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By Mira Bekar

Entitled

LANGUAGE, WRITING, AND SOCIAL (INTER)ACTION: AN ANALYSIS OF TEXT-BASED CHATS IN MACEDONIAN AND ENGLISH

For the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Is approved by the final examining committee:

Tony Silva

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Aneta Duchevska

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4/10/2015

Date

LANGUAGE, WRITING, AND SOCIAL (INTER)ACTION: AN ANALYSIS OF
TEXT-BASED CHATS IN MACEDONIAN AND ENGLISH

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Faculty

of

Purdue University

by

Mira Bekar

In Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

of

Doctor of Philosophy

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Purdue University

West Lafayette, Indiana

For my participants

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We would disagree on the importance of being in the “real world” over the importance of finishing your PhD sooner. He used to say, “I can well imagine that being back in the “real world” is quite different than living in our academic ivory tower. That's exactly why we encourage students to stay here until they finish their dissertations. Of course that is not always possible, in the real world, though often it's the only good possibility of finishing a dissertation.” But life is an enormous puzzle whose pieces should be kept safe, not a single one should be lost in order for the puzzle to be whole.

Regardless of where truth lies, this dissertation is an organic evidence of our complex but fruitful collaboration.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CMC: Computer-mediated communication

TBC: Text-based chat

SFL: Systemic Functional Linguistics

DA: Discourse analysis

CA: Conversation analysis

CAT: Communication Accommodation Theory

FtF: Face-to-face communication

(AgerCh 7): Excerpt from a text-based chat - Pseudonym of participant; Ch means chat; 7 means number 7

(AgerInt 1): Excerpt from an interview – Pseudonym of participant; Int means interview; 1 means the first interview

SYNC CMC: Synchronous computer-mediated communication

ASYNCH CMC: Asynchronous computer-mediated communication

ABSTRACT

Mira Bekar. Ph.D., Purdue University, May 2015. Language, Writing, and Social (Inter)action: An Analysis of Text-based Chats in Macedonian and English. Major Professor: Tony Silva.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the text-based chatting practices of a particular community of native Macedonian speakers who chat both in Macedonian and in English (as their foreign language). Much research in computer-mediated communication (CMC) over the last decade has been done in English as L1. Some of the few studies which explored CMC cross-linguistically include the comparison of French vs. English (Werry, 1996), Japanese vs. English (Nishimura, 2003b), Spanish vs. English (del-Teso-Craviotto, 2006), Serbian vs. English (Radic, 2007) and Turkish vs. English (Savas, 2010). In these studies, a number of different language features (e.g., orthography, code switching) and functions (e.g., representation of gender) common to TBC have been analyzed, but none has explored in-depth the use of language as social action in online text-based interactions. Data collected from surveys, text-based chats, and interviews were analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively using methods and concepts borrowed from discourse analysis, conversation analysis, systemic functional linguistics and communication accommodation theory. Seventy text-based chats in Macedonian and English from seven native Macedonian speakers, who form an intact group, were collected over a period of four months. By investigating linguistic elements, extralinguistic phenomena (e.g.,

emoticons, typographic forms such as LOL), and contextual phenomena (e.g., appraisal, limitations of the medium) in the text-based chats of my participants, and by conducting follow-up text-based interviews regarding their individual chatting practices, this study has explored how all these phenomena are used for performing social action in two languages. Text-based chat was also found to be a convenient medium for participant to co-position in various ways while carefully accommodating to various contextual factors.

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

All communication is possible miscommunication (author unknown)

1.1 Introduction

The above quotation indicates the theme of this study which focuses on the important relationship between language and social action in everyday life. I became interested in exploring online communication while studying in the US and spending significant time chatting (audio, video and text-based) with my friends, colleagues, and family from my country, the Republic of Macedonia. This everyday activity, which may seem insignificant to some—since it is aimed at “killing time”—gained an academic significance for me. Thus, this study is a combined outcome of what I still do on a daily basis, i.e., communicate online with my friends and colleagues, and of what I have been doing for my professional development as a young scholar in the field of applied linguistics, i.e., analytically explore how social action is performed.

This work investigates the chatting practices of a particular community of native Macedonian speakers who chat online in Macedonian (as a first language) and in English (as their foreign language). It uses data from multiple, spontaneous, online text-based chats. Specifically, in this work, I investigate seven people’s chatting practices in order to (1) describe and understand better the linguistic and social nature of the use of text-based chat (TBC) by the same individuals in two languages, Macedonian and English; (2)

compare participants' individual use of linguistic and paralinguistic elements as well as their individual strategies of interaction in TBC used for performing social action; and (3) more generally describe a relatively new form of writing—text-based chat—as a type of synchronous computer-mediated communication (SYNCH CMC) that is actively under development in terms of its genre conventions. The contribution of my work in the current scholarly discussion in the field is tripartite. First, this work broadens the range of features studied along with the analytical tools used in computer-mediated communication CMC, more particularly text-based chat (TBC), which contributes to a better description of this recent mode of interaction. Second, adding a description of chatting practices in Macedonian by Macedonian-native speakers and comparing those practices with the chatting practices of the same speakers in English broadens the range of languages that have been researched by scholars interested in CMC. Finally, this research serves as a good basis for future cross-cultural studies, because, to my knowledge, no published study explored the cultural patterns of text-based, computer-mediated communication in Macedonian and English. I believe this research will contribute knowledge in two fast-growing areas of study: computer-mediated communication (CMC) and L2 writing.

Each participant's independent case is examined from a combination of *etic* and *emic* perspectives, i.e., a combination of the researcher's situated findings and the participants' own perspectives and rationalization of their own chatting practices. By using the theoretical concepts of Discourse Analysis (DA), Conversation Analysis (CA), Systemic-Functional Linguistics (SFL), and Communication Accommodation Theory

(CAT), which are elaborated in Chapter 3, I focus on exploring how language is used in TBC to perform social action as chat unfolds.

Specifically, I look at six elements of TBC: (1) the overall structure (length, density, openings, body and closings); (2) the purpose of social action; (3) situated co-positioning of participants; (4) appraisal; (5) emoticons, and (6) the discussed topics while emphasizing the unique features of each participant's discourse.

1.2 What is Text-Based Chat?

Before describing TBC in detail, it is important to first provide a definition of CMC (computer-mediated communication), which usually is used as an umbrella term describing all synchronous and asynchronous communicative practices that employ computer software. Text-based chat is a computer-mediated communication mode. With the fast-emerging technology there has been terminological confusion of the words “CMC,” “synchronous CMC,” and “chat.” Broadly speaking, CMC refers to human communication which is facilitated by computers. For the purposes of this study, I will use the definitions provided by three sources, two scholars and one online dictionary-encyclopedia, whose information is verified by experts. December (1997) defined CMC as “a process of human communication via computers involving people, situated in particular contexts, engaging in processes to shape media for a variety of purposes” (as cited in Thurlow, Lengel & Tomic, 2004, p. 14). Herring (1996) defined CMC as “communication that takes place between human beings via the instrumentality of

computers” (p. 1). Finally, according to Webopedia.com,¹ “CMC is a human communication via computers and includes many different forms of synchronous, asynchronous or real-time interaction that humans have with each other using computers as tools to exchange text, images, audio and video” (Webopedia.com. 2004, CMC para. 1). CMC is a mode of communication different from face-to-face (FtF) communication and writing as traditionally conceived, and is defined by the medium used. In this study, CMC encompasses not only communication, but the whole process by which people exchange information and perform social action using computers.

There are two types of CMC: asynchronous CMC (e.g., emails and blogs where the communication occurs without time constraints, i.e., participants can log in at their convenience) and synchronous CMC (when participants are online at the same time). Text-based chat is believed to be a mode of synchronous CMC. In synchronous communication, interaction occurs in almost real time, and it happens in so-called “chat rooms” or multi-user object-oriented systems (MOOs). Examples of chat rooms include Internet Relay Chats (IRCs), and web-based chat systems such as Yahoo chat (Yahoo! Messenger) or Google/Gmail talk.

The visual representation of chat is as follows: a dialogue box appears on the screen and displays all verbal interaction or chat publically, and a smaller frame or box lists everyone who is participating (or who is logged into the chat). When we

¹ Webopedia is a free online dictionary for words, phrases and abbreviations that are related to computer and Internet technology. Full-time experienced editors gather information from standards bodies, leading technology companies, universities, professional online technical publications, white papers and professionals working in the field. Every definition is verified among multiple sources; definitions are never based on just one source.

communicate via chat, the following happens: (1) we type a message; (2) we press ENTER key or the SEND button and the message is sent to the chat-server, and (3) the message is transmitted to the public dialogue box by the server. To sum up, text-based chat is an interactive and synchronous mode of communication that may involve two or more participants who are online at the same time.

1.3 Why Study CMC?

The development and spread of technology is increasing the range of computer-mediated communicative (CMC) situations exponentially. Scholars in various fields such as applied linguistics, communication, and sociology have been speculating that CMC is becoming a new language variety (see Yates, 1996; Crystal, 2001). CMC, especially text-based CMC, is a very good representative of the unclear boundaries between spoken and written register, and at the same time it is something that mirrors “persistence.” This means, as Herring (1999) argued, that CMC was practiced because of the availability of a persistent textual record, i.e., messages could be retrieved at any time, which made the interaction “cognitively manageable” (p. 2).

In terms of its similarities to and differences from written language and speech CMC is more spontaneous than writing as traditionally conceived, but less spontaneous than speaking (Herring, 1996, 2001, 2003; Crystal, 2001). Although synchronous CMC happens almost in real time, it still allows time to think while typing, and to check what message one wrote before clicking on the ENTER key or the SEND button. The pace of the interaction is relatively fast, and the speed depends on how advanced in typing and how focused on the actual communication event the interactants are. The planning how to

respond takes longer for asynchronous CMC, i.e., interactants reply to messages at their own convenience, which may happen days or weeks later. This was described as the second communicative condition of language by Chafe (1994), according to whom spontaneity was typical of unplanned spoken language, while “deliberate working over” was typical of written language. However, this generalization has to be reconsidered carefully. As Biber (1988) pointed out, discourse researchers had sometimes compared spoken and written registers without considering the full range of spoken and written registers and that seems to be the case with Chafe. For example, researchers in discourse comprehension would analyze one written genre, but generalize their findings to all discourse types and processes.

As a new and different format for expressing social relations, CMC includes a wide variety of social and functional features. This complexity makes it appealing for research or, as Herring (2003) stated while encouraging new researchers to plunge into the field of “Internet linguistics,” “the discursive negotiation and expression of social relations in cyberspace, including asymmetrical relations, constitutes one of the most promising areas of future investigation for students of computer-mediated communication” (p. 625). In the past decades, online communication has suppressed the face-to-face communication, becoming an increasingly common form of social interaction. The processes of establishing and maintaining social relationships for professional or personal purposes have been transferred to online, virtual venues. Close analysis of mundane activities such as text-based chat can help us understand how we achieve satisfying personal and professional development as human beings, i.e., how we do social action. Social (inter)actions, as social relationships, are always something

continuing through time. Establishing and developing a social relationship means that people prefer interacting with certain members, but not with others. The frequency, nature, intensity, roles, reasons, forms of communication and so on vary. Thus, maintaining a social relationship means that two or more persons relate to each other by some communicative device, shared social action and shared knowledge, situated co-positioning or any other kind of recognizing the presence of each other.

1.4 Contributions of This Study

As mentioned above, in order to explore the ways social relations and action are realized, the focus of my research is on online text-based chat (TBC). This study involves an in-depth analysis of TBC, taking a bottom-up approach to examining this complex sociocognitive and sociocultural activity. Close analysis of mundane activities such as text-based chat can help us understand how language is used for performing social action and how interactants co-position themselves in certain virtual circumstances. Specifically, this study aims to understand how TBC facilitates non-native speakers' written expression, and how the same people interact in two different languages (Macedonian and English) using text-based chat. By doing this and by treating TBC as a social product and process, I believe that the study will contribute to two areas of research: computer-mediated communication and second language writing by (1) exploring the use of TBC *by the same individuals in two different languages* (Macedonian and English), thereby addressing one of the important weaknesses of contrastive studies, in which different groups have been investigated for each language separately, and (2) by using a wider set of analytical tools and resources than has been used previously to analyze communication,

including those of Conversation Analysis (e.g., Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson, 1974, 1978; Schegloff, 1982) and Systemic Functional Linguistics (e.g., Eggins, 1997; Hood, 2007, 2010; Martin & Rose, 2007).

If treated as a hybrid form with features typical of both spoken and written modes, analysis of synchronous online text-based chat will contribute to the field of second language writing through broadening of the scope of studies that compare L1 and L2 writing, which usually focus on comparing student or scholars' academic writing practices. Polio (2003, p. 59), in her overview of research on second language writing, which focuses on writers' texts, writers' processes, participants and context, made the point that multiple foci of L2 writing research are necessary, as well as multiple approaches and techniques in studying L2 writing. Scholarship has changed since Polio's overview in 2003 in that more empirical research on L2 writing has been published; however, no study has been published yet on Macedonian speakers writing in English. A few studies have explored college student writing in Macedonian though. These studies have explored college student writing and compared the writing difficulties of EFL students, ESL students and Native-English speakers. Georgievska (2008) conducted comparative research on Macedonian and British student academic writing and Bekar (2007) compared the writing strategies of three groups—American students, Macedonian students and a group of international student population studying and writing in English.

This study is an intra-subjective one, i.e., it compares the writing of the *same* individuals in two languages. Some scholars advocate more comparative intra-subjective research. For example, Ortega and Carson (2010) believe that “much can be gained by investigating L2 writing as a within-writer phenomenon, by means of designs that treat

writers as multicompetent individuals and thus require elicitation and analysis of writing by the same people in their two (or more) languages” (p. 53). To date, the priority has been given to comparative inter-subjective studies of academic writing. Most L2 writing specialists center their research on second language *academic* writing. However, it is equally important to investigate L2 writing in other genres and media in order to broaden our understanding of writing practices not only of second language writers, but also of all writers. In other words, although this study does not address issues of teaching English as a foreign language at the college level, it will contribute to the field of L2 writing by offering a comparative study that explores the writing practices of several Macedonians in L1 (Macedonian) and L2 (EFL) in a context different from the classroom, i.e., in online communication.

Working from multidisciplinary perspectives, describing and analyzing the intersection of technological and social contexts surrounding nonacademic writing— all provide us with a holistic approach toward research on nonacademic writing. Rapidly emerging communication technologies that affect the writing process and written products demand a new socio-technological perspective, one that takes greater account of nonacademic writing.

Apart from the intra-subjective aspect being explored, this study presents some of the features of this hybrid mode of communication as some scholars describe it (e.g., Zitzen, 2004). CMC, let alone, text-based computer mediated communication takes a variety of forms— e-mail, discussion forum groups, real-time chat, virtual role-playing games—forms whose linguistic properties vary depending on the kind of messaging system used and the socio-cultural context. The characteristics of the medium have

important consequences for understanding the nature of computer-mediated language. Herring (2008), drawing upon Murray's research (1988), gave an overview of computer-mediated discourse (CMD), mentioning that "CMD researchers speak of electronic 'medium effects' on CMD, rather than treating CMD as a form of 'writing' (typing) that happens to be distributed by electronic means" (p. 614). In other words, the means of production of communication is similar to those of CMC and other forms of typing. Thus, if we agree that genre is viewed as a product of social, technological, and institutional influences which shape its form and purpose, then we may consider looking at text-based CMC as a newly emerging written genre.

Genre is a complex term to define, which can be proved by the long history of scholarly attempts to explain this term. The origins of its definition can be traced in Aristotle's attempt to classify literary writings. Then Bakhtin (1986) first developed the concept of genre that was applicable to all spheres of human communication. Drawing on Bakhtin's work, Miller's (1984) defined genre through social action theory. Martin's (1984) Systemic-functional linguistic approach sees genre as a "staged, goal-oriented, purposeful activity in which speakers engage as members of our culture" (Martin 1984, p. 25). Later, genre was understood as "a class of communicative events, the members of which share the same set of communicative purposes" (Swales, 1990, p. 33). Recently, there have been very broad definitions of genre, such as "an abstract, socially recognised way of using language" (Hyland 2003, p. 21). Genres have to be seen as connected with recognizable textual forms which historically develop in various social, personal or professional exchanges. Wherever language is used, genres are structuring verbal interaction both oral and written and the knowledge of genres is a prerequisite for

actively or passively participating in a culture. For example, for Bazerman (1994), genres are important for structuring social action and language is used for performing purposeful activities.

To conclude, the contribution of this study to the existing research in second and foreign language studies and computer-mediated communication is that it offers a description of an important, non-academic hybrid mode of communication. In addition, in connection to the contribution to the disciplines of CMC and L2 writing, the study also provides valuable data on language in the context of interaction, which has been less studied than written language as an independent, formal, linguistic phenomenon. In other words, there is little in-depth discourse analysis research of the relation between grammar, language, and social interaction. For an in-depth analysis to be properly carried out, language should not be perceived only as a tool for communication, with the ultimate goal of conveying a propositional message, but more importantly, as a tool humans use to position themselves, to create and maintain a feeling of belonging to a group/community, and to perform social action. This is how Schegloff et al. (1996, p. 2) understand grammar, as “part of a broader range of resources, organizations of practices, if you will-- which underlie the organization of social life, and in particular the way in which language figures in everyday interaction and cognition.” Here, I will attempt to understand how linguistic resources and social interaction affect one another, and how social interaction is shaped by and accomplished through particular linguistic and rhetorical structures. Seeing language as a cultural and social practice not only as a tool for conveying a message will explain the interrelation between language, grammar, and social interaction—a connection which demands a great deal of further research.

1.5 Overview of the Study

In the most general sense, as mentioned earlier, this study centers on describing the online text-based chatting practices of the same seven individuals in two languages (Macedonian and English) and on exploring how the linguistic, paralinguistic, and contextual features of online TBC are used to accomplish social action—i.e., how the language functions in online text-based chat interactions. This is carried out by a combination of analytical tools and concepts borrowed from discourse analysis, conversation analysis, systemic-functional linguistics, and communication accommodation theory.

This introductory chapter introduces the topic of investigation along with the personal rationale for choosing the topic, defines text-based chat, discusses the importance of studying this phenomenon, and explains the contribution of this study to the study areas of computer-mediated communication and second/foreign language writing. Chapter 2 provides an overview of the theoretical and empirical studies which have investigated the phenomenon of computer-mediated communication. The focus is on computer-mediated cross-linguistic studies which have explored linguistic, paralinguistic features, rhetorical, and contextual phenomena in text-based chat. The literature review in Chapter 2 concludes with the research questions for the present study. Chapter 3 combines the conceptual framework and the methodology. The conceptual framework used for the purposes of this study focuses on the major concepts and methods borrowed from four traditions: DA, CA, SFL and CAT. The chapter then provides an overview of the steps of the methodology design, states the reasons why I employed a qualitative case study approach combined with descriptive statistics, provides background

information about the participants including data about the recruitment process. In Chapters 4, 5, and 6, the results of the data analysis are presented in such a manner that I highlight and illustrate both the common and individual text-based chatting practices studied as social action. The last chapter, Chapter 7, discusses the data through the relevant theoretical lenses as well as the limitations of my study. It is devoted to summarizing the main points of this work, the conclusions, and the future directions for research.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW: RESEARCH ON CMC

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the theoretical and empirical studies which have investigated the phenomenon of computer-mediated communication (CMC). Specifically, I focus on (1) studies which have explored the discursive, i.e., linguistic, paralinguistic, and interactional features of CMC, in general; (2) cross-linguistic research focusing only on online TBC only, which has used different approaches, and which apart from linguistic items has explored gender, identity, rhetorical, and contextual phenomena in online TBC; and (3) SFL studies that have explored the concept of *appraisal* and interpersonal meaning in writing.

Generally speaking, those studying CMC want to know *if* and *how* interaction is different when it is mediated by computers and the Internet, and what the impact of the technology is on social interaction. Specifically, they analyze CMC with respect to the ways people construct their identities, make relationships, and build community over emails, listservs, newsfeeds groups, blogs, web-based chat, Tweeter, Facebook, personal homepages, Skype, and so on.

CMC was made possible with the development of the Internet. It was first used for governmental and military purposes at first, and later, it included academia, business, and personal users. The aim of developing the Internet in the 1960s was to serve as a network for transferring information protocols between computers (Hafner & Lyon, 1996). Later, the Internet was used by academia, business, and personal users. In the late

1980s and especially 1990s, scholars started exploring the main topics of study and issues related to CMC (see Danet & Herring, 2007). With the fast-emerging of technology the terms CMC, synchronous and asynchronous CMC, and various types of online chat have been used inconsistently. Thus, there is a terminological confusion at times in the work of scholars dealing with these phenomena—CMC is used as an umbrella term for different modes. In the late 80s and beginning of the 90s, a group of scholars (e.g., Batson, 1988; Faigley, 1990) explored the implications of CMC in classrooms for teaching writing. Since mid-1990s, the fast-growing popularity of PCs for emailing, surfing the web, and chatting has caused CMC to become more attractive to scholars (for an extensive review see Danet & Herring, 2003, 2007).

2.2 Research on Linguistic and Interactional Features of CMC

Regarding research focusing on linguistic features in text-based chat (TBC), scholars have explored various linguistic phenomena in CMC including: (1) subordinate clauses (e.g., Baron, 1984); (2) deletion of subject pronouns, determiners, auxiliaries, use of abbreviations, and no correction of typos (e.g., Murray, 1990); and (3) nominalizations (e.g., Herring, 1998). Herring (2003), in *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis*, drawing on Chafe's (1982) work on cognitive-constraints on real-time language encoding, explained that linguistic choices are determined by temporal constraints in SYNC CMC, and these are a result of the economization of effort and language. Others emphasized that in CMC there are fewer subject and object complements, more stranded prepositions, and shorter words are used than in face-to-face communication (Ko, 1996). Focusing on the difference between the linguistic features used in standard written language and e-

grammar used in SYNC CMC and ASYNCH CMC, Herring (1998) showed that when scholars interacted in a public discussion group (on ARPANET)—a form that was relatively freed from prescriptive standard norms of written communication—they produced nominalizations, complex subordinate and complement clauses, and more passive constructions.

Other linguistic structural features, such as orthographic and typographic features, have been explored in CMC, some of which include deletions/reductions (Zelenkauskaitė, 2004), abbreviations such as *pls*, *LOL*, *CU* (Danet, 2001), multiple punctuation (e.g., “!!!”), eccentric spelling (e.g., “*Sooooooooorry!*”) (Werry, 1996; Danet, 2001), written-out laughter (e.g., “*hehe*”), and emoticons (Danet, 2001; Nishimura, 2003b; Radich, 2007). These orthographic and typographic varieties show how creative participants involved in text-based chatting can get, in order to substitute for the absence of non-verbal features such as facial and body gestures, sounds, prosody, etc.

Furthermore, Herring (2012) provided an overview of grammar in electronic language, pointing out that the concept of grammar should be approached differently than it standardly is—that is by its use in speech. For example, phonology is non-existent in text-based chats and sound is replaced by typography and orthography. Language in CMC has not become “formalized in ‘rules’, but it exhibits patterns that vary according to technological and situational contexts” (p. 1). Recent research on e-messaging showed that small number of non-standard spellings, such as “*msg*” for “message,” and “*gtg*” for “got to go” have been conventionalized, while unique formations are scarce (Kapidzic, 2010).

Regarding interactional features rather than linguistic structures *per se*, one phenomenon explored from a CA perspective is how interaction is organized through language. For example, Schönfeldt and Golato (2003) compared the linguistic choices, focusing on the technical aspects of German Web chat communication, that have a strong impact on the interaction, i.e., on turns, turn-transition space, turn taking, adjacency pairs, and sequence organization. Their major finding worth mentioning is that interlocutors decided to rely on specific words in written messages and on the order of sequences to perform repairs, i.e., a relevant repair occurs only in subsequent turns because the turn under constructions is not seen by the co-chatter. The order in which messages appear in CMC is fully dependent on the server and the speed of the Internet connection. Thus, Schönfeldt and Golato brought to our attention that the turn-taking system is different in text-based chat from face-to-face conversation due to these factors. Other research focusing on the difference between face-to-face communication and CMC showed that in contrast with face-to-face communication, CMC sometimes involves lengthy gaps between messages, and it shows disrupted turn adjacency as well as lack of simultaneous feedback (Cherny, 1999; Murray, 1989). Markman (2005) observed that disrupted or “false adjacency pairs” are common features of chat interaction, especially when multiple participants are involved and several disjoint conversations can be tracked. The findings showed that messages in multi-party chats were ordered sequentially, depending on who first hit the SEND button and in what order. Also, users did not *necessarily* intend to interrupt one another when messages would appear out of sequence, and they employed context to determine if a turn was actually completed.

Zappavigna's research (2011) on Twitter focused not only on the linguistic activity and "ambient affiliation" on Twitter, but on how topic of the tweets was used for investigating construction of meaning. The article was, in my opinion, the first step toward showing how we can study the linguistic complexity and relationship between ideational and interpersonal meanings of online communication, specifically Twitter—that is by understanding the nature of negotiating meanings within certain patterns of social processes.

2.2.1 Research on Code-Switching in CMC

Many studies on CMC have been concerned with issues of language choice, linguistic diversity, code-switching, and using one language over other languages for specific on-line purposes. It is obvious that CMC is a multilingual and multicultural phenomenon since it is used globally by anybody who has access to the Internet. This implies that people from geographically distant places communicate using a variety of languages; therefore, the process of code-switching is common. This body of research analyzed instant messaging systems, bulletin board systems, and chats used for synchronous communication. Chat is most often found to be a tool for enhancing social interaction (Herring & Nix, 1997), as well as enforcing a sense of community among learners (Kirk, 2000; Wang & Newlin, 2001).

The concepts of *code-switching* and *code-mixing* seem to be used interchangeably in research. In their overview of studies of the discursive features of the multilingual Internet, Danet and Herring (2007) stated that all types of this linguistic phenomenon have been observed in a variety of languages and presented the following research: 1)

Greek and English (Georgakopoulou, 1997), in which self-presentation and alliances in e-mail discourse were studied; 2) German and English in German-based hip-hop and diasporic web forums (Androutsopoulos, 2006); and 3) Hindi and English, and Punjabi and English in IRC (Paolillo, 2001). A different perspective was offered by Wright (2004), who explored how English educated bilinguals used various native languages apart from English in online environments. Other empirical research on CMC includes Taiwanese compared to accented Mandarin-English used in college-affiliated Bulletin Board Systems (BBS) (Su, 2007); French as compared to English in language chat rooms (Cramer, 2006); Classical Arabic and Egyptian Arabic as compared to English among young professionals in their email communication (Warschauer, Said & Zohry, 2007), and, finally, Cantonese as compared to English in Hong Kong (Lee, 2007). Lee's linguistic study on instant messaging is valuable work because it showed *five* methods of using Cantonese in emails and ISQ instant messaging. There was also a discrepancy in what Lee viewed as general participants' habits of CMC use in Hong Kong and what participants' attitudes were toward CMC. That is, one of the findings stated that interviewees claimed that they literally had translated Cantonese words into English, but that strategy was rarely seen in the researcher's analysis (as cited in Danet & Herring, 2007). Sauro and Smith (2010) investigated the overall L2 performance in text chat.

As illustrated above, exploring code-switching in CMC has been in the center of cross-linguistic studies, in which English was used as a benchmark when compared to other languages used in international computer-mediated communication. The studies illustrated the similarities and differences in participants' and researchers' views on what happens in CMC and how linguistic choices are affected by sociocultural (e.g., belonging

to a community) and technological contexts (access and experience with the Internet-based interactions). In other words, these scholars were concerned with the use of language in digital social life and with the analysis of participants' sociolinguistic awareness.

2.2.2 Research on Linguistic and Interactional Features in Instant and Text Messaging

Text-based chat exhibits common features with instant messaging (IM) and text messaging (see Isaacs, Walendowski, Whittaker, Schiano & Kamm, 2002 and Palfreyman & Khalil, 2003; for further explanations). The linguistic items and the strategies of shortening standard language forms and substituting for the lack of prosody used in text-based chats are similar to those used in text messaging and instant messaging. Because I explore only several linguistic elements and paralinguistic elements such as emoticons, the research-driven studies presented in this section provided information regarding how text-based communication has been analyzed so far and what else is still needed to be researched in this area.

Ling and Baron (2007) compared text messages produced by American college students with respect to transmission length, emoticons, lexical shortenings, and sentential punctuation. They gave an overview of linguistic studies that analyzed texting in several languages including Döring (2002) for German, Hård af Segerstad (2002) for Swedish, Ling (2005) for Norwegian, and Thurlow and Brown (2003) for British English (as cited in Ling & Baron, 2007). All these studies demonstrated how instant messaging and text messaging share common features in regard to abbreviations, acronyms,

emoticons, omission of vowels, omission of subject pronouns, misspellings, and multiple or specific punctuation. It is interesting from current perspectives to note that these researchers experienced difficulties to collect text messages, because text messaging was a new phenomenon relatively at the beginning of the 2000s. This proves how fast technology changes along with people's perceptions towards it, as well as CMC-related terminology.

During the same decade, Baron (2004), as well as Tagliamonte and Denis (2008), conducted two statistical IM studies, which along with the above-mentioned Thurlow and Brown's (2003) discourse analysis of texting reported that abbreviations, acronyms, and emoticons were less dominant in young people's computer-mediated communication than suggested by the popular published claims. Ling and Baron (2007) asserted that we need more corpus-based analyses of such features as abbreviations and punctuation because by collecting data from similar populations the linguistics of texting and IM can be compared in a more insightful way.

The idea of comparing data from "similar" populations is problematic, if "similar" means people of the same nationality only, or speakers of the same language, and when only linguistic items are being compared. We would agree that homogeneous ideologies, which classify people according to the same type of cultures, language, religious affiliation or ethnicity, hinder us to see our world as a dynamic place in which accepting and adopting the ideas of the other cannot be ignored if we want to understand each other better. Each of us when placed in certain contexts contributes to the development and dynamicity of this world in one way or another. By exploring human idiosyncrasies, we

add value to the life-experiences of people in their choices in using language, technology, and other available assets—the chosen approach of this study.

The latest contribution by Thurlow and Poff (2013), in the field of pragmatics of computer-mediated communication, moves beyond the commonly accepted approaches to looking at short text messages. They provided a review of studies, including their own research, on text messaging in cross-cultural, interactional contexts, and pragmatics of texting. The data they collected were more relational (concerned with building and maintaining a relationship) than transactional (concerned with transferring content, conveying messages) and were on a continuum from sending friendly salutations, to making social arrangements, to maintaining friendships. This article is very useful for my work since these scholars see relationship-building and social intercourse as both central to CMC and as something that is shaped and facilitated by technologies for communication. The popular view from two decades ago that computer-mediated communication is necessarily “asocial or antisocial” (see Thurlow et al., 2004) is undoubtedly narrow. It is obvious that separating relational intent from transactional intent, or as Thurlow and Poff put it, while referring to Jaworski’s work (2000), that separating “doing sociability from information exchange” (p. 9) is not possible. In other words, defining communication as sender-message-receiver model of message exchange is opposed to the sociologically oriented understanding of communication as negotiated meaning making.

In cross-cultural contexts, some studies approach texting by seeing it as a source of social values and preferences among certain groups of people. For example, in Hong Kong, texting is used as a status symbol among college students. According to Leung

(2007), male students with a higher economic status texted more than females. Another study found that in Japan young people prefer texting and mobile mail to voice communication, since they want to avoid direct communication, and by the use of texting and mobile email they maintain existing relationships rather than create new ones (Ishii, 2006). In France, people who gathered at a certain place use texting to talk to the friend who is absent in the particular occasion, so that they substitute for his/her absence (Riviere & Licoppe, 2005). CMC seems to be an effective way to “do social action” or to do interactional work (such as laughing, joking, teasing, or flirting). All these researchers have presented the applied contexts of text messaging through the lenses of sociolinguistics, discourse analysis, psychology, and communication studies.

2.3 Cross-linguistic Research on TBC

Much research in CMC over the last two decades has been done in English as L1 (Baron, 2004; Cherny, 1999, Danet, 1998; Murrey, 2000; Herring 1996, 1998, 2007). Little contrastive research has been conducted on TBC across various languages. Much of the contrastive research is devoted to the educational or pedagogical implications of CMC in the English language classroom. Some of the few cross-linguistic studies on TBC include analysis of French vs. English (Werry, 1996), Japanese vs. English (Nishimura, 2003b), Spanish vs. English (del-Teso-Craviotto, 2006), Serbian vs. English (Radich, 2007), and Turkish vs. English (Savas, 2010). In these studies, a number of different language features (e.g., orthography, code switching) and functions (e.g., representation of gender and identity) have been analyzed. A more extensive description of some of these studies follows.

In a detailed description of the discursive features of one English and one French Internet Relay Chat (IRC), Werry (1996) showed that overlap and interruption are impossible because the chatting system is linear and presents the whole lines or utterances of the chatters line-by-line. Moreover, it was found that communities of interlocutors created their own abbreviations, and aimed at brevity, while short syntax and subject pronouns were often deleted. Even emoticons were seen as markers of brevity. In both French and English chat rooms, users were very creative in finding ways to compensate for the lack of physical and contextual clues, which are evidently present in face-to-face communication (FtF).

Del-Teso-Craviotto (2006) explored the language used to express sexuality² in English and Spanish chat rooms using CA methodology. Findings showed that most instances of sexuality were expressed through linguistic strategies, such as (1) smiling emoticons were often post-positioned to sexually bold statements; (2) flirtation and erotic actions were usually performed through *alter personae* in AOL chats, and in mIRC; and (3) a humorous transcribed representation of nonstandard phonology was often used to accompany spicy comments. The researcher found that laughter was used similarly in English and Spanish as the most common face-saving strategy in flirty conversations. Laughter was expressed through onomatopoeia (e.g., “ja”, “he” in Spanish), with emoticons (graphic representations of facial expressions, such as “:-)” or “x-D”), or with acronyms (e.g., “lol” - *laughing out loud*).

The closest language to Macedonian—taking into consideration the comparative focus of this dissertation—from all those explored so far is Serbian. The only study on

² Sexuality refers to the sexualized presentations of the self in flirtatious teasing and conveying online messages which imply sexual meanings such as expressing erotic feelings, or passing at someone.

computer-mediated chats in Serbian was done by Radich (2007), who compared the text-based chatting practices of Serbian native speakers with those of English native speakers. The obvious differences across these two languages were that English speakers respected the punctuation, orthography, and typography conventions of formal written language more than Serbian speakers. Radich found that both groups used the same frequency of vulgar expressions, but the Serbian ones were with higher intensity, i.e., were more vulgar). English speakers used more abbreviations and a greater variety of abbreviations in comparison to Serbian chatters. In general, code-switching was very frequent among Serbian chatters.

Compared with English CMC users, Danet and Herring (2007) found that the Japanese chatters they studied used more creative orthography and punctuation supported by the technological advances. Nishimura (2003b, 2007) explained how the Japanese orthographic system enriches Japanese CMC linguistic, interactional, and sociocultural contexts. She used Danet's (2001, p. 17) "common features of digital writing" as a frame of reference, supplemented by studies to explain how informal spoken features such as sentence-final particles are transferred to Japanese CMC. In Bulletin Board Systems (BBS), Japanese used wavy lines not found in English, and they played with script shape to create neologisms. All studies presented so far in this section show differences that are due to different scripts and technological advancements accessible to users.

2.3.1 Cross-linguistic Research on Gender, Identity, and Culture in CMC

Using DA and CA

What follows are several examples of studies on gender, identity, and culture in CMC that use the framework of discourse analysis and conversation analysis. The first is a study on gender and politeness through discourse analysis. In their study on CMC in India, Kaul and Kulkarani (2005) demonstrated that men used more flattering discourse and praised the actions of the interlocutor (as cited in Danet & Herring, 2007), which is in contrast to the study done by Herring (1996), in which she showed that in English CMC, it is women who use more flattery and more polite forms. In another study, Panyametheekul and Herring (2007) found that the turn allocation system among Thai chatters worked generally the same as in English FtF, i.e., the predominantly female participants in Thai chats, compared to the male-dominated English chat forums, selected the next speaker rather than doing self-selection to speak. They did this by using names, gaze, posture, and direct questioning, while males used self-selection or the current speaker continued speaking. In terms of gender they found that women aligned more, used language specifically to orient towards their conversational partner, and were more present in discussions in chat rooms, whereas men initiated turns more independently and chatted less. Another study (Sveningsson, 2007) compared the use of Swedish and English at Lunarstorm, a loosely organized web community, whose participants share the main goal of social interaction. The presentations of young men and women were examined, along with the three types of relationships they develop: family relationships, relationships among friends, and romantic relationships. Sveningsson discussed the strategies users decided on when presenting the self, and whether sexuality and gender

were presented in a stereotypical way, or the chat forum, as a new medium, gave them an alternative for a more courageous representations of self.

There is a large body of research in German on linguistic and communication issues, and the use of the Internet. Some of these scholars explored how participants linguistically mark topic progression, such as topic changes, shifts, refocusing, digression, and closings (e.g., Beisswenger & Storrer, 2005; Zitzen & Stein, 2004, Zitzen, 2004). Others focused on linguistic features from a conversation analysis perspective, such as the study by Barske and Golato (2010), who explored the uses of German “*so*” in managing sequence and action.

