract 2.3, Line 7 and 8



Figure 2.16: Screenshot of Extract 2.3, Line 9 and 10



Extract 2.3 only shows what occurs in the actual interaction between Callum and Isla.

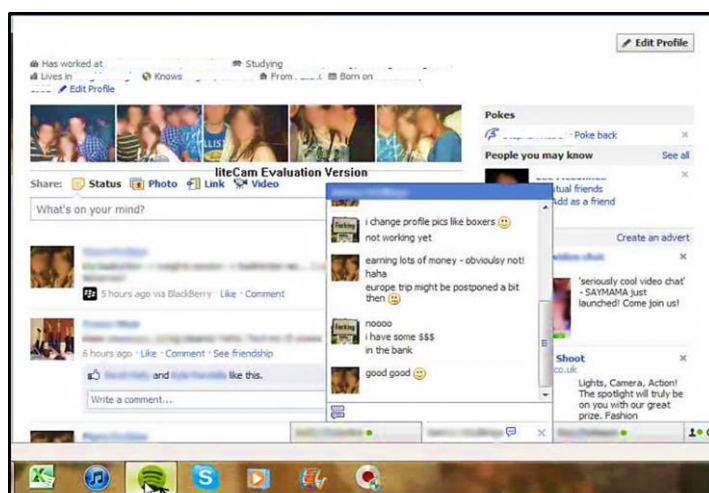
However, other information is provided in the full transcript to show actions which occur outside of a single Facebook chat. The following transcript is from a chat between Isla and Dave and shows Isla’s actions during a gap in that chat.

## Extract 2.4: JM/IS10/F: 35-43

1 I\*: 🗨️6.0 chatting to Gavin 🗨️  
2 ((opens Spotify))  
3 (🖱️ 9.0 Spotify 🖱️)  
4 ((switches back to Facebook))  
5 (7.0)  
6 🗨️19.0 chatting to Gavin 🗨️  
7 ((Opens up chat window with Dave))  
8 ((Opens chat list))  
9 (🖱️ 21.0 searching through chat list🖱️)

The first thing to note is that an initial is used instead of a full name to indicate that these actions are only available to Isla and not to her co-participant. At lines 1 and 6, Isla is chatting to another person, as denoted by the 🗨️🗨️ symbols enclosing the time spent talking to the other person. Note that I have not transcribed precisely what is said in the chat with the other person, only the time spent. Thus, each transcript is a representation of what happens in a single two-party chat, not a representation of the precise details of all on-going chats. Any actions which involve using the internet or other computer programmes, including Facebook, are indicated by the 🖱️ symbol. At the end of her time spent chatting with Gavin, Isla opens up the music programme Spotify. This is shown in Figure 2.17, where it is possible to see Isla's cursor moving towards the Spotify icon.

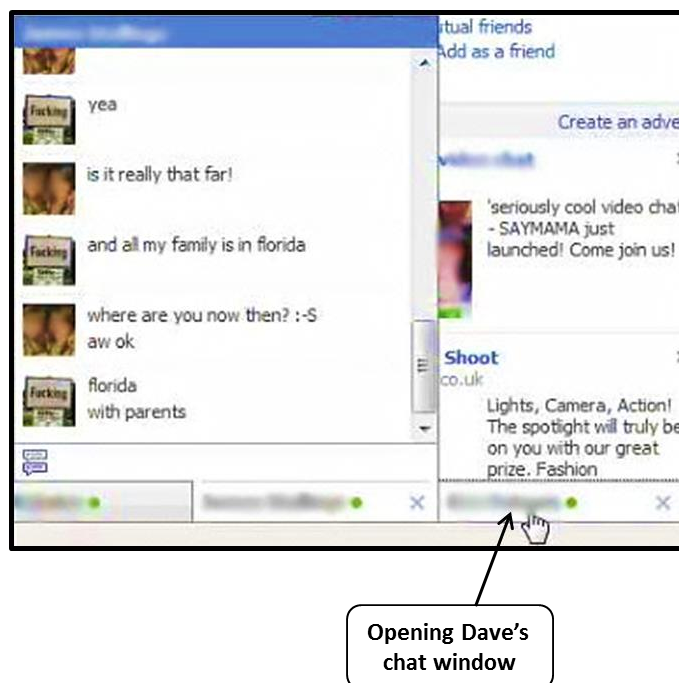
Figure 2.17: Screenshot of Extract 2.4, Line 2



As shown in line 3 of Extract 2.4, she then spends nine seconds using Spotify before, at line 4 switching back to Facebook.

Any details about actions such as opening chat windows, moving between chats or opening other internet pages, are denoted in double brackets. In line 6 of Extract 2.4 Isla returns to her chat with Gavin and spends 19 seconds chatting with him. She then opens Dave’s chat window, despite the fact that he has not sent a new message. This can be seen in Figure 2.18 below, where Isla’s mouse is over Dave’s chat window.

*Figure 2.18: Screenshot of Extract 2.4, Line 7*



However, this screenshot is merely illustrative of Isla’s actions; cursor movements are not indicated on the transcript, unless they occur during message construction.


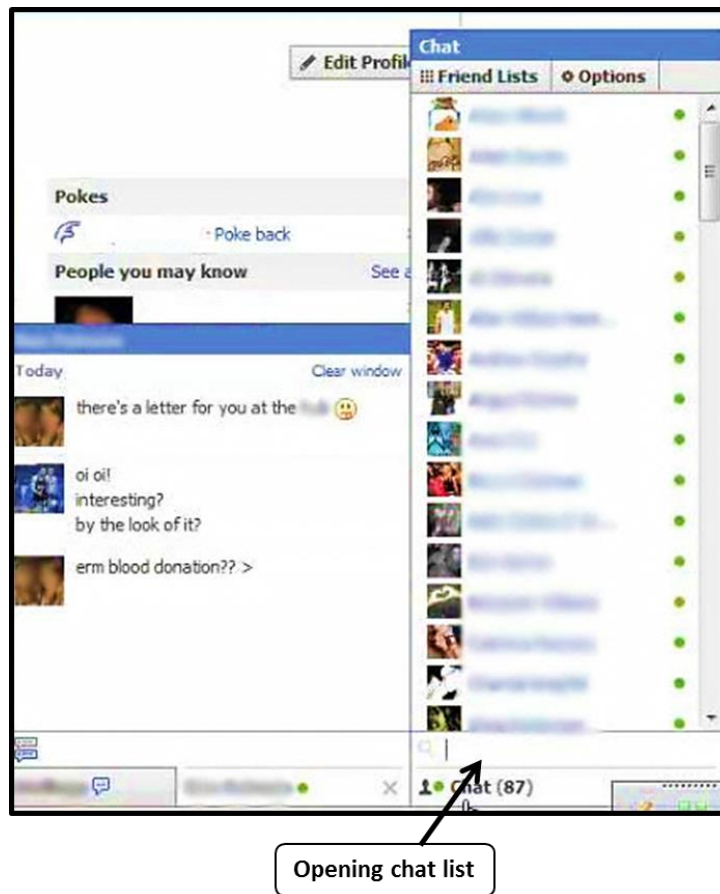
At line 8, as shown in Figure 2.19 below, Isla opens the chat list at the side of her Facebook page. She then spends 21-seconds scrolling through this chat list. Although this action occurs on the Facebook page, the time spent on this action is marked by the  symbol.

Figure 2.19: Screenshot of Extract 2.4, Lines 8 and 9



The transcription symbols shown in this section are the main ones used throughout the thesis. All the transcripts, and any rarer transcription symbols, will be explained as part of the data analysis. However, a full list of transcription symbols is included in Appendix A. Once transcription of some of the data was complete, it was analyzed using CA. The following section will explain the theoretical basis of CA before moving on to discuss the analysis of non-conversational data.

## 2.5 Conversation analysis

Broadly, the central goal of CA is to describe and explicate “the competences that ordinary speakers use and rely on in participating in intelligible, socially organized interaction” (Heritage & Atkinson, 1984, p.1). The main features of CA are that talk is analyzed *as* action and that as analysts we concern ourselves with what participants orient to, rather than what we – as analysts – think might be relevant. It is through examining instances of talk in naturally-occurring interaction that we can start to see how social action is patterned and orderly.

CA is rooted in ethnomethodology (e.g., Garfinkel, 1967), which emerged in the 1960s as the “respecification” of the dominant view of social order (Butler, Fitzgerald and Gardner, 2009, p.2). Ethnomethodologists found that social order is “something that is enacted, revealed, and managed in the minutiae of everyday lives” (Butler et al., 2009, p.2). So, ethnomethodologists were concerned with how we, as social actors, use our common-sense knowledge and practical reasoning, to make sense of the world around us (Goodwin & Heritage, 1990). Harvey Sacks, having worked with Garfinkel, started to see that one way of uncovering members’ methods and practices was to examine their conversation (Cuff, Sharrock, & Francis, 1998). According to Schegloff, (1989), Sacks realised that

the talk itself was the action, and previously unsuspected details were critical resources in what was getting done in and by the talk [...] And it seemed possible to give quite well-defined, quite precise accounts of how what was getting done was getting done – methodical accounts of action (p. 190).

Sacks (1984) argued that “it is possible that detailed study of small phenomena may give an enormous understanding of the way humans do things and the kinds of objects they use to



construct and order their affairs” (p.24). So, by examining conversation, it is possible to understand the “actions and activities through which social life is conducted” (Drew, 2005, p.75). In other words, through examining the norms and practices that occur in everyday interaction, we can begin to see how it is that participants maintain ‘intersubjectivity’, or a shared understanding of the world (Schegloff, 2006a).

CA assumes that social order is not a pre-existing framework but is constructed by social actors (Goodwin & Heritage, 1990). In other words, we can see social order in the ways in which speakers interact with one another and orient to social order, norms and practices. CA assumes that order is *situated, occasioned, repeatable* and *recurrent* (Psathas, 1995). By examining *actual* instances of the interactional organization of social activities, it is possible for analysts to describe how order is constructed through the co-ordinated practices of the participants (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1998; Schegloff, 1989).

A key finding of CA is that talk *is* action; that is, when we talk we are “doing things, such as inviting someone over, asking them to do a favour or a service” (Drew, 2005, p.74). Drew goes on to argue that “these and other such activities are the primary forms of social action, as real, concrete, consequential, and as fundamental as any other form of conduct” (p.74). By examining ordinary talk we can see how members “methodically construct their talk so as to produce a possible instance of an action or activity of some sort, and to provide for the possible occurrence next of various sorts of actions by others” (Schegloff, 1989, p.197). Actions are sequentially implicative; that is, one action will project a particular next (Heritage & Atkinson, 1984; Psathas, 1995). Conversation analysts, therefore, find that talk is *action-oriented* and through analyzing the sequential and orderly nature of talk, analysts are able to investigate the actions of that talk and how they are understood by participants.

CA also assumes that we should ground our analysis in participants’ orientations. Thus, in CA relevant contexts are discovered through analyzing the socially organized

features of talk (Heritage & Atkinson, 1984); rather than using external categorizations of speakers, such as their gender or age, conversation analysts restrict their use of knowledge about the participants to what is “oriented to by the participants themselves, in an through the production of their actions” (Goodwin & Heritage, 1990, p295). CA does not ignore the context of an interaction; rather, every action is “*context shaped* (in that the framework of action from which it emerges provides primary organization for its production and interpretation) and *context renewing* (in that it now helps constitute the frame of relevance that will shape subsequent action)” (Goodwin & Heritage, 1990, p.289, emphasis in original). In other words, speakers design their talk to demonstrate their understanding of the preceding bit of talk (Schegloff, 2007). So, context is important in terms of how participants orient to it, and also in how they display their understanding of the context of the talk so far.

### ***2.5.0 Using CA to analyze non-conversational data***

It may seem that, in its very name, CA focuses solely on ‘conversation’, or talk. Reed and Ashmore (2000) noted that when CA studies of textual interaction were first published, they were criticized - by some - for being an inappropriate type of interaction to study. Questions are still raised about the appropriateness of applying a method of analysis developed for spoken interaction to written interaction (Androutsopoulos & Beisswenger, 2008). Similar arguments have been made about extending CA to visual conduct and visual objects (Greiffenhagen & Watson, 2009), yet from the very outset conversation analysts have been interested, and have analyzed, embodied conduct, such as hand gestures, posture, gaze and so on (e.g., Goodwin, 1980, 1986, 2000; Heath, 1986; Heath & Luff, 2013). The wealth of literature on non-vocal aspects of interaction demonstrates quite clearly that the basic concepts and approach of CA can be utilized fruitfully when analyzing non-speech aspects of interaction. More importantly, the debate about applying CA to online interaction is based on

the fallacy that CA is only about ‘talk’. CA is not, after all, about ‘conversation’ as such, but is rather about how that conversation illuminates actions, events and objects (Pomerantz & Fehr, 1997). So, any suggestion that CA cannot be applied to online written interaction because it is not ‘talk’ is based on a somewhat caricatured understanding of CA.

There are, however, a number of issues to consider when applying CA to online interaction. The main question is how to approach the technologically-mediated nature of these interactions. Hutchby (2001a) suggests the technological features, or ‘affordances’, of a mediated interaction should be taken into account when analyzing the interaction. Hutchby (2003) argues that “humans are forced to find ways of managing their communicational endeavours in the light of those affordances, and this frequently means that changes will be made in the ways interactional conventions operate in conversations” (p.29). Yet, Hutchby does not suggest that any technological feature directly *determines* or *causes* some interactional pattern. Instead, he argues that we should see how participants in an interaction display an orientation to any technological affordance (or constraint).

Hutchby also notes that much of the earliest work on talk-in-interaction was based on *technologically-mediated* talk, conducted over the telephone (e.g., Schegloff, 1968, 1979, 1986). As Schegloff (2002) later reflected,

I found myself studying the telephone – or rather studying interaction in ways that accepted the relevance to the conduct of the interaction of the fact that it was being conducted over the telephone, because participants’ conduct was oriented to this conversation being on the telephone (p.289-290).

Schegloff’s point, which we can also consider when applying CA to internet interaction, is that we should study the interaction for what it is, and should investigate how participants

orient to being on the telephone, or the mobile phone, or online. Schegloff's position is similar to Hutchby's position outlined above, but with a slight difference in emphasis. Schegloff (2002) explicitly argues that "studies of new technology will frequently be pursued not for the technology as itself the interest of the first order, but rather for the technology as a device through which are refracted other phenomena" (p.290). However, Hutchby appears to start from an interest in the impact of technology on interaction. However, like Schegloff, Hutchby argues that we need to examine the interaction to see how participants orient to the technological affordances of its situation. In other words, if we start with the interaction as the object of interest, then we can see how participants' conduct may orient to the particular mediated context in which their interaction takes place. My approach is close to Hutchby's, in that I am interested in how 'the internet' has impacted interactional practices. I do not presume that the affordances of a particular interactional context, in this case Facebook chat, will impact interaction in a certain way, or even that particular affordances might be relevant. So I also start, as Schegloff suggests, with the interaction.

The aim of this thesis is to compare Facebook chat with spoken interaction and to understand if, and how, the affordances of Facebook chat impact the interaction. However, there are also methodological considerations to take into account. Greiffenhagen and Watson (2005) note that research on CMC often starts with findings from spoken interaction, and then attempts to 'fit' online written interaction into a spoken model. In other words, instead of doing as Schegloff suggests and starting with the interaction, researchers start with a *different* interaction entirely and use that as *the* basis for their analysis. Instead, the analysis of online interaction should be grounded in the data itself. However, as the aim is also to understand how participants organize their interaction for the interactional contingencies of Facebook chat, it is necessary to explicate how such practices compare to those found in other contexts. Therefore, *ad hoc* comparisons to other forms of interaction are made

throughout this dissertation, but these are predicated on an analysis of the online interaction in the first instance.

## **2.6 Analysis**

CA is an inductive method, and “rejects the use of investigator-stipulated theoretical and conceptual definitions of research questions” (Pomerantz & Fehr, 1997, p.66). Thus, I did not approach my data with any particular theoretical constructs or research questions in mind. Rather, I followed Sacks’ approach of “unmotivated looking”, that is “we sit down with a piece of data, make a bunch of observations, and see where they will go” (Sacks, 1984, p.27). Once I noticed a possible phenomenon in my data, I made a collection of possible instances. I then analyzed how this action was built by participants, and how it was accomplished in the interaction. Once I had identified certain practices, I examined previous findings from spoken interaction, as well as online and offline written interaction, where relevant, in order to analyze how participants organized their interaction in similar or different ways to other contexts. I also investigated the extent to which participants’ interactional practices showed the relevance of particular affordances of Facebook chat.

## **2.7 Summary**

In this chapter I have detailed the methods used in this thesis. I discussed how I collected naturally-occurring online data, that is, chat logs and screen capture videos, from Facebook chat. I have also provided an overview of how Facebook chat functions. I described the ‘Meredith’ transcription system used throughout this thesis. I have also described CA and considered the issues which might be relevant when applying CA to online interaction. Finally, I have discussed the analytic process of my research.

In the next chapter I will examine the ‘generic orders of organization’ in interaction

(Schegloff, 2007b). Schegloff contends that the ‘generic orders of organization’ are

- (1) The ‘turn-taking’ problem: who should talk next and how should they do so?
- (2) The ‘action-formation’ problem: how are turns recognizable as *doing* certain actions?
- (3) The ‘sequence organizational’ problem: how are successive turns formed to be ‘coherent’?
- (4) The ‘trouble’ problem: how is trouble in interaction dealt with?
- (5) The word-selection problem: how do the components that get selected as the elements of a turn get selected?
- (6) The overall structural organization problem: how does the overall composition of an occasion of interaction get structured? (Schegloff, 2007b, p. xiv).

These generic orders apply to any form of interaction. Thus, we can examine how participants manage these ‘problems’ in online, written interaction. The following chapter will focus specifically on turn-taking, action-formation and sequence organization. I will show how participants’ interactional practices are organized to manage the specific interactional contingencies of Facebook chat.

## **Chapter 3:**

### **Orders of interaction on Facebook chat**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

In this chapter, I will describe and illustrate the basic organizational practices of chat on Facebook. I will compare the findings from Facebook chat with findings from spoken interaction although, where relevant, I will also discuss how the practices identified share features with online and offline written interaction. The aim is not to provide a full account of the organization of interaction on Facebook chat, but rather to describe how the practices are similar to or differ from those found in other interactional contexts. Thus, for those unfamiliar with instant messaging, this chapter will give a broad overview of some of the key differences between this type of online interaction, and spoken interaction.

In Section 3.1, I will discuss the ‘turn-taking problem’, and compare the organization of turn-taking in Facebook chat to spoken interaction. While there have been some previous accounts of turn-taking in one-to-one online interaction (e.g., Beisswenger, 2008; Danby et al., 2009), these accounts have not been based upon naturally-occurring screen capture data. This chapter, therefore, builds upon previous studies, by using both chat logs and screen capture to describe the organization of Facebook chat. I will propose that this preliminary account of the turn-taking system in Facebook chat suggests that instant messaging is a particular ‘speech-exchange system’, with systematic differences between online and spoken interaction. I will also suggest that there may be interactional practices evident in chat which may have developed from other online interaction.

Sections 3.2 and 3.3 examine ‘the action-formation problem’ and the ‘sequential organizational problem’ respectively, which are also relevant throughout the thesis. However,

I include some discussion of them here, for two reasons. Firstly, some features of action-formation and sequence organization are relevant for understanding data extracts throughout the thesis. Secondly, they demonstrate how participants in Facebook chat draw on a variety of resources to manage the contingencies of the interactional context. In Section 3.2, I will consider how participants form actions in Facebook chat when they do not have prosody, vocal and non-vocal cues, nor embodied conduct as available resources for doing so. I will discuss how Facebook chat practices are similar to other online, and offline, written practices. In Section 3.3, I will examine disrupted turn adjacency, which has - as was discussed in Chapter 1 - also been found in previous studies of online interaction (e.g., Berglund, 2009; P.M. Greenfield & Subrahmanyam, 2003; Herring, 1999). I will also discuss how participants maintain contiguity in online interaction when compared with spoken conversation.

Throughout this chapter, I will discuss how the order and organization of Facebook chat is displayed throughout the interaction. By the end, I will have laid the groundwork for later chapters, by providing an account of the basic interactional practices. The analysis will substantiate my argument that conversation analysis (CA) provides an analytic tool, and analytic mentality, for analyzing online written interaction; that is, that “the interactional organization of social activities” (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1998, p.14) can be studied in written interaction. I will also discuss how the interactional organization of Facebook chat derives from its technological affordances.

### **3.1 The turn-taking problem**

This section will offer the first empirical account of turn-taking practices in Facebook chat, adding to our existing knowledge of online turn-taking practices. Turn-taking relates to how speakers manage who talks next, and when they should do so. The organization of turn-taking in mundane talk is both context-free and context-sensitive (Sacks et al., 1974); it can



accommodate a wide range of situations, but is also sensitive to the local interactional context.

Previous studies of online turn-taking practices have mostly focused on multi-party interaction (e.g., Anderson, Beard, & Walther, 2010; A.C. Garcia & Jacobs, 1999; McKinlay et al., 1994), although there have been some studies of one-to-one interaction which have briefly discussed turn-taking, either in institutional or social chat (e.g., Berglund, 2009; Danby et al., 2009). However, previous research has also rarely used screen capture data (although see A.C. Garcia & Jacobs, 1998, 1999), so practices such as overlapping writing and so on, could not be examined. Greiffenhagen and Watson (2005) argued that previous research on online interaction has tended to assume that spoken turn-taking practices are *the* basis for online turn-taking, rather than *a possible* basis. Thus, when the turn-taking model does not fit precisely, it is found to be lacking in some way (Greiffenhagen & Watson, 2005). As Greiffenhagen and Watson note, Sacks et al.'s (1974) findings are specifically based on naturally-occurring 'mundane' conversation, and are not, nor do Sacks et al. claim they are, a model for all turn-taking systems. Rather, they acknowledge other 'speech-exchange systems' exist, such as debates, interviews and so on (Sacks et al., 1974). However, to understand how online interaction differs from other forms of interaction, I compare my findings with Sacks et al.'s turn-taking model and use it to frame and organize my findings, because it is a clear and systematic account of turn-taking in ordinary talk. However, I do not presume this turn-taking model will, or should, provide the basis for online interactional practices. In fact, I will suggest that participants draw on various interactional resources, including those from written interaction, when organizing turn-taking.

The analysis has revealed a number of similar features of both interactional contexts. The turn-taking system systematically provides for variability of turn size (Sacks et al., 1974). Although there is evidence that shorter turns are preferred in online interaction

(Herring, 1999), in my data I found that turn length varied<sup>6</sup> (see also Nilsen & Mäkitalo, 2010). Neither the spoken nor the online turn-taking systems specify the length of the conversation or what is spoken about (in contrast to, say, a debate). So, we can already see that there may be similarities between Facebook chat and spoken interaction. In the following sections I will explore turn-taking practices in Facebook chat, and show how there are systematic differences between these and spoken interaction.

### ***3.1.0 Speaker-change recurs, or at least occurs***

The most basic form of conversational organization is that people take turns to talk (Drew, 2005). The turn-taking system in spoken interaction “provides a systematic basis for speaker-change and its recurrence, while not making them automatic” (Sacks et al., 1974, p.706). It is important to note, briefly, that while Facebook chat interaction is entirely written, participants often refer to ‘speaking’ to one another. Therefore, I will sometimes refer to chat interlocutors as ‘speakers’, unless they are writing a message, at which point ‘writer’ will be used.

In spoken interaction, each turn-at-talk is built from one or more turn constructional units (TCU), which may be words, clauses, sentences or a combination of these (Drew, 2005). Hearers monitor a turn-in-progress for when it might be possibly complete, in terms of grammar, prosody and action, so they can take a turn. In Facebook chat, a user has to construct their entire turn before sending it to the recipient. As with all forms of quasi-synchronous online interaction (e.g., A.C. Garcia & Jacobs, 1999; Markman, 2005), this construction process is ‘hidden’ from the recipient. An important difference between Facebook chat and spoken interaction is, then, that online recipients cannot monitor the

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<sup>6</sup> There are some instant messaging programmes which limit the length of a turn; however, I did not find any evidence of this in Facebook chat.

content of a turn as it progresses. The recipients also cannot provide simultaneous feedback in the form of response tokens or continuers during the turn-in-progress (Danby et al., 2009; A.C. Garcia & Jacobs, 1999). Once a turn is complete, writers send it to recipients by pressing ‘enter’ on their keyboard.

There is some debate about how to define a ‘turn’ in online interaction. Users of quasi-synchronous chat will often seemingly ‘break up’ their turns to provide some text for the recipient to read in the on-going interaction (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006). Some studies of online interaction define a ‘turn’ as the utterances a participant posts before the co-participant takes a turn (Pojanapunya & Jaroenkitboworn, 2011). To illustrate this, consider the following extract from Facebook chat, where Gavin is discussing when he will have enough money to visit Isla.

Extract 3.1: JM/IS13/B: 46-52

1	Gavin:	i have some \$\$\$
2		(2.0)
3	Gavin:	in the bank
4		(3.0)
5	Isla:	good good 😊
6		(1.0)
7	Gavin:	i am just trying to get more

Gavin posts two grammatically and semantically linked messages in lines 1 and 3. According to the definition of ‘turn’ above, lines 1 and 3 are TCUs, which comprise a single turn.

However, Gavin’s turn in line 7 is also linked to the previous messages (“more” refers to “more money”), and so could potentially also be part of the same ‘turn’. However, Isla posts an intervening message in line 5. So if we adopt the definition of ‘turn’ suggested above, line 7 would be analyzed as a new ‘turn’. There are two problems with this analysis. Firstly, even with screen capture data it is difficult to establish that messages are ‘meant’ to be a coherent

turn, or whether they are more akin to increments (Schegloff, 1996), or something analogous with a ‘rush-through’. Secondly, the participants send each message separately rather than as a single turn. If they are analyzed as a single, coherent turn, we - as analysts - orient to a practice which is not evident in the interaction. Therefore, throughout this thesis, I describe a ‘turn’ as a single sent message; in other words, lines 1, 3 and 7 above are treated as three separate turns.

Facebook chats, therefore, consist of turns, which are constructed and sent as potentially complete. As turns-in-progress cannot be monitored for possible completion, nor can misprojections of completion points occur, then it can be argued that TCUs are not relevant in online interaction (Schönfeldt & Golato, 2003). In Sacks et al.’s (1977) work on turn-taking, the relevance of TCUs, which were stoppable, included transition places and could be expanded or contracted, was based on empirical data; that is, recordings of naturally-occurring spoken interaction. In the same vein, we can look at examples of turn-taking in Facebook chat, to examine whether TCUs – or structures resembling TCUs – are relevant. In the following extract, from a chat closing, Isla is checking whether Callum has completed the online consent form to participate in this research.

### Extract 3.2: JM/IS4/B: 276-287

1 Isla: you fill out that consent form?  
2 (32.0)  
3 Callum: nah lol il do it next time we speak, if i  
4 can be arsed 😊 byeee xxxxx  
5 (32.0)  
6 Isla: you’re a lazy bugger you know that?!!  
7 (7.0)  
8 Isla: remind me to send you the link again then  
9 (2.0)  
10 Isla: night  
11 (5.0)

12 Isla: 😊 xxxxxx

In lines 3-4 Callum posts a single turn, but across the course of her next four turns, Isla shows that she has understood a number of different actions in this turn. Firstly, Isla's assessment ("you're a lazy bugger you know that?!") is responsive to Callum's "if i can be arsed". Secondly, her turn at line 8 responds to Callum's "il do it next time we speak". Thirdly, line 10 is a second-pair-part (SPP) of a closing sequence, occasioned by Callum's "byeee". Finally, Isla's turn at line 12 reciprocates Callum's kisses. Isla does not respond to all of the potential actions in the turn (for example, she does not explicitly respond to "nah" or "lol"), but she does orient to separate actions. In other words, Isla is orienting to Callum's turn as a series of different actions, which can be responded to separately. Schegloff (2007) notes that there are a variety of organizational resources for constructing TCUs, including grammar, intonation and, critically, action. I will discuss 'intonation' in Section 3.2, but here it is important to note that the separate parts of Callum's turn all package a particular action. Most importantly, we can see that Isla also treats these different actions of the turn as *relevant* building blocks of that turn. Therefore, while it is clearly a contentious issue, I would argue that we can see something like a TCU being relevant in Facebook chat. However, unlike in spoken interaction, Isla cannot project the possible completion point of these TCUs, as she cannot monitor the turn-in-progress. There is also no possibility of speaker transition at the end of each TCU. Instead, it is possible for Isla to respond to each separate TCU in a separate turn. Thus, when I refer to a TCU in Facebook chat, it is clearly a different but related phenomenon to a TCU in spoken interaction. Specifically, TCUs in Facebook chat may be organized according to grammar and action, but they cannot be monitored as they progress, and there is no possibility of speaker transition at the end of each TCU. However, they are treated as relevantly separate actions by the recipient.

So far, then, I have illustrated how participants send turns which arguably can comprise

a number of TCUs; this is important for understanding speaker change. In spoken interaction, a TCU is possibly complete at the point when “transition to a next speaker becomes *relevant* (although not necessarily accomplished)” (Schegloff, 1996, p.55, emphasis in original). This is known as a ‘transition relevance place’ (TRP). Speakers monitor a turn-in-progress for a possible TRP, at which point they may begin a turn.

Extract 3.3: From Sacks et al. (1974, p.702)

```

1   Desk:   What is your last name [Lorraine]
2   Caller:                               [Dinnis. ]
3   Desk:   What?
4   Caller: Dinnis.

```

In this extract, the caller orients to a potentially complete TCU at line 1 after the word “name”. However, this is a misprojection: the speaker in line 1 had not finished their turn when the caller starts theirs. Therefore, the caller’s turn in line 2 overlaps with the final word of line 1. Recipients in spoken interaction, therefore, monitor on-going talk for possible TRPs, and if speaker transition does not occur at the first possible TRP, it becomes relevant at the next imminently complete TCU (Sacks et al., 1974).

To examine speaker transition in Facebook chat, consider the following example, from the opening of a chat between Isla and Dave.

Extract 3.4: JM/IS9/F: 1-19

```

1           I*:      ((Opens chat window with Dave))
2           ☞ hey you ☞
3   00:00  00:00  Isla:  hey you
4           (7.0)
5           I*:      ((Switches to chat with BM))
6           I*:      [☞ 3.0 chatting to BM ☞] ↔
7           D*:      [ ☞ 3.0   writing   ]

```

8	00:11	00:11	Dave:	well hello there 😊
9			I*:	↔ 🗨️ 3.0 chatting to BM 🗨️
10	00:14	00:03	Dave:	how are you?
11			I*:	((Switches to chat with Dave))
12				⌘ i'm good thank s <del>s</del> you? ⌘
13	00:23	00:09	Isla:	i'm good thanks you?
14			I*:	⌘ apologies for being a bit f <del>f</del> drunk the
15				other night haah ⌘
16	00:32	00:09	Isla:	apologies for being a bit drunk the other
17				night haah
18			I*:	⌘ you always <del>sy</del> ys make me feel so guilty ⌘
19	00:38	00:06	Isla:	you always make me feel so guilty!

In this extract, Isla opens the interaction by posting a greeting to Dave in line 3, which is complete in terms of its grammar and action. As prosody is unavailable in written interaction (see Section 3.2), whether it is prosodically complete is a moot point. However, Isla has posted the message, suggesting that she treats it as complete. It is, of course, possible in typed interaction to press ‘enter’ by mistake. However, it is impossible to know whether ‘enter’ has been pressed accidentally, unless the speaker orients to it (for example, by saying “whoops, I didn’t mean to send that” or “I wasn’t finished”). In the extract above, there is now an action in the chat to which the recipient can respond, and so speaker transition can potentially occur.

Following Isla’s turn at line 3, there is a 7-second gap, during which there is no action on-screen by either party. Dave may still be orienting to the chat; reading Isla’s message or preparing to write, for example (A.C. Garcia & Jacobs, 1999; Marcoccia et al., 2008), but this is not available from the screen capture. After this 7-second gap, Dave constructs his response to Isla’s turn, which then appears at line 8. So, following Isla’s turn, speaker transition has occurred. Dave’s turn at line 8 also comprises a recognizable action, to which Isla could feasibly respond, so again speaker transition is relevant. Instead, Dave constructs, and subsequently posts, another turn: speaker transition does not occur, even though it is relevant. Something similar occurs following line 13: Isla posts a complete turn, at which

point Dave *could* start constructing a response. However, Isla immediately starts constructing her next turn, which she sends in lines 16-17. Thus, while transition is relevant after line 13 (notably it includes a question for Dave, making a response relevant), it does not occur because Isla self-selects and starts constructing her next turn. So, in Facebook chat, speaker transition is potentially relevant after any posted turn, but may not necessarily occur. This finding contrasts with spoken interaction, where speaker transition is potentially relevant after a TCU.

In this section, I have started to describe how in both spoken and Facebook chat interaction, speakers take turns at talk. Turn-allocation is also locally managed rather than pre-defined (see also Section 3.1.5). Turn-taking practices indicate how participants manage the technological affordances. Firstly, messages are constructed and sent separately, so recipients cannot monitor turns-in-progress or offer simultaneous feedback. There cannot, therefore, be misprojections of turn completion in Facebook chat, although it is feasibly possible for there to be misprojection of content. Secondly, participants construct and send complete turns which may comprise a number of TCUs. I argued earlier that each sent message should be treated as a ‘turn’, even if some messages appear to be linked. Therefore, as with spoken interaction, Facebook chats comprise complete turns, potentially including a number of TCU-like constructions, which can be attended to by recipients in their responses. Finally, speaker transition is relevant once a turn is sent, but as with spoken interaction, does not necessarily occur. There are, then, TRPs in chat, but they cannot be projected by the recipient.

### ***3.1.1 Overwhelmingly, one party talks at a time***

In spoken interaction, a speaker has rights to a single TCU, and while they are producing their talk, the recipient monitors the turn-in-progress and anticipates a TRP, at which point



they can self-select to start their turn (see also Section 3.1.3 below). This practice of monitoring TCUs and TRPs means that generally one party talks at a time.

In Facebook chat, I found that similarly, messages were sent one at a time, although sometimes in close proximity. Therefore, overwhelmingly, one party ‘talks’ at a time. However, this practice is not a result of the close monitoring of turns, but is simply due to the unlikelihood of both parties pressing ‘enter’ at exactly the same time. However, occasionally both parties do post at the same time, and so simultaneous messages are posted, as in the following extract.

Extract 3.5: JM/IS29/B: 61-69

1 Scott: haha the drills are light cause of  
2 my toe  
3 (10.0)  
4 Isla: aww diddums 😊  
5 (5.0)  
6 Isla: [how is it anyway?  
7 Scott: [after a week of training im fooked  
8 anyway

In Extract 3.5, there is no gap between Isla and Scott’s turns in lines 6 and 7-8; they are posted in overlap. In spoken interaction, overlap can also occur, as in the following extract.

Extract 3.6 : From Schegloff (2000, p.39)

1 Nancy: how do you know he [answered c’djeh tell]=  
2 Hyla: [so fer four minutes ]  
3 Nancy: =[ iz vo:ce? ]  
4 Hyla: =[ it’s a bu:ck.]  
5 (0.2)  
6 Hyla: Hu:h?

Nancy and Hyla produce overlapping talk in lines 1-4, which is problematic, as evidenced by

the ‘open-class repair initiator’ (Drew, 1997) issued by Hyla in line 6, suggesting she has some problem in hearing or understanding Nancy’s talk. Thus, in spoken interaction, overlapping talk can impact the progressivity of the interaction, because it may result in problems in hearing or understanding the talk. In Facebook chat, in contrast, simultaneous posting does not become problematic, because the turn remains on-screen, and can be read after it was posted. Therefore, although the turns were posted at the same time, each participant can still read the message, without the attendant problems that overlapping talk can engender.

In this section, I have suggested that as with spoken interaction, overwhelmingly one party talks at a time. However, in Facebook chat, when overlaps occur it is not a hindrance to the progressivity of the interaction, as it might be in spoken interaction, because the text remains on-screen. In the next section, I will discuss overlaps of message construction.

### ***3.1.2 Occurrences of more than one speaker at a time are common, but brief***

In spoken interaction, overlap between speakers is mostly fairly brief and tends to be resolved quickly by one speaker dropping out (Schegloff, 2000). Overlap may occur for a number of reasons. For example, as was shown in Extract 3.3, a listener may misproject the possible completion point of a turn, resulting in overlap between the current turn and the next (Sacks et al., 1974). As I have shown, such misprojections cannot occur in Facebook chat as recipients cannot monitor the turn-in-progress. Another practice which results in brief overlap is when two different speakers self-select at a TRP, as in Extract 3.7.

#### **Extract 3.7: From Schegloff (2000, p.22)**

- 1 Hyla: [Bu:t]
- 2 Nancy: [My ] face hurts

In this extract, both Hyla and Nancy start a turn so there is brief overlap; however, Hyla drops out after a single word and Nancy continues to speak. Thus, while overlaps do occur in spoken interaction, they are often resolved before they cause trouble in hearing or understanding.

It may seem that in online interaction, overlaps do not exist or are impossible (Cerratto & Waern, 2000; Werry, 1996). However, as a result of collecting screen capture data, it is possible to see that there are overlaps in online interaction, although these differ significantly from overlap in spoken interaction. In Extract 3.8, between Isla (who is recording her screen) and Joe, both parties write concurrently. We can see the content of Isla's message construction, but can only see that Joe is writing a message.

Extract 3.8: JM/IS20/F: 556-581

1		J*:	[ <del> </del> w r i t i n g <del> </del> ↔
2		I*:	[ <del> </del> yeah i h <del> </del> laurad <del> </del> s <del> </del> doesn't ↔
3		J*:	↔ <del> </del> w r i t i n g <del> </del> ↔
4		I*:	↔ doesn't understand that you don't ↔
5		J*:	↔ <del> </del> w r i t i n g <del> </del> ] ↔
6		I*:	↔ know how to be nice :-P ]
7	40:59	00:19	Isla: yeah i laura doesn't understand that
8			you don't know how to be nice 😊
9		J*:	↔ [ <del> </del> w r i t i n g <del> </del> ↔
10		I*:	[s <del> </del> i(.)'ll to es <del> </del> d c <del> </del> e u c a t e
11		J*:	↔ writing <del> </del> ] ↔
12		I*:	↔ her <del> </del> ]
13	41:06	00:07	Isla: i'll have to educate her
14		J*:	↔ [ <del> </del> w r i t i n g <del> </del> ↔
15		I*:	<del> </del> [whai <del> </del> hai ait -! you owe me a ↔
16		J*:	↔ <del> </del> writing <del> </del> ] ↔
17		I*:	↔ drink! <del> </del> ]
18	41:14	00:08	Isla: wait! you owe me a drink!
19		J*:	↔ [ <del> </del> writing <del> </del> ] ↔
20		I*:	[ <del> </del> haha <del> </del> ]

21	41:15	00:01	Isla:	haha
22			J*:	↔ ✎ 6.0 writing✎
23	41:21	00:06	Joe:	it pretty much states that when girls
24				reach a certain age they realize they
25				have no penis and gain a complex
26				inwhich they are envious

From lines 1 to 6, both Joe and Isla are constructing their turns. Isla finishes first, with her turn posted in lines 7-8. Joe continues writing, as Isla constructs another turn, which is also posted before Joe has finished writing (line 13). Joe continues writing, while Isla constructs another turn between lines 14-17. It is not until lines 23-26 that Joe finally posts the message he has, presumably, been constructing while Isla posted her previous four turns. In Facebook chat, then, overlap can - and does - occur, and there are three different types: a) simultaneous posting, where both parties post their messages at the same time (Extract 3.5); b) 'writing' overlap, where both parties are constructing their messages at the same time (Extract 3.8, lines 1-6) and c) 'writing and posting' overlap, where one party is writing a message at the same time as another posts theirs (Extract 3.8, lines 7-9). There is a significant difference between all of these types of overlaps and overlap in spoken interaction; that is, none of these overlaps impede hearing or understanding (see Extract 3.6).

Overlap in Facebook chat is possible due to the separation of message construction and sending, and because it is a written medium. Therefore, there is a systematic difference between the management of overlap in chat and in spoken interaction, as overlaps in chat do not need to be resolved. It is worth noting, however, that not all overlap in spoken interaction needs resolving. For example, in the following extract, overlap occurs between one speaker's utterance and another's embodied action (nodding) (lines 4 and 5).

Extract 3.9: From Stivers (2008, p. 41)

1 Kat: "Leave your ^dog;" "We'll babysit your dog,"  
2 (.)  
3 Tar: ((Gaze shifts to Katie))  
4 Kat: ["We have uh dog ft^oo.", ]  
5 Tar: [ ((nodding . . . . . )) ]  
6 Kat: an so:\_ his parents leave thuh dog,

In line 5 Tar is nodding while Kat speaks, but this does not impede the progress of the interaction, with Kat continuing her turn at line 6. So neither concurrent actions of embodied conduct and speaking, nor overlaps of writing in Facebook chat need resolving. However, it is important not to stretch this analogy too far. There is a difference between overlap of embodied conduct in spoken talk and writing overlap. Overlapping embodied conduct, such as nodding, provides an action which relates to the on-going talk (Goodwin, 2000; Stivers, 2008). However, overlap in Facebook chat is *always* an overlap either in writing or posting a message and therefore does not necessarily relate to the actions of the co-participant. Consider, again, Extract 3.8; the writing overlap means that Joe's turn in lines 23-26 is completely unrelated to the turns preceding it (see also Section 3.3.0). Thus, writing overlap can impact both turn-taking and sequence organization (Marcoccia et al., 2008).