It is assumed that CMC allows users more than FtF does to choose their words, i.e., make linguistic choices with more planning and care, or, or to paraphrase Herring (2003), interacting online reveals less of people’s doubts and insecurities because of the allowed time to plan one’s utterances. A second finding worth mentioning is that digression occurring in the chat can quickly lead to another topic in a topic shift chain. This kind of early topic shift, or topic decay, has been described as characteristic of very interactive CMC (Herring, 1999; Crystal, 2001).

2.4 Research on Online Communities

As described earlier, studies on online discourse from a linguistic perspective were dominant in the past (see Baron, 2008; Crystal, 2006; Herring, 1996). However, whether the analysis of linguistic function and structure can be used for defining online communities as special type of communities is a new area of research endeavors. The notion of “online community” was popularized by Rheingold’s (1993) work on “virtual

community.” Rheingold (1993) defined such communities as “social aggregations that emerge from the Net when enough people carry on those public discussions long enough, with sufficient human feeling, to form webs of personal relationships in cyberspace” (p. 5). This definition does not fully apply to my research context, because all TBCs analyzed are two-party conversations, not multi-party dense clusters or aggregations. However, the idea of affiliation and belonging—mentioned by Rheingold—is of my interest since the belonging is demonstrated through the choice of specific chat topics of my participants.

Previous research on online communities and their organization is valuable (Burnett, 2000; Hagel & Armstrong, 1997; Herring, 2004, 2008; Wellman, 2001), but further research providing linguistic and sociopragmatic models of online community affiliation is needed. The linguistic perspective tries to offer description of how people use language to construe social bonds, and how they get online to communicate, accept, support, or reject different values construed in language. But in order to succeed in the full description of those phenomena, it needs insight from the pragmatic approaches. Thus, some linguists expand their territory of research, looking into various modes of communication and language use such as images and music (Halliday & Matthiessen, 1999). My work combines the linguistic and pragmatic approaches and, through comparison of my analysis of how social action is constructed in TBC with the participants’ perceptions of the same phenomenon, it will demonstrate a more valid insight of how social bonds are construed via language.

The general impression resulting from this review is that the research focus has moved from studying the linguistic and stylistic elements of CMC to seeing CMC as a

resource for exploring people's everyday lives. The common features of these studies are that they have, taken as a whole, attempted to (1) indicate that language change and human relationships are being affected by Internet communication; (2) call for further research beyond the linguistic level; (3) provide a definition of online community while explaining the use of technology for communication; (4) make connections between identity, culture, code-switching, and self-presentation with CMC while showing how those are construed; (5) distinguish between the relational and transactional nature of text-based messages; and finally, (6) call for new computer-mediated corpus-based and cross-cultural studies.

2.5 Research on Appraisal and Interpersonal Meaning

Systemic Functional Linguistics draws upon the functional tradition in linguistics presented by the Prague School (Jacobson, 1971) and upon the linguistic school known as Firthian Systemics (Firth, 1957). It is a functional theory because it focuses on questions about how meanings operate within the particular contexts in which they are created. Within SFL theory interpersonal meaning at the level of lexico-grammar is analyzed as choices in systems of mood, modality, and attitude (Halliday, 1994). However, I do recognize that defining a theoretical concept “requires that it be positioned *vis-à-vis* other concepts in the theory” (Hasan, 2004, p. 16) or often too great to be described, which explains why Halliday saw language as multidimensional with “ineffable” concepts (e.g. Halliday, 2002). For the purposes of my study, I used the lexico-grammar approach as a starting point in analyzing the chatting practices of my participants on a word- and phrase-level. Then through scaffolding my analysis moves towards exploring what

happens in online chats beyond that level. Thus, what follows in this literature review section is an overview of research on interpersonal meaning beyond the level of grammar.

Martin (2000, p.144) explained that some approaches to interpersonal meaning within SFL tended to omit a detailed focus on “semantics of evaluation—how the interlocutors are feeling, the judgments they make, and the value they place on the various phenomena of their experience” (as cited in Hood, 2010, pp. 24-27). Poynton (1985) revived the research of interpersonal meaning in the 1980s and focused on research of language of evaluation. He explored tenor³ in texts, i.e., how various expressions of affect through vocative forms were used in creation of the social roles of participants in certain situations. Martin and Rothery (1981) and Rothery (1990) researched evaluation across different stages of the narrative. Hood (2010)⁴ claimed that the emergence of the *theory of appraisal* (Martin 1997, 2000) can be traced back to Martin’s paper on macro-proposals (1992) in which he explored gradable systems in English and pointed to the fact that choices in a gradable system of meanings always “enter into oppositions concerned with evaluation of experience” (p. 25). The SFL theory considers how the linguistic patterning of a text creates emotional language in three areas: attitude (making evaluations), engagement (bringing other voices into the text), and graduation (grading evaluations according to the “force” and “focus” of the text). Force is conceptualized as a means for amplifying judgments (e.g., “very lucky”,

³ The categories of field, tenor, and mode were developed by Halliday and his colleagues in the 60s (see Halliday, McIntosh & Strevens, 1964). The term tenor refers to the type of role of interaction, the set of relevant social relations, permanent and temporary, among the participants involved in the interaction. Hasan critiqued standard SFL applications of the terms “field,” “tenor,” and “mode” as vague, lacking ‘checkable’ criteria, and relying on “common sense” (Hasan, 2009, p. 179).

⁴ My discussion relies on Hood’s work since she wrote most authoritatively about research on appraisal and placed the theoretical concepts suggested by Halliday and Martin in practice through empirical work on appraisal in academic writing.

“such a problem”). Martin and White (2005, p. 45) presented how “protolinguistic expression of personal reactions” develops via affect as people get socialized into a culture and into cultural institutions. These feelings become institutionalized as morality, structuring the judgment system, and construing the appreciation system (see Martin & White, 2005 for a more detailed review). They approached the system of appraisal as complex and multi-dimensional, exploring the roles of the writers and speakers when they use interpersonal language for the audience, an ideal or existing, while adopting stances towards the texts they produce and towards those with whom they communicate. In the appraisal system, writers and speakers position their readers/listeners, approve, disapprove, and criticize (White, 2003; Martin & White, 2005).

Other influential scholars in the SFL field are Eggins and Slade (1997), who focused on analyzing appraisal, specifically evaluation in casual conversations. Evaluation has been seen as a domain of interpersonal meaning where language is used to build power and solidarity by adopting stances. Specifically, Eggins and Slade explored mood, modality, humor, gossiping, and negotiation in small talk.

At the beginning of the 2000s, discourse in school and professional environments was in the focus of researchers working with the SFL framework (e.g., Coffin, 2009, in history). Hood (2010), in her book *Appraising Research: Evaluation in Academic Writing*, drew upon Fuller’s work (1998), which was “foundational for more recent developments of the dimension of engagement in appraisal” (p. 25). Moreover, Hood (2010) provided a detailed description of the structuring of appraisal, attitude, and gradation through lexicogrammatical elements, and how positioning and evaluative stance in academic writing are constructed. Hood distinguished between “inscribed” and “invoked” attitude (p. 107) and

set the basis for analyzing rhetorical strategies of writers in relation to their communities. To my knowledge, however, no study using SFL appraisal model has explored computer-mediated communication, let alone online text-based chat.

The perspective I am employing in my work in regard to Appraisal Theory is how interactants share feelings and values, and make assessments within the linguistic tools at their disposal and online technological opportunities such as access to the Internet and certain software—all this is done in order to understand how they align while the chat unfolds.

2.6 Conclusion

In sum, this chapter has presented seven approaches to studying communication mediated by a technological device. Exploring CMC in all its forms and modes is important since it crosses disciplines and addresses important issues such as linguistic phenomena, contextual phenomena, rhetorical choices, and social (inter)action(s). Additionally, research on TBC, as a CMC mode, raises awareness of the influence of the medium on our writing practices. We operate within the systems of negotiation, appraisal, constructing meaning, all of which are important for humans to understand each other better. Text-based chat as a mode of computer-mediated communication is a product of the “technologies of sociability,” to use Fischer’s term (1988, p. 211). All empirical research presented in this chapter has explored common linguistic and contextual phenomena, covered in wider, interdisciplinary scholarly literature, treating computer-mediated communication on a continuum from linguistic to social phenomena, where form and function are intermingled. The presented scholarly work sets the valuable basis

for further research and encourages new studies in the discipline of computer-mediated communication with the focus on the relationship between language and social action performed via technological assets.

The next chapter presents the methods and concepts used relevant to answer the research questions of this study: (1) What is the linguistic and social nature of online text-based chat as a relatively new form of interaction?; (2) What are the participants' individual uses of English and Macedonian as well as their individual interactional practices in online text-based chat?; and (3) How is phatic communion established in online text-based chat?

CHAPTER 3. CONCEPTS AND METHODS

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes my mixed-method study, whose methodology has emerged from Discourse Analysis (DA), Conversation Analysis (CA), Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), and Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT). Besides from explaining what these conceptual frameworks—or as some scholars call them methodologies—support, in this chapter I give justification why this eclectic approach was selected as an appropriate methodology to answer the research questions. This chapter, then, describes the details of how this study was accomplished. Sections 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, and 3.5 outline the basic assumptions and theoretical commitments of DA, CA, SFL, and CAT, respectively. Sections 3.6 and 3.7 provide details about the actual data collection methods and recruitment material (survey, piloting the survey, discourse-based interviews, translation of chats, transcribed excerpts), as well as explanation of how I approached the data analysis. Section 3.8 presents details about the participants in the study.

The justification for the use of an eclectic methodology lies in the thinking that text-based chat is a hybrid mode of communication practice, i.e., it is written but since it is almost synchronous, it is as interactive as speech. Therefore, text-based chat should be analyzed from a variety of perspectives similarly to the way written conversation has been analyzed by scholars (Atkinson, 1991, 1999; Gee, 2011), who draw upon the work of anthropologists and sociolinguists (e.g., Labov 1971, 1972). Those perspectives are

sociological, linguistic, semiotic, and philosophical, and all of them help us get a better understanding of the nature of discourse. For example, Atkinson (1991) showed that if rhetorical text-analysis is combined with multidimensional register analysis (MD), a better description of the development of scientific research writing can be provided because the MD analysis complements rhetorical text analysis by offering new linguistic dimensions.

Scholars have been trying to develop a systematic approach to the analysis of any spoken or written language. In order to develop a better systematic analysis, in my opinion, it is necessary to employ methodologies to relate aspects of conversation analysis to aspects of the language as a whole system. This asks for combining two focuses, the one which sees conversation basically as a verbal interaction, in which messages are exchanged, treating grammar as an internal system, and the other which sees conversation as a linguistic interaction that is basically social, i.e., that treats grammar as used to perform social action. A combined approach to text analysis will offer a richer description of the phenomena and address better the complexity of text-based chat. Relying on one theory or method in analyzing discourse is limiting; thus, it is better if various tools are taken from various methodologies and theories and adjusted to one's own study. Gee (2011, p. ix), for example, believes that,

no theory is universally right or universally applicable. Each theory offers tools which work better for some kinds of data than they do for others. Furthermore, anyone engaged in their own discourse analysis must adapt the tools they have taken from a given theory to the needs and demands of their own study.

Furthermore, combining approaches is justifiable because although there are differences in approaches to analyzing texts due to different theoretical assumptions, origins and beliefs what should be in the focus of attention, there are some general principles that emerge from all of the different approaches. Schiffrin, in her book *Approaches to Discourse* (1994), shows that each discourse analysis approach can be used to address some of the same problems of discourse analysis. Various tool kits can be used to analyze how an individual uses certain knowledge to produce and interpret language because they are related. Or as Schiffrin (1994, p. 411) states, “no methodological preferences are reached in a vacuum: they are all the product of more general beliefs in what constitutes data and what counts as evidence and proof.” Agreeing with such views, I have built a framework that presents the concepts, tools, rules, assumptions, and approaches used by discourse analysts, conversation analysts and systemic functional linguists.

A more holistic systematic analysis can be achieved by combining functional linguistics, CA and communication theories. It seems that in the conceptual frameworks mentioned so far there is an unresolved tension between discourse functions as means of performing social action, and the study of language as an internal system. For example, Eggins and Slade (1997) claimed that Halliday’s (1994) systemic-functional notions reinterpret and weaken the above mentioned tension between discourse functions and linguistic units which are analyzed without taking into consideration the context in which they occur.

3.2 The Discourse-Analytic Method

The terms “discourse” and “discourse analysis” are difficult to define because of their complexity and holisticity. Tannen (1989) and Johnstone (2002), similarly to other practitioners of the discourse analysis approach, do not approach language as an abstract system, but instead they are interested in “what happens when people draw on the knowledge they have about language, based on their memories of things they have said, heard, seen, or written before, to do things in the world” (Johnstone, 2002, p. 3).

Discourse analysis (DA) is usually used as an umbrella term for various approaches to analyzing spoken and written texts. Jaworski and Coupland presented 10 definitions of *discourse*, which can be classified in three major categories: (1) something existent beyond the sentence (the structural paradigm), (2) language in use (the functional paradigm), and (3) a range of social practices including nonlinguistic instances of language (as cited in Schiffrin, Tannen & Hamilton, 2003, p. 1). All three categories indicate that DA treats language as a tool actively used to construct the world and to describe how social actions are performed. In other words, we use language to create and perform actions. Schiffrin (1994)⁵ summarized six approaches to analyzing discourse: the speech act approach (e.g., Searle, 1969), the interactional sociolinguistic approach (e.g., Goffman, 1959; Gumperz, 1982); ethnography of communication approach (e.g., Hymes, 1971; Ochs, 1987, Garcia, Standlee, Bechkoff, & Cui, 2009), pragmatic approach (e.g., Grice, 1975), conversation analysis (e.g., Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson, 1978), and

⁵ In Schiffrin's view, discourse analysts should explore "the way the communicative content of an utterance contributes to our understanding of relationships across utterances, or the way relationships across utterances help us understand the form, function, or meaning of a single utterance" (p. 89).

variationist approach (e.g., Labov, 1972). For her, the definition of discourse depends largely on the kind of questions researchers are asking about discourse itself.

It is important to mention that other scholars have explored the relationship between language and social phenomena, some of whom used the register analysis approach. These include synchronic description of speech registers including sports casting, oral legal, medical and news reporting registers. The interest in diachronic register analysis of some of the more contemporary scholars (e.g., Atkinson, 1999; Biber, 1988; Biber & Finegan 1994; Ferguson, 1994) has resulted in showing that different language varieties change over time, and that the change is reflected in the individual behavior, as well as in the shared patterns of language structure and use in certain communities. The idea behind this may be to show how an in-depth analysis of discourse, both written and spoken, is a necessary complement to a broader analysis of sociolinguistic and sociohistorical phenomena.

What I have chosen to do in this study is look quite closely at the language used in online text-based chatting by using discourse analysis and the conversation analysis approach (e.g., turn-taking, adjacency pairs, openings, closings), by trying to put the concept of *appraisal* within the context of online text-based chat and by drawing upon some concepts from sociolinguistics (e.g., community of practice, face, alignment, accommodation), as well as from pragmatics (e.g., social interaction, situated writing).

Particular areas, which are common to DA, CA, and linguistics, and that were explored in my study are *discourse topics*, *topic shift* and *topic shift elicitors*. I looked specifically at discourse markers which introduce the discourse topic or announce a topic shift, and which serve to mark face-threatening and saving face strategies, and alignment,

both in Macedonian and English. From a linguistic perspective, Maynard (1980) argued that speakers shift a topic when the initiated topic does not go in the direction speakers expected or the shift can happen after a disagreement (pp. 269-277). Sacks (1995 (II)) discusses “topic similarity” and “topic coherence” in CA stating that “it appears that people make it their business to attend the *topical* coherence of a next they say to some prior thing someone else said’ (p. 254). I added the use of emoticons as important markers which can signal topic shifts that occur both after some face-threatening act and after an act of alignment. What follows are the main assumptions and concepts from CA that were employed in this study.

3.3 The Conversation-Analytic Method

Conversation analysis (CA) is by definition the study of “talk-in-interaction.” In maintaining a commitment to examining naturally occurring social phenomena, such as text-based chat, i.e., examining data not collected in an experimental setting, conversation analysis seems to be an appropriate tool. CA has a long tradition of analyzing naturally occurring talk-in-interaction (e.g., Atkinson & Heritage, 1984; Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson, 1978; Schegloff, 1982, 1992, 2001). In the 1970s, the work of these analysts was considered to be a new way of looking at discourse.

CA⁶, in this study, is used as a methodological approach which rests upon the discourse analytic idea that social and psychological phenomena are partly constituted in

⁶ The history of Conversation Analysis (CA) can be traced in the early 1960s to the influences of Garfinkel’s ethnomethodology and Goffman’s organization of conduct in face-to-face (FtF) interaction. As Ochs, Schegloff, and Thompson (1996) state, “Both [Garfinkel and Goffman] were rather preoccupied with the fundamentals of sociality, social interaction and social order, and are now appreciated much more as theorists than sociolinguists” (p. 13).

and through the discourse, whether written or spoken, i.e., it analyzes how various social actions are performed. Defining CA, Psathas (1995) states, “It takes up the problem of studying social life *in situ*, in the most ordinary settings, examining the most routine, everyday, naturally occurring activities in their concrete details” (p. 1). What is relevant for this study is that CA systematically studies the organization (or “orderliness”) of social everyday actions, located in the discursive practices of the members of social groups, communities or societies. As Schegloff and Sacks (1973) stated, “our analysis has sought to explicate the ways in which the materials are produced by members in orderly ways that exhibit their orderliness, have their orderliness appreciated and used, and have that appreciation displayed and treated as the basis for subsequent action” (p. 234). Some of the major phenomena investigated by conversation analysis, such as turn-taking and adjacency pairs, are present in TBC as well, but in a modified form, as it will be demonstrated in the data analysis sections. CA scholars have also brought to attention the interrelationship between language and social action.

Thus, it seems logical to investigate those phenomena in text-based chat by using the same methods CA uses in discovering important sequences that tell us how persons are engaged in interaction, and what social action they achieve through online written interaction.

Obviously, various attempts have been made to combine analysis of grammatical structures of language with disciplines such as applied linguistics, sociolinguistics, sociology, anthropology, and functional linguistics. One example of those attempts is by Ochs, Schegloff, and Thompson, along with the other contributors to the book *Interaction and grammar* (1996). They explore the phenomena of grammar and social interaction

from the sociological perspective and by supporting three arguments: (1) grammar organizes social interaction (particular linguistic structures have interactional potency which forms part of a speaker's grammatical knowledge), (2) social interaction organizes grammar (or "grammar is an outcome of lived sociality"), and (3) grammar is "a mode of interaction" (i.e., the linguistic shaping of utterances is tangled with changing relationships among participants over the time of interaction) (pp. 33-36). This approach shows that linguistic forms are necessary tools for performing social action and have to be analyzed from various applied perspectives.

Similarly to Paul ten Have's "applied CA"⁷, in my study, I refer to CA-inspired approaches used to provide data-based analytic approaches for the ways in which social life is organized. Although Paul ten Have applies CA in the analysis of institutional talk, not in TBC, the principles applied by ten Have, and those which guide my approach to text-based chat analysis are the same and borrowed from Heritage (1997): turn-taking organization, overall structural organization of the interaction, sequence organization, and turn design. Specifically, in each utterance/chat line, I looked at (1) what the action is that the particular participant projects; and (2) how the other party/interlocutor responds to the action projected.

My study examines in detail (1) the nature of utterances used to open and close TBCs and (2) whether there are any differences between Macedonian and English TBCs. Taking the interactional nature of text-based chats, and the fact that there is a medium (i.e., computer) through which the conversation is done, text-based chat is considered in

⁷ Paul ten Have (2007) distinguishes "pure" vs "applied" CA, where applied refers to an analysis which uses the "CA-like practices which are carried out within a framework of guided by different, let us say wider concerns" (p.174) some of which come from related research areas such as sociology, sociolinguistics, anthropology and some from unrelated research areas.

this study as a written mode which is very interactive and affords the possibility to analyze chats as telephone conversations done over computer instead of a phone (for more on the nature of telephone conversations see Schegloff, 1968; Schegloff & Sacks, 1973, and Hopper, 1992).

3.4 The Systemic-Functional Linguistics Method

Systemic-functional linguistics (SFL) is considered by SFL scholars as a theory of language that provides a framework for describing how meaning is constructed through particular language choices. In this study it is used as a conceptual framework, which is concerned with three kinds of meaning: experiential, interpersonal, and textual. It is clear that people make different kinds of meaning for different social purposes by drawing on the different options that language offers. Every use of language, whether spoken or written, involves: (1) saying something about the world (experiential meaning for SFL), (2) enacting a social relationship of some kind (interpersonal meaning for SFL), and (3) presenting a message in a coherent way (textual meaning). I am aware that these meanings may not be clear cases and even SFL followers (e.g., White, 2001) note that some aspects of SFL, specifically, the Appraisal Theory, are “very much an on-going research project – many problems are still to be solved and many lexico-grammatical and semantic issues have not yet to be addressed” (p. 1). White also anticipated that the community of researchers using Appraisal Theory will grow, thus, some breakthroughs in mapping the theory are also anticipated. Hopefully, my study will give a modest contribution to this. The SFL aspect I am particularly interested in is one component of

the *interpersonal meaning*, that is the concept of *appraisal* (cf. Hood 2007, 2010), Hood & Martin (2007), Lee (2008), and Martin & Rose (2007).

Using SFL methodology means treating language as something that “relates naturally to the semiotic environment, that language is as it is because of what it has to do” (Halliday, 1973, p. 34). This is important for this study, since I am trying to define text-based chat while emphasizing its interpersonal meaning, as a communication mode that is typed, implying that it is written, but at the same time a mode which is very interactive and almost synchronous shaped by the “context of situation”.

3.4.1 Appraisal Theory

Halliday (1994) modeled “context of situation” by three aspects of the context relevant to the unfolding language event: *field* (what is being talked about), *tenor* (the people involved in the communication and the relationships between them) and *mode* (what part the language is playing in the interaction). Appraisal Theory, rooted in *tenor* (one of the three basic dimensions of semiotic structure according to SFL), explores the language of evaluation, attitude, and emotion. There are three appraisal systems: attitude, engagement, and graduation. *Attitude* consists of three sub-systems itself: affect (e.g., “It scared me”), judgment (e.g., “You are not fair”), and appreciation (e.g., “Life is not fair”). *Affect* refers to linguistic and extralinguistic resources for expressing interactants’ feelings in terms of their emotional states and/or responses to some emotional trigger. *Judgement* concerns how speakers evaluate themselves and other people in terms of their social behavior in relation to some generally accepted and established moral, legal, and personal norms. *Appreciation* concerns the linguistic and social resources for expressing

evaluations not of people but of objects, occurrences, processes, and entities. *Engagement* refers to what other scholars call evidentiality, epistemic items, and hedging. Finally, *graduation* refers to the intensity someone expresses his/herself (force) and to the clarity, i.e., how vague or sharp someone's expression is. (For a more detailed description, please refer to White, 2001, and Martin & Rose, 2007).

3.5 The Communication Accommodation Method and Alignment

Our communications are driven by our social identities as members of groups, or put in sociolinguistic terms, communities of practice. Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) has been developed into a more general model of communicative interaction, having changed its focus from being a socio-psychological model for research into accent and code switching to an “interdisciplinary model of relational and identity processes in communicative interaction” (Coupland & Jaworski, 1997, pp. 241). Two of the main principles of CAT are that (1) membership is negotiated during an interaction and through the process of interaction, and (2) interactants use specific strategies such as “convergence and divergence” to perform/show their attitudes towards each other. Or as Giles and Ogay (2007) put it, “social interaction is a subtle balance between needs for social inclusiveness on the one hand and for differentiation on the other” (Giles & Ogay, 2007, p. 294). Our communications are driven by our social identities as members of groups. However, the need to differentiate oneself from the rest and act in a specific way, because of a specific reason is also considered as adjustment.

During interaction humans engage in constant multi-dimensional processes of adjustment or *alignment* as Atkinson, Churchill, Nishino and Okada (2007) describe “the

complex processes throughout which human beings effect coordinated interaction” (p. 169). For them, alignment is “the fundamental fact of human existence and experience” (p. 189). We are all aware that language is dependent on context, i.e., the interaction is scaffolded in relation to the *definition of a situation*, involving virtual and non-virtual environments, affordances such as quick Internet connection—an important factor for the participants in this study— and existential situations such as whether the interactants are hungry and preparing food, while chatting.

To sum up, the combination of methods and concepts may provide a better in-depth analysis of TBC because it is a hybrid form in which first, language is used as a tool for communication by typing, but in a different way than writing as traditionally perceived; second, it occurs in an online environments specifically designed for interaction (Gtalk, Facebook), and finally, the theories on contextual factors and strategies of communication are applicable for this mode.

3.6 Research Design

My study employed both quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative method included descriptive statistics (frequency counts) to describe the central features of the data. The data were coded and the frequency of occurrence of separate linguistic and extra-linguistic items was counted. For example, after classifying the different *openings* used by the participants, I counted which opening device or phrase is most frequently used. Then I analyzed the structure of the most frequent openings. Another example is that I counted how many times *topic-shift* had occurred; then, I looked at the

topic choices participants made and whether the most common topics discussed define the sense of belonging and alignment of the participants.

The qualitative approach included: (1) a survey used to collect some demographic data about my participants (first language, other languages they speak, age, gender, academic status, and occupation) and information about their experiences with text-based chat, as well as about their purposes for text-based chat (see Appendix A); (2) analysis of the discourse features of seventy online text-based chats done by seven participants, followed by (3) in-depth discourse-based interviews (Odell, Goswami, & Herrington, 1983) asking the participants to reflect, in as detailed a way as possible, on their text-based chatting practices and the content of the chat (see Appendix B). For example, I asked questions such as: “Why did you say ‘sorry’ here in the text?” “What did you want to achieve with this 😊 here?”). All the interviews (totaling 765 minutes or about 13 hours) were transcribed using a simplified version of transcription conventions usually used by conversation analysts (see Appendix D).

In terms of having *etic* or *emic* perspective, the *emic* or participants’ perspective was present. My participants were part of my dissertation narrative as actual persons, not as countable numbers. This enabled me to work within their own conceptual frameworks to understand better how they get involved and maintain social interaction through online text-based chats. My task as an analyst was to make an in-depth study of instances of computer-mediated interaction (TBC), observe whether or not participants understood each other, elicit and analyze participants’ interpretations of what was going on and how the actual interaction affected their phatic communion in two languages. Then, I tried to classify the assumptions my participants made which guided them to act as they acted

and to determine how linguistic elements, rhetorical choices, and actions they projected contributed to their interpretive and expressive/affective processes.

3.7 Data Collection

The data employed in this study were of three types: textual data, survey data, and interview data. The textual data collection occurred in several phases and experienced modifications. Long before the actual data collection started, I talked to some of my potential participants, five native-Macedonian speakers, and one native-British English speaker, about the idea I have for my dissertation. At that point those participants agreed to create new TBCs while chatting in groups of three, rather than send me their existing (previously performed) TBCs. In the fall 2010, I communicated electronically with those people who expressed willingness to participate in my study, formed groups of three, and assigned a person in each group who was expected to find time that fitted everyone's schedule, as well as to be responsible for starting the chat and choosing an opening topic. After the trial period, three of the participants expressed their concerns and said "we do this just because we are your friends" and that they prefer participating in naturally occurring text-based chats to participating in organized and structured ones. Two participants, conversely, explained that they would quit participation if they had to send me their personal TBCs.

In the end, seven participants were recruited and the premise of "naturally occurring conversations" was crucial for the further research design (Atkinson & Heritage, 1984; Psathas, 1995; Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson, 1978). The participants felt comfortable to share their personal TBCs with me. Sacks (1995 (I)), after doing research

on telephone calls, pointed out that it is better to record people doing things they would typically do instead of attempting to create and structure a situation in which participants will then be expected to behave normally. Therefore, the current research presents the *naturally occurring* (i.e., not collected in an experimental, controlled setting) online text-based chatting practices in Macedonian and English of seven native-Macedonian speakers who chatted with native-Macedonian and native-English speakers. All of the participants have mastered the English language in private and state-owned language schools/educational institutions, i.e., during their undergraduate or graduate studies at the Department of English language and literature at the Faculty of Philology, Sts Cyril and Methodius University in R. Macedonia.

My goal in analyzing the TBCs of seven participants has been to understand better the nature of text-based chatting practices of a small, homogenous group, and how it changes depending on the context, i.e., on the language they use and the person they chat with. Participants were asked to send me 10 two-party chats, five in Macedonian and five in English. They were given freedom to choose which TBCs they felt comfortable sharing with me. Some of the participants sent old TBCs, while others sent TBCs as they produced them.

Over a period of six months, 70 two-party text-based chats were collected, 10 per participant. Some of the TBCs looked like they were missing an opening or ending; therefore, I confirmed with the participants that they had sent me full chats, without excluding any elements. The only requirement given was that the TBCs be a minimum of 15 minutes long (i.e., without counting the longer breaks between turns when one of the participants would leave the TBC to answer a phone for example). Participants were

asked to provide me with information about the chatting software they used when producing the chats and the date they were conducted. Two from the initially planned nine participants quitted after having realized that I was not going to organize the triads and structure the chats.

The second phase of the data collection was the survey. The survey was piloted in September 2011 among nine people I knew were exposed to regular online text-based chatting. I received very useful comments from the pilot study and restructured the survey. Qualtrics was used as a survey generating software. All participants sent their answers back promptly. Except for collecting background information about age, gender, first and other languages they speak, occupation and academic status, the survey consisted of 20 questions focusing on the reasons, frequency, and nature of the text-based chatting practices (see Appendix A).

The final phase was the process of conducting discourse-based interview (Odell et al. 1983; Hyland, 2000) and analyzing the data. The willingness of the participants to contribute to my dissertation research and the fact that we have developed stable long-term relationships both on professional and friendly bases are likely to have increased the trust of the participants in discussing with me private and sensitive matters that appeared in the text-based chats. The interviews were conducted in December and January 2012 and were mainly in English with some rare instances of Macedonian.

The interviews were semi-structured and participants could reflect on their online chatting practices while focusing on relevant issues related to my text-analysis on their linguistic, rhetorical, and pragmatic choices (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). Odell et al.

define this as a need to explore in order to describe “the perceptions informants have about the conceptual demands that functional, interactive tasks make on them” (p. 228).

The goal of this approach is to give an opportunity to the participants (1) to elaborate more on their “tacit” knowledge (Polanyi & Prosch, 1975) about the meaning-in-context of their text-based chats, i.e., to explain, if they remembered, why they wrote things in a certain way, and whether there was a specific reason for them to initiate the text-based chat I analyzed, and (2) to identify the shared-knowledge they have with the other participants in the two-party TBCs⁸.

Unlike some other genres, people are not trained or taught how to compose text-based chat. For example, there are principles for writing letters and emails; however, there are no rules what structure and content a text-based chat should have or what rhetorical moves one should utilize. Thus, this exploration of text-based chats was aimed to explore if there are some common social “norms” that participants respect while structuring and maintaining their TBCs. When I asked the interview questions, I assumed that there is some context-specific knowledge the chatters share and may be unknown to me. Participants were asked questions such as: “Why did you use ☺ here?”, “Why did you make reference to Mr. Goodbar?”, “Why such a beginning and no ending in this TBC”, “Do you feel you dominated the conversation?”⁹

To sum up, the data collection process employed the following: (1) preliminary recruitment checking with the potential participants how they feel about my study, (2)

⁸ When conducting the discourse-based interviews, similarly to Odell et al. (1983) I assumed that the participants and I share a certain amount of common knowledge since we know each other both professionally and privately.

⁹ Hopefully, my influence of a researcher was minimized by formulating the questions in such a way so that I don’t suggest what I am actually looking for, based on the findings of the text analysis of TBCs. However, I do ask myself how relevant for the participants the features are that I have selected to discuss with them? Is what I find significant--significant for them?

collection of two-party TBCs, which occurred naturally without me setting any controlling variables, self-selected and sent by the participants, (3) piloting a survey before distributing it to the actual participants, (4) text-analysis of the TBCs, and (5) discourse-based interviews.

3.8 Participants

My research is based on a case study approach (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Duff, 2008; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). As mentioned earlier, seven participants were included in the study. They form a homogenous group and an intact group. They all know each other and are a community in regard to their ethnic, linguistic, and educational backgrounds. Their written skills in both languages are at an advanced level. For five of them, evidence about their English language competence is provided. Scores from standardized tests such as IELTS, TOEFL or Cambridge Proficiency were requested.

The L1 of all participants is Macedonian. They do text-based chatting both in Macedonian and English. The L1 of their foreign chatting partners is English, variants of British and American English. Pseudonyms (Bianca, Ema, Bjork, Maria, Rebecca, Ager, and Lola) were used in this study and any possible identifying data was deleted. These participants were chosen because of (1) their willingness to participate and share their TBCs with me, (2) they are friends and have chatted with each other, and (3) they share similar educational, linguistic, as well as professional background (EFL teachers at a certain period in life). It is important to mention that their chatting practices are tied to their local context, Macedonia, and other countries such as England and the US, where

Lola and Bjork lived and worked during the period I was collecting the chats and interviewed them via Skype.

All participants graduated from the same Department of English language and literature at Sts Cyril and Methodius University in Macedonia. Six out of seven (except for Bjork) either worked or still work for educational institutions as teaching assistants, lecturers, or adjuncts. All of them are at a similar age, between 24-33 years, and have been using English for more than 14 years in the same capacities: when travelling, academically (studied in English and read professional articles in English), professionally, and casually with friends.

Bianca, a 33-year old female at the time of the survey, as all other participants in this study, belongs to the age group 25-35. She has been using English as a foreign language for more than 14 years in the same capacities as other participants: when travelling, academically (studied in English, did her MA and PhD studies in the US and UK, and read professional articles in English), professionally, and casually with friends. Bianca holds a PhD in literature and works as an EFL lecturer and curriculum policy adviser in an international high school.

Ema, a female, 30 at the time of the survey, holds an MA in English (TESOL), works as an EFL instructor (the original title of her job is lecturer of English). She has been using English as a foreign language for more than 20 years in the same capacities as other participants: when travelling, academically (studied in English, did her MA at Leeds University, and reads professional articles and fiction in English), professionally (teaches English to Macedonian undergraduate students), and casually with friends and her husband who is a Briton. Ema obtained a PhD in Teaching of English as a Foreign

Language. Her English language proficiency was measured with IELTS on which she scored 8.5 out of 9. She is also proficient in Italian.

Maria, a female, 29, at the time of the survey, holds a BA in English language and literature and an MA in Translation studies (Maria holds an MA in Translation Studies and works as an EFL teacher in a private language school, as well as a translator (English and Macedonian). She is a multilingual speaker of Macedonian, English, French, and Greek. Maria has been using English as a foreign language for more than 20 years now, in the same capacities as other participants: academically (studied in English), professionally (works as an EFL teacher), and casually with few foreign friends, and when travelling.

Bjork, a female, 24, at the time of the survey, holds a BA degree in English language and literature, works as a Cultural insight advisor for advertising/branding. She is a multilingual speaker of Macedonian, English, Serbian, Bulgarian, French, and Russian. Bjork has been using English as a foreign language for more than 17 years in school, and for about 14 years she has been communicating in English in the same capacities as other participants: when travelling, academically (studied in English), professionally (lives and works in London in the field of media), and casually, with friends and her husband, who is a Briton.

Lola, a female, 24, at the time of the survey, holds a BA degree in English language and literature. Her profession is slightly unusual compared to the professions of the other participants—a former teacher and a current photographer, working on cruisers (ships). She works on international cruisers as a teacher, and a tutor of the children whose parents are taking a cruise. Unlike the other multilingual speakers, Lola is bilingual, a

proficient speaker of English. She has been travelling constantly after graduation, which explains her more frequent use of English than of Macedonian for professional purposes. Her casual chats overlap with the professional since they are mostly performed with international colleagues she meets on the cruisers, with whom she tries to maintain the social relationship online because she may not see these people again after leaving a certain ship.

Ager, 30, the only male participant, holds a BA degree in English language and literature and works as a professional interpreter, translator, subtitler, and owns a liquor store. He is a multilingual speaker of Macedonian, English, Serbian, and German. Ager has been using English as a foreign language for more than 17 years now, mainly professionally since he interprets from English to Macedonian and vice versa, and also translates international movies and TV shows into Macedonian. Similarly to the other participants, Ager studied English, but uses English rarely for online text-based chatting purposes. Specifically, he uses text-based chat with only one native-English speaker, his British godson. His English language proficiency was measured with Cambridge Proficiency test, on which she scored A.

Rebecca, a 29-old female, holds a BA degree in English language and literature, MA and PhD in American literature. She is a university professor teaching literature to undergraduate students. Rebecca is a multilingual speaker of Macedonian, English, Greek and German. She has been using English as a foreign language for more than 26 years now in the same capacities as other participants: when travelling, academically (studied in English, reads academic papers and writes in English), professionally (translated books from English to Macedonian and poetry from Macedonian to English, teaches American

literature), and casually with friends. Unlike the other participants, she reports using TBC very often for casual conversations with friends from abroad in order to catch up with them after long periods. The table below shows this and other collected information about the participants.

Table 3.1 Demographic Data of Participants

Participant	Bianca	Ema	Maria	Bjork	Lola	Ager	Rebecca
Gender	F	F	F	F	F	M	F
Age	33	30	29	24	24	30	29
L1	Maced	Maced	Maced	Maced	Maced	Maced	Maced
L2/FL they speak	English Serbian German Hebrew (beginner)	English Italian	English French Greek	English Serbian Bulgarian French Russian	English	English Serbian German	English Greek German
Status (BA, MA or PhD)	PhD in English/ American literature	MA in English (TESOL) PhD in Education	MA in English (translation studies)	BA in English lang. and lit	BA in English lang. and lit	MA cand. in English (transl. studies)	PhD in English/ American literature
Years of using English in various capacities	27	20	20	17	16	22	26

Note. Maced stands for Macedonian language; Cand. stands for candidate

The personal and particularized experience of these seven people who interact in unique ways within particular circumstances (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007) that are close and understandable to my professional culture and subcultures I belong to are described in the next chapters. By doing discourse-based interviews, I could compare my interpretations of the data with my participants' interpretations to ensure that my interpretations are not merely subjective. Details of the

analysis and description of the individual chatting practices of the participants are presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4. STRUCTURE OF INDIVIDUAL ONLINE TEXT-BASED CHATting PRACTICES

This chapter, the first of the three results chapters, presents the online text-based chatting practices of the individual participants and the influences on those practices, with a special focus on openings and closings of text-based computer mediated interactions.

4.1 Survey and Interview Results: Individual Text-Based Chatting

Practices and Influences

As mentioned in the methodology section, one segment of the data collection process was a survey administered electronically to the participants, asking them about their individual text-based chatting practices. The second segment was a discourse analysis of the text-based chats the participants sent me, and the third segment consisted of interviews I conducted with each participant individually. I combined these different types of data together in order to give overall portraits of each individual chatter. What follows are details about the media participants use for TBC purposes, the frequency and the purpose of their text-based chatting practices, their views on preferred modes of communication of Macedonian speakers at their age, as well as, contextual factors that influenced participants' individual text-based chatting practices. (For details about the methodology see Chapter 3.)

4.1.1 Bianca

As Bianca reported in the survey, apart from using Gmail chat and Skype as online chatting programs or software, she also likes to do online text-based chatting via Yahoo messenger and Facebook. Bianca does text-based chatting few times a day, in Macedonian, in English, in a combination of Macedonian and English, as well as in other languages (e.g., Serbian), and her text-based chatting practices have not changed during the past year. Bianca believes that her intermediate typing skills do not affect her text-based chatting practices in any way. She usually chats with two people simultaneously, with friends, colleagues, romantic partner, or her family members. Her usual reason for using text-based chatting is work, business, or education, and she, similarly to the second participant Ema, always has a particular purpose in mind when she initiates TBC. Bianca acknowledged that she prefers to communicate face-to-face and reckons that Macedonians who are 25-40 old prefer to talk face-to-face as well. In regard to cultural and educational background, affecting her online chatting practices with three kinds of interactants—native English speakers, non-native English speaking foreigners, and native-Macedonian speakers—Bianca interpreted the educational choices as the main influence on her text-based chatting and communication practices in general. What affects her register is the transmission of “transparent information to each and all”:

Excerpt 1

Bianca: I think for me personally it's not necessarily ABOUT my original native culture or my adopted cultures; I think it's more about the culture of my educational choices. And it's also important about the HIERARCHY in the educational choices. I belong as YOU do to digital migrants, we are not digital natives and I learned to type on a type writer. THEN I had a computer so there is a degree of formality in the way in which I address people who are my supervisors or academic superiors; and then there is a degree of perhaps I wouldn't say informality but NON-formality when I address my mentees and my

students. But I do try and maintain—so perhaps the register changes—but I do try and get transparent information to each and all. So I wouldn't sacrifice context, but to answer in a very brief way, I think my understanding of what culture is in my life, and in my work, and in my chatting practices is really ABOUT the culture of my educational choices more so than the culture I was born in or the cultures that adopted me.

(BiancaInt 1)

4.1.2 Ema

The second participant is Ema. Ema's most frequently used online chatting software/programs are Gmail chat and Skype. As reported in the survey, her chatting practices have changed during the past year from more frequent to those occurring just two to three times a month. She chats more in English than in Macedonian. Since she estimates her typing ability as intermediate, when she writes in chunks her "text-based chatting simulates (more or less) the speed of face-to-face interaction" (EmaInt1). Her usual reason for using text-based chat is to maintain social relations with her friends. Regarding the number of people she usually chats with, the answer was "one person at a time." As she mentioned in the survey and the interview, she always starts a text-based chat with a particular purpose in mind. She is one of those who would rather communicate over phone and interact face-to-face than engage in text-based chatting. When asked to describe the typical interaction practices of Macedonian people in very general terms, she stated that Macedonians aged 25-40 prefer to meet personally, talk face-to-face and on the phone, instead of chatting online or via email.

Results showed that Ema dominated verbally in the five interactions with other interactants (her presence is above 60 % of the total produced text in all the 10 TBCs she sent). This dominance can be connected to the choice of interactants, and the nature of the topics discussed in the chats with those particular people. For example, in TBC 2, she

chats with her husband and she shares her impressions, in detail, from a professional visit of Turkey. Her husband asks short questions to keep the conversation going, while Ema elaborates on her answers to these short questions. As for the other TBCs, in which she dominated in terms of more produced text, they are all with Macedonian interlocutors. Her dominance is related to the fact due to her isolation with her PhD thesis engagement for a longer period, in these TBCs she tries to make up for her absence in maintaining the social relationship with three male friends she rarely communicated with face-to-face. She tries to catch up by changing topics dynamically from evaluating the other interactants's work, criticizing government decisions and cultural events, to recommending music videos and movies she watched while in isolation from social activities with other people. Ema initiated seven chats, and closed seven. All of these chats were for catching up and a way to compensate for the lack of maintaining social relationships face-to-face.

Regarding influences on Ema's TBC, taking into consideration the educational, linguistic and cultural background, where culture is understood both as "big culture" (Holliday, 1999) of being a Macedonian and "small culture" of a teacher educated both in Macedonia and UK, Ema emphasized the fact that her "Skype behavior" depends on the person rather than on the medium of communication or the language used:

Excerpt 2

Ema: I've noticed that I'm different to different people, but I guess that's only NATURAL because, you know, you build different relationships with people (.) so I wouldn't say using a certain language changes much, because I've met people in this medium and it's only natural that I communicate with them in the same medium, English for example or Macedonian.

Mira: Ok. So you know all these people well basically, right? [E: Yeah] First you establish a relation in FtF communication and Skype is just another medium

where you can continue with your [E: aha] Ok. Have you chatting practices changed since you sent me the chats?

Ema: (laughingly) Yes, they have drastically because they disappeared, Ok. I don't have much time now, I'm really focused on my PhD, and I don't have much time; I rarely chat with people.

(EmaInt 1)

Ema reported that she prefers email messages to text-based chats because she “find[s] them less time consuming and as informative” while trying to avoid any possible distractions such as Skype while working.

4.1.3 Maria

Similarly to Ema, Maria most frequently uses Gmail chat and Skype as online chatting programs or software. However, unlike Ema, she reported using TBC a few times a day, both, in Macedonian and English. Her text-based chatting practices have not changed during the past year. Maria believes that her advanced typing affects her text-based chatting practices “in a way that [she] can quickly delete and correct or change a message” with the purpose to make something “less harsh to the reader” (MariaInt 1). Being an advanced typist, she usually chats with three people simultaneously. Her usual reason for using text-based chat is to maintain social relationships with her friends, and she is one of those who do not have any particular purpose in mind when initiating TBC. Maria would rather communicate face-to-face or use TBC than talk on the phone or via email. Regarding the typical interaction practices of Macedonian people in very general terms, she stated that Macedonians prefer to talk face-to-face and on the phone.

Data show that Maria dominated only in one TBC (above 60 % of the produced text are hers). In TBC 1, her dominance can be explained by the fact that both she and her co-chatter are sick with a horrible cold, but Maria tries to divert the focus from the cold by introducing more pleasant topics such as travels, her new apartment, and a TV show. Although she did not dominate in most of the TBCs, Maria initiated six chats, and closed seven. All of these chats were for catching up. Specifically, all English chats were about catching up with the same foreign friend. As acknowledged in the interview, Maria performs her online chatting in a very specific way, meaning that all interactions with one person can be considered as sections of one longer TBC in continuation. She is frequently online, available for chat, and feels comfortable answering a question posed to her a day later for example, or can fall asleep during a conversation and continue hours later, taking up from the place where she has stopped interacting.

Regarding the educational, linguistic, and cultural background, Maria mentioned language, time zones, and specific persons as major factors that affect her chatting practices. The excerpt below, which comes from the interview, points out towards an unmentioned previously communication factor and that is the sense of belonging to a group which possess shared knowledge, i.e., shared jokes and enjoying “the same level of conversation,” while paying attention to the register:

Excerpt 3

Maria: Well being a non-native speaker sometimes affects the chat practices definitely and with one of the persons in the chat with whom I used to chat very often, but now because we live in different time zones is difficult to be awake at the same time. With him I noticed that being a non-native speaker affects my chats, so sometimes I would use an expression or I would use lengthy explanations, and he would tell me an idiom or a phrase that is more natural in English. As far as the educational background goes and the cultural background, they've affected the way I chat definitely and they affect chat mostly with people

with whom I find to be on the same page. People with whom I'm on the same page might have the same background—we enjoy the same jokes, we enjoy the same level of conversation. Usually we don't use very high registers because our chats are informal way of talking—an informal way of communication— but it's noticeable...But also the types of jokes depend on the type of person you are chatting with. You can use some dark jokes with very close friends but you can't use them with colleagues at work. Or with students from your class.

Mira: You are conscious about that for example when you chat that nothing slips let's say.

Maria: Definitely very conscious.

(MariaInt 1)

4.1.4 Bjork

Apart from Gmail chat and Skype to chat online, Bjork reported that she uses social media such as Last fm, Twitter, Tumblr, Facebook, G+ to interact with others. Most frequently, two-three times a week Bjork chats in Macedonian, followed by chatting in English (once a week), and once a month in another language. She never combines Macedonian and English in text-based chats. Her personal interaction practices—not necessarily text-based chatting ones—have changed during the past year in terms of social media she is involved with. She feels that “text-based chat takes up a lot of time, regardless of typing ability; so it depends on how busy [she is], rather than how fast [she] can type” (BjorkInt 1). Similarly to Ema and Maria, Bjork's usual reason for using text-based chat is maintaining social relationships with friends. She usually chats with one person only, and that person can be a friend, a romantic partner, or a family member. Similarly to Ema and Bianca, she always has a particular purpose in mind when she initiates a text-based chat. Bjork likes to communicate over phone and is

the only one of the participants who prefers communication via email. In her opinion, Macedonians 25-40 years of age prefer to talk face-to-face.

Data show that Bjork did not dominate significantly in any TBC with other interactants, i.e., less than 60 % of the produced text is hers. Although she did not dominate in most of the TBCs, Bjork initiated six chats, and closed four. All of these chats were for catching up. Bjork differentiates between various ways of maintaining social relationships (see Chapter on Purpose). Regarding the educational, linguistic, and cultural background, Bjork provided detailed insight emphasizing culture and contexts in which a foreign language is learned as major factors that have affected her chatting practices. Good communication, which means learning the foreign language in the native environments and understanding British, Macedonian, ESL cultures and relevant contexts is most important for Bjork:

Excerpt 4

Bjork: I think cultural background is definitely relevant; I don't think that is language itself. I'm more interested in the relative way rather than in the universal ...my goal is good communication. I have to be aware of a context and context comes from culture and when you know it might be different if somebody learned English in the UK, maybe if their background is from Macedonia, but they've learned it in the UK, might be different. But I can tell you from my personal background I've learned English in Macedonia without ever having set foot in a native English speaking country, and I've learned English in a Macedonian context with Macedonian examples, Macedonian background, Macedonian culture; just translated into English. So I've learned the language, but I haven't learned the cultural stuff scenes behind it. I've learned you know the big C culture things like what is Big Ben and things but only but haven't been immersed in the culture—what I call this type of ESL culture EFL culture—and it leaves you in between cultures you are not a Macedonian but you are not English either so you are kind of floating in between and when person learns English their grammar is perfect, the vocabulary is perfect but they learned it in a Macedonian context. And then they come to the UK, and there is, they think they are speaking it perfectly, but actually, because their cultural background is different, there is big misunderstanding happening.

(BjorkInt 1)

Bjork shared the frustration one can have of knowing the grammar of a language but not being able to communicate, pointing to with what she called “subconscious discrimination” regarding ignorance of the subtleties of one’s culture or language. She became more aware of the feeling of being left “in between cultures” and the importance of subtle features of language that are more important than grammar in order to avoid miscommunication:

Excerpt 5

Bjork: ...in business there is no discrimination at all but there is what I call subconscious discrimination that English even do amongst English people, do amongst themselves— they are from the north or from the south— is not that I’m foreigner so they hate me, I’m not saying it in that way but Macedonians, we would discriminate when a foreigner learns Macedonian and speaks to us in perfect Macedonian. They would not know all the subtle communication or between the lines things that are going on, so I hope I mean I hope I’m making sense.

Mira: So has anything changed, I mean because you changed the context as you are saying and I’m always thinking how interesting is when people who were around you all of a sudden become your distance Skype friends.

Bjork: Yes. You know I don’t think I can consciously notice any change. In the way I spoke with the people when I was in Macedonia and now that I’m here. I don’t see any change in the tone or NO there hasn’t been any ... I don’t consider this as a change you know when I can’t think of a word in Macedonian so I use an English word, but this is like when I use English a lot and then I need to suddenly speak in Macedonian so when I think of something in Macedonian I just use the English word instead and make some, but it’s not that bad. Actually when I think about it, I even used to speak that way even when I was in Macedonia ((both laugh)) so no I CAN’T really think of any change. Not only that but also with different people in Macedonia I also spoke in different register as well and that hasn’t changed either. I still [M: OK] have the same thing.

(BjornInt 1)

Text-based chatting practices are influenced by register or “knowing the grammar” is what Bjork explained. The language use changes when learners change the social

context, the living and working environment. However, in Bjork's opinion her register did not change with Macedonians she used to communicate when in Macedonia.

4.1.5 **Lola**

The fifth participant, Lola, apart from Skype, uses Yahoo messenger and Facebook, few times a day. When it comes to languages used for social interaction, she does TBC in Macedonian most frequently (few times a day). Daily, she chats in English and in a combination of these two languages. Her personal interaction practices have changed during the past year due to the fact that she moved to work and live in the US, where she has met people from different foreign countries with whom she communicates in English using TBC. She reckoned that her advanced typing skills make her a better interactant since typing faster enables "a better and on-going conversation," whereas slow typing hinders communication since "you say less and the chat lasts long so the other person becomes impatient and you say fewer things" (Lolasurvey: 5). The usual reason for Lola to use text-based chat is maintaining social relationships with friends, and she always chats with two people simultaneously. As reported, Lola does not have a particular purpose in mind when she initiates a text-based chat, and prefers talking FtF or via phone to communicating electronically. As all other participants so far, Lola stated that the typical interaction among young Macedonians, 25-40 years old, is when it is done FtF.

Lola produced more text than the other interactant only in three TBC. Her dominance in the Macedonian chats could be explained with the fact that, in comparison to her female friends who she chats with, Lola is more life-wise, the one who has

travelled, lived abroad at a young age, and has played the role of an encourager and adviser with the closest friends. When asked to comment on this issue, Lola explained her role of an advisor:

Excerpt 6

Lola: I think usually I'm the one who gives advices and who wants like to make things happen—like vacations—even going out for coffee or making them do something in their lives, like finish their studies. I want to try to make them do something

Mira: Encourage them in a way

Lola: Yeah

(LolaInt1)

In regard to initiating TBC, Lola did not initiate a single English chat, but she did four out of five Macedonian chats, trying to catch up with her Macedonian friends while living abroad. I asked Lola to comment on the specifics behind her chatting practices with Macedonian people along with her educational and cultural background. Her response addressed the issues of politeness and carefulness in expressing oneself in a different language:

Excerpt 7

Lola: Well I feel like it's different when I'm chatting with Macedonians or when I'm chatting with friends from other countries. I feel like that I am more careful when I'm chatting with people from other nationalities— just not say things in a certain way that I am saying now so it sounds rude. So I'm just more careful and I learned some of their phrases they, specifically the Americans, use in chats so I sound more like them and more like they would say things. When I'm chatting with [Mira: You are trying to sound American whatever that means] trying to sound American.

I tried to understand better what Lola means by “sounding American” and her response was that when she arrived in the US, she needed “to learn how to say things

more lighter, how to start a conversation” or tell somebody to do something but not to sound like and order:

Excerpt 8

Lola: For example like if you want some person from the Kid’s Corner to change something...Macedonians would just say “Go do that” or “Go put these toys away” but in English I would start with “You might go and, you might want to go and put these toys away. And I would also use those phrases in the chats not only in real life language.

(LolaInt 1)

This example demonstrates Lola’s ability to accommodate to a new social setting by being more polite and her after-the-fact awareness that sounding rude in a certain language may impede the success of an interaction.

4.1.6 Ager

The next participant is Ager, the only male in this study. Ager, unlike Maria, Lola and Bjork, performs online TBC less frequently. He uses only Google talk/Gmail chat two to three times a week. His text-based chatting practices have not changed recently. Most frequently he deploys Macedonian or a combination of Macedonian and English. Once a month he chats in other languages, but did not specify which ones. In regard to the typing speed, Ager’s opinion is that due to his very advanced typing skills he “ends up either waiting for the other person to finish typing or [he] types a lot more content than the other person”, which affects the dynamics and the quality of the interactions he is involved in (AgerSurvey 6). Like Bianca’s, Ager’s usual need for text-based chat is related to his work and entrepreneurship, as he specified in the survey, 60% of his TBCs are work-related, 30% are for maintaining social relationships with his friends, and 10%

for other reasons. Chatting online with one person at a time, usually with no purpose in mind, and meeting personally for FtF interaction is what Ager prefers when it comes to interaction modes. He refused to answer the question about Macedonians' typical interaction practices stating that he would rather not discuss stereotypes. For detailed description of the text produced by Ager see Table 6 in Appendices section.

Data show that Ager rarely initiated text-based chats, as well as that he did not dominate with the text produced during any of the interactions. Specifically, all English chats were about catching up with the same foreign friend, his godson from UK, for whom he feels responsible to help with the immersion into the Macedonian society:

Excerpt 9

Ager: At the beginning I was one of the people who were introducing him slowly into the Macedonian society, so hence the occasional Macedonian words in the chats—you know trying to bring him to be more involved in this country or something like that, I guess. But yeah...at the beginning he could talk normally with very few people apart from his wife and me because everybody here knows English, but he would have to talk a bit more slowly in simpler terms maybe. And his wife and I, I guess, just a handful of other people were the only ones that he could just talk as his normal self.

(AgerInt 2)

In relation to the factors that influenced Ager's chatting practices, he negated the educational, cultural, and linguistic background as influencing, but acknowledged the closeness with the person he chats with:

Excerpt 10

Ager: It varies from the interlocutor. If I'm chatting with my brother then it's totally different. With anyone else, because there is so much that is understood you know (.) we can be very very brief with one another without anyone being offended or anything.

Mira: Ok, so you would say that maybe the dynamics and the style depend on the shared knowledge and [Ager: Yeah yeah] and how long you know the person

Ager: And how close you are

(AgerInt 1)

Ager, similarly to Elena and Maria, acknowledged that the most influential factor in scaffolding oneself in an interaction is the shared knowledge along with the closeness to one's co-chatter.

4.1.7 Rebecca

Last, but not least is Rebecca, whose online text-based chatting practices have changed significantly in the past year, while I was working on my data collection. She has switched to audio chats on Skype now and uses TBC less than once a month. Rebecca finds TBC easy because of her advanced typing skills. She is one of those participants who use TBC mainly for maintaining social relationships with friends; however, unlike the others who chat with their romantic partners, colleagues and family members, Rebecca does text-based chatting only with friends, not with family members or boyfriends. She never chats with more than one person at a time, prefers interacting FtF or over the phone to communicating electronically. In her opinion, shared with all but one participant's opinions, Macedonians aged 25-40 prefer to meet and talk FtF or on the phone.

Rebecca produced more text than the other interactants in four TBCs. Her dominance in TBC 1 and 2 could be explained by the fact that she and her co-chatter hadn't talked for a long time, as uttered in the opening of TBC 1. Rebecca had a significant amount of news to share with Ben; thus, her average of words typed per line is

8.8, which is significantly higher than the average of other participants. In TBC 5, an exceptionally long chat, which lasted for 70 minutes without time lags, Rebecca and Humberto, an artist from Mexico, seem to be enjoying the discussions on various topics. Specifically, 16 topics were discussed in this single TBC (see more details on topics in Chapter 6).

In terms of various types of background that may influence communicative behavior of people, Rebecca, similarly to Ema, Maria and Ager, stated that the behavior during interaction depends on the person you are chatting with and the social context you are in:

Excerpt 11

Rebecca: Depends always on the people I chat with...So if they know what I do of course I'm restrained. I'm not gonna be as open. I'm not gonna joke around. So yeah that has an effect on my co-chatter (.) I know that maybe they've been students of mine or they are my colleagues or something but not real colleagues like not co-workers (.) but somebody, let's say, from same university I would be more reserved. So that would be, yeah of course, just like in everyday situations, you are a little bit watchful of what you say to people that are in some way related to what you do, or you have to keep up some kind of face in the society so you can't just go around cussing ((laughs))

(RebInt 1)

Rebecca reported awareness of the impact of good writing used in text-based chat as a multilingual speaker. The usage of proper punctuation is important for her; however, she reprimands herself of being meticulous with it in TBC. Apart from good language, whether people are educated well also affects her chatting practices. She problematized the concept of possible influences on the nature of an interaction by adding the flexibility of interactants in adjusting to the choice of register which depends on the educational background of the other party:

Excerpt 12

Rebecca: Sometimes I just think of it--stop it, this is just chatting and you shouldn't be so aware of it; but also depending on the people that I chat with. If I know that I'm chatting with someone who is reserved in terms of language, I will not use smileys ((laughs))...But if I know that someone else doesn't like it I will not use it if they are very educated

Mira: Aha. So it depends on the level of their education or educational background

Rebecca: Yeah. I think I'm more flexible in terms of who I am speaking with. I would never use a lot of abbreviations or that kind of Internet chat slang unless I'm with someone like my friend whom I am very comfortable with but even I just don't like it. I think it's crude to use those. Yeah, that's something that I'm always aware of when I chat.

(RebInt 1)

From the survey results, it can be concluded that five out of seven participants reported using text-based chat only to maintain social relationships with their friends or colleagues. Two reported using TBC mainly for work-related matters. Four participants acknowledged they always have a purpose in mind when initiating TBC. The number of people they usually talk to varies from one to three. As for the typical interaction practices of Macedonians aged 25-40, all, but Ager, stated that in the Macedonian culture meeting personally, talking FtF, or over phone are preferred communicative practices.

From the interviews, in the answers related to the questions about text-based chatting practices and the influences on TBC, the participants mentioned various idiosyncratic reasons which have impact on the ways they scaffold an interaction and maintain social relationship. Those reasons vary from closeness, shared knowledge and jokes with co-chatters, through one's educational background and change of social context to the awareness of the impact of linguistic, cultural subtleties, and the possibilities of the medium (social network) where TBC occurs.

What was earlier addressed as *dominance* in the TBC was the produced text by the participants in the 70 dyadic text-based chats they sent. Specifically, the length and density (total number of words, average text produced, words per minute, words per line), as well as the number of initiated openings and closings were calculated in order to provide a broader picture of the structure of online TBC of the participants in this study. The average text produced was calculated by counting the total number of words a certain participants used in each chat, in comparison to the number of words the other interlocutor used in each dyad (expressed in percentages).

Table 4.1 Production of Text by Participant and Frequency of Openings and Closings

Production of text by participant in 10 dyadic TBCs	Total number of words produced	Text produced compared to the co-chatter (average)	Words per minute (average)	Words per line (average)	Openings (initiated by participant)	Closings (initiated by participant)
Bianca	3056	49.7%	11.5	8.5	3	5
Ema	5549	55.7%	12.7	6.2	7	7
Maria	3058	41%	6.3	4.3	6	7
Bjork	6553	52%	13.2	4.8	6	4
Lola	7529	48%	8.9	8.4	4	3
Ager	4719	43%	13.8	4.4	2	1
Rebecca	8485	50%	17.8	6.2	6	8

From the data it can be observed that Ema produced more text than her co-chatters overall, while Maria and Ager were less present in the TBC with their co-chatters. The rest of the participants in this study participated in a balanced production of text, between 48% and 52%. It is important to be mentioned that there were cases when in one particular TBC, a participant will dominate with the produced text over the co-chatter. This dominance is closely related to the nature of the topics discussed in the TBCs. For

example, Bianca dominated textually in her Chat 10, which is related to the fact that she tries to be interactive and maintain the interaction while the other interlocutor mostly produces only one-word lines. Interestingly, Bianca rarely initiates chats, but she seems to be comfortable in closing them, even abruptly at times if needed, i.e., after she achieves her interactional purpose. A closer look of the openings and closings is provided later in this chapter.

Since there were no specific requirements about the structure of the TBC, except that they are at least 15 minutes long, the number of produced words varied significantly. Rebecca, Lola and Bjork participated in the longest TBC - 8485, 7529, 6553, respectively. The average number of words per line varied from 4.4 to 8.5 words, which reveals some specifics about this form of communication. In terms of openings and closings—discussed thoroughly in the next section—there is no standard norm that the same person who opens an interaction feels obliged to close it. However, Ema, Maria, and Rebecca showed control of their interactions since they were in charge of initiating and closing most of the TBCs in which they were involved. Ema initiated seven and closed seven chats, unlike Ager who seemed to wait other people to initiate and close the TBC he participated in.

4.2 Openings and Closings

In the previous section, I mentioned the number of TBC that were opened and closed by each participant. The bar below presents graphically the same data but summarized. In this section, I provide further details about the form and function of these discourse structures: openings and closings.

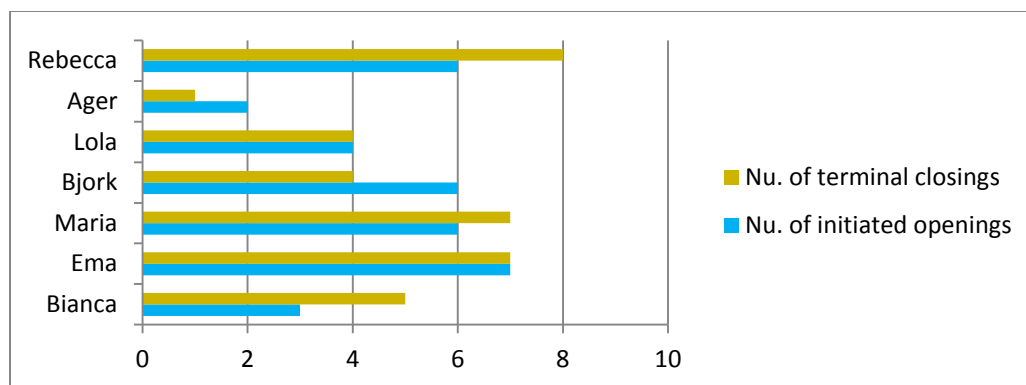


Figure 4.1 Number of Openings and Closings Out of 10 TBC per Participant

The data showed that Bianca, Maria, and Rebecca closed more TBCs than they initiated, whereas Lola and Ema initiated as many TBCs as they closed. Ager, unlike the other participants opened two TBCs and closed only one. Checking the frequency of individual openings and closings is not enough to understand how these segments portray the function of TBC in performing social action, i.e., maintaining social relationship. Having realized this, I explored deeper the structure of openings and closings, relating it to previous research, and I examined the participants' views on their practices related specifically to initiating openings and closings of online interactions.

4.2.1 Openings

In the literature review section, I have presented the previous research done on openings and closings in telephone conversations. For example, Schegloff (1968), Schegloff and Sacks (1973), and Hopper (1992) showed that while openings often employ a common starting point, e.g., greeting or identification, and then diverge over a range of particular topics, closings “converge from a diverse range of conversations-in-

their-course to a regular common closure with “bye bye” or its variants” (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973, p. 291).

As explained earlier, TBC bears some features of spoken language because it is interactive and happens almost synchronously; thus, TBC in its nature resembles telephone conversations in regard to synchronicity. *Openings*, as treated in this study, consist of adjacency pairs that appear at the beginning of TBCs and have various nature, but do not necessarily resemble the conventionalized forms with a greeting and asking about the well-being of the co-chatter.

Apart from telephone conversations, openings in interactional activities have been studied by other scholars in various fields (Malinowski, 1959; Sacks, 1964-68; Goffman, 1971; Schegloff, 1968, Irvine, 1974). For example, focusing on Western society, Goffman (1971) emphasized the importance of ritual in the opening sequences, which is existent in my data, but it exhibits different features.

Regarding the ritualistic nature of openings, online text-based chats do contain summons-answers although their nature is different than those in telephone calls or face-to-face interaction. The summons in TBC is not a ring of the phone, but a name of the chatter who initiates the chat, which appears in the dialogue box on the computer screen. Notifications such as “Ema is online,” or “Ema is typing” appearing in the chat box, or a green symbol marking availability which appears on the screen and is visible to all co-chatters have the function of summons. The openings in this study are sometimes similar to summons-answers structures and constitute the first turn, by definition, usually, but also the opening can consist of the first two turns which include other elements, apart from “summons.” In this study, only three out of 70 TBCs contained the four “ritualistic”

elements (opening greeting, recognition, checking availability, and getting down to business) usually found in telephone conversations. Below is the list with these elements, followed by an exact example of a TBC.

1. Greetings (e.g., “Hi”, “What’s up?” “How are you?”);
2. Recognition/identification (e.g., “Gabi?”);
3. Checking availability (e.g., “Oh, ti is online” – “Oh, you are online”);
4. Getting down to business (e.g., explaining the reason for a call, requesting information, providing information, commenting on a FB or Gmail status).

Excerpt 13 – an exact example of a TBC with the four “ritualistic” elements:

- 1 [06.03.2010 22:32:25] **Lola:** kako si mare :)
[How are you Mare ☺]
- 2 [06.03.2010 22:32:39] **Marija:** Zdravo Lola
[Hi Lola]
- 3 [06.03.2010 22:32:40] **Marija:** :)
[☺]
- 4 [06.03.2010 22:32:42] **Marija:** dobra sum
[I’m well]
- 5 [06.03.2010 22:32:49] **Marija:** slusam muzika
[Listening to music]
- 6 [06.03.2010 22:32:54] **Marija:** ti so pravis
[What are you up to?]
- 7 [06.03.2010 22:33:14] **Lola :** sobiram sliki od makedonija so sum slikala,
ke stavam na fb
[Collecting photos I took from Macedonia, to put
them on FB] (LolaCh 9)

Lines 1 and 2 contain opening greetings (“How are you” and “Hi”) and identification of the two interlocutors Marija, recognized by her nickname Mare, and Lola. Marija answers the question of well-being and tells Lola that she listens to music. The question Marija asks “What are you up to?” serves the purpose of showing interest to continue the interaction, i.e., shows availability and at the same time serves to check whether the other interlocutor is available to chat. After informing one another that they are not doing anything serious and related to work, but instead are involved in some leisure time activities such as listening to music and selecting photos to be placed on Facebook, they end the opening sequence.

Apart from the pattern above, which contains the four “ritualistic” elements, eight variations appeared in the structure of the openings in TBCs such as:

Pattern 1. Getting straight down to business without a conventionalized greeting
(20/70 TBC)

Example: [A Macedonian Skype TBC between Ema and Goran. Apparently, this is a follow-up TBC since Goran asks for a specific link and Ema provides an instant response.]

1 [09:48:19] **Goran:** i sakam link od spotot

[I want the link from the video]

2 [09:53:45] **Ema:**

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=er7RLwgeJUE&feature=rec-LGOUT-exp_fresh+div-1r-6-HM

Pattern 2. Greeting followed by getting down to business

(21/70 TBC)

Example: [An English Skype TBC between Ema and Matta in which Matta starts with asking for his co-chatters well-being.]

1 [21:15:57] **Matta:** are you OK?

2 [21:15:57] **Ema:** (chuckle)¹⁰

3 [21:16:16] **Ema:** so, it's really multicultural here

4 [21:16:19] **Matta:** I hope you are having a rivetting time in Turkey?

Pattern 3. Greeting or identification followed by a previously discussed topic

(11/70 TBC)

Example: [An English Skype TBC between Maria and Elbartto]

1 [27.10.2010 08:42:45] **Maria:** Sergau

2 [27.10.2010 08:43:02] **elbartto1800:** ((bow))

3 [27.10.2010 08:45:12] **Maria:** so did you get some sleep?

4 [27.10.2010 08:46:19] **elbartto1800:** Getting my usual 5 hours a day :)

5 [27.10.2010 08:46:33] **Maria:** great

Pattern 4. Greeting followed by setting up a communication protocol

(5/70 TBC)

Example: [An English Yahoo messenger TBC between Lola and Nirvana in which Lola experiences communication via Yahoo messenger for the first time.]¹¹

¹⁰ Ema prefers typing the words for the exact emoticons instead of inserting the emoticons

- [yesterday]
- 5 21:55 taka?
- [right?]
- 6 **Bjork:** ne ne na 31vi e heh
- [no no on 31st, heh]
- 7 **Tsane:** znaev deka e tuka negde, ama, ete, tolku mi seche...
- [I knew it was around this date, but can't remember]
- 8 sho praish?
- [what's up?]
- 9 **Bjork:** inace sum vo brisel i se macam so cudna tastatura
- [by the way I'm in Brussels having hard times with a
 strange keyboard]

Pattern 6. Greeting, checking availability, getting down to business

(4/70)

Example: [An English Gmail TBC between Bianca and MMcD in which the person who opens the chat asks for availability.]

- 1 8:55 PM **MMcD:** hey bela. are you available?
- 2 8:58 PM **Bianca:** aha
- 3 9:01 PM **MMcD:** i just wanted to check if you received my e-mail
 with eva's rec you didn't reply with a "yes, later" as you did with
 sani's.

Pattern 7. Checking availability, greeting, down to business

(3/70)

Example: [An English Gtalk TBC between Rebecca and Vivian]

- 1 2:11 PM **Vivian:** are you there?
- 2 guess not.
- 3 Bosat.
- 4 **Rebecca:** hiii
- 5 I am here
- 6 how are you?
- 7 2:12 PM **Vivian:** oh goody!
- 8 I am well. Saw Irit the otehr day -- she wore the earrings you gave
here (and otehr thigns too, even though it is nto yet cold here)
- 9 How are you?
- 10 **Rebecca:** I am fine -- trying to make myself write :)

In terms of frequency (shown in Table 4.2 below), the most common pattern was the one containing a greeting proceeded by getting down to business sequence (21/70 or 30%), immediately followed by the pattern consisting of getting down to business without any conventionalized greeting.

Table 4.2 Patterns of Openings (Out of 70 TBCs)

	Pattern 1	Pattern 2	Pattern 3	Pattern 4	Pattern 5	Pattern 6	Pattern 7
Frequency of the described patterns of openings	20/70	21/70	11/70	7/70	3/70	4/70	3/70

What the exact structure and nature of the opening will be depends on contextual factors such as *time*, *deadlines*, and *purpose* (see Chapter 5). In the data, I noticed that

Bianca and Ager rarely initiated TBC themselves and when they did, they avoided the steps of opening greetings or “how are you” tokens; they would immediately “get down to business” instead. The example below illustrates this tendency of opening with a request for information related to work rather than with a greeting:

Excerpt 14: [A Macedonian chat between Bianca and her aunt and colleague Natasha. Bianca is checking if her colleague Matthew has sent the texts he was supposed to translate to Nastasha.]:

1 **Bianca:** Dali Metju ti gi isprati tekstovite?

[Did Matthew send you the texts?]

2 **Natasha:** samo predovorot.

[only the preface.]

(BiancaCh 7)

The interview data showed that the participants seem to show some after-the-fact awareness that time and busyness affected their interactions. During the interview Bianca and Ager looked closely at their TBC and justified their interactional practices of openings and closings by the contextual factors such as deadlines they face at work and the task-oriented nature of today’s communication and busyness:

Excerpt 15

Bianca: We are pressured by time [**Mira:** have to wrap up this application.] These two people cannot really change this letter in any particular way linguistically, culturally, academically, because we are pressured by deadlines.

(BiancaInt 1)

Excerpt 16

Ager: The thing with Gtalk is that you can have someone who’s green, someone who’s available, and someone who’s red—busy—and someone who’s red, would

only say “can you spare a second?” And if I have questions about anything—but never to just waste away the time when someone is red. Because one of my famous statuses for when I was red said “Red for a reason,” because people just kept interrupting regardless, you know?

(AgerInt 1)

Interestingly, Ema, Maria, and Rebecca also mentioned *time* as a factor which impacts online communication nowadays, but unlike Bianca and Ager, they consider other people’s time and availability as more important than their own time and availability. I have included only one example here, taken from the interview with Maria, due to space limitations and because Ema’s and Rebecca’s opinions were very similar to Maria’s.

Excerpt 17

Maria: In terms of chat I must say that I’m a bit impolite because I take up other people’s time just to ask them how they are, or to catch on things—to ask them something that is really urgent at the moment. And I really lose sense if that is really urgent to them at the moment, and that’s what I do with my close friends.