While the technological affordances of Facebook chat enable overlaps, it is entirely possible to have an interaction without any overlap occurring. In the following extract, Isla is telling Joe that they had kissed the night before.

Extract 3.10: JM/IS20/F: 669-691

1 48:44 02:39 Isla: ok you might not want to hear this but  
2 despite the fact that I don't remember  
3 everything i do seem to remember  
4 kissing you at one point...  
5 (44.0)

6 I\*: ((Searches for friend's profile))  
7 ☒ 15.0 on friend's profile ☒  
8 ((Switches back to own profile))  
9 J\*: ⌘ 1.0 writing ⌘  
10 49:57 01:13 Joe: nah you didnt  
11 I\*: ⌘ (10.0) okay then ⌘  
12 50:11 00:14 Isla: okay then  
13 (7.0)  
14 J\*: ⌘ 10.0 writing ⌘  
15 50:28 00:17 Joe: that was just a dream you had,  
16 (39.0)  
17 J\*: ⌘ 44.0 writing ⌘  
18 51:51 01:23 Joe: i dont remeber anything along those  
19 lines. although i dont remeber allot im  
20 pretty sure i would remember that  
21 (30.0)  
22 I\*: ⌘ joe someone else saw it ⌘  
23 52:27 00:36 Isla: joe someone else saw it

After Isla's turn in lines 1-4, there is a 44-second gap where nothing happens on-screen. Isla then spends around 15 seconds on another friend's profile before switching back to her own. It seems that Isla is treating this gap as a TRP and waiting for Joe to take a turn, which he does in line 10. Isla responds in line 12, after which there is another gap where nothing happens on-screen, before Joe starts constructing his turn in line 14. Throughout this extract, then, there is no overlapping writing or posting at all, demonstrating that although Facebook chat enables overlaps of writing to occur, it is possible for interaction to occur without them (see also Stommel and van der Houwen, 2013). If we compare overlaps with the separation of message construction and sending, we find that participants *have to* construct their messages separately from sending them, because the software is designed this way. The possibility of overlap is afforded by the technology, due to the separation of message construction and sending, and the persistence of text on-screen, but the fact that it occurs is a result of how online interactional practices have developed to utilize this affordance.

In this section, I have shown that occurrences of more than one *writer* at a time are common. I have presented three types of overlap: ‘simultaneous posting’, ‘writing’, and ‘writing and posting’. There are two key differences between overlaps in spoken and written interaction. Firstly, writing overlaps in Facebook chat are often extended, whereas Sacks et al. (1974) found that overlaps in spoken interaction are commonly brief. Secondly, overlaps in Facebook chat do not need to be resolved, because they do not impede understanding or the progressivity of the interaction. Although the software affords the possibility of overlaps occurring, the fact that they do is an interactional practice of participants. Certainly, overlaps are not accountable, suggesting that overlapping writing may be a norm of turn-taking which has developed in online interaction.

### ***3.1.3 Transitions (from one turn to a next) with no gap and no overlap are common***

In spoken interaction, if recipients correctly anticipate a TRP, then transitions from one turn-at-talk to the next occur with no gap and no overlap (Sacks et al., 1974). Indeed, if silences do occur, it may signal some sort of trouble in the interaction (Pomerantz, 1984). For example, delay in response to an action such as an invitation or request has been found to be an indication of some imminent ‘dispreferred’ second action - a refusal or rejection (Pomerantz & Heritage, 2013).

As will be seen throughout this thesis, in Facebook chat, as with most forms of online interaction (see for example, Cherny, 1999; Collister, 2008; Marcoccia et al., 2008), there are often long gaps between turns. However, in the data corpus, these gaps are rarely accountable despite being what, in spoken interaction, would be extremely long silences, potentially indicative of complete conversational breakdown. In this section, I will explain some of the reasons for such gaps, including how some gaps in chat may be a result of the design of the chat software. As participants cannot monitor turns-in-progress, they cannot project a

possible completion point, and so must wait until a message is sent before reading and responding to it. A further important factor is that Facebook chat is a written medium, as typing is slower than speech (Werry, 1996). The following extract, in which Isla and Joe are discussing whether to meet up for the evening, illustrates how the written medium impacts on gaps between turns. The lines of interest are 6-8.

Extract 3.11: JM/IS20/F: 376-383

1	29:45	00:05	Isla:	i still need to eat and shower though
2			I*:	☞ sahll <del>ahll</del> i see what the
3				oth[er -s want to do?]
4			J*:	[ ☞ writing ☞ ]
5	29:56	00:11	Isla:	shall i see what the others want to do?
6	29:56	00:00	Joe:	yea you do!
7			I*:	☞hey!" ☞
8	30:00	00:04	Isla:	hey!"

In line 6, Joe posts a turn, which Isla immediately starts responding to in line 7. Isla's response is composed of a single word and no pauses or deletions occur during message construction, but it is still posted 4 seconds after Joe's turn. This example demonstrates how the separation of message construction and sending and the comparatively slow speed of typing, results in a *necessarily* longer gap than would occur in spoken interaction. Where posts do occur in close proximity or simultaneously (as in Extract 3.5 earlier), they are often the result of writing overlap.

The gap between two posted messages may not represent the accurate gap between actions. In the following extract, Katie and Ali are discussing an awkward meeting that Katie had raised earlier in the chat. The lines of interest are 7-16.



Extract 3.12: JM/KA1/F: 52-67

1	18:48	00:11	Katie:	i could be worse i could have a plaster
2				on my chin like marion
3			A*:	↔ ✎ 4.0 writing ✎
4	18:50	00:02	Ali:	what's the problem my dear?
5				(4.0)
6			A*:	✎ 2.0 writing ✎
7	18:58	00:08	Ali:	hahaha - this is true
8				(4.0)
9			K*:	✎ i just (3.0)went to see my (.) next
10				door neih <del>h</del> gighbour who just had a (.)
11				baby (4.0) ✎← with <del>y</del> my mum (1.0) ✎→
12				<del>my</del> our ✎→ and i just was intensely
13				awkward ✎
14	19:48	00:50	Katie:	i just went with my mum to see our next
15				door neighbour who just had a baby and
16				i just was intensely awkward

There is a 50-second gap between Ali's turn in line 7 and Katie's response in lines 14-16. However, the screen capture shows Katie actually starting to construct her response around four seconds after Ali's post, which will be indicated on Ali's screen with a 'writing' icon. Thus, it could be suggested that long gaps are more acceptable in Facebook chat, because participants can see that the co-participant is writing a message, and therefore the gap between some *action* occurring in the chat is much shorter than the actual gap between *turns* being posted.

However, it is important to note that not all gaps in spoken interaction are treated as accountable matters, as demonstrated below in Extract 3.13, from a conversation between “two young women sitting in a sunny corner at a neighbourhood block party” (Jefferson, 1989, p. 178).

Extract 3.13: From Jefferson (1989, p.178)

1 T: =Right. Well we had that over in our p- uh,  
2 (0.8) u- They had bought that for our house.  
3 °When they furnished the house.°  
4 (2.5)  
5 T: °(But it was different) there's no dou:bt  
6 about it°  
7 → (7.3)  
8 D: Whose car is that down there

There is a long silence in line 7, but as Jefferson notes “there is good reason to suppose that the long silence is occupied by both women scanning the surrounding scene” (p. 178).

Notably, the gap is not made accountable by either party, suggesting that long gaps in spoken interaction do not necessarily indicate some difficulty in the interaction.

So, depending on the interactional context, long gaps in spoken interaction may *not* be accountable, while gaps in Facebook chat may be “attributable and meaningful” (Antaki et al., 2005, Analysis section, para. 17). If previous gaps were fairly short, then a subsequent long gap may be read as meaningful (Stommel & Koole, 2010; see also Rintel, Pittam & Mulholland, 2003). To demonstrate an example of a gap being made accountable, consider the following extract. Joe and Isla are discussing whether Isla should go to Joe’s house that evening.

Extract 3.14: JM/IS20/B: 300-320

1 Isla: do you want the company?  
2 (13.0)  
3 Joe: kewl, yea im bored and I dunno where  
4 mikey is  
5 (25.0)  
6 Isla: second thought! Not coming now!  
7 (2.0)  
8 Isla: lol

9

(195.0)

10 Isla: haha you obviously not too bothered lol

In line 1, Isla asks if Joe wants her to come over and Joe accepts her offer, and provides an account for why he wants her company (lines 3-4). In line 6, Isla jokingly (as indicated by the “lol” in the next turn) informs Joe that she has withdrawn her offer and will now not be coming over. There is then a 195-second gap (around three minutes) in line 9. Isla orients to this gap in line 10, suggesting that Joe is not “bothered” by her withdrawing her offer. This extract demonstrates how some gaps may become accountable, depending on the interactional and sequential context. In other words, this gap has become accountable because it occurs after Isla has withdrawn an offer, and also after an exchange in which there were previously relatively short gaps. Therefore, throughout this thesis, only gaps which are oriented to, and treated as accountable by participants should be understood and analyzed, as meaningful.

In this section, I have described how transitions between turns in Facebook chat often occur with a significant gap. Analysis of the screen capture data revealed that gaps between actions may be shorter than gaps between turns. The occurrence of gaps between turns illuminates the role of two different features of Facebook chat: firstly, recipients cannot monitor the turn-in-progress to project a TRP, and secondly, writing is slower than speech, meaning it takes longer to construct a turn. However, in the data, I found that long gaps between turns are rarely accountable or problematic for participants. They may become accountable but, as with spoken interaction, this is managed by participants as part of the unfolding interaction (see also Danby et al., 2009). So while there are differences between spoken and chat interaction in terms of the lengths of gaps between turns, in both contexts it is a participant’s concern as to whether they are treated as accountable.

### 3.1.4 *Talk can be continuous or discontinuous*

Across the dataset, there were many examples of gaps between turns which could not be accounted for by the time taken to read and write a message. In other words, these are lapses in interaction. In the following extract, Katie and Ella are making plans for Ella's visit the following week. Note the significant gaps on lines 2 and 6.

#### Extract 3.15: JM/KA10/B: 5-11

```
1    Katie:      When are you back next week?x x
2
3    Ella:      Tuesday I think
4
5    Katie:      Sweeeet,how long for?
6
7    Ella:      Til Friday I think
```

In line 1, Katie asks Ella a question, to which Ella responds in the next turn. However, the gap between the two turns is nearly five minutes. Similarly, after Katie's turn in line 5, it takes over two minutes for Ella to respond. The screen capture data (not shown here) clearly shows that Ella, who is online the whole time, does not spend the entire time composing a response. Instead, lapses such as these are often explained by participants multi-tasking and not attending solely to the chat.

Multi-tasking or multi-activity "is a common feature of many social settings" (Mondada, 2012, p.224), and simply means that participants are engaged in a number of activities simultaneously. Interlocutors may be, for example, eating (Craven & Potter, 2010), watching television (Attenborough & Stokoe, 2012) or driving a car (Nevile, 2012) while also engaged in conversation. Multi-tasking is also sometimes described as *non-focused* interaction, where "participants are not sustaining a single focus of attention [...] but are engaged in other activities" (Couper-Kuhlen, 2012, p.35). In the following extract, there are

brief lapses in talk at lines 6, 9 and 11.

Extract 3.16: From Stivers & Rossano (2010, p.16, simplified transcript)

1 Mark: It's not ba:d\_  
2 (0.5)  
3 Mark: M ya know:,  
4 (1.0)  
5 Kim: #h#m:.  
6 (4.0)  
7 Mark: (it goes) good with This dressing's really good  
8 with it.  
9 (11.4)  
10 Kim: Hahh.  
11 (4.0)  
12 Mark: I don't like thuh bean one.

There are brief lapses in this extract, but the parties are also eating and therefore do not need “to sustain a single common focus of attention” (Couper-Kuhlen, 2012, p.35). In other words, conditional relevance does not necessarily hold (Couper-Kuhlen, 2012; Schegloff & Sacks, 1973) and so discontinuous talk is not accountable.

In Facebook chat, participants may also be multi-tasking, which can result in lapses.

The following extract shows some of the activities Katie engages in during a chat with Rob.

Extract 3.17: JM/KA13/F: 79-94

1 K\*: ((Switches to e-mail))  
2 📧 3.0 e-mail 📧  
3 00:05 07:22 Rob: erm  
4 K\*: ((Opens new tab))  
5 00:02 07:24 Rob: Some place...  
6 K\*: ((Switches to Facebook))  
7 ☞ haha! hotel or (.) halls (.) or  
8 hostel? ☞



quasi-synchronous interaction must be logged on at the same time to interact<sup>7</sup>. However, it may be that the non-accountability of long gaps, and multi-tasking, is partly a result of this practice having developed in other online interaction.

In this section I have shown that some gaps in Facebook chat can be explained by participants' multi-tasking activities, a practice that may have developed in other online contexts. However, multi-tasking also occurs in spoken interaction, but the activities the other person is engaged in are available for the recipient. In Facebook chat, on the other hand, as the parties are rarely co-present, a chat participant's multi-tasking is not available for co-participants. However, where multi-tasking is oriented to in the chat, it is still rarely an accountable matter.

### ***3.1.5 Turn order is not fixed, but varies***

In spoken conversation the order of turns is not fixed in advance, but rather is locally managed (Sacks et al., 1974). In two-party interaction, this effectively means that following a TRP, either the current speaker can continue, or the other party can take a turn. So, potentially, a speaker can take more than one turn consecutively, as in the following extract.

#### **Extract 3.18: From Sacks et al. (1974, p.704)**

1 Roger: That's a joke that police force. They gotta  
2 hundred cops around the guy en so(h)me guy  
3 walks in and says I'm gonna shoot you and  
4 shoots him.  
5 Roger: :hmmhh heh  
6 Roger: En it's the president's assassin y'know,  
7 (0.9)  
8 Roger: They're wonder[ful.]  
9 Louise: [Hm.-] Now they're not even  
10 sure

---

<sup>7</sup> As noted previously, this was the case with Facebook chat when data were collected.

Roger takes four consecutive turns between lines 1 and 8, before Louise self-selects in lines 9-10. Thus, in talk the order of turns is managed by the participants in the interaction. In Facebook chat, I found that turn order is also not fixed. Following any sent message, either the same participant or the recipient can take the next turn. In Extract 3.19, Isla takes a number of consecutive turns following a question from Callum about her relationship with an ex-boyfriend (kerppel).

Extract 3.19: JM/IS7/B: 59-84

1 Callum: im great, hows things with kerppel?  
2 (15.0)  
3 Isla: erm i'm texting him a bit  
4 (8.0)  
5 Isla: not looking forward to having to see him  
6 again  
7 (6.0)  
8 Isla: but otherwise i'm so much better than I  
9 was  
10 (13.0)  
11 Isla: think its been easier coz i hadn't really  
12 seen him for like 6 weeks  
13 (12.0)  
14 Isla: would have been worse if the holiday hadn't  
15 been there  
16 (45.0)  
17 Callum: so you think your going to be friends? 😊 im  
18 glad your getting better id, dont want you to  
19 be sad, especially whenb a cal hug is far away,  
20 only two weeks if your doing bucs 😞

Isla takes five turns between lines 3 and 15 before Callum takes another turn at line 17. It would be possible for Callum to start constructing a response after any of Isla's turns, without Isla having to stop turn construction. Callum could, therefore, have posted an 'interruptive'



turn between Isla's turns. Thus, while the turn order is locally-managed, the mutual co-ordination of who takes a turn is impacted by not being able to monitor each other's turns-in-progress. This lack of mutual co-ordination can result in disrupted turn adjacency (see Section 3.3.0), and, as discussed in the next section, can also impact turn-allocation.

### ***3.1.6 Turn-allocation techniques are obviously used***

In spoken interaction, there are various turn-allocation techniques which function to negotiate who takes the next turn. The next turn can either be allocated by the current speaker selecting the next speaker, or by a speaker self-selecting (Sacks et al., 1974). In two-party interaction, explicit current-speaker-selects-next allocation techniques, such as address terms, are generally not used (Lerner, 2003). However, there are other 'obvious' cases of allocation by the current speaker (Sacks et al., 1974). For example, users may explicitly indicate a TRP (Danby et al., 2009) or issue a response-relevant turn, so the recipient is effectively allocated the next turn. To demonstrate turn-allocation techniques, consider the following extract, in which Isla is telling Becca that she is speaking to a mutual friend, Guy, about a conversation they had the night before.

#### Extract 3.20: JM/IS1/B: 4-16

```
1    Isla:      currently speaking to guy about our
2              little chat last night
3              (4.0)
4    Isla:      any thoughts about it
5              (121.0)
6    Becca:    um not hugely ill just o with the flow!
7              Put it this way, im not adverse
8              to compromising 😊
```

In lines 1-4 Isla takes two turns in succession. The second turn is formulated as a question

(see Section 3.2.0), which indicates that a response is conditionally relevant. Following Isla's question, there is a gap of around two minutes, suggesting that Isla is awaiting Becca's response, which appears at lines 6-8. So, as in spoken interaction, the next speaker is selected through the use of response-relevant turns.

As has been seen in previous extracts, self-selection also occurs in Facebook chat. In spoken interaction, whoever starts first in the transition space often gets to take the next turn (Sacks et al., 1974), and parties can mutually co-ordinate who gets the floor (by one party dropping out, for example). In the following extract from Facebook chat, Isla and Joe are discussing a conversation he is having with one of Isla's friends, where he is inviting the friend to his house.

Extract 3.21: JM/IS20/F: 433-440

1	32:52	00:14	Joe:	lol im inviting her over too
2				(3.0)
3			J*:	↪ 1.0 writing ↪ ↔
4			I*:	[↪ i already have ↪ ]
5			J*:	↪ [ ↪ writing ↪ ] ↔
6	32:57	00:05	Isla:	i already have
7			J*:	↪ ↪ 3.0 writing ↪
8	33:00	00:03	Joe:	plus it my be private:p

Following his turn at line 1, Joe self-selects and starts constructing a message in line 3. After Joe has been writing for a second, Isla starts constructing her message (line 4). Despite Joe starting to *write* first, Isla's message is *sent* first (line 6), with Joe's message eventually appearing three seconds later in line 8. In this case, then, the affordance of overlapping writing discussed in Section 3.1.2, also impacts turn-allocation. Both parties self-select at the TRP after Joe's posted turn, but neither has to drop out. As the construction of the co-participant's turn is not visible, they cannot project a possible completion point. Therefore,

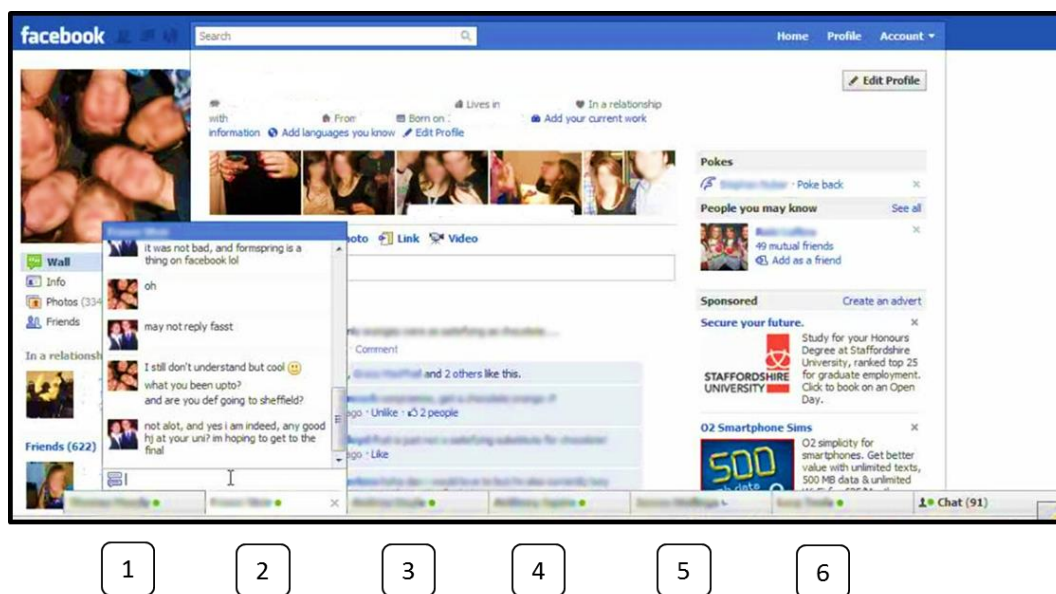
turn-allocation cannot be mutually co-ordinated. One party could potentially stop constructing their turn to wait for the co-participant to send theirs, but this would not be mutually co-ordinated as the other person could not know that their co-participant is waiting for their turn to be sent.

Turn-allocation techniques may, therefore, be used in Facebook chat just as in spoken interaction. Speakers can allocate the next turn to their co-participant through using response-relevant FPPs, such as questions. Participants can also self-select to start writing a turn, but self-selecting does not mean they will definitely take the next turn. However, one difference that I have found between turn-allocation in chat and in spoken interaction is that it cannot be mutually co-ordinated, because message construction is 'hidden' from the recipient. However, the differences in turn-allocation techniques rarely lead to interactional difficulties in Facebook chat.

### ***3.1.7 Number of parties can vary***

The turn-taking system in spoken interaction only organizes two speakers at a time, the current speaker and the next, and does not concern itself with "the size of the pool from which they are selected" (Sacks et al., 1974, p.712). It could be argued that telephone interaction only allows for two-party conversation; however, the possibility of having more than one landline telephone in a household and also the invention of conference calling facilities, allow for multi-party telephone interaction. Some online communication facilities, such as e-mail and chat rooms, allow for varying numbers of participants. In Facebook chat, however, the number of participants cannot vary, although a single speaker may conduct multiple chats at once, as shown in Figure 3.1 below. Isla has the chat window labelled '2' open, but alongside that are five other minimized chat windows (1, 3-6). Thus, Isla is participating in six on-going chats, but each chat is a two-party interaction.

Figure 3.1: Conducting multiple chats



The closest spoken parallel to this practice might be a “schism” in multi-party, face-to-face interaction (Egbert, 1997a) or putting someone on hold on the telephone (Hopper, 1989). However, in these examples, the conversations are not generally conducted concurrently. It would be unlikely, although not impossible, for a speaker to finish a turn with one interlocutor before turning to a second to take a turn, but then turning back to the first interlocutor and taking another turn. This practice is precisely what happens in Facebook chat, and also in other online interaction, such as e-mails. When a schism occurs or someone is put on hold, the interactants know that another interaction is taking place, even if they do not have access to the content. In Facebook chat, unless the speaker makes it relevant in the interaction, no recipient knows about the other on-going chats. Thus, in Facebook chat the number of participants *cannot* vary, but the number of two-party chats engaged in at once, can.

### 3.1.8 The turn-taking problem - summary

In this section, I have provided an overview of how participants manage the ‘turn-taking

problem' in Facebook chat. I have used the turn-taking model for spoken interaction as a framework for discussing online practices, but have also shown where other interactional practices may be relevant. The analysis has identified a number of potential similarities and differences; I will briefly summarize the differences identified below.

- (1) Facebook chat is a written medium; this has been identified as influencing a number of turn-taking practices, including gaps between turns, overlap and simultaneous posting. Participants' practices for managing turn-taking are also influenced by resources from other written, online contexts, such as e-mail or multi-party chat.
- (2) Message construction and message transmission are separate so turns-in-progress cannot be monitored, simultaneous feedback cannot be provided and the misprojection of TRPs cannot occur.
- (3) Turns can be constructed from various actions, which could be understood as similar to TCUs in spoken interaction. However, such constructions cannot be oriented to by recipients during message construction, but may be oriented to in their responses.
- (4) A variety of types of overlap can, and frequently do, occur in Facebook chat without needing to be resolved. These overlaps include 'writing' overlap and 'writing and posting' overlap, which are visible from the screen capture data. However, the occurrence of such overlaps is a consequence of how participants make use of the affordance of the separation of message construction and posting.
- (5) Significant gaps occur between turns in Facebook chat, which are most commonly unaccountable. Gaps occur, in part, because parties cannot project possible TRPs and so must start constructing their message once a turn has been sent, rather than

sending it as soon as the prior turn is completed. Similarly, because turns must be constructed separately from sending them, gaps occur because of the time taken to write and send a message. The screen capture data shows that multi-tasking occurs, but that the persistence of text on-screen allows absent recipients to read the messages when they return. Multi-tasking may be afforded by the design of the online medium, but participants do not always make use of this affordance. In spoken interaction multi-tasking also occurs, but is available to the recipient.

- (6) The negotiation of who is allocated the next turn cannot always be mutually coordinated, because message construction is 'hidden'. Therefore, 'starting first' does not always result in taking the next turn, rather it is dependent on who presses 'enter' first.
- (7) Participants can engage in multiple, two-party chats at once without any of the interlocutors having knowledge of any of the other chats.

There may seem to be many differences between turn-taking in Facebook chat and spoken interaction; however, there are potentially many similarities, which I outline below.

- (1) Participants take turns at talk. A turn in Facebook chat is defined as any message that a writer sends to the chat window.
- (2) Interaction in both spoken interaction and Facebook chat consists of completed turns.
- (3) At the end of a turn, transition of speakership is relevant, but does not necessarily occur.
- (4) Concurrent actions by different speakers can occur without difficulty. In Facebook chat, the concurrent actions are writing and posting, whereas in spoken

interaction, talk and embodied conduct can occur simultaneously.

- (5) The accountability of gaps and pauses is negotiated and managed moment-by-moment by participants.
- (6) Multi-tasking can occur in both sites of interaction.
- (7) Turn-allocation techniques may be used. Speakers can use response-relevant turns, like questions, to allocate the next turn to the other speaker. Equally, participants can self-select to take a turn, although, as discussed above, there are differences in how self-selection operates.
- (8) What participants say and the length of the conversation is not specified in advance.
- (9) Turn length is not fixed.

The analysis has illuminated some potential similarities and differences in the turn-taking practices of spoken interaction and Facebook chat. The identification of systematic differences does not imply that turn-taking in Facebook chat is less efficient than spoken interaction, nor that Sacks et al.'s (1974) model is not valid. Instead, turn-taking practices have developed for the specific interactional context. In the discussion (Section 3.4), I will explore how Facebook chat may be a particular type of speech-exchange system. In this section I have also noted how the interactional practices of chat often seem to derive from written communication. I will discuss further similarities in the next section on the 'action-formation problem'.

### **3.2 The action-formation problem**

One of the basic findings of CA is that talk *is* action. So, rather than simply talking *on* a topic, participants are doing things with their talk, such as complaining, accounting, inviting,

requesting, offering, and so on. Thus, any turn can be inspected for its action. Schegloff (2007b) describes the ‘action-formation’ problem as how

the resources of the language, the body, the environment of the interaction, and the position *in* the interaction [are] fashioned into conformations designed to be, and to be recognizable to participants as, particular actions (p.xiv, emphasis in original)

Research on action-formation in spoken interaction has focused on, for example, how turns can be recognized as questions (Schegloff, 1984), directives (Craven & Potter, 2010), accounts (Antaki, 1994; Heritage, 1988), and so on. It has been found that speakers design their turns to use the “*appropriate form of action, for the particular sequential environment*” (Drew, Walker, & Ogden, 2013, p.75, emphasis in original).

In Facebook chat, action-formation is impacted by two technological features. Firstly, prosody, which is important for action-formation in spoken interaction (e.g., Couper-Kuhlen & Selting, 1996; Local & Walker, 2008; B. S. Reed, 2012), is not directly available in chat, because it is a written medium. Secondly, participants are not normally co-present, so embodied conduct is not available as it would be in face-to-face interaction (Kent, 2012; Ruusuvuori & Peräkylä, 2009). Previous research has suggested that the lack of prosody, paralanguage and body language means online communication is “less friendly, less emotional or impersonal and more serious or task-oriented” (Derks, Bos, & von Grumbkow, 2007, p.844). Crystal (2001) similarly argues that facial expressions, gestures and so on are “critical in expressing personal opinions and attitudes and in moderating social relationships” (p. 36). There is, then, a presumption that online communication is in some way “*lacking in comparison to face-to-face communication*” (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006, p.252, emphasis in original). However, a substantial body of work has investigated how the lack of non-verbal



cues is compensated for online (e.g., Darics, 2012; Markman & Oshima, 2007; Werry, 1996).

In this section, I will add to this research by examining how there are similarities in the practices of written communication and Facebook chat, in how participants compensate for the lack of prosody, paralanguage and embodied conduct when formulating actions. As with turn-taking, I do not attempt to provide an account of all these practices, but rather describe some of the ways in which users of Facebook chat manage the various constraints and affordances in terms of action-formation. This section will highlight how participants' resources for interacting on Facebook chat show similarities with both spoken and written interaction.

### ***3.2.0 Punctuation, prosody and action-formation***

In spoken interaction a TCU is treated as complete because of its action, grammar and prosody. Selting (1992) argues that conversational features such as prosody, grammatical structure and sequential position are used to construct recognizable actions. In Facebook chat, prosody is not available for participants to indicate when a turn is complete, so other features such as grammatical structure and sequential position must be used for constructing recognizable actions (although see Section 3.3.0 below for a discussion of sequence organization in Facebook chat). However, in some ways chat participants have an advantage over speakers, as they can use punctuation, such as question marks, to explicitly denote the action of their turn, as Isla does in the following extract.

#### Extract 3.22: JM/IS20/B:4

1 Isla: you not speaking to me?

Here, Isla ends her turn with a single question mark, which clearly indicates that this is a question. Therefore, the action-formation problem can be managed in some cases by using

punctuation. However, the notion that the same conventions of written interaction are followed in online interaction is not supported by the data. Most notably, punctuation is not always used, even when relevant. Consider, again, Extract 3.20 (shown below as Extract 3.23).

Extract 3.23: JM/IS1/B:4-16

1 Isla: currently speaking to guy about our  
2 little chat last night  
3 (4.0)  
4 Isla: any thoughts about it  
5 (121.0)  
6 Becca: um not hugely ill just o with the flow!  
7 Put it this way, im not adverse  
8 to compromising 😊

As was discussed previously, Isla's turn in line 4 is treated as a question, despite Isla not using a question mark. Therefore, recognizable actions can be formulated without punctuation, by using syntactic structure and sequential placement. Punctuation can also be used in online communication as a vehicle for other actions, and to indicate a turn's stance or tone (see Crystal, 2001). Consider the following examples.

Extract 3.24: JM/IS20/B:521-525

1 Joe: how do you not know about freud when  
2 your on a psychology degree?  
3 (9.0)  
4 Isla: sigmund freud??

Extract 3.25: JM/BE6/B:13-15

1 Anna: But we have a lecture next week too  
2 (19.0)

3        Beth:            do we?! Why?! Aww man thought we were done!!

In Extract 3.24 Joe asks Isla a question which is syntactically designed as a question, but also utilizes a question mark. Stommel and van der Houwen (2013) note that “a question mark in chat interaction is an instance of punctuation as used in written language” (Data section). Such an assertion may well be correct, but as we can see from examining Isla’s response in line 4, question marks can be used to do other actions as well. Isla uses two question marks at the end of her turn, indicating that the action is a question, but also, in this context, a repair-initiator and possibly a news receipt. It may also indicate Isla’s stance to Joe’s turn, although this is slightly ambiguous. The double question mark may be responsive to Joe holding Isla accountable for not knowing about Freud, or it could be displaying an upgrade of sorts; that is, Isla uses Freud’s first name and a double question mark to display her knowledge as a psychology student. Thus, contrary to other claims that “the number of question-marks or exclamation-marks reflects only the length of time the relevant key is held down” (Crystal, 2001, p.35), the number of punctuation marks is actually important in the formation of a recognizable action or stance. However, as Extract 3.24 shows, the use of punctuation can sometimes be ambiguous.

In Extract 3.25, Beth’s turn in line 3 shows two different punctuation combinations. The first one - “?!” - indicates a question, which might be heard as having a ‘surprised’ tone. The second combination - “!!”- also indicates surprise, but in this sequential context may also be emphasizing Beth’s disappointment at still having lectures to attend. Thus, participants use different combinations of punctuation to ensure their turns are understood in particular ways.

Punctuation is also combined with other typographical resources. In the following extract, Emily and Isla are discussing Emily’s future holiday to celebrate her thirtieth birthday.

Extract 3.26: JM/IS12/B: 47-49

1 Isla: ooh bet that will be lovely!  
2 (11.0)  
3 Emily: I CANT WAIT!!!

In line 3, Emily writes her whole turn in upper case. Some research has found that capitalization in online interaction is usually seen as the equivalent of shouting, and therefore may be seen as rude (Martey & Stromer-Galley, 2007). However, here the capitalization is seemingly used to indicate excitement. This excitement is further highlighted by the use of three exclamation marks. We can see that these exclamation marks do different actions from those in Extract 3.25. In Extract 3.26 the exclamation marks display excitement, whereas in Extract 3.25 they seem to express surprise or disappointment. Of course, punctuation has always been used in online and offline written language to do standard actions such as questioning, and to indicate stance or tone (Crystal, 2001). In this sense, users of Facebook chat are drawing on their members' knowledge of writing, rather than speaking.

Another practice found in my data, which has also been found by other studies of online interaction (e.g., Benwell & Stokoe, 2006; Crystal, 2001; Danet, 2001), is that participants use non-standard spelling to approximate pronunciation and prosody, as demonstrated in the following extracts.

Extract 3.27: JM/IS5/B: 270

1 Callum: 😊 pwomise

Extract 3.28: JM/KA9/B: 1-6

1 Katie: do you want to see the dress i bought for  
2 my cousins wedding?  
3 (29.0)  
4 Ella: Yep, but I'm on my phooooone

5 (138.0)  
6 Katie: ahh ok, so not nooow!

In Extract 3.27, by using non-standard spelling, Callum mimics how “promise” might be said in a ‘baby’ voice in spoken interaction. In Extract 3.28, both Ella and Katie use non-standard spelling and repeated letters to indicate how a word should be ‘heard’. In fact, Katie’s turn in line 6 could be ‘heard’ as somewhat mirroring the elongated “o” sound of Ella’s prior turn. These findings will be developed in Chapter 6, where I will discuss how participants repair non-standard spelling.

Participants in online interaction cannot use vocal cues such as laughter, sighing or crying; however, they often find typographical ways of denoting such features. In spoken interaction, such features are “organized in [...] fine detail to coordinate with and sometimes sustain on-going actions” (Potter & Hepburn, 2010, p.1543). In other words, vocal cues display a participant’s stance towards a particular turn. The following extract shows how participants use typographical resources to display laughter.

Extract 3.29: JM/KA12/B: 57-60

1 Katie: its short on her because shes a million  
2 foot tall, they always do that on asos  
3 (2.0)  
4 Nadia: ha ha ha ha

In line 4, Nadia uses a now-conventionalized method in online interaction of representing laughter particles (Werry, 1996). Nadia’s ‘laughter’ indicates amusement with Katie’s turn. Here, the representation of laughter particles *is* an action. These conventions may also have been drawn from written rather than spoken interaction, particularly *online* written interaction. For example, acronyms such as “lol” (which stands for ‘laugh out loud’ and will

be seen throughout this thesis), do not appear to have been used prior to the internet. The use of “lol”, therefore, does not draw upon conventional written or spoken interaction, but rather on other forms of online interaction (Crystal, 2001).

In this section I have described how punctuation and non-standard spelling is used, alongside grammar and sequential positioning, to construct recognizable actions. As Crystal (2001) notes, the “exaggerated use of spelling and punctuation, and the use of capitals, spacing, and special symbols for emphasis” (p.34) is also found in traditional writing. Participants are, therefore, bringing their members’ knowledge of written language to the fore when constructing actions. The following section will focus on how participants use smilies as another way of demonstrating stance in written interaction.

### ***3.2.1 Embodied conduct, facial expressions and action***

In face-to-face interaction, embodied conduct and facial expressions play an important role in displaying meaning and action (e.g., Goodwin, 1980, 1986, 2000; Ruusuvuori & Peräkylä, 2009). Gestures and facial expressions are sequentially placed and can function as different actions depending on their placement. In Facebook chat, participants are not co-present and therefore unable to rely on embodied conduct and facial expressions as resources for constructing action. However, an online convention has developed of using smilies (also known as emoticons) to construct actions and to potentially compensate in some way the lack of embodied conduct (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006; Crystal, 2001; Derks et al., 2007; Markman & Oshima, 2007). Smilies are used to show how a message should be read, and how a turn’s action is understood (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006; Markman & Oshima, 2007). In the following extract, Isla and Joe are arranging to meet up to go to the gym, and are trying to arrange what time to meet.

Extract 3.30 : JM/IS18/B: 89-93

1 Isla: erm like 9am?  
2 (7.0)  
3 Isla: too early for you joe 😜  
4 (9.0)  
5 Joe: 😞 10 is a maybe

In Extract 3.30, both Isla and Joe make use of smilies, which in some way approximate facial expressions. Isla uses a smiley - a face with its tongue sticking out - at the end of line 3. As with stance markers and facial expressions in spoken interaction, smilies do different actions depending on their sequential placement (Herring, 2007; Markman & Oshima, 2007; Ruusuvuori & Peräkylä, 2009). Isla shows that the action of her turn in line 3 is ‘teasing’, rather than, say, asserting or assessing. Joe *starts* his turn with a ‘sad face’ smiley, which seems to display his stance towards Isla’s turn rather than his own.

Smilies arose on the internet<sup>8</sup> as a response to the lack of facial expressions and potentially prosody (Crystal, 2001). However, Crystal notes that “written language has always been ambiguous, in its omission of facial expression<sup>9</sup>” (p.38), and questions why no one ever introduced smilies there. Crystal (2001) suggests that smilies developed online because of the similarities between online and spoken interaction, meaning the lack of facial expressions was felt more keenly. It has also been suggested that smilies were developed because online interaction was less formal, involving more humorous posts, so some means of displaying humour was needed (Fahlman, n.d.). In the data, smilies seemed to be used to

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<sup>8</sup> While the evidence seems to suggest that smilies were invented online (Fahlman, n.d.) it seems clear that such conventional use of smilies has now been adopted in text messaging and may even be used in offline written language; this potentially provides evidence that online language influences offline language (Baron, 1984).

<sup>9</sup> Similarly, facial expressions and body language are also absent in telephone interaction, and yet a means of compensating for their absence has not developed in telephone interaction either.

indicate stance and, as I will show in Chapter 6, are repaired to ensure a turn's action or stance is clear.

Previous research on internet interaction has found that 'emotes' are used to compensate for "the absence of visual context" (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006, p.252; see also Cherny, 1999; Crystal, 2001). Emotes, such as typing "\*Mel hugs Bob\*" (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006, p.252), are ways of replicating embodied conduct online. It is notable that in my corpus, emotes are not used and the lack of embodied conduct is not compensated for in this way.

### ***3.2.2 The action-formation problem - summary***

In this section, I have provided an overview how Facebook chat participants manage the action-formation problem. Not all of the problems of forming recognizable actions have been detailed, but rather I have detailed the practices which are relevant for the rest of the thesis. Thus, I have shown how participants compensate for the lack of prosodic, paralinguistic and embodied cues. Punctuation, non-standard spelling, graphical representations of sounds and smilies are all used to form recognizable actions, closely resembling practices found in both offline and online written interaction. These practices are used in certain sequential positions, and so, as with spoken interaction, the meaning is dependent on the context of the interaction. In the final section of this chapter, I will discuss the sequential organizational problem.

### **3.3 The sequential organization problem**

The 'sequential organization problem' refers to how turns are formed in such a way as to be coherent with some prior turn (Schegloff, 2007b). How participants link turns to one another and display understanding of prior turns is a basic concern of CA (Schegloff, 2007b). Parties in talk monitor an on-going turn "for what action or actions its speaker might be doing with



it” (Schegloff, 2007b, p.2), which has implications for the relevant next action. In this section, I will briefly discuss disrupted turn adjacency and the maintenance of contiguity. These practices are discussed here to highlight how, by virtue of the affordances and turn-taking practices of Facebook chat, some basic tenets of sequence organization are disrupted. Such practices are also relevant for understanding the data extracts, and later chapters. For example, in Chapter 5 I will discuss how disrupted turn adjacency relates to simultaneous topic management and in Chapter 6 I will discuss the repair mechanisms available for dealing with disrupted turn adjacency.

### ***3.3.0 Disrupted turn adjacency***

Sacks and Schegloff (1973) noted a number of features of adjacency pairs: 1) they consist of two utterances; 2) these two utterances are adjacent; 3) they are produced by different speakers. They also noted the importance of FPPs and SPPs, in that

... a given sequence will thus be composed of an utterance that is a first pair part produced by one speaker directly followed by the production by a different speaker of an utterance which is (a) a second pair part, and (b) is from the same pair type as the first utterance in the sequence is a member of (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973, p.296).

So, following a FPP the next speaker is expected to respond with a relevant SPP, as in the following extract.

#### **Extract 3.31: Holt 88U-2-01**

1 Les: .hhhhhh So we wondered if you'd like to meet us.hh  
2 Arn: Yes certainly.

In line 1 Lesley issues a request for a meeting, to which the SPP - an acceptance - is produced in the adjacent turn. This extract is an example of a request-acceptance adjacency pair, with two adjacent utterances produced by different speakers.