(MariaInt 1)

Relating my participants’ explanations with Goffman’s (1971) and Lindström’s (1994) beliefs, it appears nowadays that following the “ritual” and the “norms of canonical” or conventionalized openings is less prevalent in online communication. Or we can say that some ritual is still present, but it is of different nature. Other contextual factors such as technology affordances are important for the other participants in this study. For example, Lola’s constant travelling and limited access to the Internet affect her interactional openings more than the face-threatening and politeness factors.

Identification in CMC and the way chatters orient to one another is done by checking each other’s location and availability. The analysis of the TBCs in this study

showed that initiation of TBC depends on the location of interactants—whether they are at work or not—but also on the fact if the device through which the interaction is performed is private- or public-owned.

Schegloff (1972) pointed out that one critical issue for successful communication to which speakers have to pay attention to is “where-we-know-we-are”¹³ (p. 100). This may sound metaphorical, but it actually means that the exact location of interactants matters. The interactional work necessary for establishing the “where-we-know-we-are” between participants, who are co-located, in a face-to-face conversation can be assumed to differ from the one used in TBC, in which the participants are communicating through a technological device (such as computer or mobile phone). The following excerpt from a TBC exemplifies such an identification and orientation exchange:

Excerpt 18: [Lidija and Bianca worked on a project together. They know each other professionally. In this Macedonian TBC Bianca contacts Lidija to inform her that she did not get paid for the work done.]

1 [06.06.2011 11:11:44] **Bianca:** Lidija?

[Lidija?]

2 [06.06.2011 11:12:02] **Lidija:** kazi... :)

[Go ahead...:)]

(BiancaCh 6)

The directness with which Lidija responds implies that she assumes what Bianca is contacting her for; therefore, no official “ritualistic” opening with greeting is natural for both. They get straight down to business.

¹³ Considerable attention has been paid in the CA literature to the practices through which participants in conversation formulate who they are, what they are talking about, where they are located, and so forth.

Excerpt 19: [Rebecca and Maria have been close friends since high school; maintaining distance social relationship. Maria lives in the States, while Rebecca lives in Macedonia.]

- 1 6:03 PM **Rebecca:** maria?
- 2 **Maria:** REBECCA!
- 3 I AM AT WORK!
- 4 CAN'T TALK!
- 5 **Rebecca:** OK LOVE YOU

(RebeccaCh 5)

Making sure that one talks to the right person since communication devices can be shared is another crucial factor that affects further successful interaction. In Excerpt 18, Bianca is the one who identifies Lidija by uttering her name instead of Lidija doing self-identification. Practically, in this case, Bianca avoids trouble which might be caused by delivering problematic content to the wrong person since Lidija works on a shared computer. Similarly, in Excerpt 19, Rebecca, assuming that Maria is at work and may be sharing a computer with other colleagues, opens the chat identifying Maria, who stated that she is unavailable for TBC.

These cases are consonant with previous studies of mobile phone use (Weilenmann & Larsson, 2002; Weilenmann, 2003) which showed that it is not always the person owning the telephone who uses it, although we expect that mobile phones today are not usually shared. Similarly to this, interactants are aware that the person on the other side of the computer screen may not be the one with whom interaction was intended. Thus, identifying the interlocutor when one is using a shared PC or laptop, at work or in a public Internet café, is part of the new ritual of doing interactional work. Moreover, openings are said to be culturally variable. A study by Lindström (1994), who

compared the patterning of the American, Dutch, and Swedish phone call openings, suggested that the way in which interlocutors orient to the identification/recognition is culturally dependent. She found that the pattern of American openings embodied an institutionalized preference for other-recognition rather than self-identification. The work suggests that American and Swedish interactants may rely on the same kinds of procedures to do this “intimacy work.” In regard to this cross-cultural issue, my participants are all Macedonians but they rely on individual procedures to do the interactional work when they open, maintain or close TBC; the procedures are the same regardless the language used.

To conclude, in order to understand the social action embodied in an utterance, we must move beyond an examination of its lexical content to an analysis of the environment in which it occurs, i.e., the availability of the interactants, their communicative habits, and the technological affordances of the interlocutors. The excerpts exemplified two-party conversational openings, with the focus on checking for availability, free time, and checking whether the interlocutor used a private or shared computer. That is similar to what Schegloff pointed out “a person who seeks to engage in an activity that requires the collaborative work of two parties must first establish, via some interactional procedure, that another party is available to collaborate” (Schegloff, 1968, p. 1089). The next section presents the close examination of the structure patterns that appear in closings sections, as well as the beliefs of my participants about the ways they initiate closing or terminate online TBC.

4.2.2 Closings

Besides openings as conventionalized forms of communication in face-to-face communication, but not in TBC, as shown above, I explored how common the typical closing type of saying “bye bye” is in text-based chats.

Pre-closings and closing are considered separate by conversation analysis, but in this study they are treated as integral, functional elements of a larger unit. Pre-closings may lead to a terminal exchange, but may also lead to a new topic development. Schegloff and Sacks (1973) were concerned with “how to organize the simultaneous arrival of the conversationalists at a point where one speaker’s completion will not occasion another speaker’s talk, and that will not be heard as some speaker’s silence” (p. 294). In this work, *closing* will be treated as one sequence that is initiated in the utterances of one speaker. That is a terminal exchange which doesn’t occasion another speaker’s talk. Similarly to initial sequences terminal exchanges employ adjacency pair formats. “Goodbye” or “bye” may be considered the most common instances of a terminal exchange (as we see in various foreign language course books or travel guides); however, other linguistic elements such as “ok,” “see you soon,” “thank you,” and “take care” are also used in closings performing the same social action of agreeing on the completion of an interaction. Some previous work by conversation analysts presented canonical examples of closing in which we can see that elements such as “okey,” and “alright” have the function of pre-closings. In such examples, the pre-closings are followed directly by closings. However, Schegloff and Sacks (1973) demonstrated that possible pre-closings can be a special place for new topic introductions.

My data showed that there are other more explicit devices such as “I have to go,” which can also open a closing sequence. Specifically, the data showed that some participants—Bianca, Rebecca, Ema, and Maria initiated closing differently in Macedonian and in English. Whenever they wanted to announce the terminal exchange in the English TBC, they would use pre-closing expressions such as “take care,” “need to go now,” “Anyway, great chatting to you,” whereas in the Macedonian chats they announced the closing by explaining what exact other work they have to do, that they feel sleepy, or that they can’t chat longer because of some other specific reason such as start of a show on TV. A valuable finding for the use of Macedonian in TBC is the frequent usage of “ajde” (ajде) and its shorter variation “aj.” This linguistic item, grammatically speaking, is a particle, usually used in Macedonian as an imperative or as an introductory particle for encouragement or initiation marker for action. In this study, “aj/ajde” functions as an initiation marker for announcing termination of TBC.

Regarding the structure of closings, four patterns were identified. Table 4.3 shows the frequency of these four patterns. The most frequently used one was pattern 1.

Table 4.3 Patterns of Closings (Out of 70 TBCs)

	Pattern 1	Pattern 2	Pattern 3	Pattern 4
Frequency of the described patterns - closings	21/70	16/70	24/70	9/70

Here, I provide an example of each pattern, followed by excerpts from the interviews in which some of the participants expressed their beliefs about closings of their TBCs.

Pattern 1: A conventionalized closing would consist of an adjacency pair of closing greetings/leave takings. There were 21 instances of this type (30%).

Example: [A Macedonian TBC on Gtalk between Maria and her friend Viktorija. They are playful with languages and try to transliterate English and French phrases the way Macedonians would pronounce them.]:

- 95 **Maria:** si ja
 96 **Viktorija:** oui
 97 have a nice day
 98 **Maria:** you too¹⁴

(MariaCh 8)

Pattern 1 shows a conventionalized closing with leave takings such as “see you” and “have a nice day.” This example is a Macedonian TBC; however, it can be noticed that both Maria and Viktorija use other languages or self-developed variants of transliterated languages, apart from Macedonian.

Pattern 2: No closing. There were 16 instances of this type of closings (23%).

Example: [A Macedonian chat on Gtalk between Ager and his boss Aleksandar, who are finishing a discussion in which they tried to solve a professional problem.]:

¹⁴ There were four instances total, in which participants used different languages to close interactions. All the participants studied languages and are multilingual, which explains the code-switching they sometimes perform in openings and closings. Sometimes they will borrow an English word but transcribe it in Macedonian (e.g., “si ja,” meaning “see you” and “baj baj” meaning “bye bye”).

99 **Aleksandar:** може само мене да си ми бил

[you may have controlled me only]

100 **Ager:** да, да

[yes yes]

101 20:05 **Aleksandar:** само мене

[only me]

(AgerCh 2)

In this example, Ager and Aleksandar are trying to solve a professional problem with subtitling. The conversation ends as it is shown above (“only me”). When I asked Ager about the possible reason for not reaching a terminal closing, he explained that he and Aleksandar talk “ten times a day,” and all their TBCs are work-related, meaning that there is no need for a closing because they usually continue with the ongoing professional discussion after a short time.

Pattern 3: Pre-closing followed immediately by a closing. There were 24 instances of this type (24%).

Example: [An English TBC between Lola and Salome, who is a recent acquaintance Lola met at a poetry festival.] :

→ 234 [15.05.2010 00:49:40] **Salomé** says: I'll talk to you during the weekend¹⁵

235 [15.05.2010 00:49:45] **Lola** says: sure

236 [15.05.2010 00:49:46] **Salomé** says: thanks for doing this for me

237 [15.05.2010 00:49:59] **Lola** says: you are welcome

¹⁵ An arrow is used by conversation analysts to mark a line in which a phenomenon under scrutiny occurs.

238 [15.05.2010 00:50:05] **Lola** says: have a great time

→239 [15.05.2010 00:50:25] **Salomé** says: bye!

240 [15.05.2010 00:50:25] **Salomé** says: (wave) 🙋

241 [15.05.2010 00:50:30] **Salomé** says: I'll see you around

242 [15.05.2010 00:50:33] **Salomé** says: Take care!!!

243 [15.05.2010 00:50:45] **Lola** says: (wave) 🙋

(LolaCh9)

In this example, we can see how Salome opens up a closing sequence by arranging a future online chat in line 234. Then an exchange of thanking and leave takings occurs, after which the interaction ends. The terminal exchange starts in line 239 with the conventionalized “bye” and a substitution of the physical movement of waving hands, performed by an emoticon with a waving smiley.

Pattern 4: Pre-closing followed by continuation of the discussion followed by a closing (12.8%).

Example: [An English chat between Bianca and MMcD, her mentee and colleague. After deciding on how to approach a problem with a colleague they bring the TBC to the end by stating they need to get back to the work they had been doing prior to the TBC.]:

70 9:24 PM **MMcD**: I just hope that people respond to e-mail over the break so that I don't have to make phone calls.

71 But I'll deal with that as it comes. Get to your exploding inbox, and I'll get to Sani's rec and Keats.

72 9:25 PM **Bianca**: You may have to. No one really checks work email during the break.

73 But you'll come to that bridge when you come to it.

74 I'll be sending Eva

75 's shortly.

→ 76 Take care

77 9:26 PM Here: freezing. But snowy pretty.

78 **MMcD**: Thanks.

79 Here: Belalting [sic.], but pleasant.

80 9:27 PM **Bianca**: Go rest a bit.

(BiancaCh 4)

Bianca's relative control over terminal exchanges and her role as an advisor can be demonstrated in the excerpt below when the other speaker opens up the closing in line 71 by saying, "get to your exploding inbox, and I'll get to Sani's rec and Keats." Bianca does not accept the pre-closing and continues with her advice that MMcD, her mentee, may have to call people during vacation time since they do not check their emails regularly, and she also inserts information about the weather right before the terminal exchange. Again, it is Bianca who types "take care," which announces the actual closing, and who finally closes the chat with advice "go rest a bit."

Having noticed that my participants performed some interactional rituals that may be considered abrupt and unexpected according to previous research on openings and closings mentioned above—that is, not following the patterns of "normal" or "polite"

conversation—I asked them whether they felt responsible for closing a TBC if they initiated it, and also what the ethics behind such interactional work was:

Excerpt 20

Mira: I don't know if you have awareness of this; let's see what you think about maybe the ethics behind it if you initiate a chat, do you feel that you will be the one who'd close the chat or do you have such a practice? Or if something happens, it is totally unconsciously done so if you initiate, is it you who will close the chat? Do you feel responsible for closing after let's say—it is harsh to say—after you get what you want?

Bianca: I understand what you are asking, but I wouldn't call it ethics. For me ethics is something very different. [Mira: Oh.] I would CALL it like what is considered to probably the DECORum of a normal conversation or civilized conversation [Mira: (laughingly) OK] I shouldn't call it normal, cause normal means having some other values. So for me, ethics is something very different, and maybe because I come from (diverge) background—but I would TRY to do that—I would try to particularly if it's the chat I initiated for professional purposes. And if I am also aware of the time frame if there's a deadline, or if I 'm doing it outside of the person's work space or work environment— if I am disrupting their home life [M: right right.] And I would be aware of that... and also because I'm aware of how much responsibility there is on my mentees and the students they have to talk to, I wouldn't drag it on; if it's just information, I'm looking for from them. But if they want advice, and by now they know if they are in dire STRAITS, and they really need, you know some sounding board type of activity, I would be— I would make sure I'm there for them. If I cannot answer it immediately I'll make sure to set up a time to do that even if it's outside of our work.

(BinacaInt 1)

The interactional work of closing a conversation seems to be task-related for some participants (Bianca, Ager, and Ema). In other words, the scaffolding of such interactions is influenced by the requirements of the task people interact for, the deadlines, or the time at their disposal to accomplish the task, and the nature of the relationships involved in finishing a task. Thus, if we think of Schegloff and Sacks' (1973) concern with “how to organize the simultaneous arrival of the conversationalists at a point where one speaker's completion will not occasion another speaker's talk” and how to perform the closing

“ritual,” I can conclude that interactional work of arriving at the point of a TBC termination depends first and foremost on busyness, deadlines, time zones, and who takes responsibility of the interactions, as it was in TBCs by Bianca, Ager, Maria, and Bjork, and secondly, on personal preferences such as whether one “feels like chatting” (e.g., Lola), whether one breaches someone’s privacy or takes up someone’s time (e.g., Rebecca and Ema). The point of the simultaneous arrival at terminal exchange depends on the issue of *getting-the-information-I’m-looking-for-from-them* and occurs after the requested advice has been offered. To confirm my assumptions I asked all participants to discuss specific termination of some of their TBCs. The replies below exemplify how my participants’ interaction is guided by busyness, deadlines (excerpt 21), taking responsibility for the interaction (excerpt 22), and personal preferences for chatting (excerpt 23).

Excerpt 21

Mira: And here you are the one who just decides to end the conversation “thanks for the advice/take care/you too”

Bianca: Yes, because we would chat in few hours again, and I had to write couple of [Mira: ah probably you were busy] and while he was doing this I was editing students’ essays and drafts. So it wasn’t like I wouldn’t talk to him. Yeah, so that was part, so if we were chatting up about life in general, and it was not December 23rd, which for him would be like, he doesn’t even celebrate Christmas if you think about it.¹⁶ I don’t celebrate that one, so for me it was not that big of a deal but...

(BiancaInt1)

¹⁶ The person Bianca is talking about does not celebrate Christmas because he cannot – he is very busy at this time of the year in Macedonia. Although he is Canadian and a Catholic, he is in Macedonia on December 23, where he needs to work especially on December 23-24-25, before the school year ends. Macedonians, as Orthodox, celebrate Christmas on January 6-7-8, not in December.

Excerpt 22

Maria: So this responsibility to start and to finish the chat usually when I'm talking to someone who's not very close to me—so with them I kind of feel the responsibility to start the chat to ask what is the of interest to me and then “thank you very much,” “bye bye or see you around.” Whereas when I'm talking to [person's name] from the other chat, sometimes, I leave the chat hanging, and I just close the box—didn't even say goodbye

(MariaInt 1)

Excerpt 23

Lola: It's different like you can always blame it on the Internet if you don't feel like chatting anymore. I just sign out and I don't finish the conversation. Sometimes I say “bye” whenever you try to finish the conversation; it can go on and on for at least 10 to 15 more minutes and sometimes I really—I either don't feel like chatting anymore or I just have to go somewhere so I just log out.

(LolaInt 1)

Excerpt 24

Bjork: Yeah, I mean people I see regularly I don't use those phrases “It was nice chatting to you,” “hope to catch you again soon” and all that. I just say “Ok look gotta go bye” and I shut up, because I just don't have the time, and they do the same so...

(BjorkInt 1)

From the excerpts it can be concluded that the awareness that the nature of TBC means avoiding wasting time on openings and closings, or avoiding “awkward situations” distinguishes TBC from phone conversations or face-to-face interactions in which not ending an interaction at all is seen as impolite. What matters for five of my participants is that the job gets done while adjusting the interaction in accordance to the closeness with interactants, as well as the feeling of taking up someone's time is what matters to the participants and what directs their interactional work.

In terms of culture-related and language-related variable closings, the structure of the interactional work performed in TBC does not differ in English and in Macedonian; however, there were instances in the TBCs worth mentioning because they emphasize the use of specific lexical devices portraying Macedonian culture and language, and which participants would only use with Macedonian family members or close friends, but not with others. Such examples are terminal exchanges including 1) a traditional folk saying “i gjezve voda sabajle,” which would translate literally into “and spill a pot of water in the morning,” meaning wishing you good luck; 2) “se chitkame,” a special form of the verb “read,” which performs a function of a diminutive (Koneski, 1995) with the meaning “talk to you/read you soon”, while expressing intimacy, endearment or alignment; 3) “гушки и бацки,” “gush,” a specific form of the nouns *hugs* and *kisses* used specifically in online communication; 4) “tao,” specific pronunciation of “ciao,” sounding like a child, who is too little to pronounce the sound /ch/ properly, again showing endearment and alignment, and 5) “aj caos,” again a variation of the greeting “ciao,” which interestingly is very frequently used for closing but is not a Slavic word.

Therefore, coming to the point of terminal exchange may be lexically different with the awareness of culturally specific phrases, but the simultaneous coming to an end, in general, depends more on the interactional work of both participants and the shared understanding that abrupt termination of the TBCs is considered acceptable with close friends or colleagues. That terminal point would occur after interactants would offer the required advice, moral support, or receive the information they were looking for.

To conclude, in terms of structure, eight variations were recognized for openings in TBCs, the most frequent being the one which contains a *greeting* followed by *getting*

down to business, where “business” has different meanings from having responsibilities at work to sharing news or asking for advice. As for closings, three patterns were identified, 30 percent of which contained a terminal adjacency pair of a closing greeting without a pre-closing sequence. The most interesting finding, which initiates further research, I believe, is the high score of TBC without a closing (23%), because it marks the change of the nature of the ritualistic or conventionalized form used for polite termination of an interaction. Regarding lexis, eight closings (11.4%) include the canonical “bye-bye” turn. What was found in the other English TBCs were “take care” turns, and “making-future-arrangements” turns, while the Macedonian TBCs ended with greetings, specifically the word “pozdrav,” meaning “regards,” “greetings” in Macedonian, good luck wishes and affective talk. In terms of performing social action, although interactional work is shared in most cases, four participants had relative control over terminal exchanges, doing so after they would receive the needed information or satisfy themselves with the self-identified scope of the maintained social relation. Four out of seven participants reported always having a particular purpose in mind when they initiate TBC. Purpose is what is presented in the next chapter along with the concept of having some relative control of an interaction.

CHAPTER 5. PURPOSE AND SITUATED CO-POSITIONING IN TEXT-BASED CHAT

This chapter explores two related social phenomena involving interaction. The first one is *purpose*, seen as a self-initiated need to engage in online text-based chat either to request information or to maintain social relationship. The second one is *situated co-positioning*, which is closely linked to purpose, referring to the way participants position themselves in the process of co-constructing and maintaining the social relationship.

5.1 Purpose in TBC

5.1.1 Definition of Purpose in TBC

The issue of *purpose* in TBC surfaced while discussing the strategies participants in this study used to open, maintain, and close TBC (discussed in Chapter 4). The nature of purpose varied and a participant might initiate the TBC having one initial purpose in mind, which might remain the same until it was achieved, unyielding to interactional work, or it might turn into another purpose scaffolded by the interactional work. There is a tension between one's personal purpose and the co-constructed realization of a certain purpose in an interaction. While accomplishing one's own purpose, more experienced interactants seem to find ways to adapt more efficiently to the overlapping of purposes in accordance with the interactional context. Personal purpose is the internal reason for an interaction and is driven by the immediate need to obtain information. It is what one

comes with in the interaction, whereas social purpose is, generally speaking, a negotiated purpose. It usually emerges in the interaction, although it is possible for an interactant to initiate an interaction for a social purpose.

Social purpose in discourse¹⁷ according to Brown and Fraser (1979) is an integral part of a situation schema consisting of components such as Scene—consisting of Setting (bystanders, locale, time) and Purpose (goals, tasks, topic)—and Participants and their various properties and relationships. Purposes occur “in sets of different scope” and can be compared to fleas on the back of other fleas, i.e., “large purposes contain their smaller ones with them, as discursive means of overarching ends” (Brown & Fraser, 1979, p. 39).

The notion of *purpose*, often addressed also as *intention*, or *intentionality*, has been explored in various ways, such as in explaining speaker meaning through the “cooperative principle” (Grice, 1957, 1989), speech acts (Searle, 1969, 1983), social development of language (Tomasello et al. 2005), and the cognitive pragmatics, i.e., comprehension of communication acts and extraction of information (Bara, 2010). Specifically, Grice’s “speaker’s meaning” is defined as the result of speakers expressing intentions through what they say, and recipients recognizing or attributing those intentions to speakers.

Searle (1983) proposed the notions of “meaning intention,” and “collective intentionality,” explaining the communication intention as “all action is a composite entity of which one component is an intention in action” (p. 107). He also distinguished between “first-order representation intention” and a “second-order communication intention” (pp. 165-166). The difficulty to distinguish between types of intentionality can

¹⁷ The most extensive work on context has been carried out in the social psychology of language by Brown & Fraser (1979).

be demonstrated by the following quote by Searle, “[B]ut I could have all the intentionality I do have even if I am radically mistaken, even if the apparent presence and cooperation of other people is illusion, even if I am suffering a total hallucination, even if I am a brain in a vat (Searle, 1990, p. 117). The work done on intentionality is valuable but it has raised new questions and dilemmas in the ways we approach meaning and intention in communication¹⁸.

I intend to show here that speaker intentions direct text-based chat and that they can be approached as *personal* and *social* purposes—purposes which are not mutually exclusive. Basically, I am slightly broadening the notion of *speaker intention* as it is generally understood, by presenting examples of how these first-order and second-order intentions work in a new media and online context, that is, in TBC. It is true that the performance of social action is partially guided by the speaker’s intention, but it is also done through the collaborative work of the chatters, and through dyadic co-cognizing in TBC. But, at the same time, as a researcher, I cannot be certain that the interactants fully recognize each other’s specific intentions. As Duranti (2006) argued,

We might be able to recognize the ‘directionality’ of particular communicative acts (e.g., through talk and embodiment) without being able to specify whether speakers did or did not have the narrow intention to communicate what is being attributed to them by their listeners (p.33).

This means that the angle in my study is close to the sociocultural approaches (e.g., Belz, 2002; Jacoby & Ochs, 1995), stating that social interaction is co-constructed,

¹⁸ First-order intention means to intend to inform somebody about something. The second-order intention means that the hearer recognizes this first-order intention. There is also a third-order intention, much disputed by scholars later, which means to have someone’s second-order intention recognized by her/his audience.

which means that interactants have a common purpose to create activity or a meaningful reality jointly. As for the general context of text-based chat, the purpose of interactants is to read and respond to the text that appears on the computer screen, or as Gumperz's (1982) explained, to use the immediate "contextualization cues" in order to make a meaningful interaction from what they know or from their shared social experiences and expectations.

This study explores, first, the personal and social purposes of interactants in TBC, and second, *how and if* those purposes control the interaction.

5.1.2 Personal Purpose

The subjectivity of interactional behavior is most typically represented by how people selectively interpret and represent issues they interact about and by what opinions and prior knowledge they have about the issues discussed. In other words, each participant defines their personal interpretation of the current interaction through TBC; however, the interaction is possible only when those interpretations of individual interactants are partly shared. Relevance of the interaction may be both personal and social in this case, and is defined by the current context (For more on the hierarchical structure of intentions see Sperber & Wilson, 1986).

The excerpts below suggest that *personal purpose* mattered in the interactions of the participants in this study and exemplifies how an internalized purpose at the start of the interaction became co-constructed during the performance of social action. An interactant's personal purpose refers to the process of internalizing an interaction, i.e., adjusting it to one's own need to request information, usually for work-related issues, or

to ask for favor. According to some of the participants in the study, there is a distinction between “chatting for fun” and “chatting to obtain information” (LolaInt 1; BjorkInt 1). These ideas are similar to communicative and informative intention of the Relevance theory, which states that unless the audience correctly recognizes the speaker’s informative intention, communication has failed.

The first excerpt from the three presented below shows how for somebody getting down to business and getting what you need directs the interaction. The other two examples show how the interactant’s original purpose changes and how the “directionality” of the interaction is co-constructed. However, they differ in a sense that in the second example the person who requests information does not get immediate answers, while in the third example the recipient “reads” the intention of the person who initiated the TBC even though this person does not openly ask for a favor.

As mentioned earlier in the section on individual TBC practices, Bianca initiated three out of the ten TBCs with the sole purpose to request information for professional reasons. Although Bianca has a purpose in mind for contacting MMcD, i.e., to find out the title of the conference presentation, without MMcD’s participation and preference to respond, even after 11 minutes versus not to respond at all, Bianca could not accomplish her purpose.

Excerpt 1: [An English TBC between Bianca and her mentee and colleague MMcD, who she has asked to come up with a title for a conference presentation. Bianca initiates the TBC with the single purpose to obtain the title as soon as possible.]:

1 2:32 PM **Bianca**: Just a quick question: what is the provisional title you plan to give to your presentation for Vrshac?

2 I need to send them that ASAP.

3

11 minutes¹⁹

4 2:43 PM **MMcD**: Sorry. Angela and I still haven't got together about that.

I just called her, but there was no answer, so I'll offer a provisional title now:

5 2:44 PM **Bianca**: Thanks.

6 That would do for now.

7 MMcD: I'm brainstorming....

(BiancaCh 3)

In this example, Bianca initiates the TBC with a specific request. She avoids the formulaic, conventionalized opening and gets straight down to business, explaining that she needs the answer “ASAP.” MMcD responds after 11 minutes even though Bianca mentions the urgency of the matter. I do not know the real reason for his delay, since MMcD was not a participant of the study to be interviewed, but what is important is that he is committed to the interaction and gives a response eventually, while simultaneously apologizing. Bianca seems to be satisfied even with some provisional title (“that would do for now”), which shows her control of the directionality.

The second excerpt fairly represents many other TBCs in my corpus in which the personal purpose is clear at the beginning, but the “directionality” of the interaction is co-constructed. The purpose of this TBC was for Ema, as reported in the interview, to check the well-being of her female friend Katherine, who was in Japan, and to express support after the earthquake in Japan, which triggered a tsunami in March, 2011.

¹⁹ This is how a time lag is presented in Gtalk. There was a time lag of 11 minutes before MMcD got engaged into the TBC.

The directionality of the original purpose of an interaction may be changed as a result of the co-constructive work in dyadic TBC. To use Duranti's terminology, Ema's narrow personal purpose for initiating this TBC is easy to specify; however, the "directionality" of the TBC is hard to predict. Ema's personal purpose was to express support and maybe hear more details about the earthquake aftershock Katherine was experiencing; however, Katherine changed the direction and imposed new topics for discussion such as teaching and marriage, avoiding talking about the earthquake.

Excerpt 2: [An English TBC between Ema and her colleague Katherine. They attended the same MA program in the UK, and at the moment of the TBC Ema is in Macedonia, while Katherine is in Japan during the period of a tsunami and earthquake which occurred in 2011.]:

1 [11:30:27] **Ema:** Hey, K! Just thought I'd give you a hug quickly, to protect you from a new aftershock (just read your Fb status)

2 [11:30:37] **Ema:** (hug)

3 [11:31:04] **Ema:** you seem to be OK an[sic] as positive about things as ever!

4 [11:31:14] **Katherine:** hey hey!!

5 [11:31:22] **Ema:** :)

6 [11:31:45] **Katherine:** all good here. Thanks for thinking of me-it means a lot.;

7 [11:31:53] **Ema:** should we trust the (sometimes conflicting) news reports here?

8 [11:31:53] **Katherine:** how's stuff with you?

9 [11:32:13] **Ema:** just how big is the risk of the worst scenario?

10 [11:32:13] **Katherine:** enjoying married life? PhD?

11 [11:32:35] **Ema:** ticks for both items :)

12 [11:32:42] **Katherine:** teeny teeny, from what I can tell, certainly for anyone outside the immediate vicinity.

13 [11:33:31] **Ema:** am just analysing some of the questionnaire data - struggling with a sea of data as most of the questions were open ended :)

14 [11:33:35] **Katherine:** there're a few issues with milk and vegetables registering high levels of iodide, but nothing too serious yet. I'm happy to be home

15 [11:33:48] **Ema:** good!

16 [11:33:54] Katherine: it's terrible up north though - can't quite get my head round it

(EmaCh 1)

It appears that Ema's personal purpose to initiate the TBC was to express support after having seen the posted Facebook status of Katherine in relation to the earthquake in Japan, in 2011. In the first three lines, Ema self-performs the interaction. She does not know if Katherine is available, but decides that it is important at that particular moment to leave support messages which Katherine will hopefully attend to later. The use of emoticons, more thoroughly discussed in Chapter 6, and of exclamation marks denotes the affective state of the interlocutors. In line 4, Katherine enters the interaction with a greeting, and in line 6 she thanks Ema for her concern, comforting her that "all is good" there. From what follows in lines 7-10, it seems that there is misalignment between Ema and Katherine, because Katherine avoids answering Ema's questions about the situation in Japan and poses new ones instead. This is where the directionality of the interaction changes and where the interactant's personal purpose becomes a social one. The interaction continues and the interlocutors discuss various topics: social, intellectual, and some very personal ones. Katherine eventually addresses the topic of the earthquake and answers Ema's initial question, in line 14, where she explains that some food has a high level of iodide, but "nothing too serious yet." In line 16, she intensifies the evaluation of the situation by saying "it's terrible up north though - can't quite get my head round it." The interaction continues as Ema and Katherine discuss their teaching practices without any further mention of the earthquake—the original purpose for initiating the TBC.

The third excerpt is another example of how a personal purpose triggered interaction, but that purpose was accomplished only through co-construction, i.e., because it was accurately interpreted and responded to by the recipient, Ager.

Excerpt 3: [An English TBC between Ager and his friend Matta. Matta is organising a bachelor party, or as the British say “a stag do.” He, as a foreigner who is getting married to a Macedonian woman, needs help with accommodation for his friends, who are travelling from Britain to Macedonia, where the stag do is taking place.]:

1 12:29 **Matta:** hey man, just trying to make a plan for the Stag do. The thing is, having everyone here for a week (i.e. if the Stag do was at the weekend) is problematic as I will be busy.

2 12:30 **Ager:** I can take people around town

3 have them sleep at my place

4 or even in Dracevo if need be

5 all is fine

6 **Matta:** what I really need to know is is [sic] the place available all week

7 12:31 and thanks for the offer - think its going to be a mad time whatever we do...

8 **Ager:** in the hills?

9 yeah, i just need to report it

10 **Matta:** yeah

11 **Ager:** but no one will be there

12 it's going to be chilly

13 people go there july-september

14 **Matta:** OK, so I will get them to give me their days of availability and then we'll go on the overlap

(AgerCh 4)

In the excerpt, Matta's personal purpose directed the TBC. He is the one who initiated the interaction. Matta gets straight down to business, avoiding the

conventionalized opening, and he expresses concern about accommodating all the people invited to his bachelor party. Although Matta is not explicit in requesting help from Ager, Ager “reads” Matta’s personal purpose for the TBC and offers accommodation himself. Apparently, Ager has plenty of available space for guests in his current home, as well as in another local Macedonian settlement-Dracevo, and in a house “in the hills.” Matta thanks Ager in line 7 and agrees to check his guests’ days of availability before making further arrangements.

5.1.3 Social Purpose

Apart from the personal purpose an interactant can have when initiating TBC, and which may give directionality to the TBC, another type of purpose which initiated TBC was identified. I refer to it as *social purpose*. Beneath our use of language in TBC lie the social expectations of communication. The social purpose includes layers of smaller purposes as described by Brown and Fraser (1979). In order to understand an action we want to know what motivated it, and what the desires, purposes, and reasons were for the action. However, often the motives and purposes for action are hard to identify and understand, since they are internal mental and psychological states.

More specifically, as shown in the section on interactant’s personal purposes, the motive for initiating TBC was easy to identify by the questions or concerns immediately posed in the opening. However, in other cases, as illustrated below through three excerpts from TBCs sent by Maria, Bjork and Rebecca, the purpose for interaction was to kill time, to catch up, to gossip, to share such news which improve the social relationship, or as one

of the participant's defined it to do a "coffee chat."²⁰ Social purpose differs from interactant's personal purpose since it gets externalized and multilayered, it cannot be easily controlled, and it is prone to dynamic change of its directionality.

In the excerpt below, the TBC was neither initiated from someone who needs practical information or a favor, and it was not controlled/directed by any of the interactants.

Excerpt 4: [A Macedonian TBC between Maria and her close friend Viktorija. The TBC is an excellent example of catching up with a friend and exchanging information about recent events.]

- 1 **Viktorija:** yallow [sic]
- 2 hellow [sic]
- 3 **Maria:** yellow :)
- 4 wazzup?
- 5 **Viktorija:** nisto posebno
[nothing special]
- 6 samo so se razbudiv
[just woke up]
- 7 **Maria:** dobro utro
[good morning]
- 8 **Viktorija:** kako pomina na svadba
[how was the wedding]
- 9 ?
- 10 10:35 **Maria:** imase losa rakija
[there was bad rakija²¹]
- 11 ama ko na svadba

²⁰ As in other cultures, in Macedonia drinking coffee is a common social activity. As stated in Encyclopedia Britannica (2013) the introduction of coffee and coffee drinking to Europe provided "a much-needed focus for the social activities."

²¹ "Rakija" is a hard alcoholic drink Macedonians usually drink at weddings and gatherings.

- [but a typical wedding]
- 12 poigravme
[we danced a bit]
- 13 pomuabetivme
[we chatted a bit]
- 14 **Viktorija:** auuu
[auuu]
- 15 **Maria:** se vrativme vo sk prodolzivme vo dammar
[we came back to Skopje and continued the party in Damar]
- 16 me zezaa deka piev samo voda
[people were making fun of me for drinking only water]
- 17 10:36 i gorjan me zezase za preramkata od prslukot so resi da se pokazi
[and Gorjan made fun of my bra strap which decided to show]
- 18 **Viktorija:** ahaha
[ahaha]
- 19 ako prolet e
[it's ok, it's spring]
- 20 vreme e
[it's time]
- 21 :-)

(MariaCh 3)

After the exchange of opening greetings where Maria aligns with Viktorija's playfulness when she mistypes the word "hello" and turns it into "yellow," Maria's initial question "wazzup?" (What's up?) announces that the TBC will be aimed at catching up. To use Goffman's notion, "wazzup" defines the situation. After stating she just woke up, Viktorija asks Maria to share her impressions about a wedding. The *shared knowledge* between close friends, i.e., Viktorija's prior knowledge that Maria was at a wedding, is important in interactions since it shows that online TBC can be used as a tool for

maintaining and strengthening an already close relationship by keeping up with a friend's current activities. Maria's description presents an ordinary wedding at which people drink, chat, and dance, with no interesting details. Perhaps realizing that nothing was special about the wedding, she decides to give the story a twist and to talk about how friends made fun of her bra strap. Viktorija aligns with the mood and evaluates the behavior as expected for the spring season when nature awakens.

The second excerpt is another example of the way social purpose can be performed. Here Clark initiated TBC after having accepted Bjork's friend request and adding her contact to his LinkedIn²², the world's largest professional network. The existence of various online networks provides opportunities to connect with the same people in various ways and build layers of relationships with them. In this excerpt, Clark knows Bjork professionally and interacts face-to-face with her, but shows willingness to broaden the relationship by accepting her friend request on a virtual social network.

This TBC is an example of the non-existence of a personal purpose which directs interaction and of how the directionality and scaffolding of the interaction is spontaneously co-constructed. Neither Clark nor Bjork initiate the TBC with a prior personal purpose to express their dissatisfaction with the current political and economic conditions in the UK; however, as often happens, maintenance of social relationships may involve deep discussions about politics.