Studies of online interaction have often found disrupted turn adjacency (e.g., Berglund, 2009; P.M. Greenfield & Subrahmanyam, 2003; Negretti, 1999; Werry, 1996); that is, that FPPs and SPPs are not always adjacent. Disrupted turn adjacency occurs because, following a FPP, an unrelated turn is sent before the SPP can be issued. The following extract, from the start of a chat between Isla and Gavin, demonstrates disrupted turn adjacency.

Extract 3.32: JM/IS13/B: 17-30

1 Isla: back to that profile pic haha  
2 (41.0)  
3 Gavin: haha  
4 (8.0)  
5 Isla: how's work going?  
6 (3.0)  
7 Gavin: I change profile pics like  
8 boxers 😊  
9 (3.0)  
10 Gavin: not working yet

In line 1, Isla mentions Gavin's profile picture, and then in line 5, issues a FPP of a question-answer adjacency pair, asking about his work. Gavin's turn in lines 7-8 is not, though, a response to the question about his work, but rather relates to Isla's comment about his profile picture. The response to line 5 actually appears in line 10. Disrupted turn adjacency is not the same as an insert sequence in spoken interaction. Insert sequences come between the FPP and SPP, but are launched to "address matters which need to be dealt with in order to enable the doing of the base second pair part" (Schegloff, 2007b, p.99). However, in Extract 3.32, the

inserted turn between lines 5 and 10 is not related to the base FPP in line 5, but rather to a *different* prior turn (line 1).

Disrupted turn adjacency, therefore, violates “the relationship of adjacency” which is so central to how “talk-in-interaction is organized and understood” (Schegloff, 2007b, p.15). As Schegloff (2007b) puts it “next turns are understood by co-participants to display their speaker’s understanding of the just-prior turn and to embody an action responsive to the just-prior turn so understood” (p.15). Such an assertion is clearly not true in the case of disrupted turn adjacency. Consider Extract 3.32 again; Gavin’s turn in lines 7-8 is clearly not responsive to Isla’s question in the immediately prior turn. Previous research has suggested that disrupted turn adjacency may result in miscommunication between parties (A.C. Garcia & Jacobs, 1998, 1999). However, it may well be that, as Garcia and Jacobs’ research required participants to interact via an instant messaging programme which they were not familiar with, any miscommunication could be the result of the newness of the programme rather than the interactional context itself. In the data above, we can see that neither Gavin nor Isla express any difficulties in understanding the relationship between turns. I would suggest that this may be a result of their familiarity with online interaction. Therefore, when reading extracts in this thesis, it is important to be aware of disrupted turn adjacency, but also to not treat it as problematic for participants unless oriented to by them in the course of the interaction (Greiffenhagen & Watson, 2005). In Chapter 5, I will further address how FPPs and SPPs are still recognizable as paired actions (see also Bou-Franch, Lorenzo-Dus, & Blitvich, 2012; O’Neill & Martin, 2003)

### **3.3.1 Contiguity**

Sacks (1987) found that there is a strong preference for contiguity in conversation, by which he meant that if a question, for example, is asked, then the answer should come as

close as possible to that question. Sacks notes that if a turn comprises two questions, then “the order of the answers is the reverse of the order of the questions” (p.60), as in the following extract.

Extract 3.33: From Sacks (1987, p.59-60)

1     A:       Well that’s good uh how is yer arthritis. Yuh  
2             still taking shots?  
3     B:       Yeah. Well it’s awright I mean it’s uh, it hurts  
4             once ‘n a while but it’s okay.

As Sacks explains “the first answer is an answer to the second question, and the second answer is the answer to the first question” (p.60). This is how paired actions remain contiguous in spoken interaction. However, there is little explicit research on contiguity except for Sacks’ (1987) paper and therefore it is difficult to know the extent to which these findings may also be true of turns with multiple actions. In this section I will discuss contiguity in Facebook chat, but I will not make any claims about the similarities and differences between spoken and written interaction.

In Facebook chat, actions are sometimes responded to in reverse order, as in the following extract. Joe and Isla are discussing a girl who Joe has been getting texts from after a drunken night out. The interest in this extract is the two questions in lines 1 and 3-4, and Joe’s response in lines 8-9.

Extract 3.34: JM/IS19/B: 188-205

1     Isla:       do you know her name this time lol  
2   (11.0)  
3     Isla:       and would you recognise her if she  
4             walked past you in the street?  
5   (4.0)  
6     Isla:       that would be a good start

7 (56.0)  
8 Joe: wouldn't recognize her but she's  
9 called harriet

In line 1 Isla asks Joe if he knows the name of the girl, and in her next turn asks if he would recognize her. In his response, Joe answers the second question first and then responds to the first question, which shows some similarities with Sacks' (1987) work. However, such responses seem to be rare in Facebook chat. It is more common to respond to each action in turn, as if it were a list, as the following extract demonstrates.

Extract 3.35: JM/IS4/B: 105-122

1 Isla: what you been upto?  
2 (6.0)  
3 Isla: and are you def doing to sheffield?  
4 (52.0)  
5 Callum: not alot, and yes i am indeed, any good  
6 hj at your uni? im hoping to get to the  
7 final

Isla asks one question in line 1 and another one in line 3. These questions are, in contrast to the spoken example, responded to by Callum in the order in which they were sent.

Responding to actions as a 'list' has also been found in other studies of online chat (Nilsen & Mäkitalo, 2010) and in text messages (Hutchby & Tanna, 2008). Such similar findings suggest that the affordance of text remaining on-screen during a written interaction is utilized by participants to respond to messages in the order they are received.

### ***3.3.2 Sequential organization – summary***

In this section, I have shown how, as in other types of online interaction, adjacency pairs can be disrupted in Facebook chat. However, sequences are still organized around adjacency

pairs, even if the paired actions are not adjacent. I have also shown how actions are sometimes responded to in reverse order; that is, with the final action first. However, it is more common for each action to be responded to in order, as if it were a list, possibly due to the persistence of written text on-screen. Contiguity and disrupted turn adjacency will be discussed further in Chapter 5, where I will show how paired actions and the persistence of on-screen text are relevant for managing simultaneous topics.

### **3.4 Discussion**

The aim of this chapter was to describe some of the ‘generic orders’ of Facebook chat. As well as laying the groundwork for later chapters, my aim was to demonstrate how CA can be used for analyzing online interaction. I briefly described turn-taking, action-formation and sequence organization. I have shown how participants’ practices display features of both spoken and written interaction. I have also discussed how some differences between spoken and Facebook chat interaction derive from how participants manage, and in some cases exploit, the technological affordances of the chat system.

This chapter has built upon the previous work on turn-taking in online interaction (e.g., Danby et al., 2009; Garcia & Jacobs, 1999). However, as previous research has tended to focus on multi-party chat or institutional one-to-one interaction, this chapter has further developed our knowledge of how turn-taking works in one-to-one online interaction in a more social setting. In addition, as a result of the collection of screen capture data, it is possible to construct a fuller account of how participants manage online interaction. I have suggested that there are a number of similarities between spoken interaction and Facebook chat, including that the length of conversation, turn size, turn order and what participants say is not decided in advance. Similarly, turn-allocation techniques are used in both forms of interaction. Multi-tasking and concurrent actions can also occur in both, although there are

some differences. In Facebook chat, participants are unaware if their co-participant is multi-tasking, whereas in spoken interaction this information would most likely be audibly or visually available. Based on examination of the data corpus, it appears that turns, TCUs and TRPs are relevant in Facebook chat, although it is acknowledged that this is a contentious issue. Certainly, the practices they describe are different from spoken interaction; for example, there are TRPs, but they cannot be projected during the turn-in-progress.

There appear to be a number of differences in turn-taking practices between Facebook chat and spoken interaction, many of which result from two particular affordances. Firstly, the fact that it is a written medium, where text persists on-screen, appears to influence multi-tasking, gaps between turns, action-formation and also the maintenance of contiguity. Secondly, the separation of message construction and transmission impacts gaps between turns, overlapping writing and also turn-allocation techniques. I found, though, that the technological affordances do not dictate interactional practices. For example, while the persistence of text on-screen allows multi-tasking, it is not a direct result of this affordance but rather is a consequence of how participants make use of that affordance. Similarly, the separation of turn construction and turn sending enables participants to construct their turns in overlap without it needing to be resolved, but the occurrence of overlap is how participants' practices have developed for these particular interactional contingencies.

The turn-taking system in the Facebook chat data I examined appears to be different from spoken interaction. However, Sacks et al. (1974) argued that the turn-taking system was based on 'ordinary' conversation, but other turn-taking models existed, such as those for meetings, interviews, debates or ceremonies. In CA, ordinary conversation is claimed to be "the fundamental domain of interaction and indeed a primordial form of human sociality" (Heritage, 1995, p.394). It is, therefore, argued that "the practices of ordinary conversation appear to have a 'bedrock' or default status" (Heritage, 1995, p.394). Thus, other speech-

exchange systems are seen as different from, but related to, the ‘ordinary’ speech-exchange system. The possibility of discovering systematic differences in speech-exchange systems forms the basis for CA work on institutional talk, which compares ‘institutional’ and ‘ordinary’ talk (e.g., Atkinson & Drew, 1979; Clayman, 1992). To discover other speech-exchange systems, empirical data is examined and compared to the findings from ‘ordinary’ talk to see if there are systematic differences. This chapter has suggested that there may be systematic differences between Facebook chat and spoken interaction, which need to be explored further. I argue, though, that Facebook chat could be considered a speech-exchange system which is similar to, but also in systematic ways, different from, spoken interaction.

I also noted that Facebook chat participants draw on resources from online and offline written interaction. In order to compensate for the lack of facial expressions and vocal cues, participants appear to make use of pre-internet writing conventions, such as the use of punctuation, as well as practices which have developed online, such as acronyms or smilies. Therefore, the practices of Facebook chat have developed from both spoken and written interaction.

In this chapter, I also discussed sequence organization and showed how some turn-taking practices lead to disrupted turn adjacency. As analysts we should not presume that disrupted turn adjacency is problematic for participants, who rarely display trouble following the interaction. I suggest that this highlights how adjacency pairs are used by participants for organizing interaction. Participants commonly respond to messages in the order they were received, as opposed to in reverse order as was suggested by Sacks (1987), although it is acknowledged that this may not actually always be the case in spoken interaction either.

Overall, this chapter has demonstrated that using CA to analyze online interaction allows for a clear understanding of how online interactional practices are similar to, and different from, spoken interaction. CA is not restricted to analyzing ‘conversation’, but rather



by applying the same analytic mentality to online interaction, we can analyze how social order and activities are created by participants in an online context. In doing so, participants orient and attend to the specific interactional contingencies of Facebook chat. In the next chapter I will examine how participants start a Facebook chat, and will compare these openings to findings from spoken interaction. I will specifically explore further how chat openings reflect particular technological affordances. I will also seek to show how openings in other interactional contexts are similar to or differ from those found in Facebook chat.

## Chapter 4:

### Openings

#### 4.0 Introduction

In this chapter I will investigate how users of Facebook chat *start* their chats. Conversation analysts have long been interested in how people enter into a conversation. The focus has been on how speakers indicate that they wish to start a conversation, and also how the opening sequence of that conversation is organized. Most research on openings has used data from telephone calls, with some studies of face-to-face interaction. There are, however, few studies which investigate how a ‘conversation’ is started online and those that do tend to be based on data from multi-party chat rooms.

The aim of this chapter is, then, to investigate how participants start a Facebook chat. I will make direct comparisons between chat openings and those in spoken interaction, specifically focusing on previous CA findings about what is referred to as the ‘canonical’ telephone opening (Schegloff, 1986). However, where relevant I will also show that there are similarities to openings in other contexts. I will focus, firstly, on how participants manage the technological features of Facebook in their chat openings. I will explore how other affordances discussed in the previous chapter are made relevant during opening sequences.

The chapter is organized as follows. In Section 4.1, I will review the findings from previous studies of openings. I will describe the ‘canonical’ telephone opening sequence, and will also review the literature on face-to-face and online openings. This first section will, therefore, provide examples from other opening sequences, to which Facebook chat openings can be compared. In Section 4.2, I will discuss the affordances of Facebook chat, such as the availability of the names of participants that the analysis suggests are relevant for participants when opening their chats. In Section 4.3, I will focus on the summons-answer sequence and

will show that there are systematic differences between the summons-answer sequence in spoken interaction and in Facebook chat. I will describe the three broad types of summons identified in the data. In Section 4.4, I will show how these types of summonses are responded to, and discuss how these responses demonstrate that summonses may be vehicles for more than one action. Finally, I will address how delays in responding to a summons are managed.

#### **4.1 Opening a conversation**

In this section, the previous literature on openings in both spoken and online interaction will be reviewed. Firstly, I will discuss the findings from research on telephone openings. These findings, and particularly the ‘canonical’ opening, will be used for comparing openings in spoken interaction and in Facebook chat. Secondly, I will review the small literature on face-to-face openings. Finally, I will discuss previous research on online openings, and describe how this chapter builds upon and furthers this research.

##### ***4.1.0 Openings in landline telephone calls***

There is a great deal of research in CA which uses telephone calls as data. As such, the bulk of research on openings focuses on telephone conversations (Schegloff, 1979, 1986). Schegloff’s (1968, 1979, 1986) work examined the opening sequences of such calls in detail. He found that telephone openings comprise four sequences, all of which perform particular actions. This organization of sequences has become known as the ‘canonical’ opening. These four sequences perform certain tasks which need to be accomplished before the interaction can proceed, and each sequence occupies a sequential position or slot relative to the others (Hopper, Doany, Johnson, & Drummond, 1990). An example of a canonical telephone opening is shown in Extract 4.1 below.

Extract 4.1: From Schegloff (1986, p.115)

1            ((RING))  
2    R:        Hello  
3    C:        Hello Ida?  
4    R:        Yeah  
5    C:        Hi,=This is Carla  
6    R:        Hi Carla.  
7    C:        How are you.  
8    R:        Okay:.  
9    C:        Good.=  
10   R:        =How about you.  
11   C:        Fine. Don wants to know..

In lines 1-2, the telephone ring and the answerer's first turn comprise the 'summons-answer' sequence, which serves to "mobilize the attention...of their target as a way of launching an episode of interaction" (Schegloff, 2002, p.289). The second sequence is the 'identification and recognition' sequence (lines 3-5), which leads to each participant displaying recognition of the other (Hopper et al., 1990). In lines 5-6 there is an exchange of 'greeting' tokens which incorporates "claims by the parties to the exchange that they have recognized each other" (Schegloff, 1979, p.34). The final sequence, from lines 7 to 11, is an exchange of 'initial inquiries' and their responses (Hopper & Drummond, 1992; Schegloff, 1968, 1979). Once these sequences have been completed, the first topic or 'reason for the call' can be initiated (line 11); this is known as the 'anchor position' (Schegloff, 1986).

Research from other countries including Sweden (Lindström, 1994), Greece (Sifianou, 2002), the Netherlands, (Houtkoop-Steenstra, 1991) and Taiwan (Hopper & Chen, 1996) have found systematic differences between telephone openings in different countries. For example, in the Netherlands and Sweden the answerer will often self-identify in their first turn (Houtkoop-Steenstra, 1991; Lindström, 1994). There are also differences in 'institutional' telephone call openings, such as those to emergency services, where there is often a reduced opening sequence (Hopper & Drummond, 1992; Whalen & Zimmerman,

1987). It has, in fact, been argued that the canonical opening rarely occurs, even in North American phone calls (Hopper & Drummond, 1992). Therefore, the claim that Schegloff's opening is 'canonical' is somewhat controversial.

Schegloff's response is that these are empirical matters; that is, as more data is collected, the canonical opening may be adapted or altered (Schegloff, 1986). Others suggest that the canonical opening encapsulates the actions, such as checking availability and identifying and recognizing the speakers, that must be done before the 'reason for the call' can be introduced (Hopper et al., 1990). Even if the organization of these actions differs according to country or culture, the interactional constraints these actions orient to remain the same; in other words, they show the organization of practices for interacting on the telephone (Hutchby, 2001a). Thus, the canonical model includes all these actions, and where there is deviation, such as sequences being excluded, it is for the participants and the analyst to examine why this occurs.

It is also important to be aware that telephone interaction is, of course, mediated by technology. While Schegloff (2002) argues that the telephone should merely be treated as a tool for analyzing talk-in-interaction, this argument neglects the "relationship between structures of talk-in-interaction and the properties of telephone technology" (Hutchby & Barnett, 2005, p.150). In other words, the canonical opening is "designed to deal with a particular set of interactional issues that are peculiar to landline telephone conversation" (Hutchby & Barnett, 2005, p. 154). These issues include the lack of visual access to one another, meaning that the identity of speakers cannot be established prior to the interaction starting. Equally, a landline telephone encounter is rarely 'accidental'; rather, there must be a 'reason' for the call, even if it is just 'catching up' (Hutchby & Barnett, 2005). Perhaps the nearest candidate for an 'accidental' landline telephone call might be someone dialling the wrong number, although there is still some intended interaction (Hutchby & Barnett, 2005).

However, with the advent of mobile telephones, accidental calls, known colloquially as ‘pocket calls’ or ‘pocket dialling’, are more common. These are the result of a mobile phone being activated whilst in someone’s pocket, and a call accidentally being made to someone in the phone’s electronic phone book. In such cases, interaction could arise ‘accidentally’, although there is no empirical evidence of how such interactions proceed. It is clear, then, that the mediated nature of telephone calls can in some ways affect the interaction. Therefore, it is important to recognize that the practices of a telephone opening are organized to deal with the particular communicative affordances of the telephone.

Thus, while I use the ‘canonical’ telephone opening as a basis for comparison, I am aware that it is based on data from telephone openings, which are designed to deal with particular technological affordances. In Section 4.2, I will address how Facebook chat openings are organized to deal with affordances which are different from those of the telephone. In the following section, I will discuss the research on face-to-face interaction, and suggest some ways in which openings in face-to-face interaction may differ from telephone openings.

#### ***4.1.1 Face-to-face openings***

In the CA literature “openings in face to face encounters are less extensively and systematically described than openings of telephone conversations” (Mondada, 2009, p.1978). The structural organization of face-to-face openings is referred to in the literature, but the assertions made are often intuitive rather than based on data (e.g., Hutchby, 2001a; Schegloff, 1968). There are non-CA studies which have examined openings in face-to-face encounters, but these have often only focused on the embodied actions of opening sequences, or have been ethnographic (e.g., Kendon, 1990; Laurier & Philo, 2006). Other research has focused on strangers (Mondada, 2009) and on institutional settings, such as doctors’ surgeries

(e.g., Heath et al., 2007; Robinson, 1998). In contrast to telephone interaction, then, there is little which examines the openings of interaction between intimates.

However, some research has examined the openings of face-to-face encounters which “involve parties coming together in some private territory to which they were granted access (e.g. a friend’s apartment, a teacher’s classroom)” (Pillet-Shore, 2012, p.376). These encounters involve one individual already being present in a room or a house and greeting others who arrive later. They are also pre-arranged meetings; for example, someone coming to a party. In these encounters, the summons-answer sequence often comprises knocking on a door or ringing a bell and the recipient either vocally or physically (by opening the door) responding to the summons. Pillet-Shore’s (2008, 2012) work also suggests that, in some face-to-face contexts, greetings such as “hi” or “hey” function as summonses and greetings. Thus, in contrast to the canonical opening, there may not be separate summons-answer and greetings sequences; instead a greeting sequence may also be a summons-answer sequence.

The occurrence of an identification and recognition sequence is based on whether the speakers know each other (Pillet-Shore, 2012). Unacquainted participants may be introduced to one another (Svennevig, 1999), but for previously acquainted parties, identification and recognition can be accomplished visually in face-to-face interaction. Thus, from the limited research available, a number of differences between face-to-face and telephone interaction can be discerned, which will be explored further throughout the chapter. However, as there is such limited CA research on face-to-face openings, I will still compare chat openings with the canonical telephone opening. Where relevant, though, I will suggest possible similarities or differences between Facebook chat and face-to-face openings.

#### **4.1.2 Online openings**

One way in which face-to-face openings have been studied is through research on video calls, made via software such as Skype. Licoppe and Morel (2012) analyzed video calls between friends, and noted how identification and recognition could also be done visually. In fact, it became an accountable matter for participants if the face of the caller was not made visible during the opening sequence. There is also limited research on openings in voice-based multi-party chat rooms (Jenks & Brandt, 2013), which found that greetings were often used in new conversations, whereas when a new party entered an on-going interaction, the newcomer simply joined in with the interaction.

Research on text-based online openings (e.g., Rintel & Pittam, 1997; Rintel et al., 2001) focuses predominantly on multi-party online interaction between unacquainted parties. For example, several studies of online forums have explicated the structure of first (or opening) posts and their responses (e.g., Antaki et al., 2005; Stommel & Koole, 2010; Vayreda & Antaki, 2009). The findings suggested that the responses to first posts were often misaligned and posters responded to an action which was not in the original post (Stommel & Koole, 2010). Antaki et al.'s (2005) work on the opening post of a single forum thread explored how the interactional practices found online relate to the affordances of the medium. They noted how the reader of a forum post has to seek out the post in order to read the message. In contrast to a telephone call, then, the opening post in a forum does not interrupt some other on-going activity. Antaki et al. also noted that opening posts often did not include greetings; rather the topic of the thread was launched immediately. While in spoken interaction, lack of greetings or immediate topic-initiation may signal urgency (in calls to emergency services, for example; see Whalen & Zimmerman, 1987), in online forums it simply orients to the technological affordances, where the recipient is both unknown and also already engaged in the interaction through having actively found the post. Thus, the findings



of Antaki et al. suggested that forum openings are designed to suit the particular technological features of online forums.

The structure of multi-party chat rooms more closely resembles Facebook chat than forum interaction, because participants in a chat room must be logged in at the same time in order to interact<sup>10</sup>, which is not the case with forums. Research on openings in chat rooms suggests that the organization of opening sequences is evidence of participants managing the affordances of the software. Rintel et al. (2001) noted that in Internet Relay Chat, when a user logged in, there was an automatic server notification informing currently logged-in members that a new user had logged in. Therefore, a currently logged-in user may have greeted the newly logged-in individual before the new user had a chance to post. Thus, the technological features which enabled an automatic notification also impacted the opening sequence. Users either greeted the whole chat room or greeted each user individually. Rintel and Pittam (1997; see also Rintel et al., 2001) also found that greetings were often used to start an interaction, but a statement or assertion – designed to elicit a response - was also sometimes used. Rintel et al.'s study used CA methods, although they develop their own terminology for explaining how chat room opening sequences proceed. Therefore, this chapter will extend the findings of such research by investigating how openings occur in one-to-one online interaction, and also by explicitly comparing such openings with those in telephone interaction.

It is notable that the research on online openings focuses on multi-party interaction between people who do not know each other offline. Much of what is known about openings in spoken interaction is based on one-to-one interaction between friends, so focusing on anonymous, multi-party online interaction can make direct comparisons more difficult. There

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<sup>10</sup> At the time of data collection, participants in Facebook chat had to be logged in at the same time in order to interact, although this has since changed.

is, though, some early research which examined the development of e-mail conventions (Duranti, 1986). Duranti found that in e-mail exchanges, participants tended to use a greeting token in the first e-mail, but once contact had been established, greetings were rarely used in subsequent e-mails (see also McWilliams, 2001). The role of technology was only briefly discussed, with Duranti (1986) suggesting that the subject line “forces people to think meta- semantically. Addressers are expected to know what the message is about before typing the text” (p.169). Duranti argued that users of new technologies made use of existing conventions learned in some other domain of interaction when establishing practices in the new domain. Danby et al. (2009) have also compared openings from telephone and online counselling. They found that in online counselling the client would often have an extended problem- presentation turn at the outset of the interaction. In contrast to telephone counselling, the counsellors could not acknowledge what was being said during the turn construction. They concluded that the organization of turn-taking in online counselling “had implications for the types of therapeutic strategies used by the counsellors” (p.110). Danby et al.’s research clearly compares the findings from spoken and online interaction in an institutional setting. However, they focused on how the opening of the counselling sequence started, rather than necessarily the opening sequence, such as the summons-answer. Therefore, this chapter will add to such work by examining the opening of a ‘social’ as opposed to an institutional opening sequence, and will examine the summons-answer sequence in detail.

## **4.2 Opening sequences in Facebook chat**

In this section, I will discuss how the organization of opening sequences in Facebook chat display the relevance of its structural affordances. To start an interaction on a landline telephone, a telephone number is dialled, which produces a mechanical ringing (Schegloff, 2002). This mechanical ringing is regarded as the summons. Summonses check the

availability of the intended recipient (Schegloff, 1968), and function as a preliminary to further interaction, such that a completed summons-answer sequence “cannot properly stand as the final exchange of a conversation” (Schegloff, 1968, p.1081).

To start an interaction in Facebook chat, the summoner firstly needs to check, through consulting the chat list, whether their intended recipient is online (Figure 4.1). As discussed in Chapter 2, the green dot next to the names of Facebook friends indicates that the other person is logged into chat. However, this visual indication that someone is online does not necessarily mean they are at their computer or willing to chat.

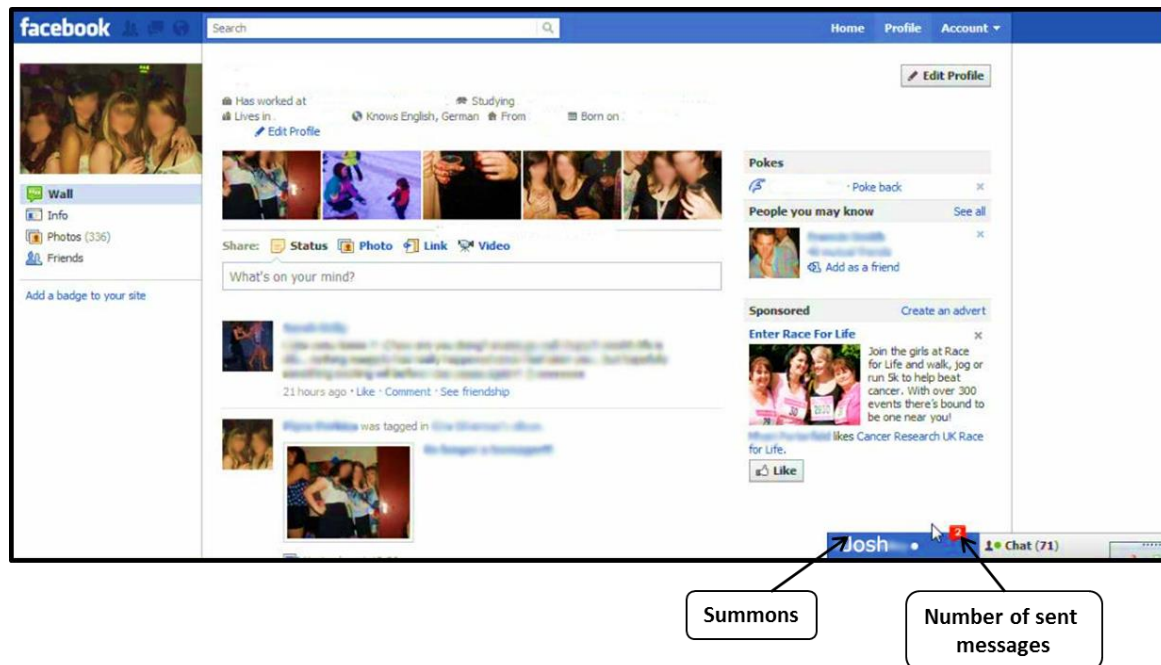
Figure 4.1: Facebook chat list



To start a chat, the summoner clicks on the recipient’s name to open a chat window with them. This action *does not* issue a summons; rather the summoner has to type a message to the recipient, and then send it. The recipient will then receive an electronic summons; a chat window will ‘pop up’ on their screen, potentially accompanied by a short sound (depending on the recipient’s computer set-up). This summons, in the same way as a ringing telephone,

indicates to the recipient that someone wishes to start an interaction with them. Consider Figure 4.2 below for illustrative purposes. It shows Josh summoning Isla.

Figure 4.2: Facebook chat summons



The fact that Josh has summoned Isla is indicated by the appearance on her screen of the highlighted box with his name in it (labelled as ‘summons’). The small bubble which appears above the box informs Isla how many messages have been sent as part of this summons (in this case Josh has sent two messages in quick succession). To issue this summons, Josh has constructed a message in his own chat window and sent it to Isla. Therefore, as well as the summons indicating to Isla that Josh wishes to chat with her, the summons also indicates that the first turn (or in this case, two turns) in the interaction have been issued. So one difference between landline telephone and chat openings, is that the summons is not produced simply through dialling a number. Instead, the summoner in Facebook chat has to construct an action which will function as both a summons and the first turn of the interaction. Another difference is that in chat the first turn of the interaction is issued *before* the sender has checked whether the recipient is actually available. Thus, in Facebook chat, the summons not

only checks the availability of a recipient, but also *always* does another action. The types of actions I identified in the data as summonses will be discussed in Section 4.3 below.

The organization of chat openings also displays the relevance of the identity of participants being available prior to starting an interaction. Consider Figure 4.2 again; Josh's name is visible to Isla as part of the summons. Equally, as Josh has picked Isla's name from the chat list, he knows who he is starting a chat with. In Facebook chat, then, the names of the co-participants are available, and the lack of identification and recognition sequences suggest that participants orient to the underlying principle that "one should not tell one's coparticipants what one takes it they already know" (Goodwin, 1979, p.100).

However, even in telephone interaction there is not always an *explicit* identification and recognition sequence, but rather identification may be accomplished through voice recognition alone (Schegloff, 1979), as in the following example.

Extract 4.2: From Schegloff (1979, p.35)

```
1           ((Summons))
2   A:      Hello::,
3   B:      Hi:::,
4   A:      oh: hi:: 'ow are you Agne::s
```

In this extract, A answers the summons by saying "Hello::,". This turn provides a voice sample for B, who recognizes the answerer as their intended interlocutor. This recognition is demonstrated by the design and prosody of B's turn in line 3. If B were unsure about the identity of the answerer they may either ask if the intended recipient were there, or may offer a 'try-marked' recognition. Try-marked recognitions offer a tentative recognition of the recipient, often indicated by a questioning intonation, or potentially the intended recipient's name. However, the design and prosody of line 3 ("Hi:::") suggests that B has recognized A from their voice alone. Similarly, A explicitly recognizes the caller in line 4, based on the

greeting token alone. This extract therefore demonstrates how identification and recognition sequences can also be absent from telephone calls.

In face-to-face interaction, identification and recognition can be done visually (Schegloff, 1979). There is often no spoken sequence, although introductions may occur if the participants do not know one another (Pillet-Shore, 2011). Equally, in mobile telephone calls, identification and recognition sequences often do not occur, because information about the caller and the recipient may be available (Licoppe, 2010, 2012), as the following extract demonstrates.

Extract 4.3: From Hutchby & Barnett (2005, p.160)

1                   ( (summons) )  
2       N:       Hullo Sammy  
3       S:       Yeah

In this extract, the caller, N, “identifies the *answerer* by name prior to any voice sample announcing the name of the caller” (Hutchby & Barnett, 2005, p.160, emphasis in original). It is possible to identify the answerer prior to them answering the phone, because there is a presumption of a link between a particular person and their individual mobile handset, to the extent that “‘answerer’ and ‘called’ are treated precisely as one and the same” (Hutchby & Barnett, 2005, p.161). In contrast, in landline telephone calls, where the phone belongs to a household, there is the possibility that the answerer is not the intended interlocutor, and thus a ‘gatekeeping’ sequence occurs (Hutchby & Barnett, 2005).

As with mobile telephones, there is a presumption that the owner of the Facebook page will be the one who responds to a chat summons. In order to demonstrate this, consider the following deviant case, where an identification and recognition sequence becomes relevant. Mary starts an interaction with Paul. However, it is actually Violet who is using

Paul's Facebook account, which Mary does not realise until Violet identifies herself.

Extract 4.4: JM/VI/1:1-37

1 Mary: hello  
2 (16.0)  
3 Paul: hello  
4 (9.0)  
5 Paul: this is Violet stalking people  
6 (4.0)  
7 Mary: how are you?  
8 (1.0)  
9 Mary: oh  
10 (5.0)  
11 Mary: hello  
12 (5.0)  
13 Paul: good thank you  
14 (4.0)  
15 Paul: how are you?  
16 (2.0)  
17 Mary: who are you stalking?  
18 (33.0)  
19 Mary: I'm fine thanks  
20 (18.0)  
21 Paul: Laura, she has put some strange pics up  
22 (4.0)  
23 Mary: oh - I think I took her off my FB  
24 (4.0)  
25 Mary: probably a good thing  
26 (4.0)  
27 Paul: yeah  
28 (11.0)  
29 Paul: how are you doing  
30 (17.0)  
31 Paul: been upto anything fun?  
32 (14.0)  
33 Mary: yes, good. not really - big stressful week at  
34 uni this week, so mostly doing uni  
35 (16.0)  
36 Mary: i was only really messaging because it occurs

37                           to me that we have not booked a hire care for  
38                           holiday

In line 1, Mary starts the interaction with a greeting token. Mary's greeting is responded to in line 3 with another greeting token. At this point Mary is not aware that it is Violet rather than Paul with whom she is chatting. It is interesting to note that Violet answers the summons *before* identifying herself, demonstrating the strength of the interactional imperative to provide the second pair part (SPP) of an adjacency pair.

Violet identifies herself in line 5, and provides an account for why she is using Paul's Facebook page. The fact that Violet provides an account offers empirical evidence that there is an expectation that the individual who owns the Facebook page will be the one who answers the summons. Mary acknowledges Violet's identification in line 9 with a change-of-state token "oh" (Heritage, 1984). The position of this token suggests that Mary's inquiry "how are you" at line 7 was constructed and posted before she noticed Violet's identification.

Interestingly, in her next turn Mary re-issues her greeting "hello", despite the fact that the pair has already exchanged greetings in lines 1-3. The reissuing of a greeting token suggests that Mary's first "hello" was designed for Paul, whereas the greeting in line 11 is designed for Violet. This example, therefore, provides evidence that even a greeting token in Facebook chat is designed for a particular recipient, based on the presumption of a link between the Facebook page and a particular person.

If we compare Extract 4.4 with the canonical opening in Extract 4.1, we can see that there are a number of similarities, albeit with some disrupted turn adjacency (see Chapter 3). There is a summons-answer sequence at lines 1-3 and an identification and recognition sequence in lines 5 and 9-11. There is subsequently a greeting token at line 11, which also functions to show recognition of the interlocutor. There is an initial inquiries sequence, which occurs alongside the identification and recognition sequence. Finally, once the opening



sequence has been completed, there is the anchor position at lines 36-38 where Mary introduces the reason for the chat. Overall, then, despite the differences in the technologies of Facebook chat and telephone interaction, the openings can, and do, closely resemble one another. However, there are still differences, most notably the fact that the summons itself is composed of a greeting token, and is not just a mechanical ring. In the following section, I will explore the different types of summonses identified in Facebook chat openings.

### **4.3 The summons-answer sequence in Facebook chat**

The previous section has shown that chat openings reveal a number of structural differences between chat and the landline telephone. The key difference is that in Facebook chat, the chat-starter has to construct and send the first action in order to generate the (electronic) summons. Equally, the identity of both interlocutors being available may impact the opening sequence, as evidenced by the fact that there is rarely an identification and recognition sequence. So a summons indicates not only who is trying to start a chat, but also that the first turn(s) of the interaction is available, thus projecting expectations of a particular type of response (Licoppe, 2012). In this section, I will show the types of summonses constructed in that first turn. In spoken interaction there are a number of classes of summons, such as address terms, courtesy phrases and physical devices (Schegloff, 1968). However, the analysis revealed a broader range of summons devices in the Facebook chat data. I have placed these in three categories: greeting tokens, personalized summonses and topic initiators.

#### **4.3.0 *Greeting tokens***

One type of summons used is a greeting token, which, when in first position, works conventionally as a greeting. In Facebook chat it also functions as a summons, as shown in

Extract 4.5.

Extract 4.5: JM/IS25/B: 1

1        Lucy:        Heyy

Lucy's greeting token "hey" greets the recipient, but also checks their availability to enter into an interaction. Greeting tokens cannot be used as summonses in telephone interaction, because the summons is automatically a mechanical ring. However, in face-to-face interaction, there may be more variety in the type of summons, and so a greeting token could potentially be used (Pillet-Shore, 2012; Schegloff, 1968). Greetings are also used in other online contexts, such as in text and voice chat rooms and in e-mails (Jenks & Brandt, 2013; Rintel et al., 2001). In chat rooms, as with Facebook chat, greetings are used to indicate or check availability to chat. In contrast, in e-mails, greetings are often used, but do not summon or check the availability of the recipient, but merely serve as greetings (McWilliams, 2001; Severinson Eklundh, 2010).

There are, then, similarities between a greeting token used as a summons in Facebook chat and in face-to-face interaction. In both contexts, the greeting token performs two actions: checking availability and greeting. In contrast, in telephone interaction it is not possible to use a greeting token as a summons, as the summons is a mechanical ring.

**4.3.1 Personalized summonses**

The second type of summons identified is one designed specifically for the intended recipient. Of course, speakers in all conversations construct their talk for their recipients, whether for an individual or for a category of people; this is known as "recipient-design" (Sacks et al., 1974, p.727). In landline telephone calls, it is necessary to identify the recipient before designing talk specifically for them (Schegloff, 1979). In Facebook chat, the recipient

is known prior to the interaction starting, so the summons itself can be personalized, as can be seen in Extract 4.6 and Extract 4.7.

Extract 4.6: JM/BE2/B: 1

1 Alf: shexy

Extract 4.7: JM/IS4/B: 1

1 Isla: Cal! 😊

In Extract 4.6, Alf uses a term of endearment to start the chat, whereas in Extract 4.7 Isla uses an address term. They are both personalized for the particular, expected recipient. As with greeting-summonses, these personalized summonses function to establish the availability of the recipient (see also Nardi et al., 2000). Another type of personalized summons identified does not use a specific address term, but rather tends to be playful or humorous, yet still recipient-designed.

Extract 4.8: JM/IS18/B: 1

1 Isla: boo

Extract 4.9: JM/BE5/B: 1

1 Anna: Rowr

Such summonses seem to mimic noises made in spoken interaction. In other words, just as users find ways of representing, say, laughter in written language (see Chapter 3), so these are lexical representations of sounds which may be made to draw someone's attention in spoken interaction. This type of personalized summons is possible in - and most likely based on - summonses in face-to-face interaction.

Personalized summonses are also not available for participants in a landline telephone call, because the summons is always a ringing telephone. However, it has been argued that in mobile phone calls, the summons itself is treated as personalized (Arminen & Leinonen, 2006). This argument suggests that the summons is no longer ‘neutral’, because it conveys information about who is calling (through displaying the name of the caller on-screen, for example; Arminen & Leinonen, 2006; see also Licoppe, 2012). There is, then, a similarity between mobile phone and Facebook chat summonses, as both regularly provide information about the summoner. However, a mobile telephone summons may be *treated* as personalized, but this is done by the recipient. For example, the recipient may have the caller’s number in their phone, or may have assigned a ringtone to a particular caller (Licoppe, 2012). In Facebook chat, on the other hand, it is the chat-starter who personalizes the summons. There may be similarities here with face-to-face interaction, where identification and recognition can occur visually, and so more personalized summonses, such as address terms are also possible (Lerner, 2003).

#### **4.3.2 Topic-initiation**

The final type of summonses identified is topic-initiation, as shown in Extract 4.10 and Extract 4.11

##### Extract 4.10: JM/KA13/B: 1

1      Katie:      fish ate my feeeeet!

##### Extract 4.11: JM/IS3/B: 1

1      Bobby:      Going out?

These topic-initiations function firstly as a summons, but also effectively treat the first turn as

the ‘anchor position’, where the first topic is initiated following an opening sequence (Schegloff, 1986). The turns take similar forms to those found in other research on topic-initiation (e.g., Bolden, 2008; Button & Casey, 1985), which will be discussed further in Chapter 5. The key thing to note is that these topics have been launched *before* the availability of the recipient has been established, yet are initiated without any preliminaries or greetings. Syzmanski, Vinkhuyzen, Aoki and Woodruff (2006) found that in ‘push-to-talk’<sup>11</sup> mobile radio, participants often initiated the topic in the first turn of the interaction, rather than using a greeting. They suggested that this form of summons may orient to the recipient’s availability. Topic-initiation in the first turn of Facebook chat may provide evidence that participants treat chat interaction as being similar to the ‘continuing state of incipient talk’ described by Schegloff and Sacks (1973). As they explain “persons in such a continuing state of incipient talk need not begin new segments of conversation with exchanges of greetings” (p.325). If a conversation lapses between two people, say, watching television they do not need to launch a greeting sequence when they re-start their interaction. Syzmanski et al. (2006) suggest that topics are initiated as summonses when the summoner knows that the recipient is likely to be available. However, when reciprocity is in doubt, speakers are more likely to issue a summons and wait for a response. In Facebook chat, the screen capture shows us that these topic-initiations in first turn come from ‘new’ chats, rather than occurring after some brief lapse in interaction. Thus, although the chat-starter can see that the recipient is online, they do not know whether that recipient is definitely available before issuing their turn.

In spoken interaction, the opening sequence functions as a “re-constitution of the

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<sup>11</sup> Push-to-talk mobile radio allows one speaker access to a channel, and others are designated as listeners. A speaker has to press a button to be able to speak, and no other participant can speak whilst that user has the button pushed.

parties' relationship - who they are to one another, the current state of the relationship, and the relationship between the current, incipient occasion of interaction and prior one(s)" (Schegloff, 1986, p.140). Schegloff found that in landline telephone calls, the relationship between parties is often made relevant during the identification and recognition sequence. However, in face-to-face interaction it can be through the form of the greeting that "participants inescapably display a stance toward 'who' they 'are' to one another" (Pillet-Shore, 2012, p.375). In Facebook chat the summons itself can indicate an orientation to the relationship between the parties. In Extract 4.10 and Extract 4.11, Katie and Bobby presume that their recipients will know to what they are referring, and no further information is provided for the recipient to respond adequately to these topic-initiations.

As with the other types of summonses, topic-initiations in first turn are not structurally possible in landline telephone interaction. However, the first topic can be initiated in the caller's first turn (Schegloff, 1979).

Extract 4.12: From Schegloff (1979, p.30)

1 F: Hello:  
2 R: whenwillyoubedone.

In this extract, following a summons-answer sequence, the topic is initiated in the caller's first *spoken* turn. However, there is a clear difference between this example and topic-initiation in Facebook chat, as here the topic is initiated *after* the availability of the recipient has been ascertained. Topic-initiation in first turn may be possible in face-to-face interaction, although due to the lack of empirical evidence, it is difficult to know to what extent this occurs. However, Licoppe and Morel's (2012) study of Skype and mobile video calls does not provide any evidence of topic-initiation occurring in first turn in those interactions. Topic-initiations without prior greetings are also found in other types of online interaction,

such as chat rooms, e-mails and online forums (Antaki et al., 2005; Duranti, 1986; Rintel et al., 2001) as well as in push-to-talk radios (Szymanski et al., 2006). The design of these topic-initiating turns will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

### 4.3.3 *Combinations*

The types of summonses above are sometimes combined in one turn. There are also examples of combinations occurring over two turns, although these are not discussed here. In Extract 4.13 a greeting is combined with an initial inquiry and in Extract 4.14 a greeting is combined with a topic-initiation.

#### Extract 4.13: JM/IS31/B: 1

1 Isla: heya 😊 how's it going!

#### Extract 4.14: JM/BE1/B: 1-2

1 Al: hey, do any of you guys do either human  
2 biology, psychology or sport?? 😊

These opening turns are vehicles for a number of different actions. Firstly, they check the availability of the recipient, and so are summonses. Secondly, they greet the recipient, but then do another action, such as initial inquiries (Extract 4.13) or topic-initiation (Extract 4.14). Of course, combining different actions in a single turn is not uncommon in telephone or face-to-face openings. For example, line 5 of the canonical opening (“Hi,=This is Carla”) includes both a greeting and an identification. However, in Facebook chat such combinations of actions occur *as* the summons, as opposed to later in the opening sequence. As will be seen in the next section, combinations of actions have implications for how the recipient responds.

#### **4.3.4 Summonses in Facebook chat - summary**

The organization of openings demonstrates how participants' practices attend to the affordances of Facebook chat. The first turn of the interaction functions as a summons, but the chat-starter has to construct an action in order to send the summons. The variation and personalization of summonses shows participants attending to, and also exploiting, this affordance. I have identified a variety of summonses, which I placed into three broad categories: greetings, personalized and topic-initiation, although these could also be combined. I noted how in landline telephone calls, the summons is always a ring, but in face-to-face interaction, the summons may also be personalized. However, because of the lack of empirical evidence, it is difficult to know the extent of such practices. In mobile calls the summons can be personalized by the *recipient*, to provide more information about the identity of the caller. The findings of this section, therefore, show how participants design their summons to manage the affordances of Facebook chat. It is interesting to note that, despite the first turn being a summons, which is sent before the availability of the recipient has been ascertained, I do not find any examples of explicit availability checks. In other words, participants do not send messages like "are you there?", although of course it is possible for this to occur. In the following section, I show how recipients respond to summonses.

#### **4.4 Answers**

In this section, I will show how the answers to the three types of summonses are fitted to the action of the summons. In the canonical opening the answer to the summons is "hello". This answer indicates availability and also provides "a voice sample for recognition by those who might recognize it" (Schegloff, 1986, p.123). However, other findings have suggested that the answer to a summons may be an explicit self-identification, in the form of a name or telephone number (Houtkoop-Steenstra, 1991; Lindström, 1994), as in the following extracts.



Extract 4.15: Holt:1988/2/11/1-4 (Modified Standard Orthography)

1                    ((Summons))  
2     Pauline: Three two nine seve'n eigh[t?  
3     Lesley:    [.t.hhhh Oh hello Pauline: .h  
4                    is your husb'n the:re,

Extract 4.16: From Lindström (1994, p. 246)

1                    ((Summons))  
2     A:             Karin Berggren?=  
3     C:             = Hi Kari:n

In these extracts, the answerers identify themselves in the first turn. Thus, in Extract 4.15, from a corpus of British telephone calls, the answerer self-identifies by giving their telephone number. In Extract 4.16, from a corpus of Swedish telephone calls, the caller self-identifies by providing her name. Similarly, in some institutional contexts, such as emergency call-centres, the person who answers the phone often provides institutional identification.

Extract 4.17: From Whalen & Zimmerman (1987, p.174)

1                    ((Summons))  
2     D:             Mid-City emergency

In this extract, the answerer responds to the summons by identifying themselves according to their institution as an emergency call centre (see also Koole, 2011b). Therefore, despite the canonical opening suggesting that “hello” is the standard answer to a telephone summons, data collected in other countries and contexts suggests that there is more variability in answers to summonses than in the summonses themselves, even in landline telephone calls.

In mobile phone calls, answers to summonses are similarly heterogeneous (Arminen, 2005). Recipients may respond with “hello” as in landline calls (Hutchby & Barnett, 2005), but may also recipient-design their answer to the caller, as in Extract 4.18.

Extract 4.18: From Hutchby & Barnett (2005, p.159)

1                    ((Summons))  
2    K:            Simone

Following the summons, the recipient ‘K’ answers with the name of the caller “Simone”. K is able to do this because the identity of the caller is available on the screen of the mobile telephone (Licoppe, 2010; see also Schegloff, 2002 on ‘caller ID’). There is very little literature on the answers to summonses in face-to-face contexts. Schegloff (1968) suggests that tokens such as “what?” or “yeah” may be used, but no empirical evidence is provided. Other studies (e.g., Butler & Wilkinson, 2013; Lerner, 2003) have examined summonses in on-going interaction, and find that embodied action, such as a shift in gaze, may also function as an answer to a summons.

In Facebook chat, the summons is also a vehicle for another action (such as greeting, initiating topic and so on). Therefore, in their answer, the recipients can, and most commonly do, respond with a relevant SPP which orients to that action. In the following sections, I will discuss the answers which occurred for each of the categories of summons discussed in Section 4.3 above.

**4.4.0 Answering a greeting summons**

Across the data, greeting token summonses were generally answered with a greeting token, as in Extract 4.19.

Extract 4.19: JM/IS24/B: 1-3

1     Isla:        heya 😊  
2                                   (11.0)  
3     Lucy:        Hii 😊

Isla has issued a greeting token, followed by a smiley, as a summons to Lucy. Lucy responds in line 3 with another greeting token and also mirrors Isla's smiley. Thus, Lucy's turn both answers the summons and provides the conditionally relevant SPP. To some extent, then, this reflects the opening sequence in landline calls, in which a greeting token also provides an answer to a summons. However, in landline calls a greeting token produced as the answer to a summons is not treated *as* a greeting but rather as an indication of the availability of the recipient (Schegloff, 1968). Thus, in the canonical opening, an exchange of greeting tokens occurs later in the interaction (Extract 4.1, lines 5-6), despite the exchange of "hello" that occurs after the summons.

In contrast, when mobile telephone summonses are answered with "hello", it is treated by recipients as being a greeting and not simply answering a summons (Arminen, 2005). In face-to-face interaction, greeting summonses also tend to be responded to with a greeting token (Pillet-Shore, 2012). It seems, then, that answering a greeting summons with another greeting shows more in common with face-to-face interaction than with the canonical landline telephone opening.

**4.4.1 Answering a personalized summons**

When answering personalized summonses, recipients show an orientation to the interactional imperative to provide a relevant SPP, as the following extracts show.

Extract 4.20: JM/IS4/B: 3-6

1 Isla: Cal! 😊  
2 (15.0)  
3 Callum: isla

Extract 4.21: JM/KA5/B: 1-3

1 Chriss: babe  
2 (60.0)  
3 Katie: hi babe!

In Extract 4.20, Isla summons Callum using his name, to which Callum responds with the reciprocal use of Isla’s name. The responses to such address terms in spoken interaction include “what” (Schegloff, 1968) or an embodied gesture, such as looking at the speaker (Butler & Wilkinson, 2013; Lerner, 2003). Findings from mobile phone calls suggest that summonses where the caller identity is known are sometimes answered with a continuer such as “yes” (Arminen & Leinonen, 2006). In Facebook chat, embodied gesture or a shift of gaze is clearly not possible; something must be written to indicate availability. In Extract 4.20, Callum responds to this address term by using a reciprocal address term, thus explicitly matching the summons.

In Extract 4.21 Chriss’s term of endearment “babe” is responded to by Katie with a greeting, and also a reciprocal use of the term “babe”. Katie therefore treats the summons as greeting-relevant, as well as responding to the personalized term. Thus, participants in Facebook chat will try to fit their answer to the first turn, but may also orient to the other implicit actions of the turn.

When the summons mimics face-to-face interaction, the response may also do so, as in the following extract.

Extract 4.22: JM/IS18/B: 3-15

1      Isla:      boo  
2                                  (61.0)  
3      Joe:      argh.

In this extract, Isla summons Joe with a term which could potentially be seen as mimicking a way of ‘scaring’ someone in face-to-face interaction; that is, sneaking up on them and shouting “boo”. Joe’s response is, therefore, fitted to such a summons, as it could be read as a written representation of a ‘scream’ (which may be the response to being sneaked up on). The participants are therefore mutually orienting to the playful nature of the summons, but are also drawing on their shared knowledge of how such openings might occur in face-to-face interaction. This example also demonstrates how participants orient to providing a fitted SPP, even when the FPP is ironic or playful.

There are, then, similarities between the answers to personalized summonses in face-to-face and mobile phone openings. In fact, it would seem that the canonical answer of “hello” is rarely used as merely an answer to a summons outside of landline telephone openings. Rather, it is used as a greeting and also as a means of indicating availability.

**4.4.2 Answering a topic-initiator summons**

When a topic-initiator is used as a summons, the recipients also provide the relevant SPP of the sequence, and respond to the topic itself.

Extract 4.23: JM/KA13/B: 3-13

1      Katie:      fish ate my feeeet!  
2                                  (160.0)  
3      Rob:      did you like?

Katie's first turn "fish ate my feeeet!" functions as both a summons, and also initiates the first topic of the interaction. Rob's response indicates his availability to talk, but also responds to the topic at hand. As noted in Section 4.3.2, one job that gets done in openings is "the constitution or reconstitution of the relationship of the parties for the present occasion" (Schegloff, 1986, p.113). It is possible to see this in Rob's response to Katie's topic-initiation. Rob treats this summons as unproblematic and displays his understanding of the topic in his answer. He does not hold Katie accountable for not issuing a greeting or making initial inquiries, but nor does he ask for more details of the topic at hand (such as why fish had eaten her feet!). The response, therefore, suggests some prior knowledge about this topic, so no further elaboration is required. Topic-initiation in first turn will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

#### **4.4.3 Answering a combined summons**

When different types of summonses are combined, it has implications for how the answer is constructed. In some cases only one action is responded to, as in Extract 4.24 below, where the recipient, Zandro, provides an answer to the *second* action of the turn, but not to the first.

##### Extract 4.24: JM/IS31/B: 1-3

1     Isla:         heya 😊 how's it going!  
2                                 (18.0)  
3     Zandro:     Very well! And you?

Isla's summons includes both a greeting and an initial inquiry. However, in line 3 Zandro does not offer a return greeting, but only responds to the initial inquiry. Zandro's response may demonstrate an orientation towards maintaining contiguity (see Chapter 3). However, in other examples in the corpus, both actions are responded to.



3     Emily:     i am in the library "working" too...  
4                                 (11.0)  
5     Isla:       hey 😊  
6                                 (11.0)  
7     Isla:       just started semester two so don't actually  
8                                 have much to do 😊

Emily's summons in line 1 is a topic-initiation, which she subsequently follows with another turn related to the same topic. Isla's initial response is not, though, related to the topic itself, but rather is a greeting token. Isla's answer in line 5 suggests an orientation to Emily's turn as a summons, which is then responded to with a greeting token. In this sense, it is similar to the canonical answer to a summons in landline telephone calls ("hello"). In her subsequent turn in lines 7-8 Isla responds to the topic. Isla's responses therefore separate the two actions accomplished in the first turn and respond to them separately. Emily does not issue a return greeting token, but rather continues the on-topic chat (not shown). In other words, both participants orient to Isla's turn at line 5 being the SPP of a summons-answer sequence, rather than the FPP of a greeting sequence. An alternative reading is, of course, that both parties are orienting to Emily's turn at line 1 being greeting-relevant, and thus Isla's turn in line 5 is a response to *that* implicit action.

In the following extract, the summoner is held, albeit jokingly, accountable for the form of their summons, which is treated as potentially greeting-relevant.

Extract 4.27: JM/IS19/B: 3-22

1     Joe:        urgh  
2                                 (82.0)  
3     Isla:       what a greeting!!  
4                                 (7.0)  
5     Isla:       nice to speak to you too



At line 1 Joe issues a playful summons to Isla, which appears to make relevant how Joe is feeling; in other words, potentially mimicking a vocalized distress sound. In line 3 Isla explicitly treats the first turn in the conversation as greeting-relevant, despite Joe's turn not being a greeting token. The fact that Isla inspects this turn for how it does a greeting, rather than anything else, suggests that she is orienting to the action most commonly accomplished in first turn. Thus, Isla treats this turn as a greeting, but one which she makes jokingly accountable.

Extract 4.27 is the only case in the corpus where the summons is topicalized and potentially treated as accountable by participants. However, the mere fact that the summons is potentially accountable is a demonstrable difference between telephone and Facebook chat interaction. In other words, a telephone summons is a ring, so the form of the summons is unlikely to be treated as problematic. It may be that summonses in face-to-face interaction could become accountable, although there is no empirical evidence to support this assertion. In making a summons accountable, participants may orient to how interactions are opened in other contexts. It is, though, rare to find such sequences; on the contrary, despite the broad variety of different ways in which an interaction can be opened in Facebook chat, the majority of summonses are non-problematic. However, one matter that is more often treated as accountable is the length of time that it takes for the recipient to respond to the summons.

#### **4.5 Delay in answering a summons**

As with all adjacency pairs, the production of a summons makes an answer conditionally relevant. If the SPP, or answer, is not forthcoming, then its non-production can be deemed a "noticeable absence" (Schegloff, 2007b, p.20). If a telephone ring is not answered the inference may be that no one is at home. In other cases, it may be inferred that the summoned is "giving the cold shoulder", "sulking", "insulting" and so on (Schegloff, 1968, p.1086). In

the following example, the time taken to answer a telephone summons is made accountable.

Extract 4.28: From Schegloff (1986, p.119-120)

1 Jerry: ((Hello))  
2 Irene: u- Jerry?  
3 Jerry: Yeah,  
4 Irene: Irene.  
5 Jerry: Oh=hello Irene.  
6 Irene: Hi:. I j[us-  
7 Jerry: [I w'z just thinking about you.  
8 Just this moment.  
9 Irene: Uh huh. The- the phone rang so lo:ng. I uh was  
10 worried.  
11 Jerry: Oh?  
12 Irene: Mm hmm,  
13 Jerry: .hh Well I jus- I just got i:n oh: not five  
14 minutes ago. from the hospital

In this example, the length of time taken to answer the summons is topicalized by Irene in lines 9-10. At lines 13-14, Jerry provides an account for why there were multiple rings prior to him answering.

In Facebook chat, despite the existence of long gaps between messages (see Chapter 3), inferences about the availability of the recipient are still available on the non-production of an answer to a summons. Thus, while a response may not be expected immediately, some response is generally expected (Woerner et al., 2007), and if none is forthcoming it may be inferred that the recipient is not at their computer, or it could be seen as a snub or just rude (Martey & Stromer-Galley, 2007). This expectation of a response is demonstrated in the following extract, from the start of a chat between Gavin and Isla.

Extract 4.29: JM/IS14/B : 1-17

1 Isla: big bro!  
2 (1.0)  
3 Isla: 😊  
4 (1813.0)  
5 Gavin: heyyyyyyyyy  
6 (3.0)  
7 Gavin: !!!!!!  
8 (92.0)  
9 Isla: Gav!!  
10 (4.0)  
11 Isla: finally talkign to me! 😊  
12 (33.0)  
13 Gavin: sorry  
14 (2.0)  
15 Gavin: i was away  
16 (2.0)  
17 Gavin: now i am back!

In this extract, Isla issues a personalized summons at line 1. However, Gavin does not answer for nearly thirty minutes. Isla orients to this gap at line 11, and in doing so makes an ironic inference about the lack of an answer; that is, that Gavin was not talking to her. This turn leads to Gavin providing an account at line 15 for his lack of response, disputing Isla's candidate inference, by stating that he was away. In other words, the non-answer of a summons is treated as a 'noticeable absence' and becomes an accountable matter for the participants. Such examples are rare in the data despite there often being gaps between a summons and answer which would be considered quite significant in spoken conversation, demonstrating further how the meaning and significance of gaps are negotiated between participants.

The possibility of responding to a summons long after it has been posted demonstrates the relevance of the persistence of text on-screen. This affordance means that the summons is not time-constrained. Thus, while a ringing telephone will eventually cease ringing, in

Facebook chat the summons remains live for the recipient indefinitely. Once a summons has been issued the summoner cannot 'take it back'; it is available for the recipient to view when they return to their computer. In contrast, in a landline telephone call, a caller could potentially put the phone down before the summons is answered. If the recipient has not heard the call, they may never know there was a summons. Of course, with the development of technological features such as answerphones, mobile phones and the British '1471' service (where the recipient is advised of the last number which called), it is now possible to know whether there has been a summons in your absence. It is possible that Facebook chat summonses could be compared to leaving an answerphone message asking the recipient to return the call. However, in that case, the recipient still has to issue a summons themselves in order to respond. The most obvious comparison is with sending a text message (Hutchby & Tanna, 2008), where a text may be sent, received and read but not necessarily responded to immediately. There is no research that focuses on delays in answering an opening summons in face-to-face interaction, although Butler and Wilkinson (2013) note how, in an on-going interaction, a response to a summons may be pursued by re-issuing the summons until reciprocity is mobilized. The key finding here, then, is that the answer to a summons can be significantly delayed in Facebook chat. This can, as with spoken interaction, become an accountable matter. Participants can start an interaction without knowing if the recipient is available, because the persistence of text on-screen means the messages can be read and responded to at a later time.

One affordance of Facebook chat, and other instant messaging programmes, that is often mentioned in the literature (e.g., Nardi et al., 2000), is that it is possible for the recipient to view the summons and choose not to respond. The summoner does not know whether or not the summons has been seen, but could merely infer that the recipient is not available to chat. However, I saw no evidence in the screen capture data of this affordance being used,

demonstrating that we should not presume that any particular technological affordance will be of relevance to participants. What it also demonstrates is the strength of the interactional imperative to respond to a summons.

#### **4.6 Discussion**

The aim of this chapter was to examine the organization of Facebook chat openings and to analyze whether they differ from openings in spoken interaction. The findings suggest that participants' methods of opening chats attend to a number of features of the software. So, to issue a summons, the chat-starter has to construct a first turn and send it. This contrasts strongly with the canonical opening, where the summons is a mechanical ring, although there may be more similarities with openings in face-to-face interaction.

The lack of identification and recognition sequence shows an orientation to the availability of the interlocutor's name before the chat starts. While this appears to be a systematic difference between the canonical opening and Facebook chat, in practice, there is not always an identification and recognition sequence in telephone calls. Certainly with the advent of mobile telephones and 'caller ID', the identity of the caller may be known, and so identification and recognition sequences may be rarer; this suggests that the practices of participants develop to suit the technological affordances. Despite the paucity of evidence on face-to-face interaction, the empirical evidence that exists suggests that an identification and recognition sequence is rare, as identification is accomplished visually. Thus, participants in Facebook chat conduct all the actions necessary to begin an interaction, although in most cases, the identification and recognition sequence will be redundant as the technology makes the identity of interlocutors available. The lack of an identification and recognition sequence also reveals the presumption that the owner of the Facebook page will be the one responding to the summons.

I focused on the summons-answer sequence and noted how this sequence also attends to the specific affordances of Facebook chat. A chat-starter has to construct a message to issue a summons, but does not necessarily know whether their interlocutor is definitely available. The persistence of text on-screen referred to in Chapter 3 is also relevant here; this affordance means that the chat-starter can send a summons knowing that the recipient can read it many minutes or even hours after it is sent.

Thus, the fact that summonses vary greatly show how practices have developed that orient to those two affordances. I identified three broad categories of summons used in Facebook chat: greetings, personalized and topic-initiations. I noted that these types of summonses are not available in mobile or landline telephone calls. However, it is possible that there is much more variation in face-to-face interaction. A topic-initiator summons may provide evidence about how participants use Facebook chat, treating it as a continuing state of incipient interaction. The first turn of the interaction is a vehicle for a number of different actions, all of which can be oriented to by recipients. However, the answers to summonses are most often fitted to the form of the summons itself.

Overall, then, in this chapter I have identified a number of differences between openings in Facebook chat and those in spoken interaction. However, as has been stated throughout this chapter, we must be wary of making too many claims about such differences, as so much of what is known about openings is based on telephone calls. The fact that telephone calls are also mediated interactions impacts the opening sequence. It may be that if we were to examine face-to-face openings in more detail, we would see a great number of similarities between Facebook chat and spoken interaction. I have shown that, while we should not *presume* any technology impacts an interaction, if we examine the interaction itself, we can see how affordances are made relevant in the interaction by recipients. So, if we ignore the impact the technology may have and how practices are organized around that, we

risk making erroneous claims about how interaction works. Therefore, I argue that the overwhelming focus on telephone openings and the lack of research on face-to-face openings means that making claims about the differences and similarities between spoken and online interaction is remarkably difficult.

The next chapter (Chapter 5) develops the findings from this chapter, by investigating topic-initiation in more detail. We saw in Section 4.3.2 that topic-initiation sometimes occurs as a summons in Facebook chat. In the next chapter I will discuss how these topic-initiating first turns are designed, and will show further how we should attend to the impact of technological features on interaction.

## **Chapter 5:**

### **Management of topic in Facebook chat**

#### **5.0 Introduction**

In this chapter, I will discuss how participants in Facebook chat manage ‘topic’ in their chats. There is a view that the ‘topic’ of a stretch of talk; what the talk is ‘about’, is not a concern of conversation analysts. However, as I shall show in this chapter, CA analyzes topics in terms of how speakers *do* topical talk, and thus how ‘topic’ is a participant’s concern. For example, speakers might orient to being on or off topic, to changing topic, or to a topic being delicate. By investigating the practices involved in introducing and closing topics, for example, we can demonstrate how such practices display a participant’s concern with the topic of a particular stretch of talk. The organization of topic-initiation, topic change and topic closure have been studied in spoken interaction. However, there have been few, if any, studies which have examined the practices of topic management in online interaction in detail. This chapter, therefore, aims to give a broad overview of topic management in Facebook chat, and to show how it is similar to, and different from, spoken interaction.

The outline of this chapter is as follows. In Section 5.1, I will discuss the approach to studying topic in CA and how this differs from other approaches. In Section 5.2, I will address topic-initiation in Facebook chat. I will expand on the findings of the previous chapter on openings, and examine the design of topic-initiating turns which occur in the first turn of the interaction. I will suggest that Heritage’s (2012a, 2013) work on ‘epistemics’, that is, how people assert knowledge claims through talk, is integral to understanding topic-initiating turns. Once I have explained the role of epistemics in talk (Section 5.2.1.0), I will show how topic-initiating turns can be analyzed in terms of both their action and the



epistemic stance they embody. Sections 5.2.1.1 and 5.2.2 will show how the design of these topic-initiating turns may be related to their position in the interaction; that is, they occur before the availability of the recipient has been ascertained. The final section on topic-initiation (5.2.3) will discuss the positioning of topic-solicitation in Facebook chat.

In Section 5.3, I will discuss how topics are changed in Facebook chat, and will show that the practices found in chat are remarkably similar to those found in spoken interaction. In the final part of this chapter (Section 5.4), I will address how participants maintain coherence when there are two simultaneous topical threads in the interaction. While there may be some parallels with spoken interaction, the occurrence of ‘simultaneous topics’ seems to represent a systematic difference between spoken and written interaction. While other studies of online interaction discuss problems of coherence, it is rarely analyzed in terms of topical coherence; equally, it is rarely studied in one-to-one interaction. I will demonstrate how participants use ‘tying techniques’ (Sacks, 1992) to keep track of different topical threads, and therefore maintain coherence. I will argue that participants do use sequential organizational methods for maintaining coherence, but that topic – understood as *how* turns are linked to one another – is also important in online interaction. This chapter will therefore offer a new account of the maintenance of coherence in online interaction, by suggesting that topical coherence is also important.

## **5.1 The analysis of topic**

There is a tendency to think that talk is organized according to what any stretch of conversation is ‘about’ (Schegloff, 2007b). Indeed, there are many linguistic and discourse analytic studies which analyze the topic of a piece of talk or text unproblematically (e.g., Bischooping, 1993; L.J. Garcia & Joannette, 1997; Zellers & Post, 2011). CA, on the other hand, shows that talk is organized into sequences of *action*, and should be analyzed according

to what it is *doing* rather than what it is *about* (Schegloff, 2007b). Schegloff (1990) notes that there are problems with analyzing topic, as it is difficult to determine the topic of any single sentence, let alone a stretch of talk (Schegloff, 1990). For example, consider what the following extract could be glossed as being ‘about’.

Extract 5.1: JM/BE1/B: 17-28

1 Beth: yeah ok then! sport sec for sport science  
2 basically? Do departments even have  
3 sports secs?! Ha  
4 (18.0)  
5 Al: yea, well we do, so it would look pretty good  
6 on a CV 😊  
7 (13.0)  
8 Al: not all departments have them but we do  
9 (35.0)  
10 Beth: yeah doubt ours does. don't really know  
11 anything that goes on in my department tbh.  
12 but good luck anyway!

If we were to rely on “common-sense understandings of what a topic is ‘about’” (Stokoe, 2000, p.187), we could suggest that this extract is about university departments, sport secretaries, Beth’s knowledge of her department, what looks good on a curriculum vitae (CV), or Al’s chances in the election. We can see, then, even from this short extract, that being able to characterize what talk is ‘about’ poses analytic difficulties (Schegloff, 1990). These analytic difficulties are also apparent in research which attempts to identify a topic linguistically. For example, some studies use experiments where participants have to identify the ‘correct’ topic of a piece of text (e.g., Taboada & Wiesemann, 2010; Todd, 2005; Watson Todd, 2011). Unsurprisingly, participants often have difficulties doing so; these are usually attributed to problems in reading comprehension or in how the text was structured (e.g., Giora, Meiran, & Oref, 1996). A competing explanation is that there is “no such thing as the

one correct expression of the topic for any fragment of discourse. There will always be a set of possible expressions of the topic” (G. Brown & Yule, 1983, p.74). Topic is, in other words, mutually produced and negotiated by participants throughout their talk (G. Brown & Yule, 1983).

In contrast to other discursive approaches to topic, the analytic focus of CA is the “mechanics of topicality production” and how topic “is achieved by participants, turn-by-turn in their talk” (Stokoe, 2000, p.187). Thus, CA focuses on aspects such as how topics are initiated (Button & Casey, 1984, 1985), closed (Holt, 2010) or changed (Jefferson, 1983; Maynard, 1980). There is also research into how participants orient to being ‘on’ or ‘off’ topic (Stokoe, 2000). However, CA does not entirely disregard what ‘the topic is’. For example, most CA research will ‘gloss’ what a piece of data is ‘about’ or what participants have been talking about prior to an extract starting. Consider the following quote, introducing an extract, from Schegloff (2007b).

In the following episode, a family is having a discussion at dinner on the night of the 1988 national elections, and the 10-year-old son – Sig – is telling about something he said at school that day about the presidential race (p.109).

While the analytic focus of the subsequent extract is expansions, this introduction provides the reader with a gloss on the ‘topic’ of the talk (Sig telling the family something he said about the presidential race), as well as some context about the speakers (Sig is ten years old and is the son in the family) and about the situation (it is the night of the 1988 national elections). Such glosses exist in almost any CA paper, suggesting that although the analytic focus is on action and sequence, there is still *some* concern with what the interaction is *about*, even if just as a means of contextualizing an extract.

Significantly, the analytic focus of CA has not always been purely on sequence organization. Sacks (1992) was originally extremely interested in what talk was ‘about’. This interest is perhaps exemplified by his work on membership categorization. Membership categorization analysis (MCA) is concerned with “how descriptive and inferential aspects of the social world are generated and recognised” (Butler et al., 2009, p.4). Thus, the interest is in how participants might describe someone as, for example, a girl, a woman, a wife, a mother, a whore and so on, and the potential inferences which may be drawn from the particular description (see, for example, Edwards & Stokoe, 2004; Hester & Eglin, 1997; Schegloff, 2007a; Stokoe & Edwards, 2007; Stokoe, 2009, 2011a). MCA, therefore, “gives researchers with a primary interest in categorial or ‘topical’ (e.g. gender, sexuality, ethnicity, identity), rather than sequential, issues an empirically tractable method for studying those issues as members’, rather than analysts’, categories” (Stokoe, 2012, p.278). In other words, the interest is, to some extent, in the *content* of the interaction although, as Stokoe (2012) notes, the content cannot be divorced from its sequential placement. The parallel development of MCA was, then, one way in which ‘topic’ – in terms of the content of the talk, not merely the action - was of importance to Sacks.

Sacks also made topic relevant through his descriptions of ‘tying techniques’. Tying techniques include things like the repetition of words, ‘pro-terms’ and ‘pro-verbs’, which are “selected to fit what came before” (Maynard & Clayman, 2003, p.184). Tying structures “prove the basic means by which participants display to one another that and how they understood the talk to which they are responding” (Sidnell, 2010, p.224). As far as Sacks was concerned, topic was an artefact of tying structures; that is, in order to link one utterance to another, the participants have to tie certain words in their utterance to words in the prior utterance. By producing such links, speakers signal, firstly, their understanding of the prior turn, and secondly, that they are ‘doing’ topic talk (Svennevig, 1999). The final section of

this chapter will draw upon these observations about tying techniques, and will show how they are relevant for maintaining coherence when there are simultaneous topics in a single stretch of chat.

So, CA treats topic in a quite different way from how it is treated in many other fields of discursive or linguistic study. The focus is on how speakers initiate, change or link topics, rather than analyzing specifically what speakers are talking ‘about’. However, as I have discussed, there is some interest in how the content of talk may be relevant, through MCA and Sacks’ analysis of tying techniques. In the next section, I will discuss the design of topic-initiating turns in the first turn of Facebook chat, before moving on to discuss topic change and simultaneous topics.

## **5.2 Topic-initiation in Facebook chat**

In this section, I will discuss how topic-initiating turns in Facebook chat are sequentially placed and designed. In the previous chapter, I showed how topics are sometimes initiated in the first turn of the interaction. These topic-initiations also function as a summons and occur before the availability of the recipient has been established. As was shown in the previous chapter, topic-initiation in first turn cannot occur in telephone interaction, although could possibly happen in face-to-face interaction. To the best of my knowledge, online topic-initiation – particularly in first turn – has not been studied before using a CA methodology. Before examining topic-initiation in Facebook chat, I will review the findings of research on topic-initiation in spoken interaction.

### **5.2.0 *Topic-initiation in spoken interaction***

Research on topic-initiation in spoken interaction has identified three ways of designing topic-initial turns: ‘topic-initial elicitors’, ‘itemised news enquiries’ and ‘news

announcements' (Button & Casey, 1984, 1985). Topic-initial elicitors are turns which do not offer a topic for discussion, but allow the recipient to nominate a topic (Button & Casey, 1984), as in the following extract.

Extract 5.2: From Button & Casey (1984, p.177)

1 S: → What's new  
2 G: We::ll? 't °lemme see° las' ni:ght, I had the  
3 girls ove[r?]

In this extract, S uses a topic-initial elicitor in line 1 "what's new". This turn does not offer a particular topic for talk, but allows the recipient to respond with any topic they see as appropriate. In this case the recipient topicalizes an event that occurred the previous night. Schegloff (2007b) describes these turns as topic solicitations rather than topic-initial elicitors, although the two categories broadly correspond.

Topic-initiating turns can also be directed at a particular item, as in the following extract; Button and Casey (1985) called these itemised news enquiries.

Extract 5.3: From Button & Casey (1985, p.11)

1 C: → How's yer foot?  
2 A: Oh it's healing beautifully!

In this example, the topic initiating turn is directed at something in particular which is in the recipient's domain of knowledge (the recipient's foot). By asking the question, C displays some knowledge of a particular problem, but also orients to their missing knowledge. In other words, C knows about the problem with A's foot, but does not know how it is now. Schegloff (2007b) describes these types of turns as 'topic proffers' and finds that they tend to be in question format, thereby allowing the recipient to embrace or reject the topic. Schegloff

(2007b) also notes that when a topic is proffered, “the topic may concern something which is specifically, differentially, or even exclusively within the recipient’s experience” (p.170).

The final type of topic-initiating turn found in spoken interaction is a news announcement. These involve speakers reporting on an activity that relates to them.

Extract 5.4: From Button & Casey (1985, p.21)

1 S: Uh:m, yer mother met Michael las’ night

In this example, the news announcement reports on something in the speaker’s domain. However, the recipient has some knowledge of the topic; that is, S does not have to explain who “Michael” is. News announcements are produced as partial reports where there is more to be told (Button & Casey, 1985). Schegloff (2007b) describes these as unilateral topic nominations, where the speaker actively launches or further develops a topic. Schegloff (2007b) argues that when a unilateral topic nomination is issued, the recipient cannot reject the topic, as they can with topic proffers.

There are, then, three different types of topic-initiating turn, which can be described using either Button and Casey’s or Schegloff’s terminology. In this chapter, I will use Schegloff’s terminology of topic ‘solicitations’, ‘proffers’ and ‘nominations’. This is simply because the term ‘itemised news enquiry’ seems to restrict this category to specific ‘news’ items, whereas ‘topic proffer’ refers more generally to initiating a topic by asking a question about something related to the recipient (Svennevig, 1999). While I organize this section according to these categories, I will argue that we could potentially gain analytic purchase by considering these types of topic-initiators not as distinct categories, but rather as a continuum. I will suggest that we could consider two aspects when deciding where the topic-initiating turn would sit on the continuum. The first would be the action of the turn, such as whether it was an informing or a question. The second would be the epistemic stance displayed in the

turn, that is, how knowledgeable the speaker displays themselves to be in relation to the recipient.

The focus of the subsequent analysis is specifically on topic-initiation in first turn, as this is a practice on which there is limited literature relating to either spoken or online interaction. While there is some research on topic-initiation in institutional contexts (e.g., Campion & Langdon, 2004; Newman, Button, & Cairns, 2010; Stokoe, 2000), and some based on semi-experimental settings (Maynard, 1980; Maynard & Zimmerman, 1984; Svennevig, 1999), none of this research has looked at how topic is initiated in the very first turn of the interaction. There is limited research on topic-initiation in first turn in *online* interaction. Antaki et al. (2005) noted that topics in online forums can be initiated without an opening sequence and this is not treated as accountable by respondents. They argued that this is because participants do not receive a forum message unannounced, but rather the reader has sought out the forum and the thread. In contrast, Facebook chat summonses do appear unannounced and could potentially be interruptive (see also Licoppe, 2010). There may, therefore, be particular interactional contingencies which must be managed when initiating topics in first turn. The following sections will examine topic proffers, unilateral topic nominations and topic solicitations.

### ***5.2.1 Topic proffers***

In this section I will focus on what can broadly be described as topic proffers, as these were the most common topic-initiating turn identified across the dataset. I will show how some topic proffers can be ambiguous, particularly in terms of whose domain of knowledge they are in. I will suggest that by studying the epistemic stance (Heritage & Raymond, 2005; Heritage, 2013; Raymond & Heritage, 2006) of a topic-initiating turn, we might better unpack issues around knowledge domains. Equally, I will show that topic-initiating turns are



vehicles for some other action. Finally, I will suggest possible reasons why topic proffers are the most prevalent topic-initiating turn.

Consider Extract 5.5 and Extract 5.6, which are two examples of topic being initiated in the first turn of the interaction.

Extract 5.5: JM/KA12/B: 4-11

1 Katie: what are you wearing to talias wedding?  
2 (13.0)  
3 Nadia: i have no fricking idea!!!

Extract 5.6: JM/BE1/B: 1-4

1 Al: hey, do any of you guys do either human  
2 biology, psychology or sport?? 😊  
3 (29.0)  
4 Beth: yeah georgina does psychology, why?

Using the definitions provided by Schegloff, these two examples would be defined as topic proffers. In Extract 5.5, the topic-initiation is in interrogative format, and includes a question mark at the end (see Chapter 3), suggesting it is an information request. It also relates to something in the recipient's domain - what they are wearing to a wedding. Similarly, in Extract 5.6, Al requests information through an interrogative and also includes a question mark. The question is about something in Beth's domain of experience; that is, the subjects that she and her friends study. Both of these examples request information about a matter which is clearly in the recipient's domain of experience. The recipients 'accept' these topic-initiations by responding with talk on that topic.

These examples of topic proffers are, then, clearly designed in the same way as those in spoken interaction. As one aspect of understanding topic-initiations relates to the role of knowledge, it may be relevant to consider the ever-growing body of work in CA on

epistemics (Heritage, 2012a, 2013; Koole, 2010, 2012; Stivers, Mondada, & Steensig, 2011b). Sidnell (2012) comments that “epistemics are absolutely centrally implicated in the organization of topic” (p.59). Before continuing to discuss the design of topic-initiating turns, I will briefly outline the work on epistemics in interaction.

### **5.2.1.0 Epistemics**

In this section, I will provide an overview of the work on epistemics; in subsequent sections I will draw on this work when analyzing topic-initiating turns. Epistemics<sup>12</sup> refers to the organization of ‘knowledge’ in interaction; that is, how knowledge is owned, claimed, displayed, disputed, shared and so on. In other words, epistemics is about “the knowledge claims that interactants assert, contest and defend in and through turns at talk and sequences of interaction” (Heritage, 2013, p.370). Speakers will negotiate who has primary rights to know or claim some bit of information through their talk. Heritage (2012a, 2012b) argues that we can distinguish between epistemic *status* and epistemic *stance*. Epistemic status relates to how people recognize one another as more or less knowledgeable about a particular domain. So, for example, a patient may recognize that their doctor is more knowledgeable concerning some form of treatment for a medical condition. Epistemic *stance*, on the other hand, relates to how people display or position themselves in terms of their epistemic status. So, a patient may position themselves as knowing more about some form of treatment than they really do. In this chapter, I will focus on how epistemic stance is displayed in interaction.

When displaying epistemic stance, speakers may occupy a position on what Heritage

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<sup>12</sup> There is other literature both within and outside CA which has examined knowledge in interaction. Labov and Fanshel (1977) developed a classification of knowledge and discussed ‘A-events’ and ‘B-events’. Pomerantz (1980) distinguished between ‘Type 1 knowledge’ and ‘Type 2 knowledge’. Heritage (2013) notes that his work on epistemics has been built on these previous studies, but it is his terminology which is used throughout this chapter.

(2013) calls an “epistemic gradient” (p.4). Thus, participants may position themselves as relatively knowing or unknowing with regards to some matter at hand. Heritage (2013) describes those who position themselves as knowing as “K-plus” (K+) and those who are less knowledgeable as “K-minus” (K-). The extent to which a speaker is K+ or K- varies “in a slope from shallow to deep” (Heritage, 2012b, p.4), and this is encoded in the interaction itself (see Heritage & Raymond, 2005, 2012; Heritage, 2012b; Raymond & Heritage, 2006 for details of how epistemic rights are managed in interaction). Heritage (2012a), somewhat controversially, argues that sequences of interaction are driven by imbalances in epistemic stance, and that these imbalances are levelled out throughout the sequence. While I do not wholly subscribe to epistemics as *the* driving force of interaction, in the following section I will show how epistemics works alongside action construction to engender a sequence. Despite Heritage’s claims that epistemics are omni-relevant in interaction, it has most often been written about in reference to assessments (e.g., Heritage & Raymond, 2005; Raymond & Heritage, 2006) and questions (Heritage & Raymond, 2012). In the following section I will further this knowledge by analyzing online interaction and topic-initiation using epistemics.

### ***5.2.1.1 Epistemics and topic proffers***

In this section, I return to the analysis of the topic proffers first seen in Section 5.2.1, and will discuss them in relation to epistemics. Consider again, Extract 5.5 and Extract 5.6. In Extract 5.5, Katie’s topic-initiation “what are you wearing to Talia’s wedding?” is a request for information in an interrogative format (see Heritage, 2012b). It presumes that Nadia has primary access to, and rights to know about, her choice of outfit. Katie, therefore, positions herself as K- relative to her recipient. Similarly, Al’s topic-initiation in Extract 5.6 “do any of you guys do human biology, psychology or sport??” is also done from a K- position in an interrogative format. There is clearly, though, some presumption of shared knowledge on the

part of the questioner in both extracts. For example, Katie displays her knowledge that Nadia will be attending Talia's wedding. Similarly, Al displays his knowledge that Beth and her friends are studying at university. In other words, they design their turns to display what they *know* but also what they do not know. We can see, then, that these turns are slightly further up the epistemic gradient than, for example, "are you going to Talia's wedding?" or "Do you study at university?" Such displays of knowledge make relevant and maintain participant's identities and their relationships to one another (Raymond & Heritage, 2006); that is, how well the participants know each other and how well they are expected to know each other.