Excerpt 5: [An English TBC between Bjork and her new friend Clark. After exchanging information about accepting friend requests on LinkedIn and Clark's attempt

²² LinkedIn is a networking site for professionals in various fields. This site has been gaining an enormous value and popularity in the past ten years because it provides many opportunities to connect with potential employers, business clients or colleagues increase exponentially. For example, in 2012, LinkedIn reported there were more than 175 million registered users of the site, in more than 200 locations around the globe.

to learn some Macedonian, the directionality of the interaction switches to discussing the poor conditions for employment and child welfare in the UK.]:

- 1 [21/02/2011 00:34:15] **Clark:** Hey Bjork
- 2 [21/02/2011 00:34:32] **Bjork:** hey
- 3 [21/02/2011 00:34:40] **Clark:** I just added you on linked in
- 4 [21/02/2011 00:34:46] **Bjork:** I was fiddling with the profile
- 5 [21/02/2011 00:34:53] **Bjork:** and searched for some contacts
- 6 [21/02/2011 00:34:54] **Clark:** Kako ste?²³
- 7 [21/02/2011 00:35:01] **Bjork:** Dobro sum
- 8 [21/02/2011 00:35:03] **Bjork:** Kako si?
- 9 [21/02/2011 00:35:14] **Bjork:** kako ste is too polite
- 10 [21/02/2011 00:35:17] **Clark:** I don't know the
- 11 [21/02/2011 00:35:29] **Bjork:** well not too polite, but a bit more formal
- 12 [21/02/2011 00:35:33] **Clark:** Word For hungover
- 13 [21/02/2011 00:35:40] **Bjork:** mamurlak
- 14 [21/02/2011 00:35:47] **Clark:** I think I got that from Slovenia
- 15 [21/02/2011 00:36:21] **Clark:** Part of me wanted to say kak de la
- 16 [21/02/2011 00:37:06] **Clark:** I will try to remember to give you a recommendation on LinkedIn
- 17 [21/02/2011 00:37:17] **Bjork:** oh that would be amazing
- 18 [21/02/2011 00:37:31] **Bjork:** by the way kako ste is correct
- 19 [21/02/2011 00:37:39] **Bjork:** but it's like vous in french
- 20 [21/02/2011 00:37:42] **Clark:** Ok
- 21 [21/02/2011 00:37:43] **Bjork:** vous vs. tu
- 22 [21/02/2011 00:38:02] **Clark:** I struggle with Slavic languages - so many similarities
- 23 [21/02/2011 00:38:04] **Bjork:** it's in plural and kako si is in singular
- 24 [21/02/2011 00:38:22] **Bjork:** that's true
- 25 [21/02/2011 00:38:37] **Bjork:** macedonian and bulgarian are incredibly similar

²³ The Macedonian question “Kako ste? is a polite way of asking somebody “How are you?” while “Kako si?” is a more informal way of addressing someone. The answer “Dobro sum” means “I am doing well.”

- 26 [21/02/2011 00:38:53] **Bjork**: some even say it's the same language
 27 [21/02/2011 00:38:56] **Clark**: How is the job hunt?
 28 [21/02/2011 00:39:01] **Bjork**: although that's very politically controversial
 29 [21/02/2011 00:39:14] **Bjork**: the job hunt is hopeless

(BjorkCh 5)

After the opening greetings, Clark informs Bjork that he accepted her contact request on LinkedIn. Although it is reasonable to expect that the TBC will develop in the direction of a further discussion about professional issues posted on LinkedIn, that does not happen. The social purpose of this TBC and the unclear directionality is announced by the question in line 6 with which Clark asks Bjork about her well-being. The fact that Clark, a citizen of the UK, poses the question in Macedonian triggers the opening of a new thread, in which Bjork and Clark discuss the meaning of certain linguistic forms in Macedonian. In line 27, there is a topic shift announced by Clark's turn in which he asks Bjork about the job hunt. This question, "How is the job hunt?" defines the situation because from this turn until the end of the TBC, lasting 46 minutes, Bjork and Clark discuss the politics of the Labour party, unemployment, and welfare in the UK, both showing dissatisfaction and frustration with the current state of affairs in the UK.

The third and final example of how interactants perform TBC for social purposes is a text-based chat sent by Rebecca in which she catches up with an old friend, Benjamin. Judging from the structure and content of the TBC, the directionality of the interaction was unclear and neither of the interactants seemed to have had a personal purpose in mind to initiate this chat; however, the bonding while sharing emotions of solitude marked the social purpose of the interaction. Instead of just asking for information or

favor, they aligned, opened up, and moved spontaneously towards discussing the feeling of solitude.

Excerpt 6: [An English TBC between Rebecca and Benjamin. Rebecca is Macedonian, currently living and working in Macedonia. She attended a high school in the US, where she met Benjamin, who became her class mate. They occasionally chat online and even less frequently interact face-to-face, which explains the need for catching up.]:

1 6:17 PM **Benjamin**: hey. (long time no chat) how are things going?

2 6:18 PM **Rebecca**: hey ben! how are you?

3 where are you right now?

4 **Benjamin**: in chicago

5 6:19 PM my first year as a prof at northwestern

6 it's neither snowing nor raining today :)

7 **Rebecca**: ha ha

8 are you enjoying your job?

9 6:20 PM **Benjamin**: yeah. teaching is fun but takes a lot of time. research is ok. finding a new group of friends and a social life is what I miss most from california

10 6:21 PM **Rebecca**: yes, that's sure to be tough

11 a lot of people have that problem in the US

12 they seem somewhat distant and detached because of all the constant moving though that's a rough generalization

13 6:22 PM **Benjamin**: I haven't thought about how it affects people

14 but I miss how my friends at [name of university] lived either one floor down or on the other side of campus

15 6:24 PM we had lots of parties and if I was not in the mood to cook, I'd go down one floor and see if my friend Gaurav was in the mood...

16 plus hiking (no hiking here)

17 **Rebecca**: solitude makes me awfully depressed

18 I do everything to avoid it

19 6:25 PM I think if I'd have to live somewhere where I had no friends I'd just flip out

20 flip out? or just flip

21 sounds fishy

22 **Benjamin:** "go crazy" is slightly more common

23 **Rebecca:** one of the reasons I've stayed here is because I can't stand being alone

24 6:26 PM it affects my work, too, and I get eating disorders
it's a shitty situation. I wish I wasn't like that

25 I wouldn't have to live where I live

(RebeccaCh 2)

After the conventionalized opening with greetings (“hey”), asking for well-being, and checking for location, Benjamin provides an update about his new job. In line 9, while describing his current engagements, Benjamin mentions one of his concerns (“finding a new group of friends and a social life is what I miss most from california”). This defines the situation, i.e., it is what Rebecca picks up on as relevant information and it marks a point which gives directionality to the further interaction. While Benjamin provides details about exactly what he misses most in his current job and location, Rebecca opens up to explain how the feeling of solitude affects her also.

The last three excerpts above showed how interaction was initiated without an interactant’s specific personal purpose. More importantly, all excerpts presented in the sections on interactant’s personal purpose and social purpose showed how the purpose became externalized, i.e., how directionality for maintenance of social relationship was an achievement of both speakers. Analysis also showed that there was no strict pattern of how an interactant chose a point which would define the situation. Some interactants were more experienced in adapting their interactional communicative behavior (e.g., Ema

and Rebecca), while others appeared to rely more on prior communicative strategies and tried to routinize their interactions with new co-chatters (e.g., Bianca and Ager).

5.1.4 Interactants' Perceptions of Purpose

Going beyond the analysis of the text shown on screens and establishing offline face-to-face contact with the interactants is an essential step for a more comprehensive study of CMC. Such contact allows the researcher to arrive at more reliable conclusions through more accurate triangulation of data. For this purpose, all participants were asked questions during the interviews, which addressed the issue of purpose. Specifically, when asked whether they initiated text-based chat with a particular purpose in mind, the participants mentioned professional purposes (Bianca and Ager), underlying issues (Ema and Maria), and non-intrusive ways of maintaining social relationships (Maria, Lola) as guiding purposes for their online interactions.

As participants explained, purpose, if present, directed the interaction. In Bjork's, Bianca's, and Rebecca's case purpose was always present, and it intervened with the contextual existence of a whole process of interacting with a certain person for a longer period.

Excerpt 7

Bianca: I think in all of my online activities there got to be a purpose in mind. I wouldn't be spending time online if there's no purpose, NOW the purpose doesn't have to be professionally significant, but there's got to be an underlying issue.

(BiancaInt 1)

As reported in my interviews, Rebecca often initiated TBC for a personal purpose. For her, purpose, whether private or professional, controlled the interaction, and it

depended on the person, more specifically, on how close the interactants were. If they were very close, then the purpose of sharing intimate issues would dominate the TBC, while with colleagues the social purpose of catching up might have been present in the TBC; however, the main purpose for the interaction with those people would be obtaining the pursued work-related information.

Similarly to Bianca's idea of "underlying issue," for Ema (EmaInt 1) and Maria (MariaInt 1), the usual purpose in online TBC was to comment on people's online statuses or on something people had posted on their online profiles and walls (a very common purpose among users of social networks is commenting on other peoples' public posts). When Ema wanted to maintain social relationships she usually "just wanted to say Hi." Maria called these purposeless online text-based interactions "chit-chats" with close friends and family. When she initiated TBC with purpose it was specifically to obtain information from people she rarely communicated with in person: "Sometimes I find that the chats are an indirect way of asking people; a non-intrusive way of asking for information" (MariaInt 1).

The data also showed that purpose is of dynamic nature and, as said earlier, it is accomplished through the dyadic co-constructive work of the interactants. This suggests that there is a causal connection between (1) the mental and emotional states of the people who initiate the chat, and (2) the interactant's personal or social purpose with the external world. This could be seen in some of the participants' views that the concept of purpose changed with time. For example, Bjork, Lola, and Maria, identified different purposes for online chatting which developed through time.

Bjork differentiated between what she called “coffee chat,” used for catching up with friends, which in this study is referred to as social purpose, and interaction with a clear point. When there was no clear purpose, even if that was for maintaining social relationship, Bjork would get annoyed when “people contact [her] and they don’t state their purpose.” Usually “they say hi” and then she responded with “hi,” but she got “very impatient,” because she could not know what the point of that interaction was. On the other hand, she saw “killing time” as an important way of staying in touch with people who are important.” A valuable issue Bjork mentioned in the interview was that the change of interactional habits and purposes reflected changes in the use of social media for satisfying curiously-related needs:

Excerpt 8

Bjork: I think like that when there was no Facebook, I find that I used to chat a lot more. When there were no social networks, and the amount of time I spent actually chatting to somebody I see it as a waste of time—when I can just look at somebody’s profile in five minutes and then go away—it seems so on hand. It is a shame but on the other hand, I understand that my habits have changed with social media.

(BjorkInt 2)

Similarly to Bjork, the concept of purpose changed for Lola. She differentiated between “chatting for fun” and chatting “to obtain information” (LolaInt 1). For Lola, purposes differed depending on whether the interlocutors were local Macedonians or foreign friends. Her TBC changed in a way they, from longer chats “for fun,” became shorter and used for “practical reasons” such as obtaining some needed information from her Macedonian friends.

The connection between interactant's personal or social purpose with the external world can be illustrated with Ager's perception of purpose. For Ager, who works online from home as a freelancer, TBC is an integral part of his work. When asked whether he had a specific purpose in mind when interacting through TBC, Ager stated he did, since he works online and his Gmail account is actually his "office." He defined the purpose as a combination of personal purpose and a social purpose which develops spontaneously into something "mundane."

Excerpt 9

Mira: My first question for you would be when you start a chat do you have a particular purpose in mind?

Ager: Hmm usually yeah. Even most of the time, I guess, because my gmail account—and that's how I chat by Gtalk—my gmail account is my office, cause it I'm a freelancer and that's what I do. I sit in front of a computer all day long and also my colleagues are on Gtalk, so it's usually something about work. And I also have a few friends there, but it's never just to type—just for chat sake—it's always to ask something and then often times the chat would, I guess, develop into something more mundane that has nothing to do with anything at all just regular conversation, but it's usually to ask a question.

(AgerInt 2)

The co-construction of the purpose seems to be connected with the process of establishing an interactional routine when chatting with a particular person. The interactional routine, similarly to linguistic routine (see Hymes, 1962), is a recurrent sequence of communicative behavior, which can be conventional or idiosyncratic. The way purpose is realized may be obvious, such as in single-topic TBC, where one interactant requires information immediately in the opening and the other provides it, or the purpose may not be obvious because it is not concrete, but consists of layers of purposes covered in spontaneously co-constructed topics.

Interactional routines play a great part in coping with day-to-day situations. Interactions may get routinized and drawn from a standard repertoire of interactions with certain people. However, the recurrent sequences which an interactant may have drawn from a pool of previously accomplished interactions, may be new for a new co-chatter. Some interactional routines become persistent due to practical reasons of efficient exchange of information (Erickson, 1996), but others remain specific to the individual.

For example, Ager's and Bianca's interactional practices seemed to depend on the surrounding contextual factors such as whether they use online text-based chat differently with foreigners depending on which capacities they have known the interactant. Bianca appeared to show awareness of the process of developing an interactional routine with her mentee MMcD. For her, TBC is more efficient because it is a process of appropriation of interaction and her co-chatter knows "what he needs to tell" her in advance.

Excerpt 10

Bianca: It's been a process. So at first it wasn't that he wasn't able to answer them but he didn't have anything substantial to say. Right now he has lots to say; he actually INITIATES the responses before I ask a question. He kind of knows what he needs to tell me before I ask him.

(BiancaInt1)

Drawing upon Searle's (1988) notion of "intention-in-action," it can be said that regardless of how involved interactants are in their TBC, they have a sense of whether they are communicating their purpose successfully, or whether they are accomplishing that purpose only gradually as the TBC unfolds. It was noticed that although my participants opened their text-based chats with specific requests, their interlocutor—after responding to the requests—would change the content.

The notion of interactant's personal purpose, though it may seem ritualistic, should be understood as something that is not static. It can be changed on a local level within the immediate context of the TBC, but at the same time it depends to a great degree on interactional work transferred from the external world—previous face-to-face or other types of interaction, level of intimacy—in which both interactants have been involved. While achieving some purpose (even if it is “killing time”), interactants choose ways to position themselves in accordance with the defining online situation.

5.2 Situated Co-positioning in TBC

5.2.1 Definition of Situated Co-positioning

Drawing upon Goffman's notions of *definition of situation* and *presentation of self* (Goffman, 1959), I looked at the strategies my participants used to present themselves in a certain light, or more specifically to position themselves in the specific situated online interactions. Positioning, or better put, *co-positioning*, is a product of situational influences. We play some roles in everyday communication such as a role of a teacher, colleague, intimate friend, etc. But we align those roles, which derive from our established relationship with our interactants, in accordance to certain momentary situational influences. Aligning with others is a social activity. Drawing upon scholars' views such as those of Gee (1992) and Watson-Gegeo (2004), Atkinson, Churchill, Nishino, and Okada (2007), defined *alignment* as “the complex means by which human beings effect coordinated interaction, and maintain that interaction in dynamically adaptive ways” (p.171). I explored how the social roles interactants are recognized by were adjusted as such in online text-based interaction.

The *definition of situation* (Goffman, 1959) is useful to address the ways interactants acted to accomplish what they intended through online text-based interaction. According to Goffman, the “definition of situation” is a social situation in which interactants, being in each other’s immediate presence, present impressions based on the kind of self they want to be seen as, and they believe in that impression fostered by their own performance. While interactants co-position themselves, degraded situations may occur, in which interactants try to save face. Goffman (1959) claimed that when the accepted definition of the situation has been degraded—when individuals get embarrassed in social situations—some of the actors may pretend that nothing unexpected has happened, if they find this strategy gainful to themselves. Goffman acknowledged that this type of non-natural behavior—in the sense that people may pretend—occurs at every level of social organization. In other words, people assist one another in maintaining face while performing social action. Maintaining or *saving face* is understood as not being disrespectful to others in public communication, and making an effort or taking actions to prevent conflicts which may impede the interaction. Protecting oneself against loss of face is a central issue according to Brown (1977), which “swamps the importance of the tangible issues at stake and generates intense conflicts that can impede progress toward agreement and increase substantially the costs of conflict resolution” (p. 275).

Combining the notions of *saving face* and Goffman’s notions of *definition of situation* and *immediate presence*, I see social interaction in TBC revolving around the ways interactants, being in each other’s immediate but virtual presence, present

impressions to one another and try to co-position themselves simultaneously as the TBC develops.²⁴

The term *situated co-positioning*, in this work, indicates a reconceptualization of the notion of identity as a joint performance of social action. Such reconceptualization is possible only if conversation is seen to be a negotiable form of social interaction, the products of which are also social. For instance, what may seem unacceptable for some external observers and defined as a rude interaction can frequently be observed and practiced in text-based chat environments, yet not considered rude to the engaged interactants. In such cases, the conventions are dependent on *in situ* influences. There are cases when one decides on the direction and termination of TBC, while the other accepts the direction along the way and seems not to be offended when the other one terminates the interaction after achieving the personal purpose. As discussed in the previous section on purposes, what has been said in the TBC evolves and is shaped as the conversation develops in accordance with certain situational influences. Those situational influences are a combination of the discursive practices of the other chatters to which one has to adjust, the technological factors (e.g., stability and strength of the Internet connection), spatial factors (e.g., whether the PC is shared or personal, the geographical location at the time of chat), temporal factors (e.g., time zones and frames, deadlines), and existential factors (e.g., whether one needs to eat or work simultaneously while chatting, whether one really wants to chat, or whether one is sick). The key objective of a discursive

²⁴ It is important to clarify here that in TBC, the factor *immediate presence* is disputable, because interlocutors are not all present and constantly available at the same time while the interaction develops. For example, one can attend to messages being sent to him/her at their own convenience and availability. However, in most cases interactants are simultaneously present and they ask and respond timely.

practice approach is to develop theories and techniques relevant to the analysis of meaningful behavior in actual situations.

Our discursive practices are driven by our social identities as members of groups, communities of practice, institutions we work for, etc. Therefore discursive practices should be approached from various perspectives--as part of our personal and professional discourses, as context-bound, i.e., the social reality may be shaped by power relations, and as entities whose meaning is not static but negotiated in interaction. This explains why participants need to differentiate oneself from others and act in a specific way as they attempt to position themselves while performing the role they have in their professional lives as teacher, advisor, translator, or writer, but diverge when they do something specific (e.g., deliberately avoid emoticons, use different discourse than the expected one for their status, or try to control the directionality of the chat by accomplishing their own purpose.). In other words, their identities emerge through the processes of social interaction not as fixed end-products who may bring in previously assumed roles, but as individuals who position and re-position themselves through the various online interactions in which they participate. For instance, when an interactant poses a question or requests information to satisfy a personal purpose, that interactant seems to expect an answer depending on the positions available within his/her own and others' discursive practices, especially when the interactants know one another well. However, the participants also create and recreate themselves in response to the evolving co-positioning of those with whom they are interacting.

5.2.2 Situated Co-positing and Power

The hybrid nature of CMC, let alone TBC, has important implications for the social effects of interaction accomplished online in general and power relations among interactants in particular. Two opposing positions regarding the nature of power relations and technology have been taken in literature. Those who see CMC as liberating have argued that CMC facilitates status equalization, mutual support, and digital democracy. In other words, CMC can serve to reduce the social barriers to communication (e.g., Kiesler & Sproull, 1992; Weisband, 1992) and to cultivate diversity (Matsuda, 2002) and democracy in collective activities. The other view—drawing on Foucault’s metaphor of the *panopticon*—has emphasized that CMC has the potential to reinforce power relations, which implies that the informational and social properties of CMC increase control and surveillance apart from equality²⁵. According to Foucault (1980, 1983), power relations should not be considered as merely hierarchical and should be approached as social phenomena possessing plurality and fluidity. (For further information on this tension see Spears, Lea, Corneliussen, Postmes & Ter Haar, 2002). Thus, TBC can be understood as both broadening the scope of interaction and the different aspects can reduce the inequality of power between participants and the researcher.

In TBC, power relations are shaped by social interactional environment, i.e., the social influences such as time, deadlines, roles we play in the professional life, and changes of one’s status (e.g., from a former student to a friend or from a girlfriend to an acquaintance). The capacity to respond to and align with the actions of others online provides equal power relations. By examining discourse in TBC affecting other

²⁵ Power played a significant role even in the interaction between me and my participants. Because participants had full control over which TBCs they submitted to the study, they alone decided which segments of their personal lives they revealed

interactants' behavior, it was concluded that the equalization of power for most of the participants was accomplished through exchange in a personally chosen comfort space for communication in which participants' assumed roles could be adjusted. True, instances of control were found in some TBCs, but the ritualization present in those instances was also found to enhance social activities which resulted from interactants' past experiences, educational choices, and personal worldviews. In this study, TBC is therefore seen as a mode of communication which lessens the constraints of power relations. This occurs because people, some more skillful and communication-wise, some less, try to adjust to the definition of situation of the co-chatters while constructing their own personal perceptions of a situation.

5.2.3 Examples of Situated Co-positioning in TBC

Below are four excerpts which exemplify how two of the seven participants (Bianca and Ager)²⁶ co-position differently with different interactants, because the *in situ* social situations require that from the interactants. The chosen TBCs, which are representative of more TBCs in the corpus, are similar because they contain problem-solving sequences, and they contrast interactions between each of the participants and a friend, and each of the participants and a colleague. Using conversation analysis, I treated problem-solving as an interactional achievement of participation in interaction.

²⁶ Due to space limitations only three out of seven participants' co-positioning was discussed here. This should be seen as a factor which weakens the evidence since the situational factors discussed in the TBC of these three participants are present, more or less, in other participants' interactions.

5.2.3.1 Bianca

In the first two examples, situational influences such as Bianca's educational choices and professional practices shape her co-positioning. The social meaning of what has been said, i.e., of the discursive practices, will be shown to depend on the co-positioning of interlocutors. Through these examples, I will show that the perception that an interactant assumes a single role, not different roles, is static and limiting.

Bianca co-positions differently with a mentee and a colleague (MMcD), and with a former student, Gabril, who is a close friend of hers today. Bianca's situated co-positioning, besides the different professional relationship she has with MMcD and Gabril, and her professional discursive practices, also depends on her ability to accommodate. Accommodation, as explained earlier, is approached as a social activity in its own right.

In Excerpt 11 below, Bianca is concerned with a situation in which a student is not getting a letter of recommendation from a teacher named Ivo. Since both she and MMcD are this student's counselors, they negotiate the steps they should take with Ivo and obtain the letter.

Excerpt 11: [Bianca and her mentee, MMcD, try to negotiate the best way to push a colleague, Ivo, to write a letter of recommendation. Bianca and MMcD also need help from Tom, the director and one of the co-owners of the private school where Bianca and MMcD work]:

19 **Bianca:** Do you think that he'll eventually write it? Do you think that he
needs a reminder for that?

20 or?

21 **MMcD:** My rapport with Ivo, I think, is decent. But he's a bit of a Yes Man, so I'm not so certain.

22 **Bianca:** Yes, he is. Sadly.

23 9:07 PM **MMcD:** I do think that he'll write it. I just don't know about the timeframe and the amount of feedback he'll take before submitting it.

24 **Bianca:** Push comes to shove, see if you can talk to Tom, if he's back, about speeding things up.

25 **MMcD:** Yes, Tom is back.

26 **Bianca:** Ok, so see if you can 'utilize' his assistance.

In lines 27-36 MMcD requests information about the relationship between Ivo and Tom and Bianca explains they are good high school friends.

37 9:12 PM **MMcD:** OK. So you suggest that I first go through Tom rather than directly? Or go first and then use Tom as support?

38 9:13 PM It's also sad that we're gchatting [*sic*] strategies about getting teacher recs in order.

39 It shouldn't be necessary.

40 **Bianca:** No, first him. Then Tom.

41 **MMcD:** Yes, I agree.

(BiancaCh 4)

Bianca in all her chats with MMcD plays the assumed role of an advisor and mentor—that is someone who is at a higher hierarchal and professional level than MMcD and who trained MMcD for his new job of an overseas counselor. Bianca's positioning changes during the interaction in accordance with the situational influences; from someone who always has a solution for others to deal with a problem, here she is the one who needs suggestions on how to deal with a problem. It is usually MMcD who asks Bianca for advice and accepts the advice without hesitation—analyzed in the other TBCs Bianca sent—but this time it is Bianca who asks for advice. After realizing that MMcD

shares her opinion that this teacher, Ivo, is a “Yes Man,” she changes the tone and decides to observe institutional hierarchy again (something she does in other of her TBCs). Thus, she uses the expression “push comes to shove,” which means that if necessary, they should first turn to the director of the school, Tom, who can use his influence to assist them. MMcD does not immediately accept the instructions, but tries to find out more about the relationship between Ivo and the school director, Tom. The understanding that teachers should not be getting other teachers’ records in this pushy way—by using institutional power and hierarchical rights—is the point of agreement. It takes 15 lines, from line 26 to 41, for MMcD to agree upon the steps he should take.

The co-positioning may depend on situational factors such as the change of interactant’s confidence, i.e., various forms of positioning develop through time. In the interview, Bianca explained the change of her relationship with MMcD from one in which there was “a lot of hand holding and a lot of guidance,” since she “had to play” the role of a supervisor when MMcD started working in their school, to a relationship in which they are equal interactional partners “because of the nature of the work” they do as overseas counselors and because MMcD gained confidence and capability to handle responsibilities on his own (BiancaInt1).

Excerpt 16 also addresses the issue of relationship change, or, how the same person, Bianca, co-positions herself differently with another interactant than she does with MMcD. Gabriel, the interactant in this excerpt, used to be her student. When asked about her relationship with Gabriel, Bianca explained it as follows, “Gabriel was my student throughout his high school days. I was also his guidance counselor and college adviser. Today he is a friend.” Gabriel graduated from the high school, and moved to the

US, which led to him becoming a friend rather than a former student, the assumed role he used to play with Bianca as his teacher. The TBC is mainly about Gabril's new experiences after moving and studying in the US, while the excerpt below focuses on the same people in charge mentioned in the previous TBC with MMcD.

Therefore, Bianca co-positions herself in accordance with the situational factors of 1) the behavior of the third party, who is the subject topic of the text-based chat, and 2) Gabril's status of a former student.

Excerpt 12: [A Macedonian TBC between Bianca and Gabril in which they evaluate the behavior of their director, Tom.]:

225 [15.05.2011 19:42:29] **Gabril:** nego tom e mnogu bezobrazen

[Nevertheless, Tom is very rude]

226 [15.05.2011 19:42:38] **Gabril:** siri muabeti po skopje deka sani bila vo depresija

[He goes around town and gossips how Sani was depressed]

227 [15.05.2011 19:42:42] **Bianca:** morno

[That's morbid]

228 [15.05.2011 19:42:43] **Gabril:** zatoa sto ja nemalo nejze vo vesnik

[Just because she didn't appear in the newspaper]

229 [15.05.2011 19:42:46] **Bianca:** moron

[Moron]

230 [15.05.2011 19:42:54] **Gabril:** taka me nervira znaci

[He really gets on my nerves]

231 [15.05.2011 19:42:58] **Bianca:** ja imashe vo tea moderna.

[But she appeared in Tea Moderna²⁷]

232 [15.05.2011 19:43:02] **Bianca:** sto nervira i toj.

[He can really be annoying]

²⁷ Tea Moderna is a local and very popular Macedonian magazine.

233 [15.05.2011 19:43:10] **Bianca:** znaci, ponekogash e covek da go tepa.

[Really, sometimes he deserves spanking]

(BiancaCh 9)

In this excerpt, Gabril complains about one of the high school principals, Tom, the same person who was mentioned in the previous chat, and to whom Bianca and MMcD would turn to for top-down institutional help. Gabril went to the high school where Bianca worked as a teacher and student counselor, and they both know Tom well. Gabril expresses a negative judgment about the school director and provides justification for that judgment (“Nevertheless, Tom is very rude”). Bianca takes up the judgment by giving it a stronger illocutionary force and assessment of the situation as “morbid,” and of Tom as a “moron.” Although Bianca is the teacher who would be expected to control the lexis used when evaluating her colleagues in front of students, she uses more critical evaluations than Gabril. The way she describes colleagues with Gabril is more offensive than with MMcD, with whom she was professional but informal. Bianca agrees with Gabril that this person’s acts are annoying and co-positions herself in accordance with Gabril’s new role as a friend who graduated from the high school where she once worked, who has moved to the US, and who now feels confident in criticizing his former school officials from distance. The freedom she feels to express criticism using harsh words with a former student positions her differently from her actions in Excerpt 15 with MMcD.

The positioning Bianca believed she was shaping in online TBC was one without imposed hierarchy, and if addressing looked hierarchical that was not primarily due to power relations, but in her view, it was “mechanical and almost automatic” behavior. Excerpt 13 presents data from an email Bianca sent after the interview in which she further elaborated some issues discussed.

Excerpt 13

Bianca: I am not aware of a hierarchy, if we can call it such. Perhaps because I may be on the receiving end of it, so to speak, being the teacher/adviser/older one. In face-to-face conversation, I make a joke about 'the royal we'; but in chats, I rarely pay attention to it, mostly because (at least with Gabril), most of our conversations take place via chats these days (due to their studies abroad) that I do not want to waste their time spinning jokes about how I am myself and they are themselves, and they are my equals. I think their use of the polite second person address form as far as I am concerned, as with most adults in their lives, who were their teachers, is mechanical and almost automatic.

(BiancaEmail2)

Bianca has been conceived by her co-chatters as an advice provider, who rationalizes such positioning as someone who feels that people “seek her out” when in need, but she also accepts the fact that people do not necessarily do what she tells them. People can become equal interactional partners who just need “gentle push” (BiancaInt 1).

Both Bianca and Ager sent TBC that were socially similar in regard to how they co-positioned with colleagues and tried to solve work-related problems as well as how they handled those “trouble sequences” (see Schegloff, 2007).

5.2.3.2 Ager

In the next two excerpts, we can observe Ager’s co-positioning in problem-solving sequences with his boss and with his former girlfriend. When talking to his boss, as shown in excerpt 14, Ager tries to be rebellious at first, but later he becomes submissive and follows orders, while with his former girlfriend, who is a close friend now, he keeps on avoiding answers to her questions. Aleksandar, Ager’s boss, and Ager both work as interpreters and subtitlers, providing Macedonian subtitles for foreign TV shows. Ager learned the interpreting business from Aleksandar, and he is Ager’s “guru”

explaining that he will follow what the third party ordered, not Aleksandar's orders. Aleksandar reacts to this rejection with "laaa...", which means nothing in Macedonian, but may be a way for Aleksandar to express emotion. Apparently Ager, who knows him very well, interprets that expression as a sign of annoyance, and accepts that it was the third party's fault. In line 46, he agrees with Aleksandar, by saying "never mind, they made the mess." Although Ager initially indicates that he intends to correct the problem as the client wishes ('No, I'll do as they ordered.'), he finally says 'OK,' indicating submission to Aleksandar's wishes. Aleksandar sounds even bossier in line 47 accusing Ager that he has the intention to put the rest of the colleagues in trouble by accepting what the third party/the clients requires. Ager finally agrees that he will do what Aleksandar expects from him out of solidarity ("Aha solidarity"). From a CA point of view, this example confirms Pomerantz's work (1984) on agreements and disagreements. Frequently disagreements are weak forms and they are actually partial agreements/partial disagreements (p. 65). Another valuable point, which may contribute to the CA research is that the agreements are often prefaced with short phrases, in this case "never mind" and "aha."

Ager emphasized the fact that he perceived Alexander as someone he owed his professional life to, so being very direct with one another was the accepted norm of their interaction:

Ager: He is the person I owe my professional life to and he brought me into subtitling first when I was really really young, so he's the reason why I'm not dirt poor forever. He's my guru basically...He is like a father to me basically. He has the freedom to swear at me if he wants...but it's always teaching and it's how I wanted

(AgerInt 1)

Excerpt 15 is from a TBC between Ager and his former girlfriend Widia. The difference in co-positioning can be noticed in the different way of handling a problem-solving sequence; that is, by demonstrating a tendency to avoid answers while creating unexpected adjacency pairs. Ager's co-positioning is based on his presumed knowledge of the effects of the roles they both play in their everyday interactions as former romantic partners. Specifically, the co-positioning in this specific situation was directed by three situational factors: 1) the way Ager perceives Widia; 2) the face-threatening nature of the topic, and 3) the presumed experience of interacting with the same person in similar situations.

Excerpt 15: [Ager and his former girlfriend are catching up. He was in Macedonia and she was in Japan when this TBC occurred. After having checked personal location, having talked about movies and after Ager has reported that he broke up with his then-girlfriend, they start this sequence.]:²⁸

- 102 **Widia:** :))))))
 103 ама ти си ми убаво расположен
 [Oh you are in a good mood]
 104 заљубен си?
 [Are you in love?]
- 105 **Ager:** cek, sega ke se javam na nekoj normalen da shetam vo park
 [Let me call someone normal to walk in the park]
 106 ne
 [No]
- 107 **Widia:** со кого искачаш/шеташ/дружиш?
 [Who are you going out with?]
- 108 16:11 **Ager:** ne
 [No]
 109 rabota
 [Work]

²⁸ In this TBC interactants mash the Latin and the Cyrillic alphabet. Even the multiple smiley, specifically “the big grin” :D, was transferred in Cyrillic alphabet and changed into :Д

110 **Widia:** добро, во слободно време?
 [Ok, but in free time?]
 111 кој ме замени?,,
 [Who replaced me?]
 112 ајде, кажи ми!!
 [C'mon tell me!!]
 113 повреди ме!!!!
 [Hurt me!!!]
 114 :ДДДДДДДДДДДДДД
 [sic – a multiple smiley in Cyrillic alphabet]
 115 се шалаааааааааааам
 [I'm jokiіііііііііііing]
 116 ама ме интересира кој ме замени?
 [but I'm curious who replaced me?]
 117 јес да ја **незаменлива** сум!!!
 [although I am irreplaceable!!!]

(AgerCh 7)

Widia starts the sequence by giving a compliment to Ager on his mood, immediately following the compliment with a face-threatening act in the form of an intimate question, asking whether he is in love again. He avoids the question by postponing the answer and saying he should call someone “normal” for a walk in the park. The use of the word “normal” may be seen as offensive, especially by Widia, since it implies that Ager would rather spend time with someone who enjoys the weather outside then stay inside, spending time on chatting. He interrupts the adjacency pair and instead of answering whether he is in love he expresses a wish to walk in the park at that particular moment. However, one line later (line 106), Ager provides a brief negative answer that he is not in love, after which Widia takes the floor and starts insistently to “pursue response” to the same question, to use CA terminology. The way she does this is by clarifying the question first, then using imperative forms and multiple exclamation marks. Interestingly, she ends her turn of eight lines emphasizing that she is joking,

adding a multiple smiley. According to conversation analysts (e.g., Pomerantz, 1984), the success of such pursuits “lies in whether the recipients subsequently voice their agreements and disagreements to the other speakers’ assertions” (p. 153). In relation to this, Ager seems to agree with what Widia mentions in lines 115-117. As explained by Ager in the interview, one of the roles Widia plays in the interaction is that of an attention seeker, and Ager responds by co-positioning himself so as to refuse attention, evading the question and trying to divert her attention. While Widia is expressive in her use of emoticons and punctuation marks, Ager’s distance can be identified by the sharp negations and nonexistence of any affective language. He seems to know which interactional strategy to use to divert Widia’s attention and avoid providing a pursued answer:

Excerpt 16

Ager: This is one of her other roles (.) where she pretends to be the most important thing on Earth and we still do this and she would start a chat with “You missed me right?” and stuff like that. This is another one of her rants like that “I’m irreplaceable and all that”

(AgerInt 2)

Ager co-positions differently with two demanding people--one demands solidarity at work, which Ager accepts, the other demands attention which Ager rejects to provide. Drawing on Brown and Levinson (1987), Ager’s examples show the imbalance of power between interlocutors that is normally derived from the situation, the players, or the level of shared knowledge, and I would add that it also depends on the level of knowing which exact interactional strategy will help preserving face with a certain interactant.

Bianca’s and Ager’s co-positioning is different with their co-chatters in terms of the discursive practices shown through linguistic choices, emoticons, and punctuation

while they simultaneously reverse and restore their position in accordance to the *in situ* conditions. In terms of social action accomplished through situated co-positioning, Bianca performed social action of providing people with advice and encouragement since they sought that from her. Ager performed a social action by maintaining solidarity while solving a professional problem and preventing possible loss of his co-chatter's face, as well as a social action of protecting his own face with a person he knows well, a former girlfriend. All participants appeared to have had different sense of how they are positioned in the world, and then, seeing the world from the perspective of one so positioned, they decided to commit and use different strategies to maintain social interaction. Bianca is positioned in the world of advice givers, but negotiates her position differently with professors and students. Ager is positioned in the world of power-relations as being submissive to his guru and being overbearing with an ex-girlfriend.

To conclude, data analysis has indicated that any version of what interactants initially take to be their personal purpose of a text-based chat is always open to further negotiation and to their situated co-positioning as to what the actual social action is. The co-positioning is a mix of ready-made strategies based on the presumed experience of the interactant, on extended interaction with other people (perhaps including the interactant), and on the competencies of both interactants for negotiation, as those competencies appear in a bottom-up way in the scaffolding of the *in situ* interaction.

CHAPTER 6. CO-CONSTRUCTING PHATIC COMMUNION THROUGH APPRAISAL, EMOTICONS, AND TOPIC CHOICE

This final results chapter, first, defines *phatic communion* and then explains how this phenomenon is co-constructed through expressing attitude, as one of the appraisal systems in SFL, as well as through using extralinguistic items and topics chosen by the interactants. This chapter presents quantitative data about the frequency of attitude phrases interactants used. Specifically, phrases of affect, judgment, and appreciation phrases used in both English and Macedonian were counted and discussed. The chapter also presents a cross-linguistic analysis of the individual patterns interactants used for expressing the submodes of attitude, supported with participants' views on the use of these phrases expressed in our interviews.

6.1 Phatic Communion

6.1.1 Definition of Phatic Communion

Malinowski recognized phatic talk to be a form of action with the aim "to establish bonds of personal union between people brought together by the mere need of companionship" (p. 151). *Phatic communion* as defined by Malinowski (1923) is a type of speech "in which ties of union are created by a mere exchange of words" (p.315). Even though phatic talk "may not serve any purpose of communicating ideas, phatic communion is functional in defusing the threat of taciturnity" (p. 150). Participation in

any activity means using language to achieve social action. Lyons (1968, p. 417) modified the term “phatic communion,” saying “it serves to establish and maintain a feeling of social solidarity and well-being.” With the constant renewal of interest in reconceptualizing the functions of language, the investigation of phenomena such as *phatic communion* is of increasing relevance. With this study, I will contribute to the view that phatic communion is not achieved only by “mere exchange of words,” but that it also dwells in the extralinguistic elements and the sharing of individual mental, temporal, and existential contexts. And, importantly, phatic communion depends on the ability to manage interpersonal relations while simultaneously adapting to the discussed topics, as well as on the awareness of the particular usage of emoticons and appraisal subsystems. This ability is a product of various social, and cultural, as well as professional factors (e.g., upbringing, education, job-related pressure), while “awareness” refers to what one brings into an interaction and how one positions oneself, an issue that was discussed in the Chapter 5.

I am aware that it is difficult to separate individual from social phenomena. For example, Matusov’s (1998, p. 326) major criticism of the internalization model is that it is “ethnocentric - it privileges mastery of a solo activity as the crux of human development” and in its place he suggested a “participation model,” in which the focus is on the individual mastery of joint activity. Joint and solo activities mutually constitute each other and are “inseparable aspects of a sociocultural activity” (p. 327). By studying TBC, my aim is to discover whether the basic social function of a complex interactional behavior which includes phatic communion is realized through a detailed organization of interpersonal relationships in which interactants share their attitudes, identities/roles,

spatial (e.g. their location), and other contexts. The process of phatic communion provides interactants with the chance to inquire into the unknown details of the evolving roles they will be playing and adjusting in an interaction, which basically include the social identity and the momentary interests, moods, motivations, and purposes of the other interactant, or to use Goffman's words, interactants try to achieve the "working consensus" of the interaction (Goffman, 1959) through phatic communion.

6.2 Appraisal and Attitude

6.2.1 Definition of Appraisal and Attitude

In psychological theories of emotion, *appraisal* is defined as a quick evaluation of a situation with respect to one's well-being (Frijda, 1986; Lazarus, 1991). *Attitude* is one of the three appraisal systems and is specifically designed by the systemic functional linguists to address the interpersonal meanings. The three SFL appraisal systems are attitude (affect, judgment and appreciation), amplification (force and focus), and engagement (projection, modality, concession)²⁹. In this work I have focused only on the subsystem of *attitude*, and I have approached language as something that relates naturally to the semiotic environment—"that language is as it is because of what it has to do" (Halliday, 1973, p. 34). SFL theorists classify *attitude* as a system of appraisal addressing the evaluation of a situation in regard to personal emotion and behavior, and social norms. Specifically, attitude focuses on how speakers express feelings. In TBC as in any communication interactants express feelings. Text-based chat is a typed communication

²⁹ According to SFL theorists, *affect* refers to linguistic and extralinguistic resources for expressing interactants' feelings. *Judgement* concerns how speakers evaluate themselves and other people in terms of their social behavior in relation to some generally accepted and established moral and personal norms. *Appreciation* concerns the linguistic and social resources for expressing evaluations not of people but of objects, occurrences, and processes.

mode which at the same time is interactive, and through which interactants achieve social meanings. In other words, when people use text-based chat they do social action by co-constructing interpersonal meanings, the construal of which is in the focus of Appraisal Theory.

6.3 Co-constructing Phatic Communion Through Attitude

The linguistic and extralinguistic items interactants used to express the subsystem of attitude, i.e., affect, judgment, and appreciation, can be arranged across a range of grammatical structures (Martin, 2000; Martin & Rose, 2003, and Martin & White, 2005), but more importantly for my study, they are resources interactants jointly draw upon from their social knowledge in order to keep the interaction going. Some of the most common lexical and grammatical structures used both in English and Macedonian for expressing attitude include³⁰:

a. Adjectival (adj.+ PP or adj. + NP) used as a judgment phrase

[Bianca: Ch2.1 29] ...*Good* for Ivana...

b. Adverbial: Manner of Purpose (VP + adv. or adv.+ adj.) used as an appreciation phrase

[Ema: Ch2.1 63] ...traditional music *covered so nicely*...

c. Verbal (VP + NP) used as an appreciation phrase

[Kat: Ch3.1 38] ...so you *like* copenhagen? i have never been

[Bjork: Ch3.1 39] ...*i love it it's like some dreamy city light years ahead from where i live*...

³⁰ The classification comes from Martin and White (2005), while the examples come from my data.

The contribution of this study to Appraisal Theory is the discovery that interactants use not just linguistic but also extralinguistic features such as emoticons, eccentric spelling, multiple punctuation marks, and extended laughter to express attitude:

d. Emoticons

[Rebecca: Ch6.1 26]

Mil: ...знаењето е секундано...

[...knowledge is secondary...]

Rebecca: i momentalno :)

[...and it's momentary ☺...]

e. Multiple punctuation

[Bianca: Ch8.1 34-35]

Olja: Da vujna mi vo health documents shtiklirashe deka na bard ke jadam vegetarian food

[Yes, my aunt put a check mark in my health documents for bard that I'll eat vegetarian food]

Bianca: Yes!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

f. Extended laughter

[Bjork: Ch8.1 47-50]

Lidia: озбилна си???

[Are you serious???

Ахахахахахаха

[ahahahahahahha]

:))))))))))))))

Bjork: hahaha

6.3.1 Frequences of Attitude Phrases

The tables below present the frequencies of occurrence of phrases participants used to express judgment, affect, and appreciation in both English and Macedonian (Table 6.1), and the frequency of attitude phrases by language--English vs. Macedonian (Table 6.2). Table 6.3 presents the frequency of individual attitude phrases by language (English vs Macedonian) and Table 6.4 summarizes the varieties of words and phrases participants used to co-construct phatic communion through attitude. Each occurrence is counted out of the total number of utterances per participant. An utterance, as defined for the purposes of this study, usually consists of a single turn in TBC, typically a line long but sometimes more and is typed by one person. An example of a one-line utterance is: “Lola says: no problem.”

An example of a two-line utterance is: “Lola says: I am glad I can help, not many people
are interested in a country like Macedonia”

Table 6.1 presents the number of utterances each participant typed in his or her 10 text-based chats. Then, the numbers of the judgment, affect, and appreciation phrases per person are presented. The phrases can consist of words, extralinguistic elements or a combination of linguistic and extralinguistic elements. Finally, the frequencies of the specific phrases were measured by dividing the number of phrases with the grand total number of utterances (e.g., $37/844 \times 100$ is 4.38%) and the grand total of phrases expressing the attitude submodes was presented in percentages.

Table 6.1 Total Number of Utterances and Frequency of Attitude Phrases in All TBCs

Participant	Total number of utterances by participant	Affect Phrases	Judgment Phrases	Appreciation Phrases	Total Attitude phrases ^b
Bianca	844	26	37	76	16.4%
Ema	471	30	34	75	29.5%
Bjork	759	44	37	84	21.7%
Maria	306	24	49	24	18.6%
Rebecca	703	62	76	59	28%
Ager	503	39	28	48	22.8%
Lola	495	66	39	52	31.7%
Total ^a	4081	52.7%	43.8%	72.2%	168.7

Note. a. The percentages do not add up to 100% because the utterances analyzed come from various texts. b. The percentages do not add up to 100% because the utterances analyzed come from various texts.

Of all the submodes of attitude, the most frequent was appreciation in all TBCs (English and Macedonian). Of the total number of utterances of all the participants in this study 72.2% were used to express appreciation, 52.7% to express affect, and 43.8% to express judgment.

The results suggest that when the participants in this study engage in text-based chat, they most often express positive and negative evaluations of objects, events, and processes. To quote White (2001, p. 1), “the most obvious values of appreciation are concerned with what is traditionally known as aesthetics, with positive or negative assessments of the form, appearance, construction, presentation or impact of objects and entities.” The high percentage of attitude phrases can be explained by the fact that my participants belong to a community of practice shaped by their similar educational and aesthetics choices and similar environmental factors. For example, in every text-based chat that is leisure-related they talked about concerts or bands they had watched or were

planning to watch. They respect the same type of non-commercial bands from the independent music scene such as Tindersticks, Radiohead, Interpol etc. Likewise, they all studied linguistics and literature and were exposed to reading the same literary works and translating similar literary genres; in these ways and others, they have been exposed to the same aesthetic values and enjoy engaging in discussions about specific bands, TV shows, movies, poetry, and politically-engaged art. All of them have had experience teaching English to Macedonians and five of the participants have pursued their careers in education, translation, and literature; therefore, the high percentage of appreciation phrases used in topics related to teaching and students was expected. This is consistent with Martin and Rose's list (2003, p. 33) of some objects, entities, and processes which are commonly evaluated under the heading of Appreciation. The list includes TV shows, films, books, CDs, paintings, sculptures, homes, public buildings, plays, recitals, spectacles and performances of any kind, feelings about nature and so on.

Table 6.2 presents the frequency of attitude phrases by language, i.e., English vs. Macedonian, where it can be observed that all three submodes of attitude were more frequent in the English than Macedonian TBC.

Table 6.2 Frequency of Attitude Phrases by Language (English vs. Macedonian)

Affect phrases in English (%)	Affect phrases in Macedonian (%)	Judgment phrases in English (%)	Judgment phrases in Macedonian (%)	Appreciation phrases in English (%)	Appreciation phrases in Macedonian (%)
35.7	17	24.3	19.5	44.7	27.5

Again, the phrases used to express appreciation predominated, both in English (27.5%) and in Macedonian (44.7%). Regarding affect phrases, they were more frequent

in the English TBCs, while in the Macedonian TBCs judgment phrases were slightly more frequent (19.5%) than were affect phrases (17%).

The data are surprising because it was expected that affective states would be more present in interaction done in a native language, since studies have shown that people feel less anxiety when interacting in their own language (Bailey, Onwuegbuzie & Daley, 1999; Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993).

The data point to the fact that interactants to engage in modes for expressing attitude interactants' beliefs, purposes, and accepted norms may influence what counts as a disputable topic, thus, allowing interlocutors to engage in modes for expressing attitude. Those environments seem to occur more often when the interlocutors were using L2 than when they were using their native language, Macedonian. As reported in the interviews with the participants and in the data analysis presented in the previous chapters, various situational influences affected their idiosyncratic discursive practices, including existential factors (e.g., whether one really wants to chat with somebody or how co-chatters perceive one another), spatial factors (e.g., whether the PC is shared or personal, the geographical location at the time of chat, and temporal factors such as time pressures and deadlines).

Finally, the presence of English in Macedonia is considerable. Most young people grow up being a second generation of English users as the first foreign language, which explains why my participants feel comfortable expressing affective states and judgments in English more than in Macedonian. English plays a large part in their lives, particularly their digital lives, and they feel comfortable communicating in varieties of English when discussing their interests and identities.

6.3.2 Individual Patterns for Expressing Attitude

This study compared the structure of the exact phrases, including linguistic and extralinguistic elements, participants used in English with those they used in Macedonian to express the submodes of attitude. Table 6.3 below presents the differences in the frequencies among the individual usages of attitude phrases by the same interactants in two languages. For a detailed list of the phrases each participant used in each TBC see Appendix C.

Table 6.3 Frequency of Individual Attitude Phrases by Language

(English vs. Macedonian)

Participant	Affect phrases in Eng (%)	Affect phrases in Maced (%)	Judgment phrases in Eng (%)	Judgment phrases in Maced (%)	Appr. phrases in Eng (%)	Appr. phrases in Maced (%)
Bianca	0.8	2.25	0.8	3.5	2.6	6.4
Ema	4.4	1.9	1.7	5.5	12.7	3.2
Bjork	4.3	1.45	3.2	1.7	6.6	4.5
Maria	5.2	2.6	1.9	1	3.3	4.6
Rebecca	7	1.8	8	2.8	6.8	1.6
Ager	2.4	5.4	1	4.6	3.9	5.6
Lola	11.7	1.6	7.5	0.4	8.9	1.6
Grand total	35.8	17	24.1	19.5	44.8	27.5

Note. Due to space limitation for the table, I used abbreviations. Appr. stands for Appreciation; Maced stands for Macedonian; Eng stands for English

Regarding appreciation, the person who used such phrases most frequently was Ema (16%). She is immediately followed by Bjork (11%) and Lola (10.5%). Regarding affect, 13.3% of Lola's phrases were affective (both in English and Macedonian), followed by Rebecca (8.8%), and Maria (7.8%). Regarding *judgment*, Rebecca produced most of those phrases (10.8%). The next most frequent users of judgment phrases were Lola (7.9%) and Ema (7.2%).

In terms of language used, all three categories (appreciation, affect, and judgment) were used more frequently in the English TBCs than in the Macedonian TBCs. However, when looking at the phases individual participants used, it can be noticed that Bianca and Ager used more appreciation, affect, and judgment phrases in the Macedonian text-based chats than did the other interactants. Ema used more judgment phrases in the Macedonian TBCs, while Maria used more appreciation phrases in the Macedonian TBCs compared to the English TBCs.

This distribution of frequency suggests how participants expressed different attitude, positive and negative to co-construct phatic communion. For example, Bianca co-constructed phatic communion through appreciation phrases, while Rebecca co-constructed it through judgment phrases. For example, one Macedonian text-based chat, Bianca's TBC 9, shows an abundance of attitude phrases, i.e., 37 instances of appreciation phrases, 13 instances of affect phrases, and 24 phrases used for expressing judgment, out of 844 phrases total. Perhaps this abundance is explained by the major topics of this TBC, a chat between Bianca and a former student which was positive concerning students they both knew and negative concerning a colleague they both disliked. Another participant, Rebecca, used 30 judgment phrases, 27 affect phrases, and 32 appreciation phrases in one English chat (TBC 5). In this TBC, she and her co-chatter Humberto changed topics very interactively and covered a variety of issues, including sleeping habits due to different time zones, job prospects, Mexican and Macedonian governments, personality traits, and so on. The nature of the topics discussed, as well as the fact that Rebecca perceives Humberto as an interesting co-chatter, as related in our interview, allowed the frequent expression of attitudes in the focus of their interaction.

When the TBCs were work-related or co-chatters did know each other well, on the other hand, the frequency of attitude phrases was low.

The ways participants co-constructed phatic communion in English and in Macedonian differed. For instance, in her English TBCs, Bianca used 31 different tokens³¹ to express attitude, while in the Macedonian TBCs she used only 21 different tokens. In Bianca's case the tokens are not equivalent in English and Macedonian. Lola, on the other hand, used 80 different tokens to express attitude in the English TBCs, while in the Macedonian TBCs she used only 17 different tokens. The tokens "good" and "great" in English are equivalents of the Macedonian words "super" and "ubavo." Similarly to Lola, Ema used 81 different tokens for expressing attitude in the English TBCs, while in Macedonian she used half as many, i.e., 48 different tokens, to express various states of judgment, appreciation, and affect. The token "good" in English is an equivalent of "dobro" in Macedonian, and "really" in English was used with the meaning of "mnogu" in Macedonian. The Macedonian word "mnogu" is a qualifier, and it is an equivalent of "really," "much" and "many" in English.

Next is Bjork, who in the English TBCs used 81 different tokens to express attitude, while in the Macedonian TBCs she used only 66 different linguistic items. "Good" was Bjork's most frequently used adjective, but she used it only in English. She did not use its equivalent in Macedonian. What is specific for Bjork is the usage of the adjective "horror" in English and its equivalent in meaning, the word "ужас," in Macedonian. Also, she put a greater illocutionary force in negative evaluations than other participants. As did Bianca, Maria used a smaller variety of linguistic tokens than did the other participants. She used 29 different tokens to express attitude, and in the

³¹ The term token refers to any word, phrase, and isolated emoticon.

Macedonian TBCs she used 25 different tokens. For Maria, it can be said that she rarely repeated the same affective phrases. The items used in English were not equivalent with those used in Macedonian. In the English TBCs, Rebecca used 62 different tokens to express attitude, while in the Macedonian TBCs she used 38 different tokens. The tokens “good,” “great,” and “so,” in English are equivalent to the Macedonian words Rebecca used such as “ubavo,” “super,” and “mnogu,” respectively. Ager used 33 different tokens to express attitude in the English TBCs, while in the Macedonian TBCs, similarly to Bjork, he used a greater variety of phrases - 60 different tokens. Only the qualifiers “mnogu” and “really” can be considered as equivalents from all the attitude phrases Ager used.

Table 6.4 summarizes the varieties of words and phrases participants used to co-construct phatic communion through attitude.

Table 6.4 Number of Varieties of Attitude Phrases Used in English and Macedonian TBCs

Participant	Total number of attitude phrases	Varieties of attitude phrases used in English TBC (N)	Varieties of attitude phrases used in Macedonian TBC (N)
Bianca	139	31	21
Lola	157	80	17
Ema	139	81	48
Bjork	153	81	66
Maria	57	29	25
Rebecca	197	62	38
Ager	115	33	60

Data showed that Ager is the only participant who used a greater variety of attitude phrases in Macedonian than in English. All other participants used a greater

variety of attitude phrases in English. Among all participants, Ema used the greatest variety of English attitude phrases. Lola not only used the lowest variety of attitude phrases in Macedonian, but for her the difference in the number of attitude phrases used in English and in Macedonian is the highest (80:17). Rebecca used the highest number of attitude phrases in the two languages ($n=197$).

The adjective “good,” and the intensifiers “really,” “very,” and “so” were used by all participants without exception. Another valuable finding from the presented frequencies is that although all my participants are highly-educated (three of them hold PhD degrees, two have MA degrees, and two hold only a BA degree), the choice of phrases they made in TBC are simple and informal. Their language is not sophisticated, which can be seen in the choice of adjectives such as “good,” “super,” and “great.” One possibility is that since some of them see TBC as a medium for chit-chat (e.g., Lola, Maria, and Bjork), they feel comfortable in using basic English. Also, others (e.g., Bianca and Ager) apparently try to keep the same level of formality with friends, relatives, colleagues, and students.

Regarding the social function of language and building phatic communion, the data have suggested that the frequent occurrence of evaluative language is a way of participating in an event, or as scholars who explore the social use of language (e.g., Pomerantz, 1984) observe, when people partake in social activities, they routinely make evaluative comments. In uttering a positive evaluation—or to use the SFL terms *appreciation* and *judgment*—a participant usually invites the recipient to co-participate in the praising by uttering a second/subsequent positive assessment. According to Pomerantz, assessments can be upgraded, have similar evaluation value or be

downgraded. The more engaged participants are in providing subsequent assessments, the stronger their will to maintain the interaction appears to be, which shows the building of the phatic communion.

6.4 The Structure of Attitude Sequences

In regard to the structure of the talk-in-interaction, closely related to the frequent use of attitude phrases, my study also revealed that the participants evaluate after they get a response or additional information in response to their inquiries. When there are second, upgraded evaluative comments, participants use those turns to do self-selection to speak. Thus, the structure of the interaction at points of evaluative language looks as follows (P stands for one of my participants, X for their co-chatters):

- P: Requesting information
- X: Response
- X: Providing additional information (usually the other co-chatter provides additional information)
- P: Expressing appreciation/affect/judgment and second evaluation
 / appreciation usually performed by self-selection

Below is a representative excerpt, taken from the data, which portrays the described structure of interaction with second evaluation. It shows how second evaluation is used for building or maintaining phatic communion. The social action performed in Excerpt 25 is catching up with an old friend. After explaining her busy life and expressing her need to go on vacation, Rebecca requests information about a common

friend, Nathan, in line 37. Benjamin cannot provide information about Nathan (“I have not heard from him in a while”); however, in order to maintain the phatic communion, he uses the turn to change the topic by inviting Rebecca to Chicago. After she provides information about another friend, who is getting married, the sequence of evaluative comments, i.e., subsystems of appraisal starts. Benjamin expresses attitude with the tokens “wow” and “cool” and provides a second evaluation with the expression “sounds fun.” Rebecca intensifies the evaluation by using the frequent attitude token “very,” after which self-selection occurs, and she decides to end the interaction abruptly.

Excerpt 1: [An English TBC between Rebecca and her old friend and school mate Benjamin from the time when she attended a high school in the US. They do not communicate often even though they have known one another for more than 20 years, but they do keep in touch. This is the end of a part of the interaction in which Rebecca complains about her busy life.]:

36 **Rebecca:** and I need to go on vacation!

37 I’m taking German again. How's your friend Nathan?

38 6:31 PM **Benjamin:** I have not heard from him in a while

39 if you make it to chicago, there's space here.

40 **Rebecca:** thanks! I'd love to come

41 6:32 PM I'm coming next year, definitely

42 my friend Maria's getting married and she's asked me to be her bridesmaid
that will be quite the experience for me

43 and her econ professor from ASU who also is my friend will be her
bridesmaid. She's 69

→ 44 **Benjamin:** wow. cool.

45 sounds fun.

→ 46 6:33 PM **Rebecca:** very

47 I'll be late for my german class

This pattern is valuable because it demonstrates how participants align and build phatic communion through evaluative comments about common interests while simultaneously broadening emotional and intellectual experiences about a shared knowledge. In the next section, participants' personal views on the use of affective language, specifically, on the attitude phrases they used in the TBCs are described.

6.4.1 Participants' Views on the Use of Attitude Phrases:

Data from Interviews

As presented in Chapter 4, participants in this study brought with them chatting experiences and practices which were affected by their educational, cultural, linguistic, and professional backgrounds. Based on the interviews, several factors appeared to influence participants' use of affective language. Those factors included how well the co-chatters knew one another, how much time they had to chat, and whether they belonged to a particular national or linguistic group (native vs. non-native English speakers). Specific factors such as automaticity in interaction, politeness, and conciseness were mentioned by participants. The question that opened during analysis of these data, and is worth researching in future, is how our education affects our ability to rationalize social actions.

Bianca seemed to have internalized an ability to use affective language to keep the interaction going. Her responses in the interview and email communication showed that she seemed to be unaware of whether using affective language was related to her need to encourage people, or to her profession as a counselor. But she pointed to a

mechanical ability to encourage people in order to maintain interaction. For example, the frequent use of “Ok” and its variant “Oks”—non-typical of the Macedonian language—is something specific to Bianca’s rhetoric, and it represents a way to show understanding or to align with other interactants. For her, the addition of the ‘s’ markings to other words, such as words of recognition or encouragement, “came afterwards as a kind of automatic overflow.” She stated that she adds ‘s’ markings in all written correspondence: “I do that with text-messaging, I do that with emailing, I do that in chat and I do that with everyone, students superiors; it’s just something I feel comfortable with” (BiancaInt 1). This comfortableness comes from the fact that other people align with her by using words she uses frequently, or as she put it, “I’ve gotten my entire family on board to use Oks, and now they put it everywhere in their text messages.”

The second participant, Lola, emphasized her ability to sound as similar as possible to the non-Macedonian interactants in order to maintain politeness. For her, the affective language used for alignment depended on the nature of the relationships and the way they developed, as well as on the topics she discussed. She also reported that she valued the closeness with her American friends more now, when she lived more in the US, than when in Macedonia. Similarly to Lola, Ema attributed her use of spontaneous natural expression of her affective state to the closeness, feeling of comfort, and “affective state of the interaction” (e.g., insertion of teasers in her TBC). An example of the affective state was, as she called it, “the bragging thing,” (e.g., bragging about originality of research ideas), which is “very affective” for her, because “it would require someone who really knows [her].” For TBCs she had with her husband, she frequently used affect and judgment phrases. She explained that both of them used “affective language” and laughed

about jokes that might seem “to be extreme examples of an affective act providing the reasons to potentially risk sounding racist in front of other people” (e.g., jokes about pronunciation of /r/ and /l/ sounds by Asians). She would “never say” such jokes to someone that she doesn’t know very well, because she “would fear that they misunderstand” or would think that she is “some kind of a racist person.” In other words, for Ema, phatic communion strengthens with negative attitude phrases, if you know the people well.

For Maria, “conciseness and preciseness” in TBC was crucial, and that was why her use of attitude phrases was limited. This could be observed in the total number of appraisal words she used in all her TBCs. She used 57 appraisal phrases, which compared to some other participants is one-third of their total number. Interestingly, as she reported, she didn’t actually tend to be concise and precise in speaking; however, she tended “to do that in writing.” For Rebecca, using language as a tool for performing various types of social action such as building and maintaining diverse relationships is crucial. The number of attitude phrases she used is higher than any other interactant, in both English and in Macedonian ($n=197$). As reported, Rebecca frequently spoke in made-up dialects to her best friend, i.e., used specific ways to “pronounce” words in writing. The people that she was playful with in TBC were those who would respond in the same way. In other words, Rebecca speaks to people in a certain way if those people respond in the same way, which is a form of phatic communion co-constructed through affective talk.

To conclude this section, the data analysis has demonstrated how phatic communion is co-constructed through the use and perception of affective talk in online text-based chat. Participants are *doing* social action such as catching up with

friends' career, offering moral support and advice for life-related issues through computer-mediated text-based chat. Short comments for expressing attitude are very common and their functions depend on the co-positioning of the participants, as well as on the "roles" interactants have assumed or decided to play, consciously or unconsciously. Expressing attitude (affect, judgment, appreciation) and expressing facts in a form of evaluation, while participants are maintaining their relationships, and consequently performing social action, is an omnipresent element in all the TBCs. Therefore, it is important to understand that the use of affective language is influenced by the interactant's position and the context of the TBC creation. Analysis of the structure of TBC, regardless of the language in which it is created, can reveal how phatic communion is built through interaction in a certain social context.

6.5 Co-constructing Phatic Communion Through

Extralinguistic Items

Extralinguistic items such as emoticons, eccentric spelling, eccentric punctuation, and written-out laughter may also function as tools for co-constructing phatic communion. In an online interactional environment that is mainly verbal and nonphysical, such as text-based chat, emoticons, which are graphic representations of faces (☺, ☹, 🤪) may contribute substantially to the social meaning of a message. Similarly to expressions such as "Take care," or "How do you do?" that are often exchanged in multiple types of interaction, emoticons seem to be ritualized expressions that not only convey meaning, but also fulfill a social function. That is, emoticons are used to mitigate the strength of negative feedback or to avoid specific answers to ritualized questions like checking for

availability or asking for one's well-being. Imagine someone asking for someone's availability via TBC, saying "Are you busy?" and getting a negative response such as "Yes. Actually, I can't talk to you right now." That negative response might have an inordinate effect especially in a typed medium where contextualization conventions are absent. But putting a smiley at the end of the same response, or an emoticon showing how busy you are—for example, the emoticon for a nerd with glasses (🤓) referring to busyness—will foster the phatic function of an utterance.

6.5.1 Emoticons

The concrete functions emoticons played in the TBCs analyzed in this study were alignment, relief, support, and solving problematic issues (e.g., information technology problems, complaints to romantic and business partners). Table 6.5 summarizes the frequency and types of emoticons participants used. Smileys, as the most frequent types of emoticons used in online text-based chatting, were counted separately from other emoticons such as emo face 🌪️, nerdy face 🤓, sad face 😞, party emoticon 🎉, and so on.

Table 6.5 Frequency of Emoticons Used in English and Macedonian

Participant	Emoticons in English TBC	Emoticons in Macedonian TBC	Total number of emoticons used by participant	Total Emoticons participant used to number of typed lines
Bianca	0	1 (emo) 🌪️	1	1/446 (0.22%)
Ema	47 smileys; 10 other	32 smileys; 4 other	93	93/418 (22.2%)
Bjork	7 smileys; 1 other (xx)	29 smileys	36	36/759 (4.7 %)

Table 6.5 Continued.

Participant	Emoticons in English TBC	Emoticons in Macedonian TBC	Total number of emoticons used by participant	Total Emoticons participant used to number of typed lines
Maria	16 smileys; 7 other	13 smileys; 2 other	38	38/306 (12.4%)
Rebecca	15 smileys; 2 other	25 smileys; 2 other	44	44/703 (6.2 %)
Ager	9 smileys; 1 other	6 smileys; 1 other	17	17/503 (3.4 %)
Lola	35 smileys; 5 other emoticons	15 smileys; 2 other emoticons	57	57/495 (11.5%)

Although emoticons are frequently used in computer-mediated communication, as research has shown (see Chapter 2), Bianca is an example of an interactant who uses emoticons rarely in online text-based chatting. In her TBCs, she used only one emoticon. Ema (22.2%) and Lola (11.5%) used emoticons most frequently among all participants. Ema, Marija, Ager, and Lola used emoticons more frequently in the English TBCs, while Bjork and Rebecca used more emoticons while chatting with their Macedonian friends.

6.5.2 Additional Extralinguistic Items

Apart from emoticons, phatic communion in the online text-based chats was built through the use of additional extralinguistic items such as eccentric spelling, eccentric punctuation, and written-out laughter. Table 6.6 summarizes the finding on the usage of these extra-linguistic items. In English, the participants substituted for body language and intonation with the use of 1) eccentric spelling (e.g., “byeeeeeee”); 2) written-out laughter (e.g., variants of “hahaha,” “chuckle”); 3) words in parentheses for demonstrating lower

voice, inner thoughts, or for avoiding interruption while the other interactant was typing; 4) eccentric punctuation (e.g., multiple punctuation marks “!!!” used for surprise, or “...” used for leaving a line/thought unfinished; 5) graphic representations of surprise and cheering (e.g., “*ju-huuu*,” “*wo-hoo*”); 6) emotional and mental states (e.g., “*argh*” for anger; “*yuk*” for disgust; “*pfff*” for nonsense; “*zzz*” for feeling sleepy; “*nope*” and “*nooo*” for negation; “*yup*,” “*yeah*,” and “*yay*” for agreement).

In Macedonian, the instances of eccentric spelling, eccentric punctuation, and written-out laughter that occurred in my data were the following: 1) eccentric spelling (e.g., “*naskoroooo*” meaning “sooooo”; “*nateeeee*” - a prolonged final vowel of a personal name for drawing attention; “*SHO ZBORISH*,” meaning “WHAT ARE YOU SAYING,” used for surprise - an instance of using capital letters for emphasis); 2) representations of emotional and mental states (e.g., “*ay*” for surprise and shock, “*uf*” for complaint, “*xaxa*” for laughter, “*aaaa*” for understanding), and 3) direct borrowings of English words with Macedonian spelling (e.g., “*baj baj*” instead of “bye bye,” “*frendli*” instead of “friendly,” “*lajt*” instead of light, “*lajk*” for “like”). The last category was classified as extralinguistic, because such linguistic items/lexis do not exist in Macedonian and instead of using their Macedonian equivalents, participants decided to be creative and basically make up new items with eccentric spelling.

Beyond the foregoing extralinguistic items, participants built phatic communion by using abbreviations typical of online chatting. The use of these items shows that they belong to the community of practice of online chatters. In English, two occurrences are worth mentioning: 1) shortening of the possessive adjectives and pronouns (e.g., “*ur*” for “your” and “*urs*” for “yours”), and 2) abbreviations (e.g., “*bff*” for “a girls’ best friend,”

“btw” for “by the way”). In Macedonian, equivalents for these abbreviations were not found.

In Table 6.6, I first present the number of occurrences per person of total number of tokens of eccentric spelling and eccentric punctuation both in English and Macedonian TBC, and then, in column 3, I present the percentages of the same entities per total number of lines. I then do the same for written-out laughter in the last two columns (number of instances / total number of lines typed by a participant multiplied by 100%).

Table 6.6 Frequency and Percentage of Instances and Occurrences per Line of Eccentric Spelling, Punctuation and Written-out Laughter per Participant

Participant	Eccentric spelling and punctuation (e.g. “WOOOW”, “!!!”)		Eccentric spelling and punctuation a participant used to number of typed lines (%)	Written-out laughter (e.g. “hihi,” “haha”)		Written-out laughter participant used to number of typed lines (%)
	English TBC	Maced TBC		English TBC	Maced TBC	
Bianca	2	0	0.4	0	0	0
Ema	27	12	9.3	2	3	1.2
Bjork	2	5	0.9	3	15	2.5
Maria	13	2	4.9	5	6	3.6
Rebecca	22	17	5.5	7	6	5.5
Ager	9	20	5.7	0	0	0
Lola	31	4	7.1	29	3	6.4

Data showed that two of the participants, Bjork and Ager, used more instances of eccentric spelling in the Macedonian online text-based chats than did the other interactants, while all the others used eccentric spelling more frequently in their English

TBCs. As for the written-out laughter, most of the participants used similar number of phrases to replace laughter in both languages, except for Bjork, who used five times more written-out laughter in Macedonian TBCs compared to her English TBCs, and Lola, who used the highest number of instances of written-out laughter in English, about 10 times more than in her Macedonian TBCs.

Overall, all instances of eccentric spelling, eccentric punctuation, and written-out laughter were more frequently used in the English TBCs than in Macedonian TBCs. Two participants, Ema and Lola, used all three extralinguistic items most frequently than other participants for co-constructing phatic communion while Bianca used them least frequently. An interesting case is the male participant, Ager, who did not use a single instance of written-out laughter either in English or in Macedonian TBCs. In order to find out more about the possible reasons for these online chatting behaviors, I looked for evidence in the exact TBCs by doing a contextual discourse analysis and combined it with descriptive statistics given above and then discussed these findings in the interviews with each participant.


6.5.3 Participants' Views on the Use of Extralinguistic Items:

Data from TBCs and Interviews

This section presents the findings of my discourse analysis of TBCc and my interviews with the interactants on their views about the possible reasons for the use of emoticons, eccentric spelling, and eccentric punctuation, as well as other items to substitute for the non-existence of physical contact. All these items prove necessary tools

for building phatic communion and help us understand how social action is performed with language.

1. Bianca

Data showed that regarding the use of emoticons in her chatting practices, Bianca is really exceptional compared to the other participants. In all 10 chats, Bianca used only one emoticon, the “emo” face () , which she used on Skype. Although her co-chatters used emoticons, she did not accommodate with them. Bianca described her own chatting practices as being “profession-related.” What guides her choice of phrases and use of emoticons as markers of phatic communion is her job, according to her, were, her educational choices and always having an inquiry about students or colleagues. Bianca appears to be pragmatic and wants to “get quick information” as explained in the interview. Her interaction is guided by her purpose to get a quick answer one way or another and to appear professional. This means that because she and her colleagues have to submit transcripts to supervisors they “shy away” from using emoticons.

2. Lola

Lola used emoticons, especially smileys, for the following reasons: (1) conversation movers (expressing willingness to chat with a certain person and keep the conversation going); (2) alignment (or tendency to return a smiley if the co-chatter uses an emoticon); (3) out of a habit, at the end of an utterance as a period. Regarding written-out laughter, Lola used 32 instances of “*haha*” (with its variations “*hah*,” “*hihi*,” and “*hihi*”). In the interview we discussed with Lola her usage of smilies.

Excerpt 2

Mira: Tell me, when it comes to using emoticons which emoticons do you use most often and do you use emoticons with anybody, no matter what the relationship is with that person ?

Lola: Actually I use the smiley face. That's the most common. Sometimes if that person is very close I would use the one with the kiss or the one taking their tongue out.

(LolaInt 2)

The discourse analysis of her TBC shows that Lola has used smiley faces as a conversation mover, or as she explained it, a smiley at the end of a line in the opening sequences meant that the other interlocutor “can continue chatting.” It also meant that she really wanted to chat with somebody. When she knows that the interaction will be short, she “will just *not* put the emoticons.” The excerpt below is a representative instance of using an emoticon for expressing willingness to interact, as a form of alignment or accommodation. The way Lola performs this social action is representative of other participants' accommodation of their online behaviors.

Excerpt 3: [An English TBC between Lola and Salome. Salome is preparing a presentation on Macedonia and asks Lola to help her with some Macedonian music. In this sequence they are discussing a traditional Macedonian song “Your Eyes, Lena.”]

50 [14.05.2010 23:52:38] **Salomé:** BTW... I love Lena's eyes!!!

51 [14.05.2010 23:52:51] **Salomé:** I wish I knew what it said... but it's beautiful

52 [14.05.2010 23:52:58] **Salomé:** I'm enjoying this sooo much!

53 [14.05.2010 23:52:59] **Salomé:** =)

54 [14.05.2010 23:54:03] **Lola:** :)

(LolaCh 1)

In line 50, Salome changes the topic with the abbreviation “BTW,” often used as a topic shift initiator, and expresses her positive evaluation of a Macedonian song, adding that in spite of her lack of knowledge of the language, she enjoys the song. Salome ends her sequence, consisting of four turns, with a variation of a smiley, to which Lola responds with another smiley, aligning with the feelings Salome expressed. The analysis of all TBCs Lola sent showed that she tends to react with a smiley when the other interactant uses a smiley. Moreover, in trouble sequences, Lola reacts with written-out laughter because for her, online text-based chatting “doesn’t seem so serious as the face-to-face interaction.”