So far, then, I have shown that topic proffers tend to be information requests in an interrogative format. They also position the recipient as K+ relative to the questioner. Topic proffers also, of course, do another action - they initiate a topic. It is, of course, possible to initiate a sequence of interaction without explicitly initiating a topic (i.e., 'hello' or some sort of gesture, such as a wave could initiate a sequence without initiating a topic). Let us now consider a more ambiguous topic proffer, both in terms of action and epistemics. The following extract, between Josh and Isla, comes from the opening of a Facebook chat, and Josh's turn at lines 1-2 is the first turn of the interaction.

Extract 5.7: JM/IS21/B: 2-9

1 Josh: forgot to ask how ure trifle was the  
2 other day!!!  
3 (28.0)  
4 Isla: it was goodd thank you 😊

In this extract, Josh's topic-initiation "forgot to ask how ure trifle was the other day!!!" is treated by Isla as an information-seeking question, where Josh is in a relatively unknowing position in terms of how the trifle was (although, of course, he knows that Isla made a trifle). However, the design of the turn is more declarative, and does not include question marks at

the end of the turn as the previous examples did (see Chapter 3, Section 3.2). It could, potentially, have been treated as an apology for not asking about her trifle. In which case the epistemic stance displayed becomes more complicated, as presumably both Josh and Isla know that Josh has not asked about the trifle. Such difficulties potentially underline Drew's (2012) concern that we should not regard epistemics as "the default explanation for everything and anything" (p. 66). In the case of Extract 5.7, Isla herself *treats* Josh's turn as being a question from a K- position. One potential reason for treating the turn in this way is that it is also a topic-initiation, so Isla orients to this by *doing* topical talk. In other words, she responds to the turn by taking up the topic, as opposed to simply accepting the implicit apology.

So, instead of seeing topic proffers as doing one action - initiating topic - we can also analyze them as vehicles for other actions. It is important at this point to address the matter of where these turns occur in the interaction. These topic proffers occur in the *first turn* of the interaction, *before* the speaker has checked their recipient's availability; in fact, they function to check availability. There is, then, some imperative to engender a response from the recipient. It may be that the design of these turns functions to mobilize a response (Stivers & Rossano, 2010). Firstly, questions "make [a] response actionable and accountable" (Heritage, 2012b, p.3). Secondly, by requesting information from a K- position, the recipient is projected as more knowledgeable and, therefore, responsible for providing the information (Heritage & Raymond, 2012; Stivers, Mondada, & Steensig, 2011a). Thus, in a context where the recipient's availability is not yet established, chat-starters may design their turns to best mobilize a response *when* the recipients become available.

This section has examined topic proffers and has introduced the notion of epistemics as a means of analyzing these turns. I have suggested that topic proffers are the most common topic-initiator used in first turn, because they function to mobilize a response from a

potentially absent participant. The following section will address unilateral topic nominations, which are, in the literature, a different form of topic-initiating turn

### 5.2.2 *Unilateral topic nominations*

In this section, I will show how unilateral topic nominations can also be analyzed, as topic proffers were, with regards to their action and the epistemic stance displayed. In the first turn of Facebook chat, I found significantly more examples of topic proffers than what would be described as ‘unilateral topic nominations’ or ‘news announcements’. Unilateral topic nominations tend to be assertions about something in the speaker’s domain (Button & Casey, 1985; Schegloff, 2007b). With topic nominations the recipient must ‘accept’ or topicalize the talk (Svennevig, 1999). The following two extracts show the clearest examples from my corpus.

#### Extract 5.8: JM/IS10/B: 3-10

1 Isla: there's a letter for you at the union 😊  
2 (6.0)  
3 Dave: oi oi!  
4 (2.0)  
5 Dave: interesting?

#### Extract 5.9: JM/KA13/B: 3-13

1 Katie: fish ate my feeeeet!  
2 (160.0)  
3 Rob: did you like?

The topic-initiation in Extract 5.8 provides information in declarative format and, despite the letter being *for* Dave, Isla is in K+ position, because she knows about the letter, whereas her recipient does not. In Extract 5.9, which was also seen in the previous chapter, Katie

nominates a topic for talk (line 1), but the topic is not developed further in this turn. In other words, it is produced as a partial report, where there may be more to tell (Button & Casey, 1985). Line 1 is an assertion, where Katie is clearly in a K+ position (they are her feet and she knows what has happened to them!). However, as was discussed in the previous chapter, the response suggests that Rob is not an unknowing recipient. Thus, rather than simply analyzing this turn in terms of whose domain of knowledge the topic is definitively in, I instead suggest that this is understood as being on a continuum, and the depth of the epistemic gradient is simply quite shallow.

It is notable that in the Facebook chat data it is rare to find pre-sequences in the first turn. In spoken interaction, a preliminary “projects the occurrence of some type of turn or action” (Schegloff, 1980, p.107) and can include utterances such as “can I ask you a question?” or “can you do me a favour?” (Schegloff, 1980). Preliminaries may also mention what will be involved for the recipient if they give a go-ahead response (Schegloff, 1980). The only examples of pre-sequences identified in the data corpus are Extract 5.6 (shown previously) and the following extract.

Extract 5.10: JM/KA9/B: 1-6

1     Katie:       do you want to see the dress i bought for  
2                   my cousins wedding?  
3                               (29.0)  
4     Ella:        Yep, but I'm on my phooooone  
5                               (138.0)  
6     Katie:       ahh ok, so not nooow!

The topic-initiation in lines 1-2 functions as a preliminary, serving to check whether Ella is available to view the dress Katie has bought. The preliminary is understood by Ella as indicating that she will need to open a webpage or a photograph. However, it also provides further information about the content of the webpage or photograph. If the preliminary were

designed as, for example, “do you want to see something?” a much longer sequence would be projected, establishing the recipient’s availability and explaining the “something”. Providing more information in a preliminary allows the recipient to take up or decline the topic, depending on their availability. As it transpires, Ella is unable to view the dress as she is accessing Facebook chat from her phone.

The first turn in Extract 5.10 still proffers a topic for talk (the dress for the wedding). It is in question format, but it also *explicitly* checks the recipient’s availability to do a particular action. Katie is, in Heritage’s terms, K+ in terms of her knowledge of the dress. However, she is K- in terms of knowing whether Ella is available to view the dress. Thus, the epistemic imbalance which drives the sequence forward at this point is Katie’s lack of knowledge about Ella’s availability.

In this section, I have discussed how topic nominations are rarer in first turn, potentially because they are less mobilizing; in other words, there is potentially less implication that a response is required from a topic nomination. I have also described how pre-sequences, which explicitly check the recipient’s knowledge or availability, are rare in Facebook. So far, I have argued that topic proffers and unilateral topic nominations could be analyzed according to the epistemic stance displayed, which can be understood as a potential driver of the sequence. We can also understand these topic-initiating turns as being vehicles for a number of actions. They summon the recipient, initiate topic, launch some other action (such as questioning), and may encode an epistemic stance. In the final section on topic-initiation, I will show how this analytic approach can also be applied to topic-solicitations.

### **5.2.3 Topic solicitation**

Topic solicitations invite “the *recipient* to propose a topic” (Schegloff, 2007b, p.170, emphasis in original; see Extract 5.2). The key finding from my data is that topic solicitations



*do not* occur in the first turn of a Facebook chat. Rather, they are used following some sort of opening sequence, as in spoken interaction (Button & Casey, 1984). The following extract shows an example of topic-solicitation.

Extract 5.11: JM/KA2/B: 1-12

1 Chriss: ey up  
2 Chriss: babe  
3 (275.0)  
4 Katie: babetron!  
5 (2.0)  
6 Katie: how are you?  
7 (224.0)  
8 Chriss: I'm okay thanks, how are you?  
9 (61.0)  
10 Katie: I'm good thank you!  
11 (3.0)  
12 Katie: → gossip?  
13 (30.0)  
14 Chriss: erm, I should have another date with  
15 Chloe this Friday

This extract includes an opening sequence which bears similarities to the canonical opening explored in Chapter 4. There is an exchange of greetings, followed by an initial inquiries sequence. It is worth noting that both Katie and Chriss ask “how are you?” (lines 6 and 8) which suggests that Turkle’s (2011) assertion that people do not ask “how are you?” in online communication is not borne out by empirical evidence. At line 12, Katie issues the topic solicitation “gossip?” This turn is in question format, and Katie positions herself as K-, as she does not know whether Chriss has anything newsworthy to report. Line 12 does not nominate a particular topic for talk, but rather allows Chriss to nominate a topic.

As noted above, topic solicitations are never used as summonses in the Facebook chat

corpus. One possible reason for this is that there would be competing conversational preferences if a participant were to do so. Topic solicitations are generally used by the current speaker to demonstrate that they have no particular reason for initiating the interaction (Bolden, 2006, 2008). Thus, if a topic solicitation were used in the first turn, it could potentially indicate that the chat-starter has no ‘reason for the chat’. However, if opening sequences are curtailed in some way (for example, emergency services calls), it can often mean that there *is* a reason for the call (Hopper et al., 1990). Thus, in Facebook chat, a topic-initiation in first turn can indicate that this is the ‘reason for the chat’. If this first turn was then a topic solicitation - which suggests that there is no reason for the chat - there would be competing interactional preferences in play. This may explain the interactional reasons for avoiding topic solicitations in first turn.

#### **5.2.4 *Topic-initiation - summary***

The findings presented so far on topic-initiation build on those from Chapter 4. Topic-initiation in first turn cannot occur in telephone interaction, although could potentially occur in face-to-face interaction. I have suggested that topic-initiating turns in first turn are designed to mobilize a response, which is particularly important as these turns also function to check the availability of the recipient. I have also shown that, while the categorization of topic-initiating turns is useful, it may be possible to refine this categorization by also considering action and epistemics. I suggest that this categorization could be considered a continuum, where topic-initiating turns can move up the epistemic gradient even within each category. In other words, a topic proffer could either be done from a relatively unknowing or knowing position. Therefore, I argue that we can examine how the various actions and epistemic stance work together to drive the interaction and mobilize a response.

### 5.3 Topic change

In this section, I will examine how topic change occurs in Facebook chat. I will show how, despite being a written medium, there are remarkable similarities between topic change in online and spoken interaction. I will briefly discuss stepwise topic change, before moving on to discuss more disjunctive topic shifts. I will explore how we can demonstrate empirically that a change of topic has occurred, and will also address the sequential positioning and practices of topic change.

#### 5.3.0 *Stepwise topic change*

In spoken interaction, topic change most commonly occurs in a stepwise fashion (Jefferson, 1984), which involves “connecting what we’ve been talking about to what we’re now talking about, though they are different” (Sacks, 1992, Vol 2, p.566). The following extract demonstrates stepwise topic transition in Facebook chat.

#### Extract 5.12: JM/IS27/B: 89-150

1     Isla:         so tell me more about these £20 tickets!  
2                     (30.0)  
3     Sam:         well there just the regular seats,  
4                     probably with a little obstruction for  
5                     parts of the show  
6                     (6.0)  
7     Sam:         but that is why they are only £20  
8                     (9.0)  
9     Sam:         the next ones up are £35 i think  
10                    (9.0)  
11    Sam:         but bare in mind we’d have to get to and  
12                    from London  
13                    (24.0)  
14    Isla:         hmm but if you book in advance you can  
15                    get such cheap seats  
16                    (8.0)

17 Isla: and even cheaper if you go by bus...  
18 (15.0)

19 Isla: I know that might not be so much fun but  
20 we did worse on E&E  
21 (12.0)

22 Sam: we did indeed  
23 (8.0)

24 Sam: i didn't mind the coaches though  
25 (16.0)

26 Sam: when we had the 3 seats at the back it  
27 was good  
28 (1.0)

29 Isla: I don't mind either  
30 (6.0)

31 Isla: so I think that's a plan!  
32 (6.0)

33 Isla: yeah coz you can also have more leg room  
34 (13.0)

35 Sam: yeah that was also good  
36 (33.0)

37 Sam: i have some terrible photos from those  
38 coach journeys  
39 (27.0)

40 Isla: haha plus some amazing ones!  
41 (54.0)

42 Sam: are your camera batteries charged ready for  
43 when we go out?  
44 (74.0)

45 Isla: erm nope!  
46 (6.0)

47 Isla: are you going out tomorrow>?  
48 (8.0)

49 Sam: i'm not sure yet.  
50 (29.0)

51 Isla: I don't think I want to  
52 (8.0)

53 Sam: i have a deadline on friday, and i've  
54 nearly finished the work, but i may have  
55 to use tomorrow to do some more  
56 (2.0)

57 Isla: quite liking the look of my bed at the

58                   moment!  
59                   (5.0)  
60    Isla:        yeah course  
61                   (10.0)  
62    Sam:        you may feel like it after your exam!  
63                   (7.0)  
64    Sam:        😄

At the beginning of this extract, Sam and Isla are discussing buying tickets to go and see a show in London. By the end they are discussing their exams. However, there is no clear topic change; rather there is a stepwise progression. At line 19 Isla uses an example of what Sacks (1992) described as a tying technique to tie her comment using the indexical “that”, to her prior turn about getting a bus. In the second part of her turn, Isla links two instances of travelling by coach. Sam subsequently topicalizes “those coach journeys” at lines 37 and 38. In lines 42 and 43 the conversation shifts from photographs taken on a coach journey to taking photographs on a night out. Isla then topicalizes the night out (line 47) by suggesting that she may not actually go out (lines 51 and 57-58). Sam links this to her exam (line 62), and subsequent turns also focus on Isla’s exam (data not shown). Thus, the conversation shifts gradually from discussing a potential trip to London to discussing exams, with each turn related to some prior turn (Svennevig, 1999). Although some previous non-CA work has suggested that online topic shifts tend to be abrupt or disjunctive (Lambaise, 2010), I found that stepwise topic shifts were the most common way for participants to change topic in my data. However, this could be a result of the differing types of interaction, as previous work has tended to be based on asynchronous rather than quasi-synchronous online interaction. In the following section, I will discuss how participants mark disjunctive topic shifts, before going on to discuss the sequential placement of topic change in Facebook chat.

### 5.3.1 *Disjunctive topic change*

A disjunctive topic change occurs when there are no ties between one turn-at-talk and the prior. In other words, “the participants work to disengage one turn’s fit with a prior turn and so produce a demarcation of one topic from the next” (Holt & Drew, 2005, p.40; see also Svennevig, 1999). Disjunctive topic shifts are sometimes described as ‘unilateral’ topic shifts; that is, where one party tries to change the topic abruptly (West & Garcia, 1988). However, a recipient can resist the attempted change by producing talk on the original topic (Svennevig, 1999). As will be shown in Section 5.4 below, in Facebook chat an attempted unilateral topic shift can, occasionally, result in simultaneous topical threads. In this section, though, I will focus on how participants mark a topic change, but will also discuss how we can establish whether an unmarked topic change has occurred.

In both spoken and online interaction, speakers may mark a change in topic and by doing so they orient to disjunctive topic changes as potentially accountable. As shown in the following extract, a change in topic often involves a misplacement marker (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973) which displays an orientation to disjunctive topic change as potentially accountable.

#### Extract 5.13: JM/IS5/B: 29-50

1     Callum:     lol take that as an inuendo if you  
2                     like too hahahaha  
3                     (43.0)  
4     Isla:         hahah you are soooo sick!! 😊  
5                     (19.0)  
6     Callum:→     anyway, me and javelin 😊

In Extract 5.13 the prior sequence is closed using the discourse marker “anyway”, which shows that the subsequent utterance is a new topic or course of action (I. Park, 2010). The

discourse marker “anyway” is also used in spoken interaction, as in the following extract, where three students have drifted away from the task of constructing an essay plan.

Extract 5.14: From Stokoe (2000, p. 196)

1 C: our college is metropolitan [huh ha huh  
2 B: [eh ha ha  
3 A: [ha heh ah yeah right  
4 more (.) conservative than Maggie Thatcher  
5 → erm (0.3) anyway we’re drifting (.) the split brain  
6 ops

In line 5, A reorients to the topic at hand, and characterizes the prior talk as “drifting”. The previous topic is closed using “anyway”, before the speaker shifts back to the task. Other examples of misplacement markers found in both my data and in spoken interaction include “by the way”, “oh” and “so” (Bolden, 2006, 2008; Schegloff & Sacks, 1973). Thus, in both spoken and Facebook chat interaction, participants orient to the potential accountability of changing topic abruptly by marking the topic change.

When a topic change occurs as unmarked it may become accountable. The following example shows an unmarked topic shift being responded to in a way which, while not entirely clear, evokes some notion of accountability for changing topic in this way. Prior to this extract, Isla and Callum have been chatting about Callum having nothing to do, so he would have time to visit Isla. The topic change occurs in line 4.

Extract 5.15: JM/IS5/B: 451-459

1 Isla: soo you have plenty time and money to  
2 come visit me 😊  
3 (31.0)  
4 Callum:→ did you pull at refreshers lol??  
5 (6.0)

6 Isla: what?  
7 (1.0)  
8 Isla: no

At lines 1-2, Isla jokingly suggests that Callum should come and visit her. After a 31-second gap, Callum asks whether she “pull[ed] at refreshers” (in other words, whether she ‘got together’ with a guy). Isla’s response - “what?” (line 6) - does not appear to show trouble understanding the question as she then goes on to respond in her next turn. Rather, Isla appears to make this abrupt topic change an accountable matter. The extract above, therefore, shows that unmarked disjunctive topic changes may well be oriented to by the recipient.

Unmarked topic changes can be recognized by examining whether new referents, with no links back to prior turns, have been introduced (Svennevig, 1999). Thus, we can examine the indexical expressions used to see if, and how, one turn is linked to some prior turn (Maynard & Clayman, 2003). In Extract 5.15, there are new referents in line 4 - “pulling” and “refreshers” - which have not been used, or implied, in the prior turns. These new referents suggest that there is a change of topic. In the following extract, Isla and Gavin are discussing Gavin’s difficulties saving money, and how he needs a “boring girl” to help him with this.

Extract 5.16: JM/IS13/B: 172-188

1 Isla: haha a boring girl will keep you on track! 😊  
2 (11.0)  
3 Gavin: hahahaha  
4 (7.0)  
5 Gavin: she will put me to schlaufen!  
6 (1.0)  
7 Gavin: hahahahah  
8 (1.0)  
9 Gavin: 😊  
10 (21.0)  
11 Isla: hehe



12 (47.0)  
 13 Gavin: → i soooooo want to do Wimbledon this year  
 14 (5.0)  
 15 Gavin: u ever done it?  
 16 (2.0)  
 17 Gavin: i soooooooooo want to

In line 13, the new referent “Wimbledon” is used, and there is also a change in person reference (Enfield, 2013) from talking about “she” (the boring girl) to “I” (himself). We can argue that, as “no elements of the composition need to be understood in terms of what has been said just beforehand” (Holt & Drew, 2005, pp. 40-41), a topic change has occurred

In this section, then, I have discussed how, as in spoken interaction, topics are most commonly changed in a stepwise fashion in Facebook chat. I have also shown how both marked and unmarked disjunctive topic changes occur. When misplacement markers are not used, it is necessary to examine the turn’s referent to evaluate whether there has been a topic change. Topic change occurs in spoken interaction in specific sequential positions, where parties work together to collaboratively change topic. In the following section, I will examine the sequential position of topic change in Facebook chat.

### ***5.3.2 Sequential positioning of topic change***

It has been found that there are specific sequential environments in which topic change occurs (Maynard, 1980). New topics tend to be initiated following opening sequences, pre-closings or topic-bounding turns (Button & Casey, 1984, 1985). In this section I will focus specifically on how topic is changed at topic-bounding turns, where participants work collaboratively to disengage from one topic and launch a new one (Holt & Drew, 2005). These are also sometimes known as ‘multi-lateral’ topic shifts (West & Garcia, 1988). There are a number of practices, including laughter, the use of figurative expressions, repetition and summaries, which are used when parties collaboratively change topic (Drew & Holt, 1995,

1998, 2005; Holt, 2010; Svennevig, 1999). Topic change also occurs when transfer of speakership has been unsuccessful, leading to lapses in talk (Maynard, 1980). In this section, I will demonstrate that there are many similarities between the practices of topic change in Facebook chat and in spoken interaction. Consider Extract 5.16 again (shown below as Extract 5.17).

Extract 5.17: JM/IS13/B: 172-188

1 Isla: haha a boring girl will keep you on track! 😊  
2 (11.0)  
3 Gavin: hahahaha  
4 (7.0)  
5 Gavin: she will put me to schlaufen!  
6 (1.0)  
7 Gavin: hahahahah  
8 (1.0)  
9 Gavin: 😊  
10 (21.0)  
11 Isla: hehe  
12 (47.0)  
13 Gavin: i soooooo want to do Wimbledon this year  
14 (5.0)  
15 Gavin: u ever done it?  
16 (2.0)  
17 Gavin: i soooooooooo want to

Following Gavin's response to Isla in line 5, he adds a turn consisting solely of typed representations of laughter particles, followed by a smiley (line 9) (see Chapter 3). Isla's response at line 11 also comprises solely laughter particles. Such turns are "essentially backward looking", as they do not add any further topical information (Holt, 2010, p.1524). Heritage (2012a) suggests that once no new information is added to an interaction, the topic "withers" (p.46; see also Jefferson, 1983). In other words "the topic is not abandoned, but no additional life is contributed" (Heritage, 2012a, p.46). In Extract 5.17, no new topical talk is

added between lines 7 and 11, after which Gavin initiates a new topic (line 13). Thus, as with spoken interaction, when no new information is added, the topic is abandoned. Note that there is some shared ‘laughter’ prior to the topic change (see also Markman & Oshima, 2007), which has also been found to precede the introduction of a new topic in spoken interaction (Holt, 2010). In the following extract, Hal is recounting his experience with an American tourist at a cathedral.

Extract 5.18: From Holt (2010, p.1517-1518)

1 Hal: But what tickled me see Lesley after ee’d been round  
2 the Cathedral ‘n the Palace he came back outta the  
3 ga:te, (0.3) ‘n ‘ee said well goodbye he said, an’ sh’  
4 come back in- (.) in a hundred years ‘n see it again,  
5 .h an’ you make sure you’re still st(h)ood o(h)on this  
6 ↓ga(h)ate=  
7 Les: =ehh heh [ha h ha huh hu]:h hu:h=  
8 Hal: [↑heh ha ha ha huh]  
9 Les: = [.hhhhh]  
10 Hal: = [ih-ih he:h [huh,  
11 Les: [uh ↓hhuh huh huh. ↓ [.hhhhh  
12 Hal: [↓ih he:h he:h heh. .h [h So=  
13 Les: [↑Ye:h  
14 Hal: =I s’d well I’ll try:, [(hu:h-heh heh.)]  
15 Les: [↑ih ↓heh heh ha ] ha: [hu  
16 Hal: [But um (.)  
17 No. it eh it’s marv’lous really- .hh YOU DID↑n:’t  
18 e- Did Marian: (.) ever ask you- it’s too late now  
19 b’t d’Marian as’you ‘bout that Scout da:nce?

In this extract there are a number of periods of reciprocal laughter in lines 7-13 and 14-15.

Holt (2010) points out that, “as Lesley’s laughter begins to tail off, Hal overlaps with a rather general, disengaged assessment that connects to the prior talk, before introducing a change of topic by asking whether Lesley has been invited to a dance” (p.1518). There is, then, mutual

laughter followed by a topic change. In Extract 5.17, there is also mutual ‘laughter’ followed by a change of topic. Extract 5.17, then, is effectively a ‘slowed down’ version of what occurs in Extract 5.18; that is, “shared laughter followed by the initiation of a new matter/activity” (Holt, 2010, p.1515). A similar practice occurs in the following extract, where Isla and Callum are engaged in an exchange of teases.

Extract 5.19: JM/IS5/B: 222-275

1 Isla: well that’s not much use! Haha  
2 (39.0)  
3 Callum: noithers your face lol kidding bbz  
4 (16.0)  
5 Isla: 😊  
6 (5.0)  
7 Isla: :’-(  
8 (19.0)  
9 Callum: I kid, your face is lovely  
10 (14.0)  
11 Isla: 😊  
12 (6.0)  
13 Isla: you’re just saying that now 😊 ]  
14 (2.0)  
15 Isla: meany  
16 (6.0)  
17 Callum: no im not!!!  
18 (35.0)  
19 Callum: 😊  
20 (78.0)  
21 Isla: hmph  
22 (1.0)  
23 Isla: lol  
24 (8.0)  
25 Callum: 😊 pwomise  
26 (4.0)  
27 Callum:→ what you upto?  
28 (6.0)  
29 Isla: erm not really that much lol

In this extract, emoticons and other representations of vocal behaviour are used by both parties (such as “hmp” in line 21, which appears to represent an annoyed sigh). These are minimal tokens which signal “that the speaker passes the opportunity to make a topic contribution” (Svennevig, 1999, p.196). Following the exchange of smilies and non-topical turns, Callum initiates a new topic. So, when topic change occurs, there is both shared laughter and minimal tokens, further demonstrating the similarities between spoken interaction and Facebook chat.

Another precursor to topic change in spoken interaction is silence (Maynard, 1980). When there is no transition between speakers, the conversation may stop, with a resulting lapse in talk. Topic changes can be used to “restore formal turn-by-turn talk” (Maynard, 1980, p.268); in other words, the topic can be changed to ‘rescue’ the interaction. In the following extract, John and Judy are discussing the experimental setting they are in, leading John to share a story about a previous experiment.

Extract 5.20: From Maynard (1980, p.269)

1 John: Yeah, it was uh (1.4) hh you sIT on the other side  
2 of a room and a guy (0.4) ((sniff) puts a LIGHT on.  
3 There's two lights. (Er's) a green an' a red one. .h  
4 the red one comes on, you take your finger off a button.  
5 The green one comes on, n you keep it on: It's a  
6 reACKshun test?  
7 Judy: Um::  
8 (1.0)  
9 John: Did that for awhi:le  
10 (0.6)  
11 John: So I had my big Psych test that wa:y  
12 (1.2)  
13 John: ((sniff)). went through on:e  
14 (1.8)  
15 John: Now we're working on Sosh

16 (1.6)  
 17 Judy: °um°  
 18 (3.2)  
 19 John: So what do you THI::NK about the bicycles on campus  
 20 Judy: I think they're terrible

Having received a minimal response from Judy in line 7, John then produces a series of turns which receive no uptake. There are, instead, a number of increasingly long pauses, before John initiates a new topic in line 19, which receives a response from Judy. In the following extract from Facebook chat, we can see something similar in that, following a long gap, a new topic is initiated to re-start the interaction. At the start of the extract, Isla is complaining that she has not met up with Callum for a long time.

Extract 5.21: JM/IS7/B: 168-192

1 Isla: but then over the holidays we could have met  
 2 up before you came back to the stadium  
 3 (6.0)  
 4 Isla: we never went out 😞  
 5 (336.0)  
 6 Isla: omg the greek girl in my flat has her greek bf  
 7 round and he's smoking in the room and  
 8 I can smell if from my room 😞  
 9 (19.0)  
 10 Isla: it's soo horrible and he's been here for ages  
 11 and if they set the fire alarm off i'll  
 12 kill them 😞  
 13 (14.0)  
 14 Isla: obviously not literally but i'll be  
 15 having words!  
 16 (11.0)  
 17 Callum: 😞 lol  
 18 (3.0)  
 19 Callum: laaaaav it  
 20 (50.0)

21 Isla: not amused it's so strong  
22 (2.0)  
23 Isla: 😞  
24 (365.0)  
25 Isla: you're quiet

Isla's complaint in line 4 does not receive an uptake from Callum. There is, instead, a gap of over five minutes, and Isla's topic change at line 6, which is marked with a misplacement marker "omg" (oh my god), suggests that she is treating this gap as problematic. The new topic is some sort of 'setting talk' (Maynard & Zimmerman, 1984; Svennevig, 1999), that is, it refers to something in the surrounding environment. Of course, in Facebook chat, participants are not in the same environment, so the new topic refers only to Isla's environment. This extract is, then, similar to the example from spoken interaction as the topical talk lapses into silence, with Isla attempting to re-launch continuous interaction with a new topic. However, when this also gets a minimal uptake from Callum, before another long silence, Isla topicalizes the interaction itself (line 25). This extract therefore demonstrates that, as with spoken interaction, new topics can be initiated in Facebook chat after silences in order to re-start continuous interaction. It also further demonstrates how a lack of new topical information can be implicative of topic closure (Heritage, 2012a).

In this section, I have shown how there are similarities between the organization of topic change in spoken interaction and in Facebook chat. The similarities include the use of misplacement markers for disjunctive topic shifts; shared laughter as a resource for topic change; and topic change occurring after silence or failure of speaker transition. It is particularly interesting that shared laughter is evident in some cases of topic change. The fact that it occurs in *a written medium*, but as a 'slowed down' version of spoken interaction supports the conversation analytic premise that laughter does not merely 'leak out', but rather is sequentially positioned (e.g., Haakana, 2001; Jefferson, Sacks, & Schegloff, 1987). So far,

then, I have demonstrated a number of similarities between topic management in online and spoken interaction. In the final section, I will discuss the occurrence of simultaneous topics in the same sequence of interaction.

#### **5.4 Simultaneous topics**

The notion of ‘simultaneous topics’ refers to more than one topic *in the same sequence, intertwined* with one another. As in the prior section, we can identify ‘topics’ based on the referents used in each individual turn. It is possible in talk for multiple topics to be relevant in a single interaction. In doctor-patient interactions, it has been found that patients may ‘pre-announce’ that they have more than one topic to discuss, for example by saying things like “first of all” or “it’s three things really” (Campion & Langdon, 2004, p.84). Patients may then list each topic or the doctor may solicit each topic in turn. However, each topic is dealt with individually, not concurrently.

There are also examples of multiple topics in online spoken interaction. Halloran (2009) analyzed discussions in online games, where groups of players use microphones and headphones to co-ordinate their actions. He found that multiple topics occurred when groups of players separated into teams. Both teams could still hear one another, but their interactions were about different topics and participants had to respond to actions directed at them. In other words, only one topic was relevant to each pair, despite all players being able to hear the parties. These findings bear more similarities to ‘schisms’ in face-to-face interaction (Egbert, 1997a), where the conversation splits into two pairs, rather than two topics which are of relevance to all the interactants.

The occurrence of simultaneous topics (sometimes called ‘multi-threading’) in *written*



computer-mediated communication<sup>13</sup> has been noted by a number of authors (e.g., Cherny, 1999; McDaniel et al., 1996; McKinlay et al., 1994). However, it has most commonly been found in multi-party chat rooms (Werry, 1996), and so often refers to multiple conversations occurring between multiple parties, again paralleling schisms. Multi-threading has also been studied in one-to-one chat, with the focus how the sequence is disrupted (Berglund, 2009). In this section, I will focus specifically on how participants and manage more than one ‘topic’ occurring in an interaction, that is, how they manage threads of interaction where there are different topical referents in the same sequence. I will also consider the interactional reasons why simultaneous topics arise in a single thread of conversation.

The following extract is an illustration of simultaneous topics occurring in a single stretch of interaction.

Extract 5.22: JM/BE4/B: 1-25

1 Anna: Hey stinky  
2 (99.0)  
3 Beth: eyup chuck!  
4 (4.0)  
5 Beth: how you keeping?  
6 (139.0)  
7 Anna: Ok. Been in a zorb today. You know then big  
8 see-through balls on water. Hows revision?  
9 (311.0)  
10 Beth: ooh that sounds fun! Where was that?  
11 (21.0)  
12 Beth: revisions ok. me helen and oliver met up  
13 today to do some but didnt really get  
14 anything done so panicing slightly!  
15 (43.0)

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<sup>13</sup> It is possible for simultaneous topics to occur in offline written communication. If two people are, say, writing letters at the same time and then send them at the same time, the letters may cross over in the post. If responses are written to both letters, then it is clearly possible for two separate ‘threads’ of communication to occur.

16 Anna: It was in this posh shopping village. I went  
 17 to pieminister too. sure exams will be fine.  
 18 (212.0)  
 19 Beth: ooh cool. we actually have some of those  
 20 things outside the shops at home.  
 21 does that mean we're posh?! Haha  
 22 (5.0)  
 23 Beth: wheres pieminster?  
 24 (5.0)  
 25 Beth: thanks 😊

In this extract there are a number of different topical referents running throughout the chat, as evidenced by the different referents used. In line 7, in response to a topic solicitation from Beth, Anna provides something newsworthy about her day, but in line 8 also proffers the topic of revision. These two topics, which I will gloss as ‘Anna’s activities’ and ‘revision’, continue throughout the extract, but are intertwined with one another. Thus, Beth’s response in line 10 refers to the TCU<sup>14</sup> about Anna’s activities, whereas her turn in line 12-14 responds to the TCU which proffered the topic of revision. It is, of course, not unusual to have two *actions* in a single turn in spoken interaction. However, in lines 7-8, the actions include two different sets of topical referents. In Extract 5.22, Beth responds to the topics and TCUs in the order they appear on the screen, adding further evidence for understanding how sequences are organized in Facebook chat in terms of maintaining contiguity. Beth uses ‘tying techniques’ to ensure that it is clear to which topic she is responding. Her turn in line 10 is tied to “zorbing” through using the indexical “that”, which could not semantically be tied to revision. Also, her use of the word “sounds” indicates that she does not have direct knowledge of the activity she is referring to, which she would about her own revision. Finally, she describes the activity as “fun”. This relies on the participants’ understanding of

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<sup>14</sup> Note that I am using the term ‘TCU’ here in the way described in Chapter 3. In other words, it refers to a TCU in an online sense, rather than as a TCU in spoken interaction.

which activity out of the two mentioned (revision or zorbing) may have “fun” as one of its characteristics. Beth ties her turn in line 12 to the topic nomination by repeating the word “revision”.

Tying techniques are also in evidence throughout the rest of the extract. Anna’s turn at line 16 is tied to Beth’s question at line 10 through the indexical “it” and also offering a reference to a place, as well as adding further information about her day out. She then ties the final TCU of her turn to Beth’s comment about “panicing slightly”, through what Sacks (1992) calls “co-class membership” (see also Maynard, 1980). Sacks (1992, Vol 1) describes co-class membership as “the various objects that are members of lists of classes” (p.757). Thus both “exams” (line 17) and “revision” (line 8) are part of the same class and can be used to tie related utterances.

In lines 19-21, Beth again addresses the topic of “zorbs”, but refers to them as “those things”. She also repeats the word “posh” at line 21 which ties this utterance back to Anna’s at line 16. This turn is, then, recognizably still dealing with the topic of ‘zorbing’. Beth’s next turn at line 23 develops further the related topic of Anna’s day out, which is also linked to the previous turn through word repetition (Pieminster). Finally, Beth’s turn at line 25 consists merely of the word “thanks” followed by a smiley face, which is a response to Anna’s reassurance about exams. In this case, the organizational principle of an adjacency pair becomes more relevant, as this is the SPP of a reassurance-acceptance adjacency pair. So, as they might in spoken interaction, participants maintain coherence through adjacency pairs and tying techniques.

In Extract 5.22, simultaneous topics occurred because Anna’s turn included two TCUs, one which provided a newsworthy topic, and a second which requested information about a topic that positioned Beth as K+. So, simultaneous topics can arise because of multiple TCUs or actions in a single turn, which demonstrates further how TCUs can be

made relevant by recipients in online interaction. Note also, that Beth responds to these TCUs in separate turns.

The next extract shows how simultaneous topics can occur due to a ‘writing overlap’ (see Chapter 3, and also McDaniel et al., 1996). In this extract, following a topic solicitation from Joe about what Isla is “up to” (data not shown), Isla and Joe start discussing what they have done, and are going to do, that day. From the screen capture, we can see how the writing overlap leads to two different ‘topics’ being relevant.

Extract 5.23: JM/IS20/F: 96-129

1	06:11	00:11	Joe:	I have showered and cooked
2			I*:	↔ 🗨️ 4.0 chatting to JB 🗨️
3	06:15	00:04	Joe:	that is all
4			I*:	🗨️ 15.0 chatting to JB 🗨️
5				((Switches to chat with Joe))
6				(4.0)
7			I*:	🗨️ yeah i need    to    ↔
8	06:36	00:21	Joe:	some one tried to add
9				photos of me from friday 😊
10			I*:	↔ cook 🗨️
11	06:37	00:01	Isla:	yeah I need to cook
12				(2.0)
13			I*:	🗨️ and i(2.0) [think we might watch ↔
14			J*:	[🗨️ writing ↔
15			I*:	↔ a watch a film tod a o 🗨️]
16			J*:	↔ writing 🗨️ ] ↔
17	06:48	00:11	Isla:	and i think we might watch a film
18				too
19			J*:	↔ 🗨️ 1.0 writing 🗨️
20	06:49	00:01	Joe:	yea you need cock? .....what?
21			I*:	🗨️ who>> 🗨️
22	06:50	00:01	Isla:	who>>
23				(10.0)
24			I*:	🗨️ its says co    o    k ↔
25	07:01	00:11	Joe:	lol

26			I*:	↔ joel ± ↯
27	07:03	00:02	Isla:	its says cook joe
28			I*:	↯ lol ↯
29	07:04	00:01	Isla:	lol
30	07:05	00:01	Joe:	a girl
31			J*:	↯ 2.0 writing ↯↔
32			I*:	[↯ what girl? .↯]
33			J*:	↔[ ↯ writing ↯]↔
34	07:11	00:06	Isla:	what girl? .

In line 7 Isla begins to construct her response to Joe’s description of his activities that day. However, before Isla can post her turn, Joe posts his turn, initiating a new topic, about someone adding photos of him (on Facebook). Isla posts her turn a second after Joe’s (line 11), which still relates to his activities for the day. Therefore, as can be seen from this screen capture data, due to ‘writing and posting overlap’, there are two relevant sets of topical referents in the interaction; one set could be described broadly as ‘plans for the day’ and the other as ‘photographs from a night out’. Of course, it is not possible to know whether Isla had *seen* Joe’s turn before continuing her message construction. However, it is a moot point; there are now two topics, and the parties must manage this.

In lines 13-16, both participants are writing simultaneously, and in their subsequent turns they both link back to prior turns about ‘plans for the day’. Thus, Isla’s turn in lines 17-18 - “and I think we might watch a film too” - is a continuation of her turn in line 11. Joe’s turn in line 20 is a response to Isla’s in line 11, and is a - presumably ironic - misreading of the word “cook”. Thus, so far, Joe’s potential topic-initiation has not been topicalized by Isla. However, in line 22, Isla asks “who”, which semantically relates to Joe’s turn at line 8-9, as “who” can only really be responsive to Joe mentioning “someone”. Thus, Isla’s turn is now addressing Joe’s topic of ‘photographs from a night out’, despite it having been initiated four turns earlier. The topic of ‘plans for the day’ has not, though, been closed, and therefore it can still be revived later in the chat (see Svennevig, 1999). Indeed, Isla links her turn in line

27 to the topic of ‘plans for the day’, by ‘correcting’ Joe’s misreading of the word “cook”.

‘Photographs from a night out’, however, now becomes the only topic of conversation for the next two minutes of the interaction. The topic of ‘plans for the day’ has not been closed, with Joe reviving this topic after a couple of minutes (data not shown), which suggests that topics may be incipiently relevant throughout the interaction.

In the above extracts, it is noticeable that despite disrupted turn adjacency, and simultaneous topics, the participants do not display any trouble in understanding one another. The ease with which individuals involved in online interaction can “follow synchronous chat and track conversational threads with all its disruption to sequence and turn-taking is still a source of wonder” (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006, p.258; see also, Markman, 2005). Parties make use of tying techniques, such as word repetition and indexicals, in order to track multiple topics (see also, McDaniel et al., 1996; Woerner et al., 2007). However, these techniques are not unique to online interaction, as they were originally explicated by Sacks (1992) in reference to spoken interaction. It is also important to note that these findings demonstrate the strength of adjacency pairs as an organizational principle, in that producing a SPP which is clearly tied to a FPP, can still be understood by participants, even when they are not adjacent. Equally, the fact that participants maintain coherence suggests that disrupted turn adjacency and different concurrent topic referents do not necessarily constitute disruptions to the participants in the interaction, and therefore should not necessarily be treated as such (Greiffenhagen & Watson, 2005). Indeed, there are still sometimes sequential ambiguities. Consider Joe’s turn in line 25 of Extract 5.23, which consists solely of “lol”. This turn could either be an increment to line 20, to demonstrate that his ‘misreading’ was ironic or it could be a response to Isla’s question about “who” added photos of him. However, neither participant mentions the potential ambiguity nor does it become relevant as a problematic turn in the interaction.

The final extract of this chapter shows an example of a loss of intersubjectivity, resulting from simultaneous topics and disrupted turn adjacency, which does become relevant in the interaction. Prior to this extract, which is between Joe and Isla, Joe has invited Isla and her friends over to watch a film. Joe is also conducting a Facebook chat with Isla's flatmate, Laura. Laura and Isla are in the same room in their flat, and as is evident from Isla and Joe's chat, Laura and Isla are talking about their separate chats with Joe. Prior to this extract, Joe has made a joke about finding one of Isla's friends attractive, and his turn in line 2 suggests that Isla may be jealous of this. The lines of interest are from 27-41.

Extract 5.24: JM/IS20/F: 414-456

1 J\*: *⌘ 10.0 writing ⌘*  
2 31:42 00:11 Joe: lol jealousy?  
3 (12.0)  
4 I\*: ((Switches to chat with Joe))  
5 *⌘ (6.0) you si ~~is~~ wish :(.) ÷ ;-) ⌘*  
6 32:07 00:25 Isla: you wish 😊  
7 (4.0)  
8 I\*: *⌘ hey i'm (2.0) ~~i'm~~ (6.0) ~~hey~~ (2.0)*  
9 *anything you wish to say to my friend*  
10 *I can relay to her across the*  
11 *[table mister :-P ]*  
12 J\*: *[ ⌘ writing ⌘ ] ↔*  
13 32:37 00:30 Isla: anything you wish to say to my friend I  
14 can relay to her across the table  
15 mister 😊  
16 J\*: *↔ ⌘ 1.0 writing ⌘*  
17 32:38 00:01 Joe: really do not  
18 (9.0)  
19 J\*: *⌘ 5.0 writing ⌘*  
20 32:52 00:14 Joe: lol im inviting her over too  
21 (3.0)  
22 J\*: *⌘ 1.0 writing ⌘ ↔*  
23 I\*: *[ ⌘ i already have ⌘ ]*

24 J\*: ↔ [ ✂ writing ✂ ] ↔

25 32:57 00:05 Isla: i already have

26 J\*: ↔ ✂ 3.0 writing ✂

27 33:00 00:03 Joe: plus it my be private:p  
28 (10.0)

29 I\*: ✂ waht ~~ah~~ hat's prive e ate ✂

30 33:13 00:13 Isla: what's private

31 I\*: ✂ oh right ✂

32 33:15 00:02 Isla: oh right

33 I\*: ✂ yeah ✂

34 33:16 00:01 Isla: yeah

35 I\*: ✂ well say prive e ate e things to her  
36 if you like ✂

37 33:26 00:10 Isla: well say private things to her if you  
38 like

39 I\*: [ ✂ I'm sure I can g||et || ↔

40 J\*: [ ✂ writing ✂

41 33:28 00:02 Joe: || lol slow much ||

42 I\*: ↔ her to (.) tell me :-P ✂

43 33:32 00:04 Isla: I'm sure I can get her to tell me 😊

In this extract, there are two broad sequences, which involve two sets of topical referents. The first ‘topic’ relates to Joe’s comment about Isla’s friend (lines 2, 6 and 17). The second relates to Joe’s Facebook interaction with Laura (lines 13-15, and line 20 onwards). As evidenced in line 20, the invitation to go and watch a film is also still relevant. These are not necessarily discrete ‘topics’, and do appear to be linked, which is potentially the cause of the misunderstanding of line 27.

In lines 13-15, Isla posts a turn about being able to relay messages to Laura (who is in the same room). However, as can be seen from the screen capture, Joe is already writing his response to Isla’s prior turn at line 6. Therefore, Joe’s message which is posted in line 17 responds to Isla’s turn in line 6, rather than the immediately prior turn. Joe’s turn in line 20 orients to the still live invitation to go and watch a film at Joe’s, as well as the fact that he is engaged in a Facebook chat with Laura. So, at this point in the interaction, Isla’s potential



jealousy is still a live topic. Equally, the invitation is relevant, as is Laura and Joe's interaction. Joe's turn in line 27 - "plus it may be private" - is the source of misunderstanding, as it is ambiguous as to what "it" refers to. It could potentially refer to the invitation, indicating that the invitation was private. It could also refer to the interaction with Laura, suggesting that what Joe is saying may be private. As the two prior turns have related to the invitation and Joe has previously mentioned the invitation, Isla appears to understand "it" as being related to the invitation. Isla initiates repair (see Chapter 6) in line 30, which explicitly orients to this potential misunderstanding. However, she then immediately 'repairs' her repair initiator, demonstrating her understanding of Joe's turn in lines 37-38.

Misunderstandings which result from simultaneous topics and disrupted turn adjacency are rare in my data. Participants are remarkably skilled at linking turns, even when they are not adjacent. Participants do this by using organizational techniques from spoken interaction to maintain coherence. In other words, the fact that participants can manage 'simultaneous topics' is due to the strength of adjacency pairs and 'tying techniques' as organizational principles in spoken interaction.

## **5.5 Discussion**

The aim of this chapter was to provide an account of how participants manage topical issues in Facebook chat. This chapter builds on a very small literature which uses CA to analyze topic in online interaction and I have discussed topic-initiation in first turn, topic change and simultaneous topics. With regards to topic-initiation, I showed how the categories of topic-initiating turns which are based on findings from spoken interaction could potentially be understood instead as a continuum of topic-initiation. Thus, topic-initiating turns can be placed on a gradient from topic-solicitation to topic nomination. We can delineate between these turns not just based on action, but also on epistemic stance displayed. This suggestion

builds upon previous work done on topic-initiation, but may also allow for a more nuanced classification of topic-initiating turns. I found that the majority of topic-initiations in first turn tended to be topic proffers which were done from a relatively unknowing (K-) position. I suggested that this may be because these topics are initiated before the chat-starter is sure that the recipient is at their computer, so they are designed to mobilize a response. I also discussed topic change and showed how it can be marked or unmarked. The findings also revealed that there are, quite remarkably, a great number of similarities between spoken and online written interaction. I found evidence of collaborative practices, such as shared laughter, which engendered topic change in both Facebook chat and spoken interaction. This finding supports the CA notion that such practices are not a 'messy' feature of talk, but rather they are interactionally organized practices. The analysis also suggests that online researchers should be wary of presuming that there is a great difference between spoken and online written interaction. Finally, I discussed the occurrence of simultaneous topics, which are generally not possible in spoken interaction. I showed how participants use tying techniques, alongside adjacency pairs, in order to maintain coherence, and how participants are extremely skilful at managing simultaneous topics.

This chapter, therefore, adds to our knowledge of the way topic is managed in online interaction. We know that it is possible to initiate a topic in the first turn of an interaction, and this topic-initiator may be designed in order to mobilize a response from the recipient. As much of what is known about topic-initiation in mundane interaction is based on telephone calls, it is difficult to compare such turn designs to those in spoken interaction because, as was discussed in the previous chapter, there is little evidence on openings in face-to-face interaction.

Overall, this chapter adds to the previous work on disrupted turn adjacency by further describing the mechanisms by which parties maintain coherence in one-to-one instant

messaging chat. I specifically examined multi-threading and discussed in some detail how participants use both paired actions and tying techniques to manage the occurrence of simultaneous topics. I have also extended the growing body of work on epistemics by applying it to matters of ‘topic’. As I noted earlier, it has been suggested that “epistemics are absolutely centrally implicated in the organization of topic” (Sidnell, 2012, p.59), and this chapter has gone some way to demonstrating this. Epistemics are, or can be, central in initiating topic, and also the organization of topic change.

This chapter has also shown the benefits of having screen capture data for analyzing online interaction. It has been possible to analyze not only the way in which simultaneous topics are managed, but also how they can arise due to ‘writing overlap’. Such an analysis would not have been possible if the data had only consisted of chat logs. The following chapter will further show the analytic possibilities of having screen capture data. In Chapter 6, the final analytic chapter, I will focus on ‘repair’, a key conversational practice in spoken interaction. By using the screen capture data, I will analyze repair which occurs not only following message sending, but also during message construction.

## Chapter 6:

### Self-repair and Facebook chat

#### 6.0 Introduction

In this chapter I will examine how people ‘repair’ or correct their messages in Facebook chat. Spoken interaction is often disfluent, with speakers repeating, re-starting or changing their talk-in-progress. While these disfluencies could simply be attributed to the ‘messiness’ of talk, CA finds that these practices are how speakers deal with troubles arising in *speaking*, *hearing* or *understanding* talk (Schegloff, 2007b). Thus, repair operations reveal how interacting parties maintain understanding (Schegloff, 2006a). The aim of this chapter is to explore how Facebook chat participants use repair to maintain mutual intelligibility in their chats. I will compare the practices found with those in spoken interaction.

Some research on repair in multi-party online interaction has suggested that self-repair does not occur in online interaction (e.g., A.C. Garcia & Jacobs, 1999; Guise et al., 2007; Markman, 2008), but this research has mostly been based upon chat logs of online interaction (although there are some exceptions; see Section 6.2.0). In this chapter, I utilise the screen capture data collected of Facebook chats, to examine how self-repair occurs during message construction. I will demonstrate how message construction repairs provide relevant information about how turns are constructed in online interaction, and in doing so, show that the participants orient to the same interactional contingencies as repairs in spoken conversation. The majority of this chapter will show how, due to the separation of message construction and sending, participants are able to do extensive repairs of their messages prior to sending. I will, though, also examine self-repairs which are visible to the recipient, and will discuss how these repairs differ to those completed during message construction (Meredith & Stokoe, 2014). I will also discuss whether the preference for self-repair found in

spoken interaction (Schegloff et al., 1977) is also found in Facebook chat. Although the focus of this chapter is on self-repair, *other-repair* and *other-initiated repair* do occur in my data.

The structure of the chapter is as follows. In Section 6.1, I will provide an overview of repair in spoken interaction, before moving on to review the prior literature on repair in online interaction (Section 6.2). In Section 6.3, I will examine what I have called ‘message construction repairs’; that is, repairs which occur during turn construction. I will consider three types of repairables: action-formation; person reference; and stance. I will show how these repairables are also found in spoken interaction, but the design of Facebook chat enables these repairs to be completed without the recipient being aware of them. In Section 6.4, I will investigate visible repairs. I will show how, in the data, visible repairs are most often corrections. I will also explore the sequential positions in which visible repairs occur and show how the turn-taking practices described in Chapter 3 impact these. Finally, I will briefly examine both visible and message construction repair which is responsive to the recipient (Section 6.5).

Overall, this chapter will show how participants in Facebook chat exploit its affordances in order to make extensive repairs during message construction. However, message construction repairs still attend to the same interactional concerns as repairs in spoken interaction. I will also show how visible repairs occur in similar sequential positions to repairs in spoken interaction. However, the design of Facebook chat means that the positions do not correspond exactly. I suggest that these findings, firstly, form an empirical basis for examining claims about how individuals ‘edit’ messages online; and secondly, have implications for how online ‘repair’ can be analyzed using CA.

## 6.1 Self-repair in spoken interaction

Repair occurs in spoken interaction *after* some trouble in talk, which could be any aspect such as word selection, action construction and prosody. A key finding about repair is that it can occur when there is no hearable error, mistake or fault (Schegloff et al., 1977) and, equally, “hearable error does not necessarily yield the occurrence of repair/correction” (Schegloff et al., 1977, p.363). Schegloff et al. (1977) found that, empirically, there is a strong preference for self-repair, that is, where the repair is both *initiated* and *completed* by the same speaker. There are a number of features of *self-initiated self-repair* in spoken interaction.

### Extract 6.1: From Sidnell (2010, p.111)

```
1   Bev:   Okay wul listen ((smile voice))
2           .hh (.) >Are=you gonna be at my house at what time on
3   →   uh Fri:- on Sund[ay?
4   Ann:           [What time am I (.) to be there at.
```

In this extract, the *trouble-source* or *repairable* item is “Fri:-” (line 3), which is lengthened and then cut off. Before the trouble-source, the “uh” indicates that there may be some disjunction with prior talk. Such “non-lexical speech perturbations” (Schegloff et al., 1977, p.367) are common in *self-initiated* repairs. In this extract the repair is initiated in the same turn as the trouble-source, although the precise positioning of self-repair varies considerably and will be discussed in more detail later in the chapter. The repair is *pre-framed*, as the talk which precedes the trouble-source is repeated (Sidnell, 2010). Repairs may also be post-framed; that is, the talk following the trouble-source is repeated. Self-repair can operate on prior talk in various ways. For example, it might involve word replacement, the insertion or deletion of an item, or a reordering of words (Schegloff, 2013; Sidnell, 2010).

In CA, a distinction is drawn between repair and correction, as repair is “neither

contingent upon error, nor limited to replacement” (Schegloff et al., 1977, p. 363). As Macbeth (2004) explains, “though repair can entail correction, correction is a lesser domain both conceptually and empirically. Correction premises ‘error’, yet studies of repair routinely find repairs where no accountable ‘error’ can be heard” (p.707). In other words, correction is a class of repair which occurs when there has been an ‘actual’ error.

## **6.2 Repair in online interaction**

Previous research on self-repair has investigated talk and embodied conduct in face-to-face or telephone conversation (e.g., Hepburn, Wilkinson, & Shaw, 2012; Lerner & Kitzinger, 2007; Martin & Sahlström, 2010; Wilkinson & Weatherall, 2011). There are a number of studies which have examined repair in human-computer interaction (e.g., Good, 1990; Greiffenhagen & Watson, 2009); however, these studies have tended to focus on how individuals interact with a computer, as opposed to how they interact with one another via a computer. There is, though, some research which has focused on repair in online interaction, but only in multi-party, quasi-synchronous interaction (although see Yang, 2005 for a study of repair in asynchronous interaction). For example, Schönfeldt and Golato (2003) studied repair in multi-party chat rooms, and suggested that “interlocutors adapt the basic repair mechanisms which are available in ordinary conversation to the technical specificities of chat communication” (p.272). They suggested that the positions in which repair is initiated in online chats are different from those in spoken interaction. For example, they argue that “there is no possibility for transition space repair or third-turn repair to occur” (p.273). Schönfeldt and Golato also argued that there are certain repair operations, such as ‘non-responses’ or pursuit of a response, which only occur in online interaction. Whether such operations are ‘repairs’ is questionable, but pursuing a response is not unique to online interaction (Bolden, Mandelbaum, & Wilkinson, 2012). Schönfeldt and Golato (2003) also

noted that, in their data, “same turn self-initiation, could not be observed in chats because the message production process is not available” (p.273). Collister (2008, 2011) discussed repair and correction in the Massively Multiplayer Online Roleplaying Game (MMORPG) ‘World of Warcraft’. She argued that message construction repairs correspond to first position repair in spoken interaction (Collister, 2008). However, like Schönfeldt and Golato, she did not have access to message construction, and so could not analyze these repairs. Instead, Collister focused on corrections, and specifically on what she calls a ‘\*-repair’, which is used to ‘correct’ misspellings. This type of repair involves the participant using an asterisk to mark the corrected version of a previously incorrect spelling, as in the following extract.

Extract 6.2: From Collister (2011, p.919)

```
1   Aniko: when I run ot  
2   Aniko: out*
```

As Collister explains, “in line 1, the player Aniko mistypes ‘ot’ instead of ‘out’. Immediately following this, he types ‘out’, with the \* indicating that this is a repair” (p.919). This “distinct repair morpheme” was used for both self-repair and other-repair. It is worth noting, however, that this repair-morpheme applies to *correction*, rather than repair (see also Jepson, 2005, who found marked corrections in second language learning webchats). Thus, the previous work which has examined online repair has tended to focus on multi-party chat between anonymous participants. Few studies have examined message construction repair, although those that have will be discussed in the next section.

### **6.2.0 Message construction repair**

As was discussed in Chapter 3, message construction and sending are separate in Facebook chat, meaning that participants can edit their posts prior to sending them, without it being



visible to their recipient. It has been suggested that participants may exploit this affordance in order to communicate more effectively (Condon & Čech, 2000), as they have more time to prepare their responses, review the posts and revise their messages (see for example, Adkins & Nasarczyk, 2008; Freiermuth, 2001; Kleinke, 2008; J. Park, 2007). Turkle (2011) has argued that this affordance, which is evident in most online contexts, allows users to spend time presenting an ‘ideal’ version of themselves. However, there are few studies which examine empirically if, and how, participants make use of this particular affordance.

Garcia and Jacobs’s (1999) research, which focused on turn-taking in online interaction, used screen capture software to study multi-party chats between students. They noted that participants may edit their messages-in-progress in response to something posted by another participant. Beisswenger (2008) also used screen capture, although in a semi-experimental setting, and he noticed a number of deletions of messages during construction. However, he notes that these deletions were “caused by the perception of new messages” (p.14); in other words, they were again in response to something posted by the interlocutor. Markman (2005) also suggested that the existence of repair during message construction is evidence that writers monitor the conversation, and edit their posts when responding to something posted by their co-participant. While these authors examined message construction repairs which appeared to be responsive to the recipient, they did not discuss repairs which occurred during message construction, but were not responsive to the recipient. Therefore, in order to build upon the previous research on message construction repair, in this chapter I will specifically examine repairs which are not a response to some intervening action by the co-participant.

Of course, editing posts during message construction does not have immediate interactional significance, in the same sense as conversation analysts would normally understand (Markman, 2008). Conversation analysts generally focus on spoken and embodied

conduct which occurs in the intersubjective space and is heard, seen and oriented to by the recipient, and is potentially accountable. In Facebook chat, it is rare that a participant will mention that they, or their co-participant, have edited a post and so make a repair potentially accountable. We must, then, think about repairs during online message construction as different from those which occur in spoken interaction. They cannot be heard, seen or oriented to by the co-participant, and so cannot be immediately accountable. However, by examining message construction repairs, we have access to turn construction, in the same way as we would in spoken interaction so by analyzing repairs that occur during message construction, it can be shown that, as in spoken interaction, “it is through self-repair that we see speakers orient to what is the appropriate form to do *this* action in *this* sequential place” (Drew et al., 2013, p.93, emphasis in original). In other words, we can see how participants construct their turns to do sequentially and interactionally relevant actions, in the same way as we can in spoken interaction. Despite the fact that these repairs are ‘hidden’ and occur outside of the intersubjective space, we should not presume that this provides “a window into the unconscious and the human mind more generally” (Hayashi, Raymond, & Sidnell, 2013, p.3). Conversation analysts also do not concern themselves with what a speaker was thinking, or whether they ‘meant’ to say something in particular. As Sacks puts it (1992, Vol 1) “don’t worry about whether they’re ‘thinking’. Just try to come to terms with how it is that the thing comes off” (p.11). Although, the ‘writing’ or ‘message construction’ level of interaction available in Facebook chat is a level which is unavailable in spoken interaction, we still should not analyze whether the writer ‘meant’ to write a particular message. Instead, this ‘midway point’ of message construction provides evidence of how participants orient to the potential implications of the actions they choose to send. In the following section I will discuss self-repairs in Facebook chat, and show how participants seek to select “the appropriate form of action for the particular sequential environment” (Drew et al., 2013,

p.75).

### 6.3 Self-repairs during message construction

In spoken interaction, a variety of trouble-sources can be repaired, including word selection, person reference and action-formation (Schegloff et al., 1977; Schegloff, 2013). In the three sections that follow, repairs that attend to action-formation, stance, ‘pronunciation’ and ‘intonation’ are examined. In Facebook chat, repairs on these trouble-sources occurred during message construction and so were not visible to recipients. These online repairs are compared with examples from spoken interaction, to demonstrate that repairs which would normally occur as hearable to the recipient are done during message construction. In other words, participants seek to manage *potential* troubles in understanding.

#### 6.3.0 Repairs of action-formation

In spoken interaction, self-repairs do interactional work (Schegloff, 2013). As Drew et al. (2013) note “in instances of self-repair we see the work of designing a turn appropriately brought to the surface” (p.74). Repairs of action-formation in Facebook chat also show interactional work being done. In Extract 6.3 Isla is moving to close the chat. We can see the construction of her messages at lines 2 and 4-6.

#### Extract 6.3: JM/IS/F: 263-269

1	03.19	Isla:	right sorry buti'm off to bed
2		I*:	↯ absolutely knackerd ↯ ed! ↯
3	00.05	Isla:	absolutely knackered!
4		I*:	↯ speak t <del>speak t</del> let me know when (.)
5			<del>when (.) let me know</del> you training
6			tuesdA <del>A</del> a ↯ day? ↯
7	00.14	Isla:	you training tuesday ?

The main interest in this extract is lines 4-6, which comprise the construction of the message that subsequently appears at line 7. At line 4, Isla deletes the turn beginning “speak t” and repairs it to “let me know when”. She then deletes this and replaces it with “you training tuesday?”, which is the only part of this message her recipient sees: the repair is hidden. By repairing the beginning of her turn, Isla changes its projected action. “Speak t” may have been headed towards a closing such as “speak to you soon”, which may receive a response which collaboratively moves to close the chat. However, “let me know when” may project a request for information. The action Isla finally posts is not a pre-closing, but rather a question which makes an answer relevant. Through these concurrent repairs, the projected action is repaired from a closing to a request to a question. This example demonstrates that, as with spoken interaction, repair during message construction can occur when there is no hearable error, mistake or fault (Schegloff et al., 1977).

Repairs of projected action also occur in spoken interaction, as the following extract shows. Donny has telephoned Marsha to say that his car has stalled and, as the call progresses, it becomes clear that he is making an implicit request for assistance.

#### Extract 6.4: MDE: Stalled

1 Don: I don' know if it's po:ssible but, .hhh see  
 2 ↑I have t'open up the ba:nk. hh  
 3 (0.5)  
 4 Don: A:t uh: (0.2) in Brentwood? hh=  
 5 Mar: =Ye::ah:- an' I know you want- (0.2) an' I wou:-  
 6 (0.3) an' I wo:uld, but- except I've gotta le:ave  
 7 in about five min(h)utes. [(hheh)

At line 5 Marsha begins a dispreferred response, with an account for - again implicitly - turning down Donny's implicit request. During turn construction, the planned shape and type of a turn is projected (Schegloff, 1987). In Extract 6.4, Marsha aborts and re-starts her turn

three times, which changes the projected turn-shape (see Schegloff, 2013). In spoken interaction, “the projection of some sense of where a turn will be being brought to a close, [...] will allow a possible next speaker to try to gear up to start at just such a point” (Schegloff, 1987, p. 72). So the change in projected turn shape is interactionally relevant for both Donny and Marsha. Like Marsha’s repairs, in Extract 6.3 Isla repairs the projected action of her turn. However, due to the affordances of Facebook chat, Isla’s recipient, unlike Donny, remains unaware of these action-formation repairs. Therefore, the repair could not become interactionally accountable. However, Isla’s repair shows her *orientation* to how the design of her turn might accomplish a specific action or outcome in projecting a particular response (Hayashi et al., 2013).

There are also a number of corrections in Extract 6.3 which occur during message construction, such as correcting the spelling of “knackered” in line 2. These are corrections because they correct an actual ‘error’ (Macbeth, 2004). Thus, despite the tolerance for non-standard spelling and grammar in online interaction (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006), it appears that participants do sometimes attend to producing the correct spelling. Participants can, however, exploit the separation of message construction and sending, to complete both repairs and corrections before they are available for the recipient.

Here is another example which shows an orientation to the sequential implications of a particular turn. Prior to Extract 6.5, Joe has informed Isla that he has been getting texts from a girl he met the previous night whilst drunk.

Extract 6.5: JM/IS19/F: 147-164

1	00.26	Joe:	i didnt do anything i dont think but she
2			isn't even a student
3		I*:	🗨️ 4.0 chatting to BRM 🗨️
4			((Switches to chat with FW))
5			🗨️ 13.0 chatting to FW 🗨️

6 ((Switches to chat with BRM))  
7 🗨️ 27.0 chatting to BRM 🗨️  
8 ((Switches to chat with Joe))  
9 (3.0)  
10 ~~⚡ holy (.) shit hit (.) s t t st t~~  
11 ~~hit joe - where we e were you~~  
12 ~~lastnight night night ? -? ? and i bet~~  
13 ~~you can't remember a thinkg kg glo -gle~~  
14 ~~g -g lol (3.0) i th i-th (1.0)~~  
15 ~~holy shit joe - where were you last~~  
16 ~~night? and i bet you can't remember~~  
17 ~~a thing lol (2.0) oh dar ⚡~~  
18 01.23 Isla: oh dar

Between lines 10-14, Isla is constructing a response to Joe, comprising a question (“where were you last night”) and an assertion about Joe’s behaviour (“I bet you can’t remember...”). However, in lines 15-17, Isla deletes her original question and assertion, replacing it with an assessment which appears at line 18. Joe is unaware of what was originally written, and only sees what is finally sent at line 18 (which is subsequently corrected to “oh dear”).

To understand the consequences of this repair we can compare the first, aborted attempt, with what is subsequently sent (Drew et al., 2013). Initially, Isla issues an inquiry “where were you last night?” The second action is an assertion: “I bet you can’t remember a thing lol”, which could project a confirmation or denial, or perhaps a humorous account. Either message would have projected a further telling from Joe about his evening. But in her eventual turn Isla does not align herself as an interested recipient (Jefferson, 1978) and does not project further talk on the topic of Joe’s night out. While she does not close down the topic explicitly, neither does she invite further talk on it.

Extract 6.3 and Extract 6.5 show that participants in Facebook chat repair the action-orientation of their message prior to sending it. Repair of action is, as Extract 6.4 shows, also a feature of spoken interaction. However, in Facebook chat these repairs are completed

during message construction *prior* to the trouble-source occurring in the interaction. In contrast to spoken interaction, where repair deals with trouble which is hearable to the recipient, in Facebook chat, message construction repairs attempt to *prevent* trouble from occurring. However, the placement of these repairs is, to some extent, entirely logical. In spoken interaction, participants make use of the first possible point for initiating repair (Schegloff et al., 1977), and in Facebook chat this is during message construction. It is simply because of the design of Facebook chat that these repairs are not available to the recipient and therefore are not interactionally relevant.

Participants also make use of being able to ‘hide’ repairs to sometimes complete quite extensive repair operations. In fact, other research has suggested that complete deletions are the most frequent type of message construction repair (Beisswenger, 2008). An example of a complete deletion was seen in Extract 6.5 above, where Isla constructs a potentially complete turn, made up of a number of actions, before deleting the turn completely and replacing it with another. Deletions, where a “speaker deletes one or more elements already articulated in part or fully in the turn-so-far” (Schegloff, 2013, p.47), also occur in spoken interaction, as the following extract demonstrates.

Extract 6.6: From Sidnell (2010, p.116)

1     Ava:     =M[mm  
2     Bee: →   [tuh go en try the:re. Because I als- I tried Barnes  
3             'n Nobles 'n, (0.6) they didn' have any'ing they  
4             don' have any art books she tol' me,

In Extract 6.6, Bee’s self-repair ‘deletes’ the almost completed production of “also” at line 2. However, this word is still hearable to Ava before it is ‘deleted’ from the talk. Schegloff (2013) suggests that deletions are far less common than many other repair operations in spoken interaction. He also notes that all the examples he has collected involve deleting a

single word (as in Extract 6.6). In contrast, in Extract 6.5, Isla does a much more extensive repair, which is completely unavailable for the recipient.

The fact that turn construction and transmission are separate is an affordance of Facebook chat. However, the completion of repairs during message construction is an example of how interactional practices have developed to exploit these affordances. This section has also demonstrated that chat users do not simply repair misspellings or ‘typos’ but also repair the action of their talk. The following sections discuss message construction repairs on other trouble-sources.

### 6.3.1 Repairs of person reference

In this section, repairs of person reference are discussed, although these should still be “understood in terms of the actions they implement” (Lerner & Kitzinger, 2007, p.530). ‘Person reference’ refers to the way speakers refer to themselves and others, and conversation analysts have studied its preference organization, as well as repairs from one type of reference to another (e.g., “my neighbour”, “the woman down the road”, “Mrs Jones”, “the woman with the long hair”, etc.; see, for example, Enfield & Stivers, 2007; Enfield, 2013; Heritage, 2007; Stokoe, 2011a). In the following extract, Scott and Isla are discussing their athletics training.

#### Extract 6.7: JM/IS29/F: 202-205

1	0.07	Scott:	i can do a bit of coaching 😊
2		I*:	🗨️ 31.0 chatting with SA 🗨️
3			((Switches to chat with Scott))
4			⌘ (4.0) haha well i'm looking for a c e
5			(4.0) n in <del>n-in</del> (.)⊖ one now i ⊖ my fri <del>fri</del>
6			best friends gone and (1.0) -b <del>b</del> busted
7			his fingers (.)⌘
8	1.00	Isla:	haha well i'm looking for one now my best



The target repair occurs between lines 4 and 7, during the construction of the message which appears at lines 8 and 9. Isla begins to type what would presumably be “a coach” at line 4, but then deletes this and repairs it to “one”, which refers indexically to the coach mentioned by Scott in line 1. This repair shows an orientation to the preference for single, minimal forms of person reference over complex ones (Sacks & Schegloff, 1979). Equally, it orients to the preference for using a locally subsequent reference form (e.g., a pronoun) following an initial full-form reference (Kitzinger, Shaw, & Toerien, 2012). Although in Extract 6.7 there is no explicit full-form reference to “a coach”, the referent is implicitly available through the verb “coaching”.

Isla performs another repair on person reference at lines 5-6, as she repairs “friend” to “best friend”. This repair has a spoken equivalent in “recalibration repair”, where the terms of a formulation are either broadened or narrowed (Lerner, Bolden, Hepburn, & Mandelbaum, 2012). In spoken interaction, when the formulation is narrowed by *adding* something to the original it can be described as an “insertion repair” (Wilkinson & Weatherall, 2011), as in the following example.

Extract 6.8: From Lerner et al. (2012, p.196)

1 Pam: I haven't had any problems for [two yea]:r[s]  
 2 Clt: [Na:h ] [Th]at's  
 3 wonderful.  
 4 Pam:→ A:nd uh I have this u:h this chap this: Islamic chap  
 5 who:'s into: Yunani medicine and [( )]  
 6 Clt: [↑Ooh. That] sounds  
 7 interesting.

In line 4, Pam inserts the word “Islamic” between “this” and “chap.” As Lerner et al. (2012)

note, this repair operation “retains some features of the original formulation but modifies it in a way that adjusts the precision of the reference” (p.196). Similarly, in Extract 6.7, Isla modifies the formulation of “friend” such that while the referent remains the same; it becomes the more precise reference “best friend”. Recalibration repairs are not *just* repairs, they also reformulate the reference so that it is “more attuned to the actions, attributes, and setting depicted in talk” (Lerner et al., 2012, p.198). When referring to a person, different inferences can be made about the person and the relationship between the speaker and the referent (Lerner & Kitzinger, 2007; Stokoe, 2011a). Isla’s repair in lines 5 and 6 attends to the nature of the relationship between Isla and the referent, in the context of an implicit offer of coaching from Scott (line 1) and implicit acceptance from Isla (lines 8-9). It may also be recipient-designed as Isla’s “best friend” may be more recognizable to Scott than the broader referent “friend”.

The following extract shows an example of a recalibration repair which *broadens* the referent. Isla and Guy are discussing their living arrangements for the following academic year. There is some difficulty about who will occupy the small room in the shared house they are moving to.

Extract 6.9: JM/IS16/B: 233-239

1	0.26	Isla:	ok well i'll speak to joe and danny today
2			if possible and see what they say
3		I*:	<i>↯ my ↯ a ↯ if we can't find any(.)one to take</i>
4			<i>the small room and (1.0) it seems that ha ↯</i>
5			<i>becca and I are a (.) <del>at becca and I are a</del></i>
6			<i>at tow ↯ wo of us are going to a ↯ have to</i>
7			<i>do half a year each tha ↯ en man ↯ ybe (3.0)</i>
8			<i>joe would reconsider us (2.0) butw ↯ we'll</i>
9			<i>see ↯</i>
10	0.44	Isla:	if we can't find anyone to take the small room
11			and it seems that two of us are going to have

12 to do half a year each then maybe joe  
13 would reconsider us but we'll see

From lines 3-9 Isla is constructing the turn which appears in lines 10-13. At line 5, Isla deletes the phrase “Becca and I are...” repairing this to “two of us are...”. The action of this turn remains the same: Isla proposes that two people share the room. However, Isla abandons volunteering herself and Becca to take the room, instead suggesting that any two people who will be living in the house might take it. Isla explicitly amends *who* the referent is, replacing a specific reference with an aggregated one (Lerner et al., 2012). In other words, Isla is able to *prevent* the action of volunteering herself and Becca *before* the recipient sees it.

As with repairs of action, person reference repairs occur in both online and spoken interaction, yet in online interaction they are not available to the recipient. Participants are therefore able to edit their posts to *prevent* any trouble for the recipient in locating the referent, rather than managing trouble after it has occurred. This finding is further indicative of a difference between online ‘repair’ and spoken repair.

### **6.3.2 Repairs of ‘pronunciation’, ‘intonation’ and stance**

Other examples of message construction repair are those which repair ‘pronunciation’, ‘intonation’ and stance. In spoken talk, people use intonation to tell recipients how to hear a word, display their stance towards it, or modify action. In other words, a speaker can display their ‘attitude’ or ‘emotion’ towards their utterances by, for example, interpolating a word with laughter (e.g., Potter & Hepburn, 2010). Equally, speakers may modify the action of a turn such that recipients understand what sort of response is relevant. In spoken interaction, speakers do this through prosodic features (Local & Walker, 2008), laughter (Jefferson et al., 1987; Potter & Hepburn, 2010) or embodied conduct (Goodwin, 2007). In online interaction, these features are not available; yet as was shown in Chapter 3, the resources of the medium

may be used to formulate the same sorts of activities.

In Extract 6.10, Isla has been chatting to Callum, who has stated that he is logging off Facebook chat to watch a television programme called ‘Secret Diary of a Call Girl’, about a prostitute, starring the British actor Billie Piper.

Extract 6.10: JM/IS6/F: 120-124

1		I*:	<i>✍ night night ✍</i>
2	0.02	Isla:	night night
3		I*:	<i>✍ enjoy billie (1.0) :- (1.0) <del>;-</del> ;-) ✍</i>
4	0.11	Isla:	enjoy billie 😊
5		I*:	<i>✍ xxxxxx ✍</i>
6	0.03	Isla:	xxxxxx

At line 1, Isla is progressing a closing sequence. At line 3 she initially types a ‘smiley face’ but then deletes it and replaces it with a ‘wink’. This deletion repairs her stance towards “enjoy billie” from something like ‘enjoyment of the programme’ to a more ‘salacious’ orientation to the fact that the programme is about a call girl. This repair demonstrates Isla’s orientation to the potential meaning of a smiley, and how this might lead to the recipient ‘hearing’ her turn in a particular way. The fact that this smiley is repaired suggests that stance markers in instant messaging should be understood, and are treated as, entirely meaningful and are analyzable as such. As with the prior extracts, though, this repair occurs during message construction and is not available to Callum.

To compare this with an example from spoken interaction, consider the following extract from a speed date (see Stokoe, 2010). M has been discussing his job as an actor and the way it helps him ‘connect’ with people.

### Extract 6.11: Stokoe [SD-5]

1 F: So actually you don't really intera:ct with people:  
2 you- you- =  
3 M: = I ↑do,  
4 F: You prote:ct the:m,  
5 M: You inter- you interact on sta:ge.  
6 (0.4)  
7 F: I °suppo:se so. °=if you get a- if:: you get some  
8 response i s'pose-

At line 7, F repairs her stance from “if” to “if::”, with the first “if” having no emphasis, whereas her second “if::” is both emphasized and lengthened. The repair modifies F’s stance in the turn being constructed. Thus, her assessment should be heard as conditional, and even sceptical, towards M’s idea that he gets a response from the audience whilst on stage. The key thing to note is that the repair is hearable by M and works to indicate what sort of turn F is formulating. That is, F cannot undo the first formulation of “if” such that only the second is heard by M. Thus, while the repairs in Extract 6.10 and Extract 6.11 are both “replacing” (Schegloff, 2013, p.61) one stance with another, the repair in Extract 6.11 is available to the recipient and so could, potentially, become an accountable matter. For Isla, though, her change in stance is not available to Callum and therefore cannot become accountable, again demonstrating the difference between repair in online and spoken interaction.

In another extract, Callum requests that Isla teach him how to throw the javelin.

### Extract 6.12: JM/IS5/F: 85-99

1 I\*: *so ho e w w (.) h who's place*  
2 *you taking? we have (5.0) w w*  
3 *q e good javelin [throw w w e*  
4 C\*: *[e writing e*  
5 I\*: *e e wes ] || e || e*  
6 C\*: *e e writing e]*

7 0.16 Callum: || you can teach  
8 me 😊 ||  
9 I\*: ↔ ↪ rs ↪  
10 0.02 Isla: so who's place you taking? we have  
11 good javelin throwers  
12 (2.0)  
13 I\*: ↪ i charge b b by the hour (1.0)  
14 :-p ↪-P ;\_ = -) (4.0) ↪  
15 0.16 Isla: i charge by the hour 😊

In lines 13 and 14, Isla constructs her response to Callum’s request. During message construction Isla begins to post a smiley with its tongue sticking out (:-P). However, she repairs this at line 14 to a ‘wink’. As with Extract 6.10, this repairs the stance from a playful orientation to a flirtatious one. As her turn is referring to being “paid by the hour”, Isla’s repair of stance alters its hearing, so that her turn is not merely a playful suggestion about getting paid, but rather refers implicitly to the category-bound activities of a prostitute (that they charge by the hour; see Stokoe & Attenborough, forthcoming). This repair is, of course, unavailable to Callum, but again demonstrates the importance of understanding emoticons as having implied meaning in particular sequential environments and being used interactionally to display particular stances.

Related to repairs of stance are repairs of pronunciation. In Extract 6.13, Isla and Gavin have been discussing when Gavin - who is living in America - is going to visit Isla, who is based in the UK. The repair occurs at line 8.

#### Extract 6.13: JM/IS14/B: 37-46

1 0.00 Gavin: come back to the states and work and save  
2 \$\$\$  
3 (2.0)  
4 I\*: ↪ sounds good ↪  
5 0.05 Isla: sounds good

6 I\*:            ~~coz~~ that's || a || lll ⇔  
7 0.02 Gavin:    || and i am working on that now..... ||  
8 I\*:            ⇔ ~~lll~~ aallwasy ~~sy~~ ys followed by... ⇔  
9 0.08 Isla:     coz that's aaallways followed by...  
10 I\*:            ~~EUROPE!~~  
11 0.02 Isla:     EUROPE!

At line 6, Isla starts writing “alll” but at line 8 she repairs it to “aallways” orienting to the way Gavin should ‘hear’ this word. In spoken interaction, repairs of pronunciation are often *other-initiated* (Jefferson et al., 1987). However, there are examples of *self-initiated self-repair* of pronunciation, as in the following example from a telephone call between Gordon and Dana.

Extract 6.14: Holt [88U-1-08]

1 Gor: Uh:m .hhh thing is. You know uh:m (.) about the  
2 weeke:nd,  
3 Dana: Yeah,  
4 Gor: .h You- you were a bit (0.2) uh anxious about it,  
5 (.)  
6 Dana: hn- Yeh but I'm always (agniss)  
7 (0.3)  
8 Dana: anxiou[s]

At line 6 Dana appears to say “anxious” yet the pronunciation is not clear, and after a gap - which could indicate some trouble with Gordon’s understanding of the word - she repeats the word, repairing the pronunciation. In this case there is a hearable error with Dana’s pronunciation of the word, which could make it difficult for the recipient to know how to respond.

In Extract 6.13, the trouble-source was the non-standard spelling of “always”, and yet it is not repaired to the *correct* spelling of the word, but rather to a *different* non-standard spelling. What Isla effectively does, then, is to repair the *emphasis* of the word, so that the

“aa” sound is more elongated. Therefore, this type of repair does not repair a misspelling, but repairs the emphasis on the word. Previous research has suggested that lexical substitutes, such as replicated letters, are used to display stance and mimic prosodic features (e.g., J. Park, 2007; Werry, 1996). Crystal (2001) suggested that the number of repeated letters simply reflects how long the relevant key is pressed. However, my findings indicate that these non-standard spellings are not ‘accidental’. Indeed, participants may actually repair their turn in order to ensure that the recipient ‘hears’ the ‘correct’ pronunciation. The repair, as with the others in this section, occurs before any potential ‘trouble’ has occurred, which again shows a difference between online repair and spoken repair.

The following example also demonstrates a change of emphasis, but in this case the ‘prosody’ rather than the ‘pronunciation’ is repaired. In this extract, Katie is discussing reporting a problem to a company and the difficulties she had in getting a response.

Extract 6.15: JM/KA14/B: 266-261

1	0.56	Katie:	i sent them an email one time
2		K*:	⌘ it took them *ten* months to reply ⌘
3	0.10	Katie:	it took them <b>ten</b> months to reply
4			(5.0)
5		K*:	((Minimizes chat window with Rob))
6			(1.0)
7		K*:	((Switches to chat with Nadia))
8			🗨 37.0 chatting with Nadia 🗨
9	0.42	Rob:	really?!
10		K*:	🗨 12.0 chatting with Nadia 🗨
11			((Switches to chat with Rob))
12			⌘ really -* 🗨← * ⌘
13	0.20	Katie:	<b>really</b>

In online communication, it is possible to emphasize a word by emboldening it. In Facebook chat this is done by placing asterisks around the word during message construction (as Katie



does in line 2); it will then appear in bold in the chat window. At line 12, Katie constructs her response to Rob's question "really?!" at line 9. Note that the punctuation in Rob's turn suggests that this turn should be 'heard' as indicating some surprise or incredulity about Katie's turn at line 3 (see Chapter 3, Section 3.2). Thus, the design of Rob's turn also indicates his stance towards the prior turn. Katie's turn at line 13 offers confirmation of her previous statement through the repetition of the word "really". Originally she writes "really" with no emphasis, but then repairs it by adding asterisks so it appears in bold, suggesting a stress on the word. Again, then, this serves to indicate to the recipient how the word should be 'heard' and also the participant's stance. As with the previous examples, the repair is completed prior to any trouble, but it shows an orientation to how turns may be read and understood by the recipient.