3. Ema

Ema used emoticons, especially smileys, for the following reasons: (1) joking; (2) aligning (or tendency to show friendliness and common interests); (3) showing she misses the people she occasionally chats with; (4) demonstrating playfulness; (5) keeping a low-profile. Regarding eccentric spelling and punctuation, Ema used (1) multiple exclamation marks demonstrating surprise or giving importance to utterances; (2) expression of gestures in parentheses (e.g., nod), and (3) three dots as a symbol for unfinished thoughts. Regarding written-out laughter, Ema, similarly to Bianca, rarely used instances of “*haha*” (with its variations). Ema’s use of parentheses was a noticeable idiosyncrasy. For her, “it’s easier to just write the emoticon up in parentheses rather than look up for the emoticon and click on the emoticon.” She avoided emoticons in group TBC when she did not know the people well, and when she was task-oriented she was “kind of being all reserved.” The use of words in multiple parentheses means that she is

“EXTRA happy” or “very very happy.” If we could judge people’s emotional states by the frequency of emoticons and written-out laughter used, then Ema was the most highly emotional participant in this study. She emphasized, “Sometimes when I miss people that’s [emoticons use] my way of saying how much I miss them.”

4. Bjork

Bjork used extralinguistic items more frequently in her Macedonian TBCs than in the English ones. The phatic functions of the emoticons she used were (1) sarcasm and (2) teasers. She found it “easier to chat with people who don’t use any than to chat to people who overuse them.” Her justification for not using many emoticons was that “emoticons are considered common and stupid,” and if the other co-chatter “doesn’t use any, she doesn’t use any back not to appear ‘stupid’ in the eyes of those who are very serious.” We looked at instances when Bjork would use an emoticon while being sarcastic. She reported awareness of “not sounding so harsh,” demonstrating to co-chatters that she was “teasing,” and “not attacking” them.

5. Maria

Maria was the only participant who conceptualized smileies as a “problem-solver,” as tools which “absorb the shock,” and as face preservers. For example, in her understanding, “the other side will not take your refusal so seriously if you use a smiley.” The discourse analysis of her text-based chats showed that Maria was very systematic in her use of smileys, for example, using the smiley at an appropriate spot in a sequence to avoid losing face. She reported she would always use a smiley when she felt like

avoiding an answer she was expected to give and defined her systematicity as deliberate use of repetition “in a manner to buy time or to think up with the other person.” Maria appeared to keep face with emoticons, or as she confessed, sometimes she uses smileys “as a screen,” because she did not want people to see what she was actually thinking. An instance of this specific use is presented in the excerpt below.

Excerpt 4: [An English TBC between Maria and Elbarto. After checking the well-being of Maria, Elbarto starts a sequence in which he complains about his destroyed sleeping patterns.]:

- 18 [14.09.2010 09:44:49] **Elbarto**: plus I'm training again so that is taking time to
adjust too
- 19 [14.09.2010 09:45:11] **Elbarto**: I don't know if it's the sleeping or the training but
I'm mega horny all the time :D
- 20 [14.09.2010 09:48:34] **Elbarto**: I did a back walkover this morning :)
- 21 [14.09.2010 09:48:42] **Elbarto**: Getting over my fear of going backwards
- 22 [14.09.2010 09:48:58] **Maria**: :D
- 23 [14.09.2010 10:00:31] **Maria**: off to work
- 24 [14.09.2010 10:00:36] **Maria**: hugs
- 25 [14.09.2010 10:02:10] **Elbarto**: cau

(MariaCh 2)

In this sequence, Elbarto complains about his sleeping habits being destroyed after two nights of partying and because of his training. After line 21 Maria appears eager to be gone. We can assume that the word “horny” made Maria use a smiley as a screen to avoid any further comments and keep face. Instead of commenting on Elbarto’s new condition, she decides to use the big smiley (:D), in line 22, and provides a reason to terminate the TBC. What is notable is the time lag of 11 minutes between the smiley and

the reason Maria provides for ending the TBC—that she has to go to work. This might mark Maria’s hesitation whether to find a reason to leave the TBC or to stay committed to the interaction after the face-threatening moment. Whatever her reason was, Elbart accepted her decision to end the interaction and uttered a closing greeting (“*cau*”).

6. Rebecca

As shown in Table 6.5, Rebecca was the most creative and versatile of all seven participants in expressing affective states with extralinguistic items. She used expressions like: “*ah*,” “*oh*,” “*noooo*,” “*YUP*,” “*OMG*,” “*wo-hoo*,” “*Nah...*,” “*ARG*,” “*au*,” “*uf*,” multiple punctuation, surprise markers such as “*oooo*,” “*lele*,” and capital letters for surprise—a feature she used consistently. Regarding written-out laughter, Rebecca used seven instances in the English TBCs and seven in the Macedonian TBCs: four instances of “*HAHAHAHA*,” one of “*hihihi*,” and two of “*hehe*”). Rebecca used emoticons, especially smileys, for the following reasons: (1) teasing or a face-threatening act; (2) filling a slot (the tendency to satisfy the need to be active in the interaction); (3) alignment (demonstrating awareness of the register of the co-chatters and common interests); (3) showing she misses the people she chats with; and (4) demonstrating playfulness. She used smileys to fill in communication gaps. As with Bjork, Rebecca reported that usage of smileys depends on how serious her co-chatter was and considered smileies “infantile,” and “kind of stupid but very convenient.” Rebecca explained that she “would never use a lot of abbreviations or that kind of Internet chat slang” with someone unless she feels “very comfortable” with that person.

Ager used only 15 emoticons in all his TBC. He attributed his sporadic use of emoticons to his fast typing and busyness. Ager eased the pressure of the job requirements by joking with his colleagues about the content of the materials he worked with, which is another strategy of building phatic communion.

To sum up, whatever a text-based chatter's reason is for placing an emoticon at the end of an utterance or on a separate line—for example, as an afterthought, for softening the force of an utterance—stand-alone emoticons have similar functions to emoticons that appear inside text. They may be used for (1) expressing emotional and facial expressions (e.g., worry, moral support, joy), (2) ritualized unemotional expressions similar to the use of punctuation marks (e.g., Lola's use of a smiley after every utterance), and (3) contextually dependent phatic communion which is shaped by the chatter's purpose for interaction (e.g., Maria's abrupt signing off or Ager's reaction to refrain himself from further comments). The idea of floating between the ritualized, i.e., conventionalized interaction and the affective one is important for phatic communion and crucial to the social nature of interactions. For example, if an emoticon softens the impact of a troublesome sequence, it is by one criterion phatic. To conclude, emoticons and the additional extralinguistic items should *not* be only seen as substitutes for the absence of physical cues such as gestures, voice, and facial expressions, but also as tools for maintaining social relationships and co-constructing phatic communion.

6.6 Co-constructing Phatic Communion Through Topic Choice

6.6.1 Defining Topic

The final important phenomenon for building phatic communion I explored, *topic choice*, is of common interest to CA, DA and structural linguistics. The interactants' choice of topics is tied to the social action performed by them and requires those engaged in an interaction to work together to create an ongoing understanding of what action is being performed through the TBC. To use the terminology of conversation analysts, what chatters are doing is they are "doing social action." Some examples of social action done in my data were: 1) providing advice to colleagues, to students and relatives, 2) handling problematic behaviors of friends and colleagues, 3) teaching foreigners Macedonian to survive in a new environment, 4) sharing feelings of loneliness, 5) informing people about current local affairs, and so on.

Approaching *interaction as talk* about various discourse topics, rather than as a series of unconnected verbal actions, may allow participants in interactions to co-construct language as action in which they accommodate each other and in that way engage in social action by creating interpersonal meanings and phatic communion through their talk. Linguists such as Maynard (1980) argued that speakers shift a topic when the initiated topic does not go in the direction that speakers expected, i.e., the shift can happen after a disagreement (pp.269-277). This approach sounds formulaic and limiting because the direction has not been proved to be expected. From the CA perspective, Sacks (1995 (II)) discusses "topic similarity" and "topic coherence" in CA stating that "it appears that people make it their business to attend to the *topical* coherence of a next thing they say to some prior thing someone else said" (p. 254). There

is a type of topic called “speaker’s topic,” a DA concept developed by Brown and Yule (1983), which refers to a speaker maintaining a particular discourse topic representing the speaker’s own understanding of a particular discourse topic representing the speaker’s own understanding of what the conversation is about. The speaker’s topic is not necessarily oriented to by other participants as topical (p. 88). Speakers are believed to “speak topically” when they make their contributions in agreement with recent elements of the topic, i.e., they pick up elements from the previous speaker’s speech and incorporate them into their own.

The idea of a speaker’s topic helps us to illustrate that the organization of interaction involves a degree of agency on the part of the participants; they can introduce new topics, skip some and return to old topics to accomplish the interactional work. Interactants try to fit their contributions in some way to the ongoing interaction. If they cannot contribute, then there is no possibility of social action.

6.6.2 Classification of Topics

The topics participants discussed in their TBCs were classified into five major categories: (1) work-related topics, (2) leisure-related, (3) personal emotional states, (4) perceptions, and (5) logistics (e.g., information technology problems, arranging Skype meetings). I want to emphasize here that these five categories are mutually exclusive, although there are a few instances when a category points to a continuum, especially with personal emotional states, making classification problematic at times. And we would agree that this complexity is expected since emotional states reflect our perceptions and interpretations.

Matters connected to colleagues, students, work conditions, and professional duties were classified as *work-related* topics (e.g., looking for a translator in English, Lola's new job on a cruiser/ship, discussing students records). Some of the work-related topics were presented earlier throughout Chapters 4 and 5. For example, Bianca and MMcD's discussions about students' records or Ager and Aleksandar's discussions about subtitling; therefore, I will not repeat those here.

Informing co-chatters about cultural events, concerts, films, and sports activities one has attended or watched were classified as *leisure-related* topics, while evaluating or expressing opinions on the same cultural and sports events were classified as *perception* (e.g., discussing food, discussing complex family relations, and sharing impressions from a concert or wedding).

The three excerpts below are representative examples of the classification. Excerpt 5 was classified as a leisure-related topic since the discussion about playing and watching football was in the focus of the interaction. Prior to the sequence presented below, Ager started the interaction by checking Matta's availability; then they discussed and joked about Matta's new apartment, which was a holdover from the architectural style present during the communist period in former Yugoslavia.

Excerpt 5: [An English TBC in which Ager and Matta try to arrange some social activities. Matta proposes activities but Ager cannot commit to any of them because of his busyness]:

- 35 12:35 **Matta:** think we will be having lunch at elena's parents on sunday but will make sure that I'm free for the football (~2:15pm mk time)
 36 you up for it?
 37 **Ager:** not sure about anything

- 38 drowning in work
 39 really
 40 **Matta:** you not free then?
 41 12:36 **Ager:** might be, no idea
 42 i don't know my schedule for the day, let alone the weekend
 43 but hope to watch scum defeat with you
 44 i
 45 i'm lying, i'm hoping for a draw
 46 you're top of the table
 47 **Matta:** :)))))))))
 48 12:37 we don't have ade, tevez, robinho, santa cruz
 49 a draw would be good...

(AgerCh 1)

The presented sequence is an example of strengthening an existing phatic communion through a male-bonding activity—arranging watching a football match. Ager and Matta support rival teams Liverpool and Manchester City. It is notable to observe how the interaction spontaneously has glided from Ager’s complaining about having too much work and being “not sure about anything”—which leads to a possible refusal for socializing—into Ager’s attacking comments in line 43. In this line, he expresses hopes “to watch scum defeat with you,” referring to the team Matta supports—an attack he softens by concluding “a draw would be good.” The TBC ends in line 49 without any leave taking. The probable reason for ending abruptly was work that prevented Ager from further chatting.

The category *personal emotional states* covers topics in which interactants complain about emotional states, offer moral support to one another, discuss health issues, share dreams, or discuss problems related to romantic relationships. The sequence below

- 12 21:42 Dojde mama me spakova pravec bt
[My mom came and “packed” me for Bitola]
- 13 21:43 Me predade ko stafeta na tetka mi i na bolnica na edna
multivitaminska
[She transferred me to my aunt as a relay and I got a multivitamin
shot]
- 14 21:44 **Mil:** pa, dobro, ti si im semejno bogatstvo
[Well, of course, you are the family treasure]
- 15 sega doma si?
[Now you are at home?]
- 16 podobra si?
[Feeling better?]
- 17 **Maria:** Na bolnica imam use 40min infuzija
[I’m in hospital; 40 minutes more of infusion]
- 18 21:45 **Mil:** ama, ima wireless
[but, there’s wireless] ...

(MariaCh 7)

This TBC is relatively stable in terms of consistency of topics discussed. Maria starts with reporting bad news that she ended up in a hospital, after which Mil expresses surprise and provides moral support to Maria for a quick recovery. Then they both continue joking about the difficulty of text-messaging with one hand while in the other arm she is incapacitated by an IV. The TBC develops from a bad news announcement to jokes about Maria’s mother’s reaction to her state. She called Maria “a cockroach” referring to her resistance to sickness. Although calling someone “a cockroach” sounds offensive, in this TBC it has a positive interpersonal meaning for Maria, her mom, and Mil. Maria’s sickness is in the focus of the two interactants, although Mil has to accommodate this topic and does not participate in the choice.

The final category was *logistics* and covered topics related to establishing Internet connection and fixing technology-related problems in general. The basic condition for realizing a proper online interaction is a stable Internet connection; however, that is not always possible, and proves to be one of the contextual factors that affect the scaffolding of TBC and the way phatic communion is established. TBCs that contained logistics topics corroborate the assumptions that technology enhances the power of this mode to shape writer-reader interactivity. The sequence below is a representative example of how technological affordances such as Internet access shape interaction and people's affective states.

Ema is in Turkey at a conference and reports to Matta, who is in Macedonia, on her encounters with international colleagues and on her conference presentation. During the interaction they seem to have serious problems with the Internet connection; however, both of them are committed to maintaining the interaction.

Excerpt 7: [An English TBC in which Ema and Matta have serious problems with the Internet connection.]:

- 65 [21:30:25] **Ema:** one of the creative tutors on the course said my presentation was 'very creative'
- 66 [21:30:47] **Ema:** hallo?
- 67 [21:32:25] **Matta:** BIRRRRRRRRRRR??????
- 68 [21:32:31] **Matta:** AAAAAAAAAAGH
- 69 [21:36:46] **Matta:** ???
- 70 [22:00:35] **Ema:** i'm back?
- 71 [22:02:14] **Matta:** harro?
- 72 [22:02:20] **Matta:** you do appear to be back
- 73 [22:02:23] **Matta:** are you there?
- 74 [22:02:28] **Ema:** (nod)

(EmaCh 2)

In this sequence, Ema introduces the topic and informs Matta that her conference presentation was praised as “very creative.” However, Matta is prevented from hearing more about it due to Internet connection problems. His frustration is clearly shown with the use of capital letters which substitute for the sounds of showing annoyance. The use of question marks denotes uncertainty over whether they can hear one another. It is notable that in TBC even if one seems to be online, in reality they might not be present due to entirely external factors like poor Internet connection, which prevents interactants from keeping the line of discussion. As observed, nine lines were devoted to logistics or trying to reestablish the connection, which was finally done in line 74, marked by Ema’s virtual nodding.

Figure 6.1 shows a distribution of the five categorized topics per participant, followed by a discussion of how topic choice contributed to performing social action and establishing phatic communion.

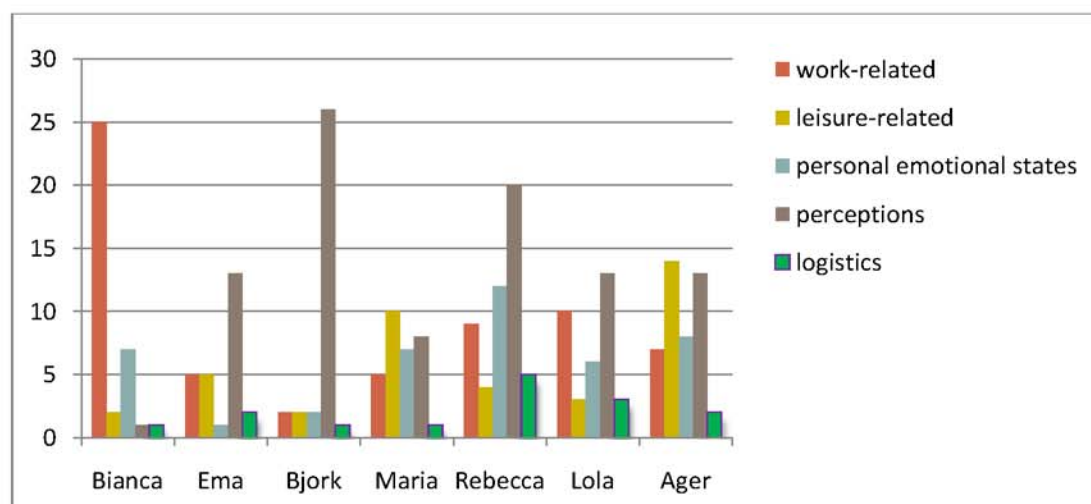


Figure 6.1: Distribution of Topics Discussed per Participant

From Figure 6.1, it can be observed that Bianca's major topics she discussed in all her TBCs, were work related. The discourse and conversation analysis of Bianca's TBCs, as well as our interviews brought to light that Bianca communicated in English and Macedonian with her Canadian colleague (MMcD) and her students, with whom the usual topics were related to the institution to which they all belong, i.e., an international high school where Bianca and MMcD worked and which students attended. Unlike Bianca, the participants Ema, Bjork, Rebecca, and Lola most frequently engaged in TBC to express their perceptions about various issues such as bands, music, literature, the political climate in the UK and Israel, and current local and foreign affairs.

The data suggest that online TBC is a convenient medium for discussing topics that involve exchanging perceptions, judgments and evaluations, all of which have informative value. This suggests that online TBC is used not only for "killing time" and getting involved in meaningless interaction. Compared to other participants, Rebecca shared personal emotional states with her co-chatters more frequently. For Maria and Ager, the leisure-related topics were slightly more frequent than topics in which they expressed perceptions, which suggests that both Maria and Ager use TBC as a medium for getting in touch with friends, informing them about their own current state, and arranging future socializing activities, while refraining themselves from evaluating any of these issues.

6.6.3 Topic Shift

This study also explored the structure of the turns in which topic shift occurred, a relevant phenomenon from the CA perspective, since topic shift is an integral part of this approach of studying social action as the sense-making practice is (Pomerantz & Fehr,

1997). Research on this phenomenon has shown that usually one person ends a sequence and another one opens a new sequence by shifting the topic (Button & Casey, 1984; Sacks, 1971). Sacks, in his lecture in 1971, explained how topics flow routinely from one to another. Button and Casey (1984) examined the use of topic initial elicitors in topic shifts and found three topic shift elicitors, both speaker-alternating and turn-alternating, that signify the topic shift. According to them and illustrated with my examples, topic shifts are marked by: (1) an inquiry which is transformed into a newsworthy event (e.g., *What else?*); (2) a positive response to the first part which produces a newsworthy event-report (e.g., Speaker A: *What's new?* Speaker B: *Well yesterday...*); and (3) a topicalizer which topicalizes a prior possible topic initial (e.g., *Koj be?* meaning *Who did that? Really her?*).

Drawing from Button and Casey's classification, in this research four different structures of reaching a point where one of the interactants shifts the topic were identified in the TBCs. Here, I will present the two most frequent structures since they were present in all participants' TBCs and appear to be unconsciously co-constructed patterns. The most frequently occurring topic shift structure (34%) occurs when a different speaker from the one who initiates a sequence shifts the topic after alignment expressed by affective talk. In other words, the most frequent instances occurred when interactants alternated turns dynamically and after a point of alignment, the one who responded to questions changed the topic. This most frequent structure is shown below:

Structure 1:

Speaker A: requests information

Speaker B: provides response

Speaker A: evaluates (provides some reaction)

Speaker B: may provide additional information but not necessarily

Speaker A: aligns (expresses affect, evaluation, judgment or agreement)

Speaker B: *shifts topic*

The excerpt below exemplifies the described structure.

Excerpt 8: [Bjork and her very close friend Tsane were catching up while she was travelling in Europe. When this TBC happened Bjork was in Brussels. Tsane started the sequence by congratulating Bjork on her birthday and then they continued exchanging perceptions of and experiences from concerts and festivals they had attended.]:

52 22:01 **Tsane:** da ne preteruvame... treba fakultet da se uchi

[Let's not pretend...we should continue with our studies]

53 inaku, koa sme tuka, sho napravi so vtor faks?

[By the way, what did you do with the idea of enrollment in a second study program?]

54 **Bjork:** da be stvarno zaboraiv angliski so francuzive

[You are right; I forgot to speak English with the French people here]

55 pa ne upisav, rekov da vidam kako ke mi ide so ovoj pa posle

[Well, I didn't enroll, I said let me first see how the studies in the first study program go]

56 posto sega ima nekoj nov sistem ova ona

[Because there has been a new system and this and that]

57 22:02 da se etabliram prvo

[I need to establish myself first]

58 **Tsane:** pa i bolje taka... da ne ti dojde puna kapa sranja naednash...

[That's a better thought...so that you are not overwhelmed with tons of
shit at once...]

59 taka e

[You're right]

60 etabliranje e prvo i osnovno

[Establishing yourself is the first and basic thing]

→ 61 **Bjork:** ke odam sega vo Amsterdam

[I'm going to Amsterdam soon]

(BjorkCh 6)

Line 52 is a transfer utterance between two topic sequences. Tsane finishes the topic sequence with an opinion about the importance of studying and starts a new sequence with a question about Bjork's idea to enroll in a second study program. The topic initial elicitor in line 53 is "*by the way*," followed by a question. Bjork provides a response to his question. In line 58, Tsane evaluates the response by agreeing with Bjork that establishing oneself is the basic thing in a new environment. After alignment occurs with Tsane's agreement phrase "taka e" meaning "You're right", Bjork changes the topic, in line 61, by providing new information about her trip to Amsterdam.

The second most frequent structure of topic shift in this study (22%) occurred when the same person who closed the preceding sequence initiated a topic shift. In other words, topic shift occurred with self-selection of the speaker who provided the final comment in a preceding sequence.

Structure 2:

Speaker A: provides new information or provides response (positive or negative)

Speaker B: expresses attitude (affect, evaluation, judgment)

Speaker B: provides topic shift elicitor either providing or requesting new information

Excerpt 9, in which Bianca talks to her student Olja, who is recovering from a serious illness at the moment of the interaction, portrays the structure.

Excerpt 9: [Olja informed Bianca about her new diet used as treatment for her serious illness, saying that she was only allowed to eat fish. Olja also complained that her mother shouted at her because she worried only about school and did not take care of her own health.]:

27 [18.05.2011 18:37:11] **Olja:** Se e stvar na navika. Ke bide, samo sum nekako mnogu nerasplozena. Plus, i majka mi mi prefrla za toa kako jas se grizam samo za shkolo, za nisto drugo, ni za zdravjeto moe.
[Everything turns into a habit. It'll be ok, I'm just not in a good mood. Additionally, my mom reproaches me for taking care about school only, not about my health.]

28 [18.05.2011 18:37:34] **Olja:** Mozebi e navistina vo pravo, no vo momentov ne mora da mi se dere i da mi gi kazuva site tie raboti
[Maybe my mom is right, but she shouldn't yell at me in these circumstances and tell me all those things]

29 [18.05.2011 18:37:35] **Bianca:** Tops: znaci vegetarian!
[Tops: so a vegetarian!]

30 [18.05.2011 18:37:41] **Bianca:** Odlicno, se povekke ne ima!

[Excellent, there are more of us!]

31 [18.05.2011 18:38:00] **Bianca:** Majka, sto da se pravi, mora da vika za takvi neshta.

[Mother, what can you do; she feels obliged to yell for such matters.]

32 [18.05.2011 18:38:03] **Bianca:** Od nemok.

[Because she feels powerless.]

→ 33 [18.05.2011 18:39:26] **Bianca:** Question - sakam da te intervjuiram, za Nova blog. Moze?

[Question - I want to interview you, for the Nova blog. Possible?]

(BiancaCh 8)

After Olja provides information about her restricted diet, she adds information about her poor mood and her mother's unpleasant reaction. Bianca expresses attitude by welcoming Olja to the club of vegetarians and tries to justify Olja's mother's behavior. In lines 31, 32, and 33 Bianca closes the topic sequence in which Olja's new diet was discussed along with her complaint about her mother," then shifts the topic by asking whether she can interview Olja. In other words, Bianca does self-selection and provides a topic shift elicitor ("*Question...*"), most likely to shift Olja's focus from the complex situation she is in. The next excerpt is a Macedonian TBC used as a representative of Structure 2.

The excerpt demonstrates that interactants shift topics after they acquire a response to their inquiries and after accommodation occurs in the form of a judgment, an

evaluation, an affect, an agreement, or even a disagreement with the other person's response. Most often the person who shifts the topic is not the one who initiated the sequence. However, data showed that interactants also do self-selection and shift a topic after providing a second evaluation or accommodating to the reaction of the co-chatter.

6.6.4 Topic Shift in English vs. Macedonian TBCs

Cross-linguistically speaking, prior to an occurrence of topic shift short responses for alignment, usually agreement, are used in English (e.g. "ok," "yes," "yeah," "☺"), while in Macedonian various particles (e.g., "ajde," "emi," "ma," "more") are used in combination with other phrases to emphasize the force of the utterance. According to Minova-Gjurkova (2007), "particles are auxiliary words that allow the speaker to refer to the context and to convey different nuances of meaning" (p. 319). This was demonstrated through the excerpts. They play an important role in "expressing modal features of the utterance." I would add to this explanation that the interaction often appears to be more affective in Macedonian, because the participants chose to add those particles in the Macedonian TBC not to skip them, although the utterances without particles would have conveyed the same messages. In other words, on the discourse-pragmatic and interactional levels, the Macedonian particles "*ma*," "*be*," "*more*," "*ajde*" function as discourse markers and typically occur in sentence-initial position or sentence-final position. They serve to connect units of discourse and are used to manage talk at the interactional level.

6.6.5 Conclusions

If it is possible to summarize this long chapter in one sentence, then this chapter concludes that phatic communion depends on the human ability to manage interpersonal relations while simultaneously accommodating to the particular usage of appraisal subsystems, to the usage of extralinguistic devices, especially emoticons, and on the topics which manifest belonging to a certain community of practice.

The interactants used linguistic and extralinguistic items to express the subsystems of attitude as resources they jointly drew upon from their social knowledge in order to keep the interaction going. The excerpts and the analyses demonstrated how participants aligned and built phatic communion through evaluative comments about common interests while simultaneously broadening emotional and intellectual experiences about shared knowledge. The design of the social interaction depended on the positioning of the participants, as well as on the “roles” interactants have assumed or decided to play, consciously or unconsciously.

Previous CA research proposed that orientation to discourse topics rather than actions allows participants to construe all talk in a positive light, as establishing alignment and communion with others, rather than doing potentially face-threatening actions. The instances of face-threatening actions were rare in my data, but they were present, for example, in Bianca’s, Ager’s, and Ema’s TBCs. In those cases, participants very rarely explicitly drew attention to a discourse topic by announcing the change with a phrase meaning “let’s change the subject.” For further discussion on dispreferred turns see Heritage (1984) and about dispreferred responses see Pomerantz (1984).

Another important conclusion of this chapter is that shifts of discourse topics represent the topic shifter's full attention to what is going on in the interaction at a given moment. However, a successful topic shift occurs only if the co-chatter's personal views of how the interaction should progress accommodate quickly to the topic shifter's decision. There appears to be no pattern of how much time can be spent and how much interactional work is needed between closing a prior sequence and introducing a new discourse topic. In all the TBCs presented in this chapter a very quick alignment is established between participants because of the existence of shared knowledge available to all. The initial individual choice of discourse topics in online text-based chats and the interactional production of phatic communion are tied to the ways we create social action. Items used for agreement and accommodation also contribute to the better understanding of the notion of "good listenership," an important area of spoken discourse analysis. Linguists have often ignored this notion of good listenership in favor of a focus on speaking turns as initiating, rather than on responsive input (McCarthy, 2010).

CHAPTER 7. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

7.1 Introduction

This study explored the linguistic and social nature of online text-based chat (TBC). In order to understand better the nature of TBC, I described the chatting practices and communication strategies of seven Macedonian participants who use both English and Macedonian in their online interactions. Specifically, I focused on how speakers co-construct social (inter)action through TBC, how lines in turns are completed, how an interaction is opened and closed, and how the choice of topics and other features of TBC, such as emoticons, strengthen phatic communion. The participants' various approaches in online interactions using specific linguistic and extralinguistic resources in English and Macedonian were analyzed. All these segments are integral parts of approaching language as social action. This chapter presents the study's major conclusions, relates the findings to the research questions and the chosen methodology, discusses the theoretical implications of the study, and provides some future directions for researchers who approach language as social action.

7.2 Overview of Findings

7.2.1 Linguistic and Social Nature of Text-Based Chat

Relating my findings to all the assumptions presented in the literature review of CMC studies, I provide a set of propositions on the nature of online text-based chat: (1) people are creative in the use of both linguistic and paralinguistic elements to substitute

for the lack of features of face-to-face interaction such as gestures; (2) the interaction in TBC may be initiated with a specific purpose in mind, but that purpose, for many, is negotiated as the chat unfolds; (3) the language (either Macedonian or English) is sometimes more deliberate than the previous studies have suggested and even carefully chosen, often depending on the co-chatter; (4) TBC does not have a fixed structure with opening and closing as is expected in face-to-face interaction — people can start an interaction getting straight down to business and leave it without producing a leave-taking phrase; (5) interaction via TBC is less conventionalized since it contains idiosyncratic communication behaviors driven by the roles people play in everyday lives, and (6) interactants— as the participants were called in this study— are not only “chatters,” who “kill time” or convey messages through TBC, but they co-construct social action.

Regarding the research question about the linguistic and social nature of TBC, this study contributes with more evidence for TBC being a new mode of communication—a typed, interactive mode occurring online. It is always computer-, cell-phone- or i-pad-mediated; i.e., it is a text mediated by an electronic device requiring access to the Internet. I analyzed TBC by using various analytical techniques in order to demonstrate how Internet-based written interactions currently function. If we can address TBC as a “genre,” it will be valuable to add the adjective “amorphous” because TBC delivery technology is changing so quickly. Also, because of the rapidly increasing opportunities to add video and audio files that augment TBC text and the newly created, expanding types and functions of emoticons, TBC becomes a multi-competence interactive skill. It represents a mode of communication typical of the first decades of the

21st century. Online text-based chat is a specific mode also in regard to the extralinguistic elements interactants use, i.e., interactants are creative in finding ways to substitute for the missing elements available in face-to-face interaction and for the psychological states such as “showing” different moods through typing. However, similarly to face-to-face communication, they have some assumed roles in everyday lives (e.g., a teacher, wife, mentor), but generally venture, with various personal and social purposes, in accommodating their identities and roles with those of their co-chatters’.

Another feature of text-based CMC is that since it usually happens fast, spontaneity and interactivity, two social features of TBC, are more emphasized, which sometimes affect the clarity of interactant’s utterances. There are no highly established conventions for TBC, as there are for other types of written communication, such as, for example, the rhetorical moves in academic texts (e.g., see Swales, 1990). Although there are no highly established rhetorical forms, there are similar interactional behaviors. Often when the other party might not understand the use of emoticons in a certain TBC, for example the use of stand-alone smilies, they would not ask for clarification. As for the audience, it is not exactly the case of TBC that you have to fictionalize your audience (see Ong, 1975, for fictionalized audience). My interactants had to visualize to whom they were talking, so that they could decide on whether to use some extralinguistic items or not. Visualizing your audience occurs naturally when you see the name of your interlocutor in the textbox. Moreover, this is expected because in some chatting media a picture of the interlocutor automatically appears following his or her name, affecting the interactants’ choice of linguistic and extralinguistic elements. The visualization helps the co-construction of the interaction, which happens on different levels. It enhances the

alignment because it activates the awareness of the nature of personal and professional relationships. This is similar to Goffman's notion of footing³²: "a change of footing implies a change in the alignment we take up to ourselves and to the others present as expressed in the way we manage the production and reception of an utterance" (Goffman, 1981, p. 128), or Duranti's (1997, p. 232) view that "to engage in interpretation, an activity which includes the assignment of intentionality, involves understanding the relationship between individuals" (e.g., speakers and addressees and the social and natural world within which they operate). Participants in an interaction are competent agents who constantly produce and understand their social world together, which is, in a way, a view of some applied conversation analysts (see Kasper & Wagner, 2011, p. 122).

The linguistic and the social nature of TBC are interrelated. Expressing attitude is an integral part of any interaction, including online TBC. In this study, attitude items such as "good" and "great" in English and "super," "dobro," and "ubavo" in Macedonian, as well as the verb "love" in English, but not its equivalent in Macedonian, were often used to indicate interpersonal satisfaction and approval. The extralinguistic items such as emoticons, also used as attitude markers, did not only signal a relationship between discourse segments, but more importantly they were separate, free-standing social markers which operated cross-linguistically. It was valuable to observe, that although it is generally perceived that emoticons are used by anybody who is engaged in text-messaging or online text-based chat, one of my participants used only one emoticon in all her TBCs. All study interactants, with the exception of Bianca, used emoticons with their

³² Footing refers to the stance or alignment interactants take up vis-à-vis one another and their utterances.

friends and colleagues to coordinate stages of their interactional work, such as evaluating states and phenomena, making arrangements, or agreeing on courses of action.

Maintaining a social relationship through dyadic online TBC means that two people relate to each other through some communicative device (e.g., laptop), through shared social action and shared knowledge, and through situated co-positioning or some other means of recognizing one another's presence. Social (inter)action is always something continuing through time. Establishing and developing a social relationship entails preference to interact with certain members, but not with others. The frequency, nature, intensity, roles, purposes, and forms of interaction vary. My data showed how an interactant can variously position themselves in online TBC interactions with different people. Participants, regardless of the language they used (English or Macedonian), presented themselves in different positions through the processes of social interaction. Their positions were in a way rebuilt through the various discursive practices they employed, and they were affected spontaneously by each other's perceptions of professional and private issues, personal and social purposes for interaction, and attitude submodes.

Another finding of this study, related to the social nature of TBC, is that interactants never destroyed the social order by showing behavior their co-participants could not understand. What they actually did was co-cognizing resources to maintain their text-based chat and *save face*. By doing so, they created their own "orderliness" in their interactional behavior and maintained it. In other words, interactants were developing interactional competences and constructing alignment, teasing, negotiation, insult, and appraisal (see Hellermann, 2008; Kasper & Wagner, 2011).

Regarding belonging to a certain community of practice, the development of the self in TBC can be observed in the process by which one interactant accommodates the perspective of a co-positioned interactant. This recognition of oneself requires development of a system of social interaction strategies organized around that belonging to a community of practice. In my study, participants jointly developed their TBCs, but there were also instances of self selection in which one participant would dominate in the TBC producing more text in more turns than the other. Sometimes such positioning was intentional, usually at the beginning of the TBC, but the intended positioning was rarely maintained as the TBC unfolded. Usually the internalized individual purposes for initiating TBC would develop into social purposes.

Situated co-positioning is closely related to the notion of *saving face*. Findings in this study showed that even though the time intervals were short, if one wanted to maintain interactivity, then having the time to think and edit what one typed allowed an interactant to choose phrases and emoticons which usually minimized the risk to face (see Halliday, 1987). Text-based chat simultaneously offers the needed distance, if an interactant needs to pause and think better what to say and type, but it also offers immediacy, if an interactant feels like reacting immediately to something said to save their or the face of other interactant. It is true that in online communication some people hide their real identities, but in my study the identities of the interactants are well known to their co-chatters. Thus, in saving face, social closeness and social roles were more important than the hiding of identity, a common feature in virtual spaces.

While analyzing the data it was hard to distinguish between *role* and *positioning*, although Davies and Harre (1990, p. 62) explained that in role theory “any particular

conversation is understood in terms of someone taking on a certain role,” and that the utterances one produces are “dictated by the role and are to be interpreted in these terms.” Positioning addresses the ways in which “the discursive practices constitute the speakers and hearers,” but simultaneously it is “a resource through which speakers and hearers can negotiate new positions” (p. 62). I would add that *role* seems to be more static and artificially maintained at times, while *positioning* is negotiated dynamically and may seem it is detached from the participants in the initial stages of the interaction. In TBC, the whole system of social interaction strategies is produced moment by moment: that is, it is shaped by the interactants’ *in situ* understanding of all their contacts, past as well as present. For example, Rebecca’s interactional behavior with colleagues and with very close friends or Ager’s interactional behavior with his former girlfriend Widia and his boss Aleksandar presented cases in which the current TBCs were affected by past interactions with the same people.

7.2.2 Individual Uses and Practices

In regard to the individual chatting practices and the structure of openings and closings in TBC, it was concluded that there are no canonical openings and closings in TBC, and that variations were affected by the individual chatting habits and purposes of the participants. Eight variations were recognized for openings in TBCs, the most frequent being the one which contains a *greeting* followed by *getting down to business*, where *business* has different meanings that range from having responsibilities at work to sharing news or asking for advice. As for closings, three patterns were identified. Participants relied on the same procedures to do the interactional work whether they were

opening, maintaining, or closing a TBC, regardless of whether they were using English or Macedonian. Even if they were busy they would chat and work simultaneously, answering the questions of the other party. Whether or not the interlocutor used a private or shared computer and the fact that some of the TBCs were a continuation of some previous interactions also affected the interaction.