In this section I have shown how 'pronunciation' and 'prosody' can be repaired during message construction, with such repairs changing how words should be 'heard', as well as the speaker's stance. As was also discussed in Chapter 3, participants use emoticons, non-standard spelling and visual emphasis in sophisticated ways to show how a recipient should understand the turn. The repairs described in this section show that participants attend to the inferences which may be drawn from their use of emoticons or non-standard spelling.

### ***6.3.3 Message construction repair - summary***

This section has shown that self-initiated, self-repair occurs during Facebook chat. As with spoken interaction, there is an apparent preference for completing repair as soon as possible after the trouble-source. However, technological affordances mean that the first possible point for completing repair is during message construction; that is, before the potential trouble-source is interactionally relevant for the recipient. While other findings have demonstrated that repairs occur during message construction which are directly responsive to

the co-participant (e.g., Beisswenger, 2008; A.C. Garcia & Jacobs, 1999; Markman, 2005), I have shown that, in addition, participants may edit their turn-in-progress and orient to similar interactional concerns as in spoken conversation (see Drew et al., 2013). The difference is, of course, that in Facebook chat, recipients do not know that a repair has even occurred. There is a single deviant case in the corpus where the person who has produced a repair during message construction orients to it in their chat. In this extract, Guy and Isla are discussing meeting up to watch a movie at Isla's flat, and the conversation turns to who will bring the film.

Extract 6.16: JM/IS16/B: 269-272

1	0.23	Guy:	better get a decent movie tho 😊
2		I*:	⌘ (1.0) haha (2.0) bring <del>bring</del> i wasn't gonna
3			say bring one but since you are illegal <del>fal</del>
4			gal you don't actually have any :-P ⌘
5	0.21	Isla:	haha i was gonna say bring one but since you
6			are illegal you don't actually have any 😊

At line 2 Isla starts to write “bring one” but then deletes this. She then repairs it to “i was gonna say bring one”, which she subsequently sends to the chat. In other words, she makes her repair interactionally relevant. As this does not occur in any other examples, we can ask why she does this particular action now. Isla and Guy are talking about getting together to watch a film. However, Guy can presumably not supply the film because he only (illegally) downloads them. Thus, Isla's repair during message construction attends to the potential trouble of requesting a movie from Guy, when she knows that he would not be able to grant that request (Drew et al., 2013). By mentioning the repair in her sent message, however, she makes Guy accountable for illegally downloading movies. In other words, the repair is made relevant for interactional purposes. However, Guy *does not* know whether this repair *actually*

occurred, and could presume that Isla is saying this simply to make him accountable for illegally downloading movies. While in spoken interaction repairs are hearable, can be oriented to and speakers may be held accountable for them, in online interaction it is the choice of the participant whether or not they reveal any message construction repair. In the following section, I will discuss the types of repairable that occur as visible, and also show how the sequential position of these repairs compare to spoken interaction.

#### **6.4 Visible self-initiated self-repair**

Across the corpus, repairs which occurred *after* message transmission generally served to correct an ‘error’ or ‘mistake’ and are therefore *corrections*. In other words, repairs on action, stance or pronunciation, such as those discussed in the section above, do not seem to occur as visible repairs. This finding perhaps results from the fact that once a message is sent, it cannot be deleted and the projected action changed (as with Extract 6.4). Rather, to repair the action of a turn, the participant would have to construct and send another turn as a repair, as in the following extract.

##### Extract 6.17: JM/IS21/B: 30-34

```
1      Isla:  see us girls are awesome
2                (6.0)
3      Isla:  didn't you ever realise that ?
4                (1.0)
5      Isla:  hehe
```

In this extract, Isla posts two turns in lines 1 and 3, which are meant to be heard as ironic. However, she does not post a stance marker to convey this. Instead, her turn in line 5, comprising laughter particles, could potentially be repairing the stance of the prior turns. However, it could also be that line 5 is an increment (Schegloff, 1996), in the same way as

adding laughter particles at the end of a spoken turn may be incremental rather than necessarily a repair operation. As neither Isla nor her recipient orient to this as a repair, by framing it or adding an asterisk for example (see Collister, 2011; Markman, 2008), it is difficult to establish whether or not this is a repair operation. Therefore, in this section, only repairs which are *oriented to as repairs* will be discussed.

Corrections of an ‘error’ or ‘mistake’ often occur after message sending in Facebook chat (see also Markman, 2008). Although these do not delete the original misspelling or ‘typo’ from the message, they are clearly identifiable as doing correction. These are much more comparable with repairs in spoken interaction which deal with some trouble in talk *after* it has occurred. As was shown in Section 6.3, corrections were also identified *before* message transmission, suggesting that such troubles are oriented to by the writer both prior to, and after, sending the message. In the following extracts, a number of visible corrections will be discussed, and comparisons drawn with the sequential positioning of such repairs in *spoken* interaction. In Extract 6.18, note the visible correction produced by Isla at line 6.

Extract 6.18: JM/IS19/F: 86-91

1		I*:	⌘ how come you feel itso bac e d
2			the next morein <del>ein</del> ning :- ⌘
3	00.09	Isla:	how come you feel itso bad the
4			next morning :-
5		I*:	⌘ S ⌘
6	00.01	Isla:	S

Isla has been discussing Joe’s night out the previous night and is asking him why he has such a bad hangover. In line 4, Isla posts a ‘smiley’ (“:-”) to display her stance towards her turn; the complete smiley (“:-S”) would indicate something like confusion. However, as we can see from line 4, she has missed off the final letter “S” from the smiley, and thus only half of it is posted. Isla types the final letter of the smiley in line 5 and this subsequently appears in

line 6. Thus, Isla corrects her prior turn to avoid ambiguity about her stance, and to enable Joe to respond in a fitted way.

There are similarities between the sequential placement of the repair in Extract 6.18 and ‘transition space repair’ in spoken interaction. A transition space repair occurs when a speaker has potentially completed their TCU but extends their turn to carry out the repair (Schegloff, 1997), as in the following example.

Extract 6.19: From Schegloff (1997, p.36)

1 Roger: We’re just workin on a different thing.  
2 the same thing

Here, it is the turn-terminal component, “a different thing”, which is to be repaired, and this is done in the transition space; that is “in the moments just following possible completion of the turn” (Schegloff, 1997, p.35). Isla’s repair comes after she has completed a turn and so transition of speakership is possible. However, before the co-participant has a chance to take a turn, Isla constructs and posts her repair. Thus, the placement of the correction in Extract 6.18 is similar to a transition space repair, as it is posted in the moments just following the completion of the turn. However, there are problems with describing this as a transition space repair. As we saw in Chapter 3, while turns may comprise actions which can be oriented to by recipients as separate TCUs, those turns are posted *as* complete. Isla must therefore take another turn, rather than extending her turn as Roger does in Extract 6.19, to do the correction. Therefore, although this could be seen as similar to a transition space repair, the repair itself appears in the next turn, because of turn-taking practices in Facebook chat. This repair can more appropriately be termed ‘next turn repair’. However, in both extracts, the trouble-source and repair are visible to the recipient.

As there is a potential TRP following a message being sent, the recipient may end up

taking a turn *before* the repair or correction can be formulated. Extract 6.20 is an example.

Extract 6.20: JM/IS6/F: 28-40

1	0.56	Callum:	😬 lol im not going to argue with you
2			tonight secret diaries of a call girl is
3			coming on lol haha tell her i say
4			hiya and well done
5			for a ew pb xxx
6		I*:	↔ 🗨 3.0 chatting to CC 🗨
7			((Switches to chat with Callum))
8			(8.0)
9			✂ wait wait wait ✂
10	0.15	Isla:	wait wait wait
11			(2.0)
12		I*:	✂ i ÷    (2.0)    ✂
13	0.06	Callum:	new

In line 5, Callum has posted “ew” rather than “new”. Before his correction is posted (line 13), Isla has already posted a turn at line 10. This correction contrasts with the correction in Extract 6.18, because there has already been a transition of speakers prior to repair. This is not an example of *other-initiated correction*, however, because Callum’s correction is not responsive to Isla’s turn at line 10. What should, then, have been a next turn repair, has appeared after the recipient has already posted a response. To some extent this is similar to *third turn repair* in spoken conversation, which occurs when

some participant produces an utterance in a turn which will turn out to be a trouble-source turn...This turn is followed by a contribution from another participant which neither claims nor embodies ‘trouble’ with what preceded (Schegloff, 1997, p.32).

Schegloff notes that, most often, the intervening turn from the other participant is very brief

and does not show any trouble in understanding what the speaker meant, as in Extract 6.21.

Extract 6.21: From Schegloff (1997, p.32)

- 1 B: hhh And he's going to make his own paintings,  
2 A: Mm hmmm  
3 B: And- or I mean his own frames.  
4 A: Yeah

Speaker A shows no problem in understanding what B has said, or that there is any trouble with B's turn. However, B still initiates and repairs their talk at line 3. Schegloff notes that this repair is in third turn not by virtue of it being "*relevantly* after" (Schegloff, 1997, p.34, emphasis in original) the next turn (as would be the case with *third position repair*, see Section 6.5) but, rather, the repair is only there incidentally. Thus, "the same repair which would otherwise have been in the transition space now appears in/as third turn" (Schegloff, 1997, p.35). So, in Extract 6.20, Isla's turn at line 10 does not claim nor embody any trouble in understanding Callum's turn at lines 1-5. Callum initiates and completes the correction, but this is not adjacent to the trouble-source turn. Callum's correction may occur after Isla's turn, but it is not *relevantly* after. As in spoken interaction, it is in third turn only incidentally, but this is because Callum does not have access to the construction of Isla's turn. This extract demonstrates how the difficulties of mutually co-ordinating turn-taking, discussed in Chapter 3, impact both sequence organization and the positioning of repair.

In both Extract 6.19 and Extract 6.21 the speakers frame the repair, which helps to locate the trouble-source. In Extract 6.19 the repair is post-framed, through the repetition of the word "thing", and in Extract 6.21 the trouble-source is pre-framed through the repetition of "his own". However, in the Facebook chat examples, there is no framing of the repair. In Extract 6.18, Isla does not repeat the whole smiley, but rather adds the final part in the next turn. Similarly, in Extract 6.20, Callum does not repeat "new pb" for example, but rather

simply writes “new”. This finding contrasts with those of Markman (2008) and Collister (2011), who suggested that participants use a variety of methods, including symbols or interjections, to mark repair in online interaction. This lack of framing may display the relevance of the persistence of text on-screen, which means that it is possible for recipients to locate the trouble-source in the text. The positions in which repairs appear also display the relevance of the technological affordances. Visible *self-initiated self-repairs* can occur in either next turn or third turn position. Transition space repairs cannot occur, but rather the repair has to appear in the next turn. Same turn repairs have to occur during message construction.

The final extract in this section shows an example of an error, or potential error, being oriented to by participants but with no subsequent correction. In Extract 6.22, Katie misspells “accommodation” at line 2, and while this is oriented to in her next turn, she does not offer a correction.

Extract 6.22: JM/KA5/B: 74-76

1	K*:	<i>⌘ we should go together, i have (.) free</i>
2		<i>acc(.)om(.)adation(!)⌘</i>
3	0.17 Katie:	<i>we should go together, i have free accomadation!</i>
4	K*:	<i>⌘ (2.0) thats really not how its spelt ⌘</i>
5	0.07 Katie:	<i>thats really not how its spelt</i>

Firstly, note the short pauses during the typing of the word “acomadation”, indicating as non-lexical speech perturbations do in spoken interaction, that there may be trouble in the production of the message. These pauses may only be available to the writer (and the analyst), but it demonstrates that if there is some trouble in constructing a turn, writers may pause message construction in an attempt to deal with it. After posting the message, Katie orients to the spelling error, but does not correct it. Spelling errors are, of course, a trouble-



source unique to written interaction (Crystal, 2001), although there may be a comparison with errors in pronunciation in spoken interaction (see Section 6.3.2). However, one of the potential affordances of online interaction is that users can, if they wish, check spelling - for example, in an online dictionary - before sending messages. Here, then, is evidence that despite the existence of technological affordances and resources, participants may not, in practice, make use of them.

In orienting to some potential error, but not fixing it, Katie is attending to what Edwards (2005) refers to as the “subject-side” or “speaker-indexical” nature of interaction. That is, when a speaker produces an action, it is “available for evaluative inferences about the speaker” (Edwards, 2005, p.6). Thus, in producing misspellings, a negative inference about a participant is made available, and in orienting to the error the participants manage the potential for such inferences (see Stokoe, 2011a). However, by orienting to the error but not fixing it, Katie presumes that there is no trouble maintaining intersubjectivity. In other words, she presumes that her recipient will know what word she is attempting to use.

In this section I have shown how the form and placement of repair in Facebook chat often, but not always, corresponds with that of spoken interaction. Visible corrections can appear in next-turn, but equally, they can be dislocated from the trouble-source. These are similar to transition space and third turn repairs in spoken interaction respectively, but such concepts are difficult to transfer to online interaction due to the differences between TCUs and TRPs in spoken and written interaction (see Chapter 3). One similarity to note, though, is that the preference for self-correction holds in Facebook chat as much as in spoken conversation. Repairs are equally *recipient-designed*, dealing with potential misunderstandings and the maintenance of intersubjectivity. We can also see how participants can orient to an error to manage the subject-side of their chats. However, participants do not correct all misspellings, providing evidence that non-standard spelling may be acceptable in

online interaction as long as the action is clear (see also Markman, 2008).

## 6.5 Repair in response to the co-participant's actions

In this chapter so far I have examined self-initiated self-repair in both message construction and following message sending. In this final section I will examine self-repairs which, although still initiated and completed by the writer, are in response to the actions of the co-participant. In the following extract, Rob and Katie are discussing a problem with their mutual friends' travel arrangements.

### Extract 6.23: JM/KA13/B: 294-305

1	1.23	Rob:	STA travel fucked up their flight
2		K*:	<i>↵ what (.)    tell me    ↵</i>
3	0.10	Rob:	<b>   they paid them but STA</b>
4			<b>forgot to tell BA basically   </b>
5		K*:	<i>↵ ↵ (3.0) ↵</i>
6	0.03	Rob:	so when they showed up
7		K*:	<i>↵ [ ↵ (3.0) ]    me    ↵</i>
8		R*:	<i>[ ↵ writing ↵ ]</i>
9	0.03	Rob:	<b>   they couldnt board   </b>
10		K*:	<i>↵ ↵ (3.0) ↵</i>
11	0.04	Rob:	coz they werent on the list
12		K*:	<i>↵ ↵ <del>what tell fuuuck</del> ↵</i>
13	0.04	Katie:	fuuuck

At line 1 Rob starts to tell Katie about the trouble their friends had experienced. At line 2 Katie constructs the turn “what tell me”, which, if posted, would be a request for further information. However, before Katie posts her message, Rob posts another turn which continues the story. Rob posts three more turns telling the story at lines 6, 9 and 11. As he is doing this, Katie gradually deletes her original message (lines 7 and 12), before repairing it to

“fuuuck”, which functions as a news receipt. Katie self-repairs her message during turn construction, and so this is not available to Rob. However, it is *responsive* to Rob’s actions in the chat.

This type of repair occurs because there is no possibility of mutually co-ordinating turn construction in Facebook chat. Therefore, in line 2, Katie does not know that Rob is already constructing a turn to provide her with the information that her turn, if posted, would request. As individuals design their talk for a particular sequential context, these repairs function to repair the design of the turn once it becomes apparent that it is no longer appropriate to do “*this* action in *this* sequential place” (Drew et al., 2013, p.93, emphasis in original). Participants in spoken conversation may also adjust the design of their turn in response to changes of interactional circumstances. In the following extract, a family are sitting around a table having dinner.

Extract 6.24: From Drew et al., (2013, p.91)

1 Sus:→ Pa- may >I have a< c- c’n I have the gravy Ross?  
2 Frn: Boy everybody’s really: hoggin [up things like  
3 Sus: [Mother said to  
4 sta[rt passing it=  
5 Mrk: [eh Yhheh uh huh  
6 Rss: = [Hey look at the sa:lad  
7 Sus: = [Well you picked it up and you laid it back do:wn

Susie repairs the design of her turn in line 1 from an imperative to a modal request. As Drew et al. (2013) note,

although just before she began speaking the gravy was easily available and was not being used by anyone, just as she spoke the contingencies had changed; the gravy was moved away from her, and Ross now had something else in his hand (p. 92).

In this example, as in Extract 6.23, the speaker changes the design of her turn in order to manage the local interactional and sequential context. However, in Facebook chat, these repairs occur during message construction and are not available to the recipient. These types of repairs have been found in other research using screen capture (Beisswenger, 2008; A.C. Garcia & Jacobs, 1999; Markman, 2005), and are often described as examples of conversational monitoring (Markman, 2005) or collaborative turn construction (A.C. Garcia & Jacobs, 1999), rather than specifically focusing on the repair operation. This is not to say that such repairs do not provide evidence of monitoring the chat or collaborative turn construction. However, by also discussing the relevance of the repair operation, we are able to understand the sequential and interactional implications of the repair operation, even though it occurs during message construction.

Finally, it is worth noting that third position repair, where speakers address talk which has been misunderstood by recipients, also occurs in Facebook chat, as the following extract - from the beginning of a chat - shows.

Extract 6.25: JM/IS10/B: 3-107

1 Isla: there's a letter for you at the union 🙄  
2 (6.0)  
3 Dave: oi oi!  
4 (2.0)  
5 Dave: interesting?  
6 (6.0)  
7 Dave: by the look of it?  
8 (14.0)  
9 Isla: erm blood donation?? >  
10 (386.0)  
11 Dave: arrghh god  
12 (5.0)  
13 Dave: i just want an interesting one!!

14 (31.0)  
15 Isla: aww gutted  
16 (10.0)  
17 Isla: i don't think it's going to be interesting :-S  
18 (70.0)  
19 Dave: i cant see it lol  
20 (5.0)  
21 Dave: how are you anyway?  
22 (61.0)  
23 Isla: oh i'm sure it was there haha  
24 (12.0)  
25 Isla: unless there is another david pating  
26 in lakepool lol  
27 (3.0)  
28 Isla: i'm good thanks you?  
29 (31.0)  
30 Dave: → nooo i cant see it being interesting!!  
31 (6.0)  
32 Dave: im not gonna be in the union now am i lol

Isla starts the chat by informing Dave that there is a letter for him at the Student's Union.

Dave responds in lines 3 and 5 by asking if it looks interesting. This discussion of whether the letter is interesting is continued in lines 7, 13 and 17. Dave's turn in line 19 "i cant see it lol" is responsive to line 17, about whether the letter is interesting. However, Isla understands this turn as being responsive to line 1; that is, that Dave means "I can't see it in the Student's Union". In line 30, Dave repairs the trouble in understanding, by explicitly stating that he meant "i cant see it being interesting!!" This is a *third position repair*, in which

the speaker of the problematically understood talk – the trouble source – can undertake to address the trouble by engaging in some operation on the source of the trouble (Schegloff, 2006a, p.223).

As with spoken interaction, third position repairs can be used to catch any problems in

understanding, and to maintain intersubjectivity between the parties (Hayashi et al., 2013). So, while I noted in Chapter 3 that trouble does not necessarily arise from disrupted turn adjacency, here we can see that third position repair is a means by which participants can deal with any trouble which does arise.

There are, then, two forms of repair in Facebook chat which are responsive to the actions of the recipient. Firstly, participants may repair the design, action or content of their turn in response to turns being posted in the chat by their co-participant, which results in their current turn being no longer interactionally relevant. These repairs are, to some extent, a result of the fact that turns-in-progress cannot be monitored in Facebook chat. However, in both spoken and chat interaction, participants may repair their turns-in-progress in response to changes in sequential context. Secondly, we see that third position repairs occur in both chat and spoken interaction, and in Facebook chat they are a means for participants to repair any trouble arising from disrupted turn adjacency.

## **6.6 Discussion**

In this chapter I have shown how self-initiated self-repair occurs during instant messaging chats. In Facebook chat, as in spoken interaction, “a great many troubles occur, and are managed within, a current turn - before a speaker reaches its first possible completion” (Hayashi et al., 2013, p.12; see also, Schegloff et al., 1977). Because of the separation of message construction and sending in Facebook chat, the first opportunity for repair is during message construction and so is unavailable for the recipient. In Facebook chat, then, this means that if a trouble-source is managed before the writer reaches completion of a turn, then the repair is completed *before* the recipient sees the turn at all. Repair in this position is quite different from spoken interaction because the content of the repair is unaccountable. The analysis has shown that participants make use of this affordance to do extensive repairs, in

some cases deleting whole turns.

There are a remarkable number of similarities between repair operations in Facebook chat and those in spoken interaction. Thus, participants were found to repair the action of their turn, their stance or person reference during message construction, through replacing, deleting, abandoning and reformulating their turns. Although prior research finds repair operations which are unique to online interaction (e.g., Markman, 2008; Schönfeldt & Golato, 2003), the repairable items found in the Facebook chat data are also found in spoken interaction, suggesting that participants orient to the same interactional contingencies in both Facebook chat and spoken interaction. However, Facebook chat affords the possibility for these repairs to be completed during message construction.

The analysis has also revealed that participants in Facebook chat correct mistakes, such as ‘typos’ or misspellings, both during message construction and after sending. However, not all spelling errors and ‘typos’ are corrected, suggesting that errors may not be corrected if they do not pose a challenge to maintaining intersubjectivity. The sequential position of visible repairs in Facebook chat was, in some cases, similar to that of spoken interaction. For example, similarly to Schönfeldt and Golato (2003), I found that due to the turn-taking practices of Facebook chat, ‘visible repairs’ which potentially corresponded with transition space repair in spoken interaction, could only appear in the next turn. However, I would argue that a practice similar to third turn repair may occur in Facebook chat. In addition, when corrections occurred they were not marked explicitly as corrections, and were not either pre- or post-framed to locate the trouble-source, which demonstrates an interesting difference with previous findings from online interaction (Collister, 2011; Markman, 2008). It may be that as previous research tended to focus on multi-party interaction, some way of marking a repair was necessary to maintain understanding of a turn when there may have been a number of intervening turns. Participants may also be making use of the persistence of

text on-screen, so recipients can read back to locate the trouble-source, thus corrections do not need to be marked.

Finally self-initiated self-repairs which were responsive to the co-participant were discussed. These occurred both during message construction and following message sending. Those which occurred following message sending were very similar to third position repairs in spoken interaction and could be used to manage trouble arising from disrupted turn adjacency. Repairs during message construction demonstrate that, as other findings have suggested, participants monitor their recipient's actions even when typing a message. However, I also argued that these repairs demonstrate that, as in spoken interaction, participants attend to constructing an appropriate turn for that sequential context.

The findings of this chapter have a number of implications. Firstly, they suggest that by analyzing message construction repairs, we can see how writers orient to the action and sequential context of their soon-to-be-posted turn. By using screen-capture data we can, therefore, gain insight in to how participants construct their turns, as we might be spoken interaction. Secondly, this chapter suggests that repairs of writing do not merely occur “where the writer notices a discrepancy between text and intention” (Myhill & Jones, 2007, p.324) or where there are “errors and other perceived inadequacies” (Crystal, 2001, p.27). Instead, writers in Facebook chat repair their messages when there is no error, instead repairing the action or sequential implications of their turn. These repairs should not be treated as providing “access to mental processes” (Hayashi et al., 2013, p.17), but rather as a means of analyzing how doing *that* repair in *that* context may impact upon the interactional and sequential context. Thirdly, the findings of this chapter suggest that participants do not constantly reformulate their messages to present their ‘best selves’ (Turkle, 2011), but rather orient to the sequential and interactional context of their messages.

Finally, this chapter raises questions about how conversation analysts understand and



analyze online repair. By examining message construction repair, we can identify what self-repairs achieve for the person constructing the turn. In other words, as Drew et al. (2013) note

the original version – that is the version that the speaker begins, though sometimes does not complete – can be compared with the eventual version, the repair, to identify in what ways the speaker has modified, altered or adjusted their turn to deal with something other than a factual error (p.74).

As I have shown, participants do extensive repairs during message construction in Facebook chat; these can be compared with the sent version to identify the various actions oriented to by doing that repair. In CA, repair is generally understood as the mechanism by which troubles which arise during an interaction are managed by speakers. There is some presumption that the repair is hearable to both participants, and thus can become potentially accountable. However, many of the repair operations discussed in this chapter occurred *before* the potential trouble-source could become accountable. So, rather than disrupting the progressivity of the interaction, message construction repair in fact *maintains* it, by *preventing* potential trouble from occurring. However, while repairs during message construction still orient to similar interactional concerns, there are differences between repair in online interaction and spoken interaction. In online interaction, repair occurs outside of the intersubjective space, and is therefore unaccountable. Similarly, instead of disrupting interaction, repair in online interaction allows for potential difficulties to be managed prior to them becoming interactionally relevant. However, I would argue that analyzing such repairs is still of relevance to conversation analysts, as it enables us to further examine how turn construction is managed by participants in online interaction.

Overall, this chapter has shown how participants do self-repair in spoken interaction.

It has demonstrated in detail how the separation of message construction and sending is exploited by participants. It has also shown how a number of the interactional practices explored in Chapter 3 impact repair. I have drawn out a number of implications from this chapter for both CA and for internet research in general. In the discussion, I will further develop these points, and discuss the key findings of this thesis, and show how these relate to the concerns about the role of the internet in changing our communicative practices.

## Discussion

The purpose of this thesis was to explore the organization of one-to-one online interaction between friends. The aims were, firstly, to compare the organization of online interaction to that of spoken conversation and, secondly, to examine the extent to which participants oriented or attended to technological affordances in their interaction. Thirdly, I also aimed to show how conversation analysis (CA) can be used to systematically analyze encounters between friends conducted using Facebook chat. I found that while there are some similarities between interactional practices in spoken and online interaction, there are also some differences, many of which show the impact of the technological constraints and affordances of Facebook chat.

The first analytic chapter (Chapter 3) focused on the generic orders of interaction: turn-taking, action-formation and sequence organization. The findings of this chapter provided an overview of the basic organization of Facebook chat which was the basis for the subsequent chapters. In this chapter, I suggested that two particular affordances of the chat software were most evident in the interaction. Firstly, the gaps between turns and the possibilities for overlap and multi-tasking demonstrated the impact of the written nature of the medium, and the persistence of written text. Similarly, how users designed actions using emoticons, punctuation, repeated letters and typed representations of vocal sounds also showed how participants managed some of the affordances. Secondly, the separation of message construction and sending was evident in a number of ways, including the fact that turns-in-progress could not be monitored, and that writing overlap did not need to be resolved. A number of practices were found which occurred in both spoken and online written interaction, but were managed differently in the respective contexts. Thus, I found that turn-taking was organized according to turns and transition relevance places (TRPs), but

that turn constructional units (TCUs) could only become relevant retrospectively. TRPs could not be projected, because of the separation of message construction and sending. I also showed how the differences in the organization of turn-taking impacted sequence organization. For example, turn adjacency was sometimes disrupted because of the possibilities of overlapping writing, and the inability to monitor co-participant's turns. However, disrupted turn adjacency rarely caused difficulties in the maintenance of intersubjectivity. Participants tended to respond to turns as a list, although occasionally responded in reverse order. However, as there has been little research on the maintenance of contiguity in spoken interaction, it is difficult to know the extent to which online practices differs from spoken interaction. Overall, Chapter 3 showed how the organization of online interaction can be analyzed using CA in much the same way as spoken interaction can. The fact that it is a written and mediated form of interaction caused no more difficulties than the fact that telephone interaction is mediated; instead, we simply see how the interaction is organized to deal with the particular affordances. I provided some evidence that Facebook chat is a particular speech-exchange system which shows some similarities to, but also systematic differences from, spoken interaction.

In Chapter 4, I examined the way Facebook chats were opened, and identified how participants negotiate the affordances of the system in the organization of opening sequences. The analysis revealed that participants have to construct a first turn to send a summons. Thus, chat-starters must design their turn prior to knowing whether their recipient is definitely available to chat. Participants exploited the fact that their recipient's name is available prior to the chat starting, to design a summons for the intended recipient. I identified three broad categories of summons - greetings, personalized and topic-initiation. The form of summons was rarely treated by the answerer as accountable. The first turn was a vehicle for a number of actions, and so was often treated by recipients as summons- or greeting-relevant, even if

was not actually a greeting token. I also established that the lack of an identification and recognition sequence showed an orientation to the affordances of the chat facility. However, in a deviant case, which included an identification and recognition sequence, it was shown that the opening sequence was remarkably similar to those found in telephone calls. The findings from Chapter 4 also suggested that conversation analysts should be wary of relying on data from telephone calls in spoken interaction without acknowledging that they are also mediated interactions in the same way as online interaction is.

The focus of Chapter 5 was the management of topic, which has rarely been studied in an online setting using CA. I focused on three practices: topic-initiation, topic change and simultaneous topics. I developed the findings from Chapter 4 by analyzing the design of topic-initiating turns in first position. I argued that the classification of topic-initiators commonly used in spoken interaction could potentially be extended by also analyzing the epistemic stance encoded in the turn; that is the way in which participants display their knowledge relative to a co-participant (Heritage, 2013). I suggested that we could potentially see topic-initiating turns on a continuum in terms of the epistemic stance and action-orientation of the turn. I found that stepwise topic shift was the most common way of changing topic, although there were also more abrupt topic changes. I identified remarkable similarities in the sequential position of abrupt topic changes in spoken and online interaction. In particular, topic change was marked by the use of ‘laughter’ in both spoken and online written interaction. The findings from these two sections suggest that there are many similarities between spoken and online written interaction.

One feature which was identified in the data was the occurrence of simultaneous topics, or multi-threading, in a single stretch of Facebook chat interaction. Participants used ‘tying techniques’ and paired actions in order to maintain coherence. Tying techniques are used to link one turn to another, with participants also relying on paired actions to track a

thread even when the related turns were not adjacent. This finding suggested that participants use interactional techniques which are also evident in spoken interaction in order to maintain multiple threads of conversation. In other words, participants were not doing anything they would not also do in spoken interaction, but were using these practices to manage the interactional contingencies which arose from the technology.

Finally, in Chapter 6, I used the screen capture data specifically collected for this thesis, to examine self-repair, which has not - to the best of my knowledge - been studied before in naturally-occurring one-to-one social 'chats'. The key finding was that users completed extensive repairs during turn construction, and showed an orientation to the same interactional contingencies as participants in spoken interaction. Thus, participants repaired their turns-in-progress not only in response to the actions of their recipient (although these types of repairs were found in my data), but also to change the action of their turn before it was sent. The findings suggest that participants will, as with spoken interaction, repair their utterances at the first possible point following the trouble-source. Due to the affordances of Facebook chat, the first opportunity space for repair was during message construction, and therefore these repairs were 'hidden' from the recipient. This type of 'hidden' repair is different from repair in spoken interaction, as it does not occur in the interaction itself, and therefore is unaccountable. Participants made use of this affordance to do extensive repairs, sometimes deleting whole turns, which is simply not possible in spoken interaction. This affordance does not preclude visible repairs occurring, but across the dataset it was found that these tended to be corrections. The placement of visible repairs was fairly similar to those in spoken interaction, but because of some of the structural differences highlighted in Chapter 3, the sequential positions did not correspond precisely.

Overall the findings of this thesis show that there are systematic differences between spoken and online written interaction. However, it is clear that the interactional practices are

not divorced entirely from one another, and there are some clear – and sometimes surprising – similarities between spoken and Facebook chat interaction. In other words, while there *are* systematic differences, these differences show how we can understand Facebook chat as a speech-exchange system, which is different from, but related to, spoken interaction. By examining the interaction in detail, it was possible to discern the extent to which participants' interactional practices oriented to the technological affordances. On the basis of such evidence, I argue that we should not presume that the constraints and affordances of the technology impact the interaction in particular ways, irrespective of the participants themselves, as participants may actually exploit particular affordances in a variety of ways.

I have also demonstrated the usefulness of using CA to analyze how online interaction is organized. I have established that, by examining how participants manage the mediated context, we can start to understand how social organization is created moment-by-moment in these contexts. Using CA to analyze online interaction also provides interesting observations about spoken interaction. The analysis revealed patterns from spoken interaction which are replicated in written interaction, such as the use of laughter in particular sequential positions (see Holt, 2010; Jefferson, 1979, Jefferson et al., 1987). For example, exchanges of laughter-type particles occurred before a topic shift (Chapter 5). Therefore, studying online interaction can support CA's claims that these practices are not 'random' or 'accidental'. Further investigation of online interactional practices, such as doing preferred and dispreferred responses online, or the placement and design of stance markers, may be fruitful avenues for furthering this argument. It could, of course, be argued that these practices occur online because online interlocutors are using their members' knowledge of spoken interaction. If this is the case, though, it simply adds to the evidence that online interaction is a speech-exchange system which is based on, but different in systematic ways to, spoken interaction.

This thesis has also revealed that there are a number of areas, such as openings and

topic-initiation, in which much of the empirical evidence from spoken interaction is available from telephone calls. As I have discussed throughout this thesis, telephone calls are also mediated interaction, and as Schegloff (2002) acknowledges, telephone interaction shows how speakers orient to the particular affordances of the telephone. Telephone interaction is not some “primordial” (Heritage, 1995, p.394) form of interaction, but rather we learn how to speak on a telephone after we learn how to speak in a face-to-face setting. The lack of research on face-to-face interaction in some contexts can be somewhat limiting in terms of making comparisons between different types of speech-exchange systems. What we know about openings and topic-initiation, in particular, is based predominantly on telephone talk. I am not, of course, suggesting that CA has not researched face-to-face interaction; there is a wide-ranging literature on many aspects of face-to-face talk (e.g., Goodwin, 1980; Heath, 1986; Heath et al., 2010; Heath & Luff, 2013; Mondada, 2009). However, much of this research focuses specifically on the role of embodied conduct in interaction, and how it impacts turn-taking, openings, turn design and so on. Equally, much of it focuses on institutional interaction, for example in doctor’s surgeries or teacher-patient conferences (e.g., Heath, 1981; Pillet-Shore, 2008). This research provides insights into how gaze, gesture and so on play a role in interaction and how openings in institutional talk operate. There appears to be less research which analyses the *spoken* language in more ‘mundane’ face-to-face interaction, in order to examine how this may differ from the findings from telephone interaction. In terms of openings, we do not know whether speakers in face-to-face interaction may also start their conversations with a topic-initiator as in Facebook chat. Similarly, we know very little about topic change and closure in face-to-face interaction. For example, Holt (2010) noted that

since becoming interested in laughter I have become acutely aware of the fact that



many brief interactions (e.g. between strangers in a shop or at a bus stop, or between work colleagues in a corridor) are terminated by (and sometimes solely consist of) a laughable followed by shared laughter as the participants part company (p.1524).

Therefore, I argue that if we want to understand how social life is organized in *any* context, we should not neglect everyday, face-to-face interaction which makes up a large amount of our day-to-day interaction. Perhaps a particular focus should be on ways of capturing spontaneous, brief encounters such as those Holt mentions above; in a corridor, on the bus, on a train, in a shopping centre and so on (see also Stokoe, 2013)

There are some limitations, or perceived limitations, of this thesis. The screen capture data allowed me to view the participants' interactions as they unfolded. However, I only had access to one party's computer screen. I also did not have access to participants' embodied conduct, so could not see how they managed their chats alongside other, offline activities. If I had video-recorded the chats, the data could also show how participants interact with, for example, co-present parties in the same room. Researchers have tended to focus *either* on how participants interact with technologies as part of everyday spoken interaction (e.g., Aarsand, 2008; Licoppe, 2012), *or* on how participants interact online. They have rarely examined naturally-occurring data from both screen capture and video data (although see Laurier, forthcoming; Licoppe, Proulx & Cudicio, 2013). Potentially, then, having video data would have enabled me to provide fuller accounts of activities such as multi-tasking. Similarly, having screen capture from two (or more) parties would have allowed for further analysis of whether chats can be mutually co-ordinated. However, the screen capture data was sufficient to provide a systematic account of the interactional practices *relevant* to the on-going interaction of each participant.

Another possible limitation is that my research is based on one-to-one chat using a

chat programme which had specific interactional affordances (see Chapter 2). Therefore it could be argued that my research only tells us about how people used Facebook chat at the time of data collection. The first response to this is that the internet does develop at some speed. Yet, if no one studied any particular internet site because it may soon become obsolete, we would not have any understanding of the internet at all, in any academic field of study. It is important to study the internet to understand what it is like now, so we can see how it develops. The second point is that ethnomethodologists and conversation analysts are interested in how social order is created by members, moment-by-moment and turn-by-turn. So, by analyzing any type of interaction, we see how participants organize their interaction to manage the particular, local interactional contingencies of that time and that place. It is rarely suggested that interactional studies of telephone calls are obsolete because of developments in telephone technology. Instead, those studies show how speakers managed the interactional contingencies of talking on the telephone. Studies of mobile telephone calls are able to show how the organization of mobile phone calls displays an orientation to the context and also, because studies of landline telephone calls exist, are able to show how interactional practices have changed or developed to suit new interactional contingencies. Therefore, further studies of online interaction can build upon the findings of this thesis so that a body of knowledge is created about how online interaction is organized, and how it has developed as the technological constraints and affordances continue to evolve.

In the future, my research could also be used as a basis for research on one-to-one chats in institutional settings. There is an increasing move towards making advice available through using online chat systems (Danby et al., 2009). In the UK, the children's advice line, 'Childline' has an online chat system for seeking advice from a trained counsellor. Similarly, Relate - a charity which offers relationship counselling in the UK - also has an online chat system for offering advice. It is possible that my research could provide a platform for

assessing the organization of such advice-giving chats (see, for example, Danby et al., 2009; Stommel & van der Houwen, 2013). Such research could build upon work on telephone helplines (e.g., Edwards & Stokoe, 2007; Hepburn & Potter, 2011; Potter & Hepburn, 2003; Stokoe, 2009), and could also be a potential avenue for the development of applied CA (see Stokoe, 2011b; Stokoe, Hepburn, & Antaki, 2012). As CA can illuminate when encounters go ‘wrong’ and when they go ‘right’, it can be used for implementing interventions in conversational practices (Stokoe et al., 2012). Thus, CA has examined conversational data and fed back to, and provided training for, practitioners to help them address the needs and concerns of their clients (Koole, 2011a, 2011b; Stokoe, 2011b). It would be possible to analyze online chats from, say, Childline or mediation services, and provide feedback and training for practitioners on best practices for managing these types of interaction.

One of the aims of this thesis was to provide empirical evidence to assess claims made about the impact of the internet on interaction. While there are concerns about whether the internet is reducing our need for interactional skills (S. Greenfield, 2009), and whether online communication is not as “meaningful” as face-to-face conversation (Turkle, 2011), it would seem that these concerns may be somewhat overstated. While there are differences between online and spoken interaction, I have established that online interaction still requires participants to manage the same interactional concerns as they do in spoken conversation. Participants, therefore, require the same interactional skills as in spoken interaction; in fact, they have to adapt those skills to deal with the various contingencies of online interaction. The claim that online chat is less meaningful because participants spend hours presenting their ‘ideal self’ is also not borne out by the data. Participants may re-word their messages, but they rarely spend a long time doing so. More importantly, participants edit their messages to attend to *exactly* the same interactional consequences as they would in spoken interaction. Therefore, I argue that the claims made about some dramatic shift in communicative practices

because of the internet are simply not supported by the data. Online interaction is not a new form of interaction, but instead is evidence of individuals doing what they have always done, and adapting their communicative practices for the context and the recipient.

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## Appendix A:


### Meredith transcription symbols


 - writing

 - surfing

|| - at the same time as

↔ - latching

 - talking to someone else

 - paste

← - *moving cursor*

(.) – pause shorter than 1 second


(1.0) - gap

[ ] – overlap

(( )) – Descriptions of actions

~~Strikethrough~~ - deleted

 + direction of movement – movement of mouse cursor in chat window

 - scrolls up

→ Features of talk that are relevant to the current analysis.



## Appendix B:

### Jefferson transcription symbols

[ ]	Square brackets mark the start and end of overlapping speech.
↑ ↓	Arrows indicates marked pitch movement
<u>Underlining</u>	Indicates emphasis
CAPITALS	Indicates hearably louder than surrounding speech.
°↑I know it,°	‘degree’ signs enclose hearably quieter speech.
(0.4)	Timed pauses in seconds
(.)	A micropause, hearable but too short to measure.
((staccato))	Additional comments from the transcriber
she wa::nted	Colons indicate elongation of the prior sound
hhh	Out-breaths
.hhh	In-breaths
,	A comma is a ‘continuation’ marker
?	Question marks indicate rising intonation
Yeh.	Full stops mark falling intonation
bu-u-	Hyphens mark an abruptly cut-off sound.
<he is>	Talk in brackets is slower than surrounding talk
>he is<	Talk in brackets is faster than surrounding talk
=	Equals signs indicate latching – no pause between turns
heh heh	Voiced laughter.
(guess)	Untranscribable word or words, or transcriber’s guess at a word
[...]	Lines omitted for the purpose of brevity
→	Features of talk that are relevant to the current analysis.

## Appendix C:

### Participant information sheet

This research is being conducted by Joanne Meredith, a PhD student in the Department of Social Sciences at Loughborough University. It is being funded by the Economic and Social Research Council, and is supervised by Professor Elizabeth Stokoe.

This piece of research focuses on the way in which individuals manage their interactions with one another in an online environment. It is hoped that this research will add to a wider literature within the social sciences on how people interact with each other in a variety of contexts. The analysis will focus on the ways in which people interact online, and **not** on the topic of conversation.

#### **What do I need to do?**

For this part of the research, I wish to collect data from the 'chat' facility on Facebook. To provide this data, you must first download the free internet browser Mozilla Firefox. This is simply an alternative browser to Internet Explorer, and still allows you to use the internet in the same way as Internet Explorer would. Once Mozilla has been downloaded, please download the free add-on 'Facebook chat history manager'. This add-on will automatically save all of your Facebook chats, with names and times available. The accompanying instruction sheet will take you through the steps for downloading both Mozilla and the Facebook chat history manager. For the duration of data collection, you need to use Mozilla Firefox for all your Facebook chats and they will be saved in the chat history.

*Please continue to use Facebook chat as you normally would throughout the data collection period.*

You will also need to download the screen capture software on to your laptop. This screen capture software will record everything that occurs on your screen while you are using the Facebook chat facility. When you start chatting to someone on Facebook you will need to start recording using this software.

### **How long do I need to save the chats for?**

Ideally, I would like to collect a minimum of 50 'chats' from each participant, although these will of course vary in length.

### **How do I provide you with the chats?**

You will need to gain consent from the other person involved in the chat **before** you can send them to me. However, if the other person involved in the chat is under 18, then please exclude these chats from the data. There is an online consent form which they can fill in - I will provide the link via e-mail.

Once you have the other person's consent, please copy and paste the chat into Word (the instruction sheet explains how to do this if you are unsure) and send it to me via e-mail or burn the file on to DVD.

### **What about the screen capture videos?**

These are often very large files, so it may be that you will need to compress them. As they are large files, you will need to burn them on to DVD and at the end of the data collection period, I can arrange to collect these DVDs from you.

### **Do I have to provide you with every chat?**

No, it is up to you which chats you provide and which you do not. If there are chats you would prefer to keep private, then simply do not copy and paste them from the chat logs. Equally, if you cannot get consent from the other person, then **do not** send me those chats.

### **Can you see what I do on other webpages I visit?**

Yes. The screen capture software will record everything you do on your computer screen. However, you are completely free to turn the screen capture software off whenever you like. If there is any footage you do not want me to have, then please simply delete it. However, **please** be mindful of entering any sensitive data, such as passwords, while the screen capture is on - in such cases it may be best to switch off the software.

Please note, though, that I will not be using data from any other webpages. I will only use the data from Facebook chat in my actual research.

**Once I have provided you with the chats, is it possible to change my mind?**

Yes. If you or any of the people involved in the chats wish to withdraw your consent, you can do so by e-mailing me, and I will ensure that the relevant chats are not used, and the data is destroyed. You can do this at any time, and will not be asked to explain your reasons for withdrawing from the research.

**Will my name or my friends' names appear anywhere in the research?**

No. All identifying names and places will be changed.

**Will my taking part in this study remain confidential?**

Yes. The data will be stored securely and any electronic data will be encrypted. The data will be destroyed within ten years of the completion of the research.

Please note that although your participation is confidential, if there are any chats about which I am concerned that you or others involved in the chats are at risk of **serious harm** (such as feeling suicidal, suffering from serious abuse) , I may re-contact you to discuss them.

**What do I get for participating?**

A payment of £25 will be paid once the data has been provided. This is to reimburse you for the time spent collecting the data and for gaining consent from the other participants. In order to receive payment, a form will be e-mailed to you which will require your name, address, bank details and student ID number. Once the data have been collected and sent back to me, the university will credit you directly into your bank account.

**I have some more questions.....**

Please feel free to contact me ([J.M.Meredith@lboro.ac.uk](mailto:J.M.Meredith@lboro.ac.uk)) at any point during the research if you have any concerns or problems.

## **Appendix D: Participant information sheet -**

### **Secondary participants**

This research is being conducted by Joanne Meredith, a PhD student in the Department of Social Sciences at Loughborough University. It is being funded by the Economic and Social Research Council, and is supervised by Professor Elizabeth Stokoe.

This piece of research focuses on the way in which individuals manage their interactions with one another in an online environment. It is hoped that this research will add to a wider literature within the social sciences on how people interact with each other in a variety of contexts. The analysis will focus on the ways in which people interact online, and **not** on the topic of conversation.

#### **What do I need to do?**

Nothing! Just continue chatting with your friend as you normally would. It is **their** chats I am recording. However, you do need to fill in the consent form if you are happy for the chats to be used. This is available here:

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/N7RBFZB>

#### **Can I ask questions about my participation?**

Yes. If there is anything that you are not sure about then please e-mail me

[J.M.Meredith@lboro.ac.uk](mailto:J.M.Meredith@lboro.ac.uk)

#### **On the consent form, what do you mean by being able to withhold data?**

If, at any point, you do not want a chat to be used in the research then either tell the person who is the main participant. Or alternatively, e-mail me and I will delete the relevant chats.

#### **Once I have provided you with the chats, is it possible to change my mind?**

Yes. If you wish to withdraw your consent, you can do so by e-mailing me, and I will ensure that the relevant chats are not used, and the data is destroyed. You can do this at any time, and will not be asked to explain your reasons for withdrawing from the research.

**Will my name or my friends' names appear anywhere in the research?**

No. All identifying names and places will be changed.

**What do you mean by 'other related academic pursuits'?**

As a research student it is sometimes necessary to present data at data sessions, conferences and in journal articles. **Please remember** that your real name will not be used, and anything that could possibly identify you (i.e. place names, names of universities and so on) will also be changed.

**Will my taking part in this study remain confidential?**

Yes. The data will be stored securely and any electronic data will be encrypted. The data will be destroyed within ten years of the completion of the research.

Please note that although your participation is confidential, if there are any chats about which I am concerned that you or others involved in the chats are at risk of **serious harm** I may contact you to discuss them. By **serious harm** I mean at immediate risk of something with may be life threatening, such as suffering from abuse or feeling suicidal. I would not be concerned about drinking, smoking, stress about exams and so on, so please do not be worried about discussing those!

**Why do you need my e-mail address?**

If I do have any concerns about the chats, then I would always e-mail the main participant first. However, if they cannot be contacted for some reason, then I would contact you directly. Please note that is **highly unlikely** that I would need to contact you via e-mail and will always try to contact you via the main participant.

**I have some more questions.....**

Please feel free to contact me ([J.M.Meredith@lboro.ac.uk](mailto:J.M.Meredith@lboro.ac.uk)) at any point during the research if you have any concerns or problems.

## Appendix E: Participant instruction sheet - Facebook chat history manager

This sheet contains instructions for how to download the browser Mozilla Firefox; how to download the Facebook chat manager add-on; and use, copy and paste the chats. If you require further help please do not hesitate to contact me ([J.M.Meredith@lboro.ac.uk](mailto:J.M.Meredith@lboro.ac.uk)).

### Downloading Mozilla Firefox

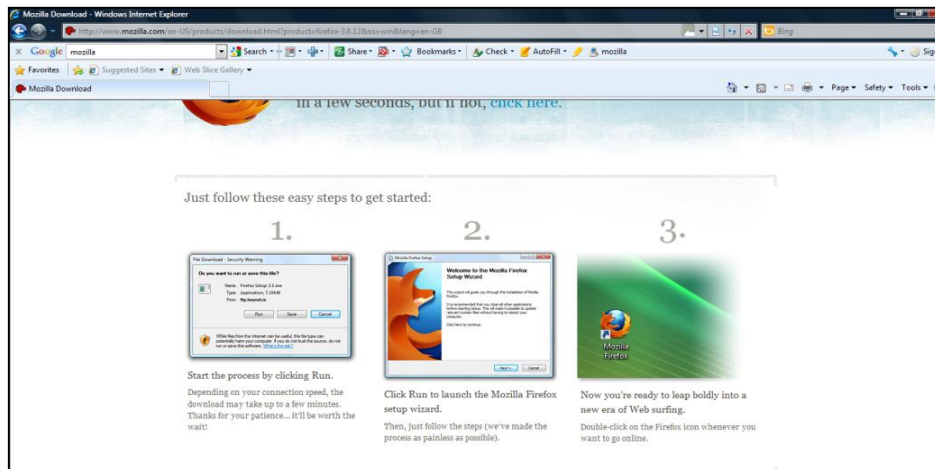
1. Go to <http://www.mozilla.com>



2. Click on the 'Download Firefox' button



3. Instructions will appear on the screen to download Firefox, follow these to finish downloading the browser.



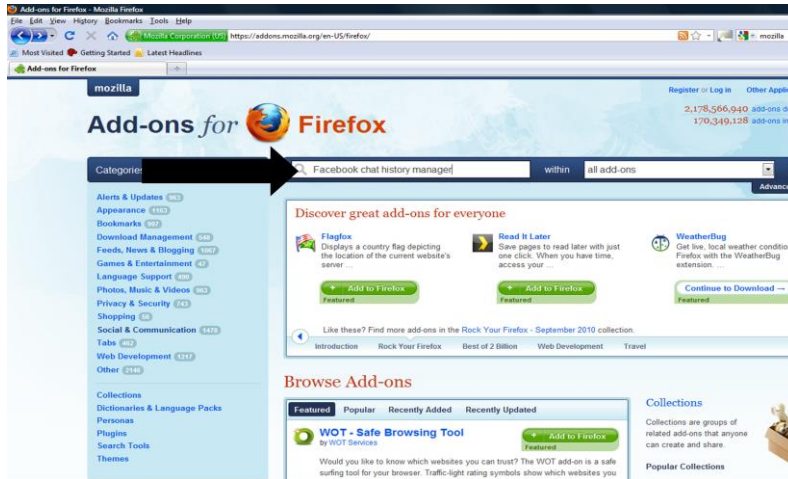
## Downloading Facebook Chat Manager

1. Open Mozilla Firefox, and go to [www.mozilla.com](http://www.mozilla.com). Click on the 'add-ons' button

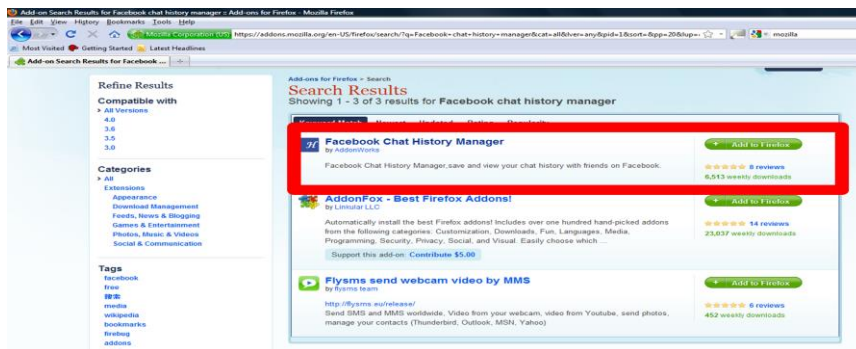


2. In the search box type in 'Facebook chat history manager'

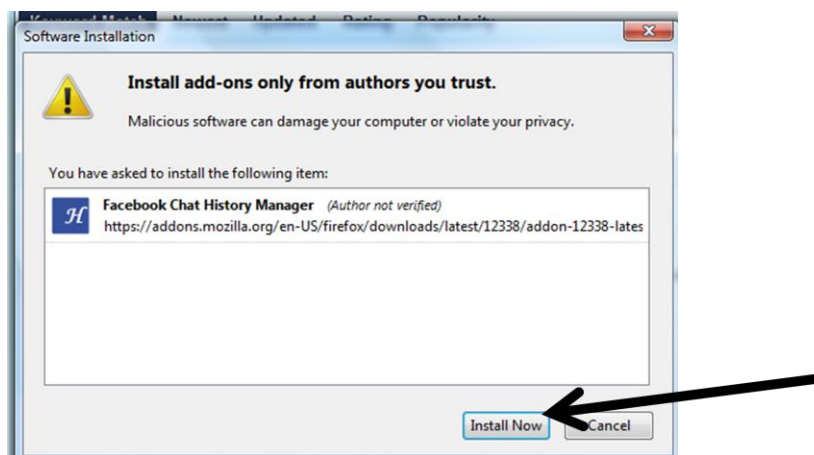




3. Facebook Chat Manager should be the first application on the list



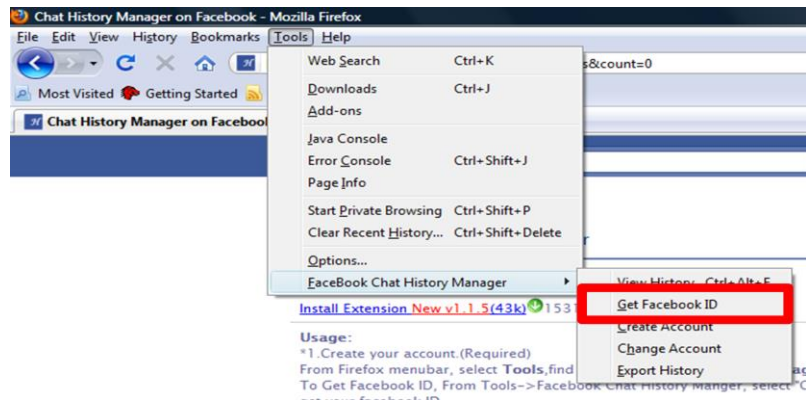
4. Click on the 'add to Firefox' button. You may get a box like this appear: Please click on the 'install now' button



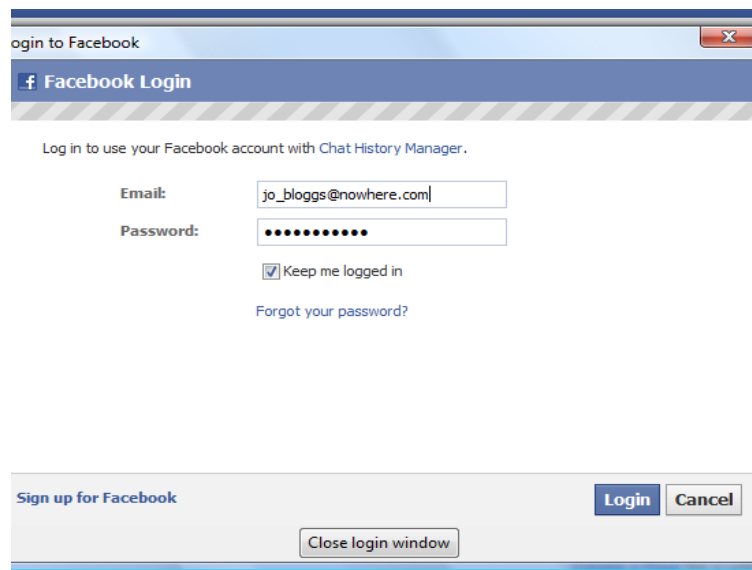
5. It will ask you to restart Firefox before the changes can take effect. Please do this.

### Using Facebook Chat History Manager

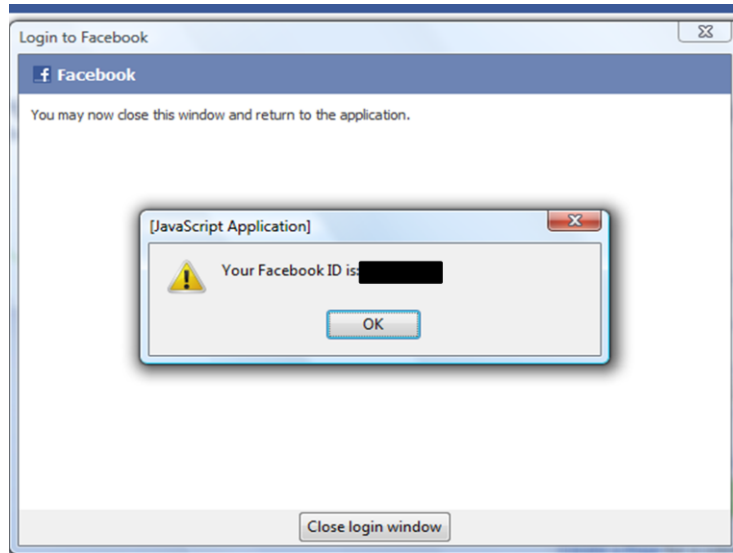
1. In Firefox open 'tools' > Facebook chat history manager



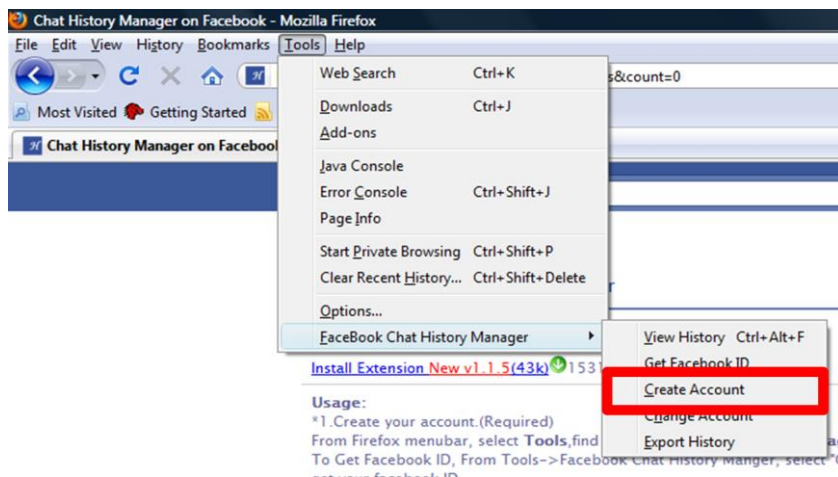
2. Click on Get Facebook ID. It will ask you to login with your normal Facebook log in.



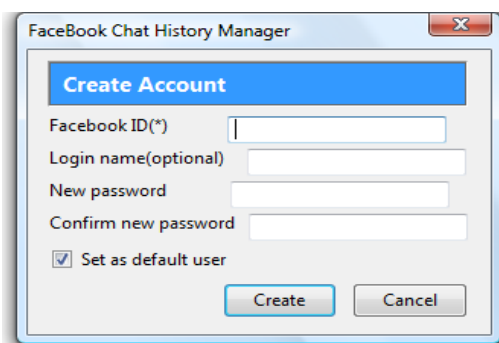
3. It will then tell you that 'You may now close this window and return to the application'. Click the 'Close login window' and a box should appear with your Facebook ID. **Copy this ID number.**



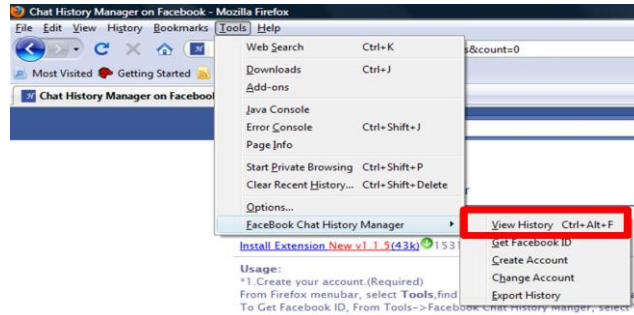
4. Now click on 'tools' > Facebook chat history manager > create account



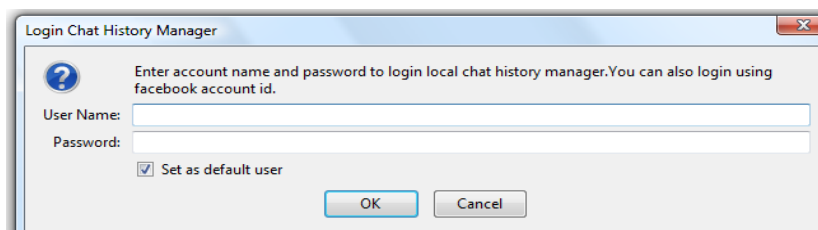
5. In the 'create account' box enter your Facebook ID (obtained in step 3 above) and create a password for yourself. If you are using a shared computer you may wish to un-tick the 'Set as default user' box.



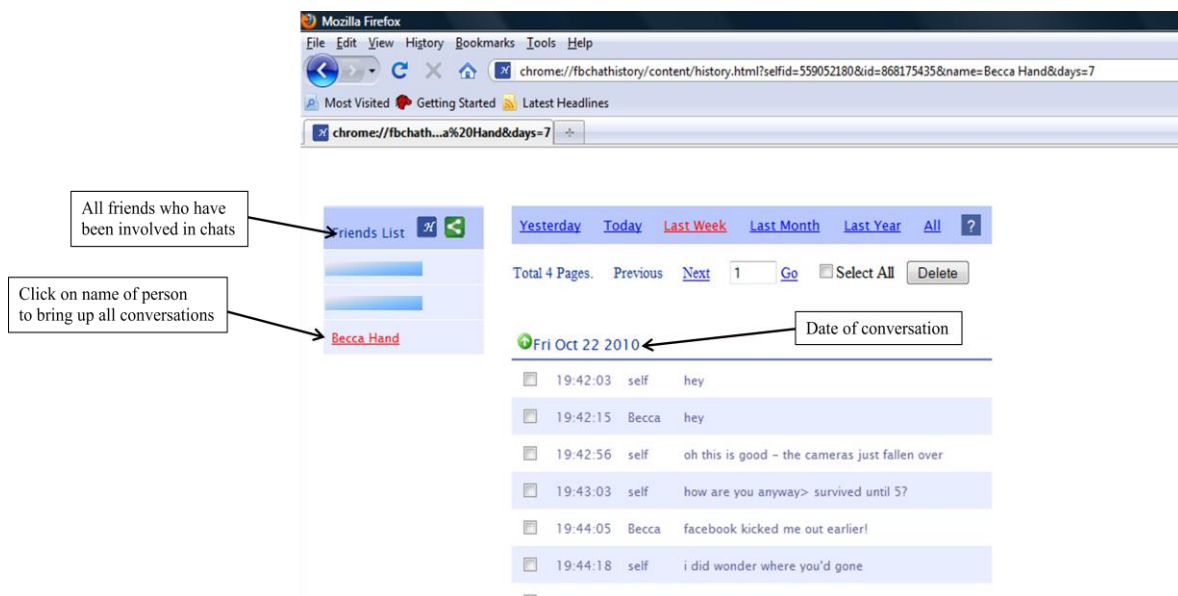
- Once you have created your account, go to 'tools' > 'Facebook chat History Manager' > View History



- It will ask you to login using your Facebook ID and the password you have created



- Once you have had some chats in Facebook, the History page will look like this:

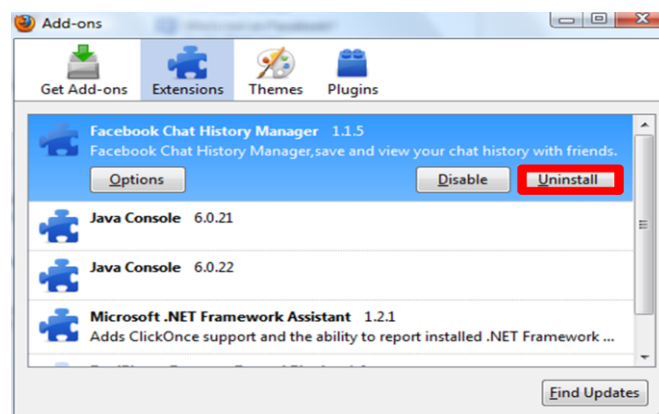


- To copy the chats, simply highlight them, right click and press copy (or Ctrl+C). Paste

them into Word (this can sometimes take a bit of time, and it may appear as if Word has crashed or is not responding, but if you leave it a few minutes it normally pastes it into a table).

### At the end of data collection

1. If, after data collection is completed, you wish to delete the Facebook chat manager, click on tools > add ons> uninstall



2. If you also wish to uninstall Mozilla Firefox, go through the usual process for uninstalling a programme from your computer (usually via the Start Menu > Control Panel, although this may vary according to which version of Windows you are using).

## Appendix F: Participant instruction sheet -

### Litecam

This sheet contains instructions for how to download and use the screen capture software Litecam. If you require further help please do not hesitate to contact me ([J.M.Meredith@lboro.ac.uk](mailto:J.M.Meredith@lboro.ac.uk)).

#### Installing LiteCam Evaluation version

1. Go to <http://www.innoheim.com/litecam.php>
2. Click on the 'Download a 30 day free trial of liteCam' button

Video Recording Software Home - Mozilla Firefox

[www.innoheim.com/litecam.php](http://www.innoheim.com/litecam.php)

**innheim** Products Download Store Support Company

Record any video and save it to watch at any time !

- Tired of searching for videos you have watched before?
- Do you want to keep the video you just watched?

**Download a 30 day free trial of liteCam**

**Built in Audio Wizard and Automatic Video Setting**  
- Start recording in less than 1 minute!

**Picture Perfect Quality**  
- Real time recording with No Loss in Quality

**Timer Recording**  
- Record while you play, eat or sleep

**liteCam**

Download liteCam  
Learn liteCam  
Purchase liteCam  
Question?  
FAQ  
Tutorial

**What is liteCam?**  
The easiest way to record ANY streaming/non-streaming videos

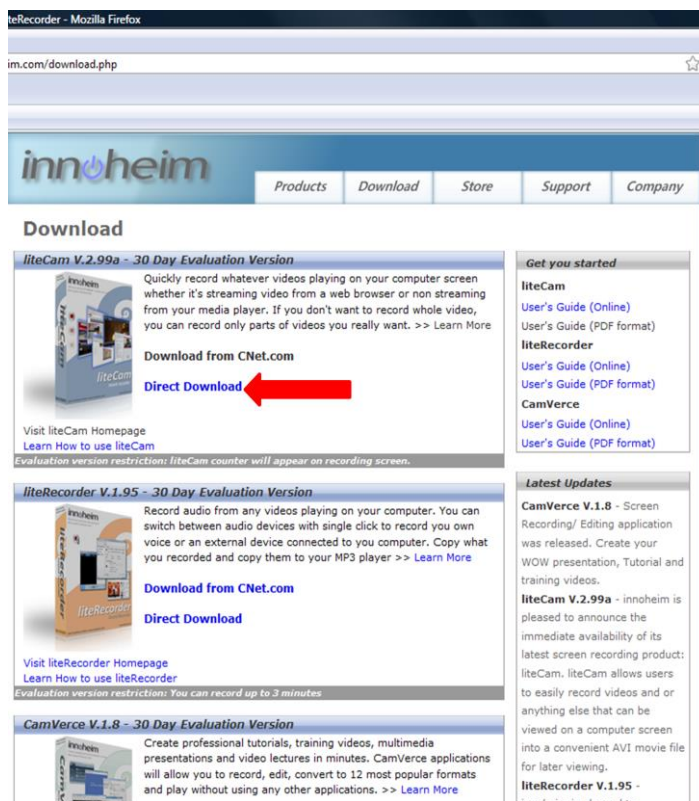
**What you can record with liteCam:**

- Streaming ANY videos from sites like YouTube or Music Videos
- Web cams and Chat Conversations. Online/offline lecture. Web conference
- Flash and Quicktime Videos or any streaming or non-streaming video formats playing on any media players like Windows Media Player, anything on your computer screen

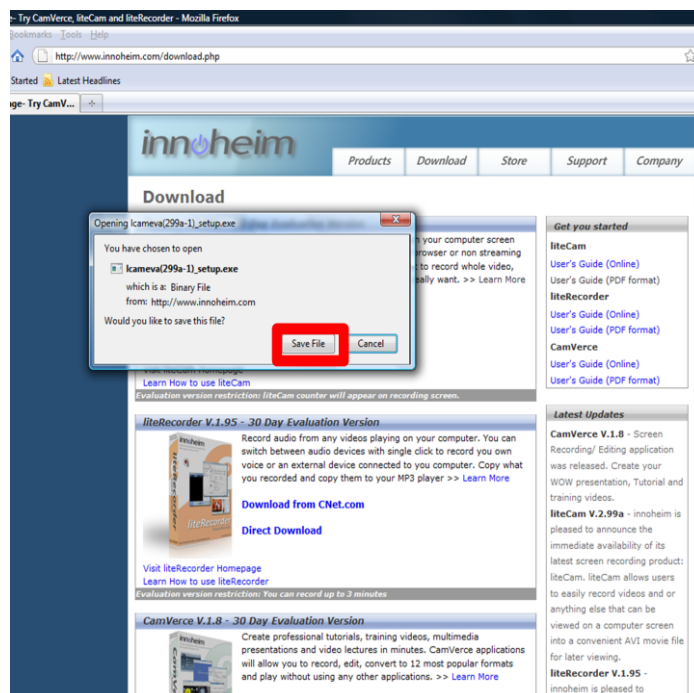
**liteCam Quick Features:**

- Audio Wizard - Automatically detects your sound card for best recording. liteCam quick tutorial

3. On the next screen, click on where it says ‘direct download’.

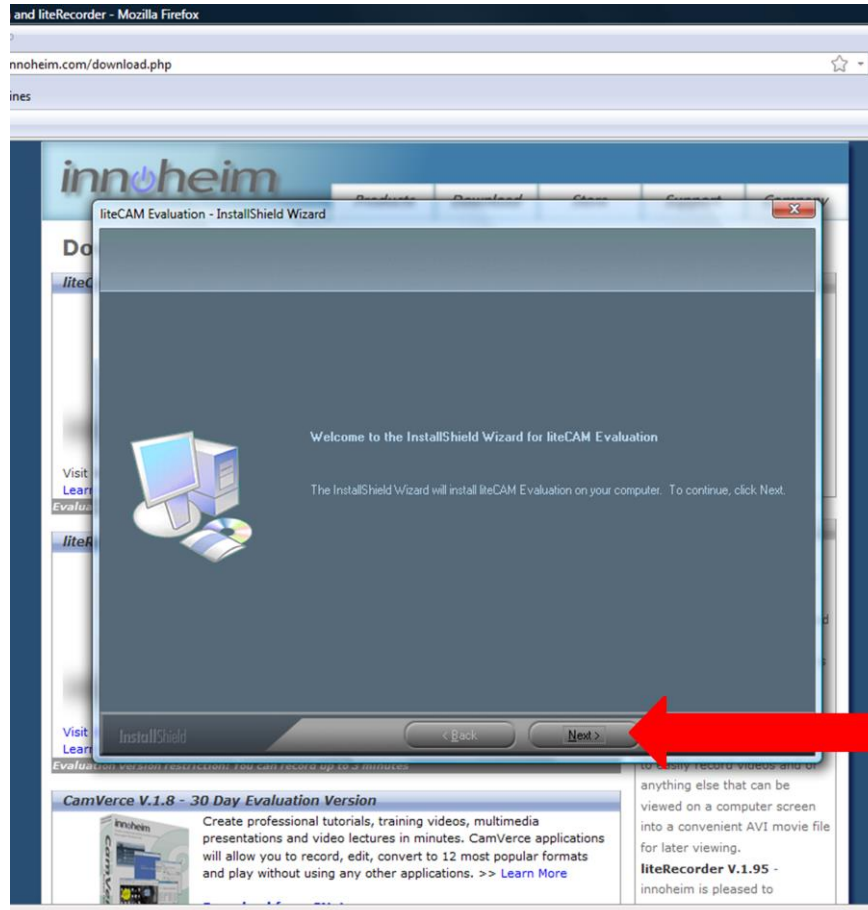


4. On the next screen, save the setup file. This may take a few minutes.





5. Once the setup has finished downloading, find where it has been saved (most likely under a folder 'innoheim' in the start menu, although this may be different depending on the computer and operating system). Open the setup file to start the installation.
6. The InstallShield Wizard will open, click next.

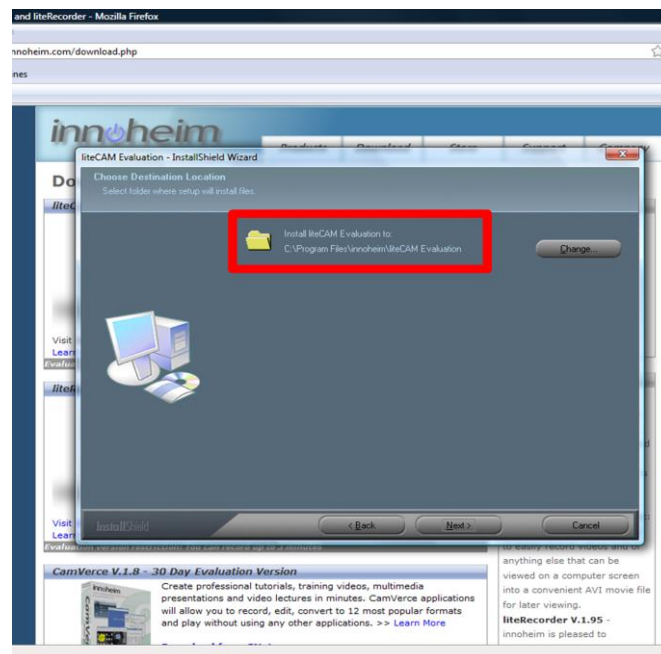




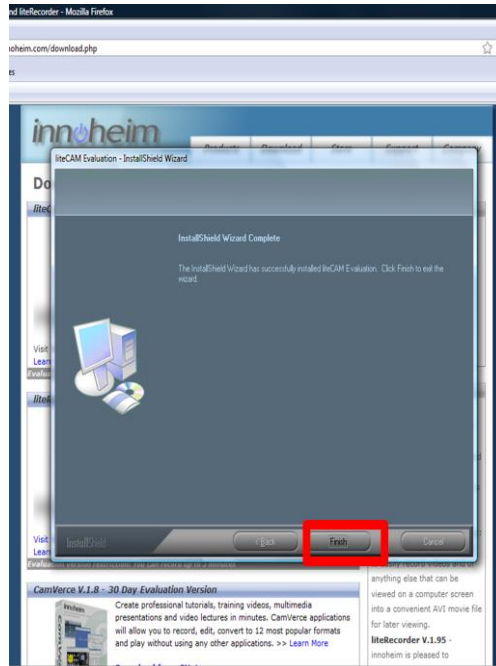
7. On the next screen, accept the Terms and Conditions.



8. Choose where you want the programme to be saved to. It will automatically pick somewhere for you, but if you want to change it you can.

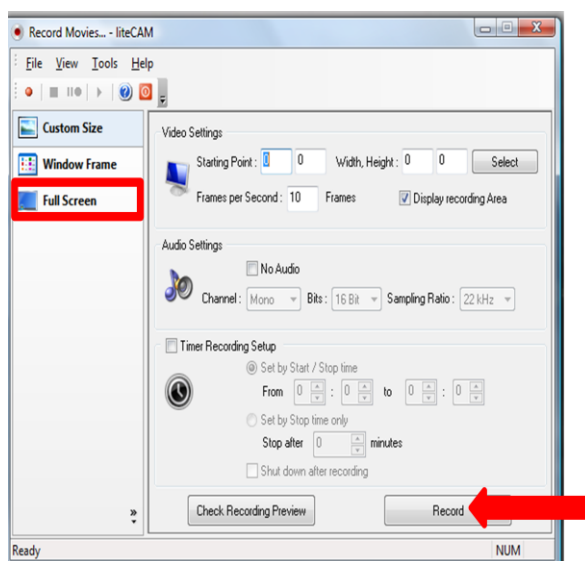


9. Once it has finished installing, click on the finish button.



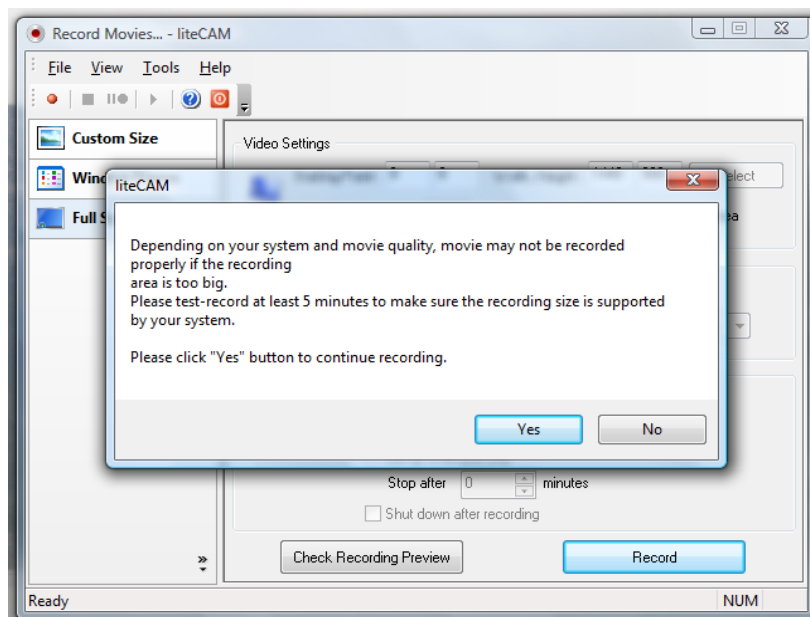
## Using LiteCam

1. Find where LiteCam has been saved. There may be a link to it on your desktop. When you open it, a pop-up will appear to tell you how many days you have left.
2. In the main LiteCam screen, make sure you click on 'Full Screen' at the left hand side. and then simply click record when you start chatting.

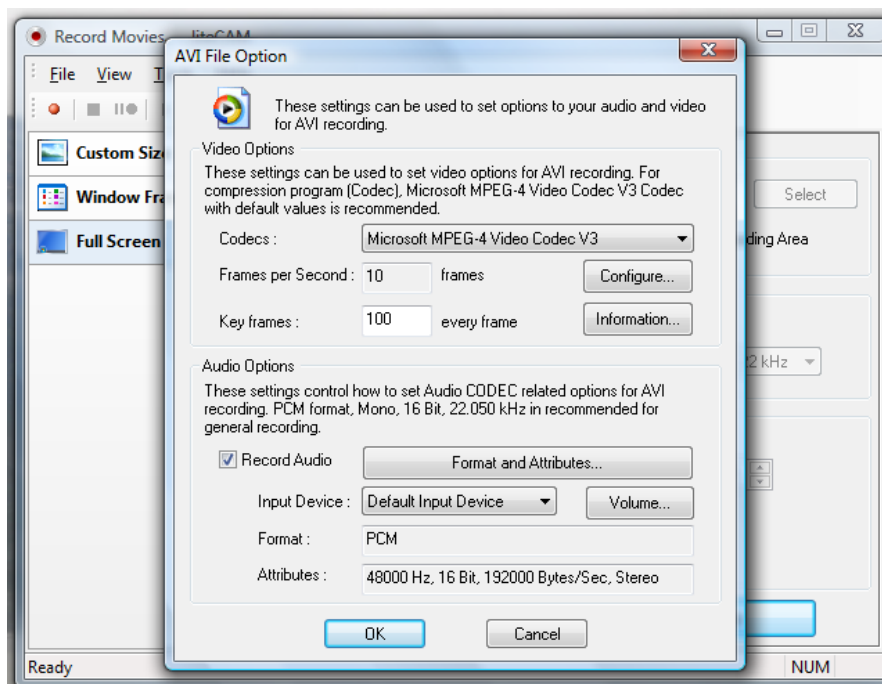


- 3.
4. A screen will appear which tells you to do a five minute test recording. I would

recommend doing this to try out the software and also to check that the files will save on to your computer (they are very large files!)



5. A screen will then appear where you can change the settings. I would recommend leaving these as they are.



10. In the corner of your screen there will be an icon with a pause and a stop button, once you have finished chatting simply press stop. It will ask you to save the file. Save the files on to your computer until you have enough to put on a DVD and then simply burn them on to DVD.

# Appendix G:

## Online consent form

[SURVEY PREVIEW MODE] Facebook Chat Research Consent Form Survey - Windows Internet Explorer

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?PREVIEW\_MODE=DO\_NOT\_USE\_THIS\_LINK\_FOR\_COLLECTION&sm=Ef18cCa7aDucRjDjflZIEZ0G6HtwfjQMF9Vw%2bkYT2U%3d

Facebook Chat Research Consent Form

### 1. Consent Form

This research is focused on the interactions that occur between participants using the Facebook 'chat' facility. The purpose of the research is to understand how people interact online with people that they know in an offline setting.

If you do not wish to participate in this research, please DO NOT fill out the consent form. The person who has asked you to participate WILL NOT be informed that you have not completed the consent form. Any data provided which relates to your Facebook chats will be deleted if consent has not been received.

I have read and understood the participant information sheet and this consent form.

Yes  
 No

I have had an opportunity to ask questions about my participation.

Yes  
 No

I understand that I am able to withhold any data which I do not wish to be part of the research, and will not have to provide reasons for this.

Yes

I understand that I have the right to withdraw my consent at any time during the research and all data collected will be destroyed.

Yes

I understand that all names and other identifiable information in the 'chats' will be changed.

Yes

I agree that the data can be used by the researcher for this research and any other related academic pursuits which relate to this research.

Yes  
 No

I understand that the data will be stored securely.

Yes

I understand that all data provided will be confidential. However, I understand that the researcher may contact me if they are concerned about the nature of any 'chats'.

Yes

**\* Please provide your name and e-mail address. These will not be used for any purpose other than ensuring that consent has been received from all Participants.**

Name:

Email Address:

If you have any further questions about the research, please do not hesitate to e-mail me J.M.Meredith@boro.ac.uk. If your question is urgent, please contact Professor Elizabeth Stokoe (01509 223360). Thank you for agreeing to participate in the research.

Joanne Meredith

Done

Internet | Protected Mode: On