Regarding lexis, 11.4% of TBCs included the canonical “bye-bye” turns. The other leave taking turns in the English TBCs were “take care” turns, and “making-future-arrangements” turns, while the Macedonian TBCs ended with greetings, specifically the word “pozdrav,” meaning “regards,” “greetings” in Macedonian, good luck wishes and affective talk. Only four participants had relative control over terminal exchanges, doing so after they would receive the needed information or satisfy themselves with the self-identified expected scope of the maintained social relation. Having a particular individual purpose in mind when initiating a TBC was reported by four participants but it was observed in all TBCs. Usually the personal purpose would become a social purpose—something the participants were not aware of—as the TBC was scaffolded and all the processes of alignment would take place.

Cross-linguistically speaking, some of the participants showed idiosyncratic creativity by using words that are non-existent in the standard Macedonian language. They would transliterate English words in the characters of the Cyrillic alphabet (e.g., baj baj was a transliterated form of bye-bye).

7.2.3 Co-constructing Phatic Communion

Regarding the research question on the ways phatic communion was co-constructed, the findings showed that it was built through appraisal, emoticons, and topic choice. All the participants but one used emoticons for different purposes, not necessarily for protecting themselves from face-threatening acts. All used appraisal phrases, among which appreciation phrases were most frequent in both English and Macedonian. Research suggested that women are more inclined to be polite and cooperative in CMC than men (see Chapter 2). In my study, since there was only one male participant, no distinctions could be made regarding the impact of gender on interaction. What was observed, though, was that women emphasized solidarity by expressing appreciation, but simultaneously were also critical and eager to control the floor, whenever possible. The study showed that neither men nor women used TBC only to exchange information, and the way the exchange was performed revealed various ways of strengthening phatic communion.

We can understand the process of building phatic communion more clearly by acknowledging that people constantly adopt and defend their positions on community belonging, knowledge, ignorance, power, education, mentoring, and respect, and that they accept, confront, and negotiate the positions of others, i.e., TBC was based on facilitative alignment. The TBCs my participants were engaged in with English speakers led me to look more closely at how two people with different cultural, linguistic, or educational background were able to find commonality in the various topics about which they conversed. One reason was that educational choices are thought to be shaping people to be versatile in the topics that they can discuss with very minimal miscommunication.

In other words, interactants showed ability to quickly accommodate and assimilate an “in-between” culture (as reported by Bjork), a culture that is international, with a focus on maintaining social interaction at a distance.

These findings are consonant with Communication Accommodation Theory (Giles & Ogay, 2007). That is, the analysis of TBC in my study demonstrated that interactants could establish a satisfactory interaction by balancing convergence and divergence, i.e., by being willing to interact in spite of one another’s idiosyncrasies. The data also suggested, in line with general descriptions of phatic communion, that interactants preferred agreement to disagreement (Malinowski, 1923/1972, pp. 150–151).

When it comes to language choice as a method of co-positioning and accommodating, my participants would use Macedonian with foreigners who understood the language to correct them or inform them about a certain form. However, interestingly, one of the non-Macedonian participants used Macedonian sporadically to accommodate to his Macedonian co-chatters. One possible reason is that since English is a lingua franca, non-English interactants are expected to speak English well, while non-Macedonians rarely speak Macedonian well. When non-natives do speak Macedonian, they may feel that using the language enhances accommodation with native speakers.

Chapter 5, which focused on the *purpose* in TBC, demonstrated that even if interactants opened a TBC with an initial individual purpose in mind, that purpose was always open to further negotiation. The co-positioning of the interactants was situated in the specific social action, and it depended on situational factors such as spatial, technological, temporal, and existential factors. Two types of purposes were identified in this study: *personal* and *social purpose*. The personal purposes were internalized

purposes usually observed at the start of the TBC, but they would become co-constructed, i.e., would grow into social purposes, as the TBC unfolded. The different types of purposes identified in the study are similar to communicative and informative intention (see Sperber & Wilson, 1986). We can conclude that communicative behavior is guided by the initial personal purpose, but it is not fixed to this personal purpose behind the behavior. Rather it depends on how one interactant perceives the behavior of the other interactants and responds to them.

Chapter 6 explained how phatic communion is co-constructed and maintained through emoticons, eccentric spelling, written-out laughter, appraisal, and topic choice. All these phenomena constitute social action. As claimed earlier, emoticons and topic elicitors do more than just signal utterance boundaries; they often signal affective and social co-positioning. Specifically, phatic communion depends on the ability to manage interpersonal relations while simultaneously accommodating to the discussed topics by a particular usage of extralinguistic items and appraisal subsystems. This ability is a product of various social, cultural, and profession-related factors.

7.3 Contribution

The new perspective offered in this study's approach is that *a priori* assumptions are necessary. Unlike the traditional CA assumption that no category or class membership is ever to be assumed *a priori* relevant, but that relevance is in the local context alone, I have tried to demonstrate that some elements should be assumed *a priori*, for example: (1) the relationship between the interlocutors, which involves the assumed roles of the interactants/chatters; (2) whether the TBC under observation is a follow-up of

a previous interaction, and (3) the possible purposes interlocutors may have in mind when initiating the text-based chat. Sacks's lectures (1995, volume I), as I understand them, illustrate that he was aware of people's ability to manipulate the sequence in a conversation. People could react with an assumed action if something particular happened in the interaction, especially if the occurrence would make them feel uncomfortable. For example, in Sack's studies, when asked for their names, people who called the Suicide Prevention Center and did not want to reveal their identity would say "I can't hear you" or open up an ending to a conversation sooner than expected. Analysis of the data in my study showed that people have some assumptions of how conversations are usually opened and closed since we are engaged in those social activities on a daily basis; however, co-construction and accommodation cannot always be predicted. Our knowledge of the social actions we are engaged in is partial and situated, which means that it is specific to particular situations and contexts, rather than universally accepted and applicable.

The outcomes of this study have implications for three disciplines. First, this work broadens the range of features studied along with the range of analytical tools used in computer-mediated communication. Second, it adds a description of online text-based chatting practices in Macedonian by Macedonian-native speakers to the scholarly literature and compares those practices with the chatting practices of the same speakers in English, thus, broadening the range of languages that have been researched by scholars interested in intercultural CMC and intercultural rhetoric. Third and final, this research serves as a basis for future studies of new modes of communication (Gains 1990), and new genres outside academic contexts, specifically studies of how people communicate

in a second or foreign language in non-academic contexts and genres. Usually, genre studies analyze conventional rhetorical moves; thus, analyzing TBC as a new interactive mode can offer new insights for reconceptualizing the phenomenon of “moves.” As usual, insights are needed from other disciplines such as linguistic anthropology, media and communication studies, educational linguistics, and genre studies. These and other disciplines could examine valuable additional contexts in which the claims about positioning, attitude, phatic communion, and language issues such as code-switching and second language acquisition can be tested. For example, CMC modes are good venues for collecting data on code-switching and creative use of a foreign language. The analysis of code-switching in CMC offers opportunities for understanding better the factors of multilingualism in virtual spaces.

In addition to these benefits, exploring online interactions may serve to redefine the instrumental functions of any language in new media in relation to technological development, as well as to approach interpersonal meanings more systematically. According to Paolillo and Zelenkauskaitė (2011), the earliest and most ubiquitous uses of chat have been entertainment and hanging out, which can be considered as interpersonal metafunction of language. Although for SFL scholars all three metafunctions (ideational, interpersonal, textual) are fully represented in language use, it seems that the interpersonal meaning has not been addressed systematically, or as Eggins and Slade (1997) stated, “any comprehensive analysis of casual conversation must be able to offer a framework for describing interpersonal patterns in talk” (p. 50). If we take into consideration the existing related research done on CMC in general, my participants add

to the deeper understanding of text-based chatting because of the specific physical environments in which they exist.

Other area that emerged from this study and that may pose challenges to scholars exploring the use of English online as a lingua franca is phatic discourse and small talk, i.e., the "language used in free, aimless, social intercourse" (Malinowski 1923: 476). Specifically, exploring which type of interaction creates and enhances phatic communion is significant: whether it is interactions that are full of factual information or those that are devoid of "relevant" factual content. More importantly, analysis might show whether the level of interactants' literacy and education affects the way they perform social action. The results obtained in this study suggest that the participants used their own education and their acknowledgement of their interactants' educational background in showing developed accommodative behaviors. This was observed in the similarity of topic choices and of opinions about political and social phenomena.

The next contribution is enriching non-standard language variations. This study offers some new partially and fully nativized borrowings from English into Macedonian. The partially nativized borrowings were used in TBC both in their original English orthography and in a Cyrillic version or in an adapted Latin script with Macedonian inflections (e.g., "*smajlinja*" (*смајлиња*) meaning "smilies"; "*chat-ov*" meaning "this chat"). Some of this study's examples of the nativized borrowings, linguistic items which are completely adapted to the Cyrillic alphabet and to the Macedonian phonetic spelling system are: "*baj*" (*бај*) meaning "bye" and "*сπραјзингли нот*" meaning "surprisingly not." The second example shows the adaptation of the pronunciation of the English

lexical item to the Macedonian phonological system by replacing English phonemes with the closest existing Macedonian phonemes.

7.4 Future Research

Although e-communication seems to be an already established form for global communication in both professional and personal settings, some of its aspects remain unexamined, although they are transforming the existing forms of communicative behavior, or even generating new ones. For example, time lags, sudden termination and silence in CMC, comparison between face-to-face and online interactions are challenging areas for research. Fast interaction, i.e., the fast exchange of postings and response in online interactions prevents researches from noticing conversational phenomena we can observe more easily in face-to-face interaction. While this research has dealt with participants whose identity is known, it would be valuable to look into the attitudes of interactants who are not certain about their co-chatters' real identity. Comparative research into similarities between text-based chat and video chat would help to show whether strengthening social relationship is more effectively performed with emoticons, or whether the activation of voice and visuals is what really enhances the social relationship. Introducing technology to communities, groups, or geographically remote people who are isolated from technologically advanced means of interaction would be a valuable research method to trace the transfer from face-to-face interaction to online interaction.

Thinking of TBC as a historical phenomenon, it would be valuable to observe what will replace the current forms of online communication. For example, SMS (text

messaging) was launched for the first time, not long ago, in 1995, and is still widely used because it offers instantaneous contact between speakers in different geographical locations. With electronic chat becoming global phenomenon the need to exchange messages rapidly across languages is greater than the concern over knowing the language well. Short message, improper syntax, non-standard forms are less relevant than the social action performed. Further research into online discursive communication and the preferable online platforms or social networks will show the increasing range of language forms, while participants experiment with those forms.

The participants' situated co-positioning, as addressed in this study, seems to reveal how one's perceptions about the types of interactants, including oneself, affect the social meaning of what has been said. The situated co-positioning of interactants is itself a product of the social force an interaction has in particular circumstances. This issue was exemplified, but not fully explored, in Bianca's reflections upon her chatting practices as a means to offer help to her mentee and students, with whom she has no face-to-face contact as she used to have, while she taught in a particular school in Macedonia.

In my work I have not looked at the pedagogical implications of using text-based chat among second and foreign language learners. It will be valuable to measure the competences of language learners and users as suggested by Canale and Swain (1980), specifically investigating how use of online text-based chat between L2 and L1 speakers enhances (1) the discourse competence, which entails knowledge of genres and the rhetorical models that create genres; (2) the sociolinguistic competence, which entails the ability to understand the reader and the ability for appropriate use of language in different

contexts; and (3) the strategic competence, which entails the ability to use different strategies for communication.

Moreover, since TBC is a dynamic mode of interaction, using other socio-cognitive approaches (Atkinson, 2011) and theories, such as complexity theory (see Freeman, 1997; Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008) or ecological perspectives (see Kramsch, 2002; Leather & Van Dam, 2003) may give better insight into the social and cognitive processes users of TBC experience while acquiring a new language. Since SLA researchers are looking for a comprehensive field of research that can study language acquisition from a cognitive, social, cultural, ecological, and historical perspective, exploring non-academic genres such as TBC or interactions in online non-academic settings may help clarify the complexity of the relationship between language, environment, and mind, and more importantly, the “emancipation” of the language learner. Or, as Kasper and Wagner (2011) pointed out, speaker’s interactional competence allows them to take part in an interaction in the first place, and “it also furnishes the conditions to engage in social activity of language learning and to participate more effectively in practices and activities over time” (p. 119). This focus on obtaining both competence and confidence for more effective interactional practice is important for pedagogical research on SLA and L2 writing.

7.5 Final Thoughts

Although stories about persons who interact in ways familiar or strange to us may seem appealing, the seven interactants in this study have offered much more than the

description of their daily chatting practices. Unconsciously they managed to remove themselves from being a central point of the research and to bring other issues into focus. Rather than simply a source of linguistic and extralinguistic data such as emoticons, they brought into focus psychological, philosophical, and socio-cognitive issues—among them professional and personal relationships of the 21st century, the socio-political systems of the countries they come from, individual creativity which enhances evolution of languages, aesthetic perceptions, historical events and the way social habits shift.

Our interactional worlds are plugged into both physical and virtual time and space. Or, to use Harre and Gillett's words, "to have a sense of one's personal individuality is to have a sense of having a place or places in various manifolds, that is, system of locations," and also a sense of "existing at a moment in an unfolding of time" (Harre' & Gillett, 1994, pp. 103–104). Our social selves are built and re-built as interactions occur and unfold. Many factors define whether these social selves will be accepted, rejected, or accommodated by the others. Some scholars believe that people are social because "they relinquish their personal individuality in favor of either participating in the activity of a social unit, or in favor of affective and mental communion with others" (Valsiner & Van Der Veer, 2000, p. 388). I would add that the virtual interactional experience does not replace the lived experience but it rather adds to the lived experience.

I feel it is appropriate to end this work by saying a few words of what I have learned as a young researcher. As other researchers of language who do not use classical experimentation and quantitative procedures, initially I felt constrained by traditional scientific procedures. Thus, I have chosen to explore the data as they were emerging.

What I mean is that in the first stages of designing my project, I tried to put my participants in pairs, set topics, and prescribe interaction times, but my participants were all strongly opposed to this procedure. They asked for naturally occurring interactions, which has proved to be a good way to fight against the full control of the researcher. Their reaction reflects Chafe's observation (1994) that "the unnaturalness of data on which so much of psychology and linguistics relies can be highly disturbing to anyone who is sensitive to what language is really like" (p. 16).

Regarding methodology the interdisciplinary approach helped me to analyze TBC in depth. The analysis of text requires a principled way of dividing transcribed data into units in order to assess its features, including choice of topic, openings, and closings. In applied linguistics research, the segmentation of spoken or written data is an essential tool without which quantitative and qualitative analysis of language use would not be possible. Analyzing such data meant making numerous decisions about categories that were not mutually exclusive and items which did not easily fit into existing definitions of units and categories. Counting the frequency of certain linguistic and extralinguistic elements was insufficient to draw general conclusions; however, the results of the counting were indicative and directed me to entities worth exploring further, for example, the phenomenon of *attitude*. The *choice of topics* implied belonging to a certain community of practice.³³ Specifically, it implied that all the participants are digital immigrants who balance their communicative behavior between virtual and physical

³³ In his article *Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants*, Marc Prensky (2001) presented the term "digital natives" which refers to the generations which grow up immersed in technology—they were born in the Internet age, use cell phone and text-messaging naturally instead of landlines and other numerous digital technologies that allow them instant communication. On the other hand, digital immigrants learn how to use the technology as extension to their body and mind.

spaces. Each part of the methodology (observation, survey, discourse analysis, conversation analysis, and interviews) allowed for the analysis of both general communicative purposes of online interaction and of specific features for each individual participant's interaction.

I approached this study with the idea that data is always contextualized, drawing upon the work of Goffman (1974), Tannen (1989), and Eggins (1994) who believe that in order to analyze language better we should not look at language in isolation, since that offers minimal assistance; instead language should be explored in non-experimental settings. I did not look at “proper English language” because deleting the “non-grammatical” data would have resulted in destroying meaningful online text-based chat features. The multidisciplinary approach gave me more freedom to work with my type of data than any prescriptive and formalist approach. The idea that people do not use ready-made formulas to produce the same language every time they chat online, even with same interactants, guided me throughout the whole research process. For example, when I chatted with my advisor about my dissertation work I did not produce the same language and TBC structures as when I chatted with my parents about the same issue.

I also believe that it is better if the analysts share some social and cultural worlds with the participants rather than enter the field as absolute strangers and become equal co-member solely for research purposes. Knowing the people you observe is in some senses comparable to doing an unofficial longitudinal study; it is valuable to get to know your participants by spending time with them. Hutchby and Wooffitt (2008, p. 106) explain this as something that is “absolutely necessary”—that analysts are either

members of the group they are doing a study with or understand well the culture of their participants. Kasper and Wagner (2011) call this concept “membership knowledge.”

There is no *a priori* list of phenomena to be checked in qualitative research, but new interactional phenomena are spotted in the course of the analysis, or as conversation analysts call it “unmotivated looking” at data. I would like to think that non-controlled online communication is one of the more promising arenas in which Malinowski's original concept of phatic communion could be put to work in future research.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A Surveys

QUESTIONNAIRE

Title: Language, writing, and social interaction: A comparative discourse analysis of text-based chats in Macedonian and English

Professor Dwight Atkinson, PhD (Principal Investigator)

Mira Bekar, PhD student (co-investigator)

Purdue University-Department of English

Instructions: Please type X next to the option that applies to you. If a question is an open-ended one, feel free to include as much information as you feel is relevant. If a question doesn't apply to you please type N/A. Answering this questionnaire should not take longer than 15 minutes.

1. As a non-native speaker of English, how many years have you been:

- a. learning English?
- b. using English?

2. In what capacity have you been using it? (mark all answers that apply to you; type X)

- when travelling (in shops, asking for directions/transport information)
- academically (I studied in English)
- professionally (I need it for my job)
- casual conversations with friends from abroad

3. Have you taken any English proficiency standardized tests? YES NO

4. If you have taken any standardized test (TEOFL, IELTS, Cambridge Proficiency, please state the name of the test and your overall score (if you can't find the exact score any close approximation of the remembered score is fine?

Test: _____ Score: _____

5. Have you participated in text-based online chats before? (*text-based means chats in which you type, no audio or video is used) YES NO

6. When you do text-based chatting, which software application do you use most often? (mark one or two options maximum)

Google talk (gtalk/gmail chat)

Skype
 Facebook
 MSN
 Yahoo messenger
 AOL
 Facebook
 Other-please specify

7. How often have you been using the preferred software chatting programs/application in the past year? (please choose one)

Few times a day
 Once a day
 2-3 times a week
 Once a week
 I don't know

8. Have your text-based chatting practices changed in the past year? If your answer is "YES", please explain how they changed referring to the frequency of your chatting practices and reasons for your change.

9. How often do you chat (text-based only, no video/audio involved) in certain languages?

	Never	Less than once a month	Once a month	Once a week	2-3 times a week	Daily	Few times per day
in Macedonian							
in English							
Combination of Macedonian and English							
Other languages							

10. How would you describe your skills as a computer user? (please mark one option)

Beginner

Intermediate
Advanced

11. How would you describe your typing ability? (please check one option)
(**Request:** if you don't know the answer, please set up a time of 1 minute, type for a minute and measure your speed by counting the words you typed)

Beginner (1-34 - WPM words per minute)
Intermediate/average (35-50 WPM)
Advanced (above 50 WPM) X

12. Do you feel that your typing ability affects your text-based chatting practices?
Please provide brief explanation.

13. What is your usual reason for using text-based chat?

Entertainment
"Killing time"
Maintaining social relations with my friends
Work/business
Educational
Other-please specify

14. If you feel that you have several reasons for using text-based chat instead of a main one, is it possible that you quantify your answer? For example, 50% killing time, 40% maintaining relationships with my friends, 10% entertainment.

15. Who do you usually chat with? (you can check more than one choice)

Friends
Colleagues
Romantic partner
Family members
Other

16. Do you usually chat (text-based) with (only one option is possible):

One person only
Two people simultaneously
Three people simultaneously
More than three

17. Do you always have a particular purpose in mind (i.e. you know what you want from your interlocutor) when you start a text-based chat?

1. Yeas, I start a text-based chat with a particular purpose
2. No, I don't have any purpose in mind when I start a text-based chat

18. When you interact with people who are geographically close (live in the same city and are easy to reach) what type of communication, in very general terms, do you prefer? (mark TWO options maximum)

1. Face-to-face
2. Via Phone (land-line or cell phone)
3. Via text-based chat (Facebook, Skype, Gtalk etc.)
4. Via audio and video chat
5. Via email

19. Although this may sound like a stereotypical question, in very general terms, how would you describe the TYPICAL interaction practices of Macedonian people, ages 25-40? (mark TWO options maximum)

Macedonians prefer to meet personally and talk face-to-face

Macedonians prefer to talk on the phone

Macedonians prefer to chat (TEXT-BASED) on Facebook, Skype and other social media.

Macedonians prefer the online audio and video calls

Macedonians prefer email communication

Other (please specify)

20. Would you be willing to participate in a 20-30 minute interview with the researcher at a time suitable for you to discuss further the results of the text-based chat and data analysis?

YES NO

21. Finally, please provide the following information about yourself

First (native) language:	
Other languages you speak:	
Status: (PhD or MA student)	
Occupation:	
Gender: M or F or Other	
Age:	
(type X next to the option	20-25
which applies to you)	26-30
	31-35
	36-40
	> 40

Thank you ☺☺☺

Appendix B Interview questions

Interview questions for all participants:

There were two sets of questions asked: general and specific

1. General questions about participants' chatting practices:

- What's your relationship with person X?
- Has it changed since you sent me the chats?
- Do you have a purpose in mind when you start a chat?
- Do you have some previously assigned roles in your interaction with person X?
- Do you treat your cultural and linguistic background as relevant to your interaction?

(How does your specific background affect the interaction?)

- Do you feel your online chatting practices have changed since you left Macedonia?

(three of the participants live abroad)

- If you initiate a chat are you the one who closes it? Do you feel any responsibility to end if you are the one who started it?

- Do you use smilies often in your online text-based chats?

2. Examples of specific questions about the chats (the questions asked after the discourse analysis of the text-based chats):

- Why the use of some particular phrases with this person?
- Do you use "Oks" often? What does it mean?

- Do you often use references to books in your chats?
- What did you mean by this particular phrase? Can you give me the broader context?
- Are you aware that people perceive you as an advice-giver?

Appendix C Tables of Individual Uses of Appraisal Phrases

Tables below present the most frequent words (adjectives, adverbs, intensifiers) individual participants used for expressing attitude.

1. Bianca

Table X – Occurrences of Relevant Tokens (2997 is the total number of words in the TBCs)

Attitude Item (English) – all participants	Frequency	Attitude Item (Macedonian) – all participants	Frequency
Good	10	Super	13
Ok (Oks)	11	Epten (very, quite)	8
Smart	4	Bravos	7
A bit	5	Ludnica/ludo (crazy)	7
Really	3	Ajde (let's)	6
Cool	3	Tops	5
Solid	3	Odlichno (great)	5
Fine	3	Ama ich (anything but)	4
		Skroz (totally)	4
		Oks	4
		Bash taka (exactly)	4
		Pametno (smart)	3
		Nice (an English word used in a Macedonian TBCs)	3

2. Lola

Table X – Occurrences of Relevant Tokens (7529 is the total number of words in the TBCs)

Attitude Item (English)	Frequency	Attitude Item (Macedonian)	Frequency
Good	8	Super	3
Very + adj. or adv.	10	Ubavo (good, nice)	3
So + adj. or adv.	10	Povekje (more)	2
Great	7	Polesno (easier)	2
Love (verb)	10	Ajde	2
Wow	5		
Bad	4		

In the English TBCs, Lola used 80 different tokens to express attitude, while in the Macedonian TBCs she used only 17 different tokens/linguistic items. Two of the tokens in English (e.g., “great” and “good”) are synonymous with the words “super” and “ubavo” in Macedonian.

3. Ema

Table X – Occurrences of Relevant Tokens (5549 is the total number of words in the TBCs)

Attitude Item (English)	Frequency	Attitude Item (Macedonian)	Frequency
Good	7/5549	Dobro (good)	7
Nice (ly)	5	Lud/nenormalno (crazy)	4
So + adj. or adv.	11	Mnogu (really, many, much)	4
Real (really) + adj. or adv.	5		
Seem (verb)	5		
Fun	3		
Just	4		

In the English TBCs, Ema used 81 different tokens for expressing attitude, while in Macedonian she used about 50% less, i.e., 48 different tokens to express various states

of judgment, appreciation and affect. The two tokens are synonymous; those are “good” in English with “dobro” in Macedonian, and “really” in English with “mnogu” in Macedonian. The Macedonian word “mnogu” is a modifier, and it is equivalent to the meaning of “really,” “much” and “many” in English.

4. Bjork

Table X – Occurrences of Relevant Tokens (6553 is the total number of words in the TBCs)

Attitude Item (English)	Frequency	Attitude Item (Macedonian)	Frequency
Really + adjective (hard, bad, scary, cool, nice)	13	Mnogu (really, many, much, a lot of)	7
Very + adjective	8	Zdravi (healthy food related)	4
Even	3	Dobro (good)	3
Horror/horrible/terrible/dreadful/Scary	5	Uzhas (horror)	3

In the English TBCs, Bjork used 81 different tokens to express attitude, while in the Macedonian TBCs she used only 66 different tokens/linguistic items. The tokens “really” and “mnogu” are synonymous in English and Macedonian. Bjork used “good,” as the most frequently used adjective but only in English. She did not use its synonym in Macedonian. What is specific for Bjork is the usage of the adjective “horror” in English and its equivalent in meaning the word “ужас,” in Macedonian. She put a greater illocutionary force in negative evaluations.

5. Maria

Table X – Occurrences of Relevant Tokens (3058 is the total number of words in the TBCs)

Attitude Item (English)	Frequency	Attitude Item (Macedonian)	Frequency
Great	2/3058	Fini (nice)	3/3058
Very (active)	2	Lajk (like)	2
So	2	Ke placam/mu se raduvam/ke umirav (I'll cry, I'm looking forward to/I'll have died)	1 (one of each but typical only for Maria)
Feels like ...	2		
Good	2		

In the English TBCs, Maria used 29 different tokens to express attitude, while in the Macedonian TBCs she used 25 different tokens/linguistic items. As we can conclude from the rare occurrences of same attitude items, she rarely repeated the same affective phrases. The tokens were not synonymous in English and Macedonian.

6. Rebecca

Table X – Occurrences of Relevant Tokens (8485 is the total number of words in the TBCs)

Attitude Item (English)	Frequency	Attitude Item (Macedonian)	Frequency
Good	8/8485	Ubavo (shubo) (nice)	4
Great	6	Super	2
So (much)	6	Mnogu (really, many, much, a lot of)	5
A lot of (people)	7	Lele (affective marker)	2
Seem (verb)	7	Definitli	2
Love (verb)	6		
Bad (worse, worst)	6		
Interesting	4		
Crazy	4		

Cute	4		
Looked depressing	3		
Definitely	3		
Very	5		
Really	5		

In the English TBCs, Rebecca used 62 different tokens to express attitude, while in the Macedonian TBCs she used 38 different tokens/linguistic items. The tokens “good,” “great,” “so,” in English are synonymous with the Macedonian words “ubavo,” “super,” i “mnogu,” respectively.

7. Ager

Table X – Occurrences of Relevant Tokens (4719 is the total number of words in the TBCs)

Attitude Item (English)	Frequency	Attitude Item (Macedonian)	Frequency
Really + adj. or adv.	4/4719	Dobro (good, better)	5
Nice (ly)	3	Ok	3
Plenty	3	Auuu (wow)	3
Love, lie, hope (verb)	1 instance of each	Normalen (normal)	3
Smelly drunk blokes	1	Многу/мошне/доста/бесно (modifier/a lot /really/crazily good)	5
		Super	2
		Sakam (like v.)	2

Appendix D Transcription conventions

Transcription conventions for the interview data.³⁴

The following transcription symbols were utilized:

[] overlapping speech

(0.5) numbers in brackets indicate pause length

(.) micropause

: elongation of vowel or consonant sound

? rising intonation

= latched utterances

underlining contrastive stress or emphasis

CAPS used for louder talk

() blank space in parentheses indicates uncertainty about the heard words

*Note: For better readability, in this final version, all transcription symbols were removed from the excerpts and punctuation marks were added to the original utterances.

³⁴ The interview data were transcribed using the conventions presented in the appendix; however, for the greater clarity of the content analysis of the text-based chat and because the prosodic features were not in the focus of this study the symbols were not shown in the excerpts from the interviews.

VITA

VITA

Mira Bećar

Education:

2015	PhD in English , May 2015, Purdue University, US
08/2008 – 2015	PhD student in ESL/Second Language Studies program with focus on Second language writing and Applied linguistics at Purdue University
01/2008	MA in Linguistics - Blaze Koneski Faculty of Philology, Sts. Cyril and Methodius University, Skopje, R. Macedonia
08/2006-06/2007	Fulbright Visiting Researcher at Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne (research for my MA thesis in the areas of Discourse Analysis and Second Language Writing)
2005	One-week stay at the University of Manchester (Writing University Project exchange)
2004-2006	Graduate studies in Linguistics at Blaze Koneski Faculty of Philology, Sts. Cyril and Methodius University, Skopje, R. Macedonia

05/03/2001	BA in English Language and Literature – specialization in translation, Blaze Koneski Faculty of Philology, Sts. Cyril and Methodius University, Skopje, R. Macedonia
1996-2001	Undergraduate studies, Blaze Koneski Faculty of
1996-2002	Philology, Skopje - Department for English Language and Literature, Sts. Cyril and Methodius University, R. Macedonia
1994-1996	Faculty of Electrical Engineering, Skopje (few courses taken)
1990-1994	Secondary school Rade Jovchevski - Korchagin, Skopje Technician of Informatics 4 th degree
summer 1990	One-month stay in London, UK (intensive course in English)

Work experience:

2011- present	Senior lector in English (teaching English language and academic writing to undergraduate students) at Ss Cyril and Methodius University
08/2008-2011	Teaching writing courses – Introductory composition at Purdue University (ENGL 10600 for American students and ENGL 10600 I for international students)
2005-present	Writing University Project Coordinator for years 1 and 3 (a writing project in collaboration with the British Council in

	Skopje, R. Macedonia and the Faculty of Philology, Skopje, R. Macedonia, was established with the purpose of training the young staff to teach writing to EFL students)
10/01/2003 - 2006	Lector in Contemporary English Language (Senior English Language Instructor), at Blaze Koneski Faculty, Sts. Cyril and Methodius University, Skopje, R. Macedonia
01/2001- 09/2003	Teacher of English at the private language school <i>The Globe</i> , Skopje, R. Macedonia (teaching English and Macedonian to adults and children of all ages)
summer 2000	Part-time jobs as a translator and interpreter (for a daily local newspaper <i>Vest</i> and for a civil engineering and local construction firm, Skopje, R. Macedonia)

Conference/Symposium paper presentations

“Negotiating needs: English in international protest banners and slogans”, English Studies as Archive and as Prospecting (80 years of English Studies in Zagreb), Zagreb, Croatia, 18-21 September, 2014.

“E-communication: Adaptation or direct transfer of interaction skills”, CCCS, Skopje, September 4-6, 2014.

“The Transparency of Writing Portfolio Rubrics”, workshop at EWCA 2014 – Conference of the European Writing Centres Association, Let’s Peer Across Borders – Writing Centres in Motion, July 19-22, 2014.

“The Hardship of Summary Writing: A Study of EFL Writers”, AWEAST conference, Timsioara, Romania, April 3-6, 2014.

“Genre Use in Eastern Europe: A Comparison of Genre Use in the Humanities of Three Different Universities in Three Different Countries”, paper co-authored with Claudia Doroholschi, Otto Kruse, Tatyana Yakhontova, EATAW, Budapest, June 27-29, 2013.

“Voice in academic writing: Tackling logical fallacy perpetuation”, paper presentation co-authored with Elena Onchevska Ager, EATAW, Budapest, June 27-29, 2013.

“Using content- and context-based instruction as motivational tools in EFL writing courses in Macedonia and Lebanon”, paper co-authored with prof. Fatima Esseili presented at FLOW (third international conference on theory and practice of foreign language writing), Lodz, Poland, June 9-11, 2013.

“Language and Social Interaction: Creating the interactive self in online text-based chats” paper presented at Language and Superdiversity: Explorations and interrogations, Jyvaskyla, Finland, June 5-7, 2013.

“Helping Students to Develop Effective Written Arguments”, paper presented at ELTAM with Elena Onchevska Ager, Pedagogoshka Akademija, Skopje, October, 2012.

SSLW 2012 - “Reverse academic culture shock: Transferring SLW practices and knowledge from a US to non-US university”, part of a panel “Expanding Graduate Education in Second Language Writing: Perspectives from Five Recent PhD Candidates” SSLW, Purdue University, USA, September, 2012.

“Co-constructing the social and interactive self in online text-based chats” Narrative Matters: Life and Narrative, American University of Paris, France, May-June 2012.

“Transferring practices of reflective writing: What can writing instructors learn from student reflection papers?” EWCA, American University at Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria, May 2012.

“The interactive self in online text-based chats: A case study of Macedonian chatters” Language, Literature, Values, University of Nish, April 2012.

“Genre and identity: Rhetorical moves in Macedonian Research Articles”, a part of a workshop entitled “Multicultural literacy as a learning outcome (in/through academic writing) - To what extent?” 4th ENIEDA Conference on Linguistic and Intercultural Education Vršac, Serbia, September-October, 2011.

“Openings and Closings in Macedonian and English Text-based Chats” Across languages and cultures 4th International Adriatic-Ionian Conference Ca’ Foscari University of Venice, September 2011.

“Audience in L1/L2 Academic Writing: Graduate Students’ Perceptions of Authorial Expertise in Research Articles” Symposium on Second Language Writing, Taipei, Taiwan, June 2011.

“Learning from the past, preparing for the future: Challenges faced by professionals entering the field of L2 Writing.” with a co-presenter Matthew Allen. Graduate Symposium on ESL Research at Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN April, 2011.

“L2 Writers’ Perceptions and Realization of Academic Identity in RAs” with a co-presenter Mei-Hung Lin. INTESOL, Indianapolis, IN, November 2010.

“Stance, Discourse Topic, and Listener’s Level of Likability: Evaluative Reactions to Japanese Speakers of English.” Sixth Conference on Intercultural Rhetoric and Discourse, Atlanta, GA, June 2010.

“All Cultures BIG and small” - A “hot topic” roundtable. Mira Bekar and Kyle McIntosh. Graduate Symposium on ESL Research at Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN, April 2010.

“Self-reported Problems of L1 and L2 College Writers: What can writing instructors do?”

7th TALGS Conference, East Carolina University, NC, February 2010.

Session chair at Symposium of Second Language Writing, Tempe, AZ, November 2009

“Self-reported Problems of L1 and L2 Student Writers” ESL Graduate Symposium at

Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN, April 2009.

“Who is YOU”? Who is WE?” Sidury Christiansen and Mira Bekar. Symposium on

Second Language Writing, Nagoya, Japan, September 2007.

Publications

“Educational Genres in Eastern Europe: A Comparison of the Genres in the Humanities

Departments of three Countries” *Journal of Academic Writing* 5(1), 119-132.

“Language as social action in e-communication” *Blesok, no 93, volume 16*, November-

December 2013.

“Openings and Closings in Macedonian and English Text-based Chats” *Jezik,*

Knizhevnost, Vrednosti (Language, Literature, Values), Collected Works, University of

Nish, 2013 (pp. 381-393).

“Writing curricula design: Aims and practices” *FLOW (Foreign Language Opportunities in Writing)* Lodz: Lodz University Press, 2013.

„Варијантите на англискиот јазик и протестната уметност: улогата на англискиот јазик во протестни натписи, транспаренти и постери” (English title: World Englishes in Protest Street Art: A Case Study of the Use of English in International Protest signs, Banners and Posters). *Annual collected works at the Faculty of Philology* 38, pp. 153-165 (2012-2013), Skopje, R. Macedonia: Filoloshki Fakultet.

„Култура и настава: Зошто е важно да се разбере концептот *култура* при предавање на немајчин јазик?” (English title: Culture and pedagogy: Why is it important to understand the concept of *culture* when teaching a foreign language?”). *Annual collected works at the Faculty of Philology* 37 (2011-2012), Skopje, R. Macedonia: Filoloshki Fakultet, 2011-2012.

“Second language writing: Concerns and positive changes in the field” *TESOLIN’* 29 (3) Pre-conference/Fall 2011 (pp. 5-7).

“Self-reported problems of L1 and L2 college writers: What can writing instructors do?” Ch. 2 in Jan Majer and Lukasz Salski (Eds.) *FLOW (Foreign Language Opportunities in Writing)* (pp. 97-125). Lodz: Lodz University Press, 2011.

“Пишан дискурс кај говорителите на англискиот јазик како мајчин и немајчин: Фактори кои влијаат на правилно разбирање на даден текст” (English title: “Written Discourse of NESs and NNEs: Factors which Influence Text Comprehension”). *Annual collected works at the Faculty of Philology 35* (2010-2011), Skopje, R. Macedonia: Filoloshki Fakultet, 2010-2011.

„Комуникативната функција на јазикот и социолингвистичката компонента изразување мислење, согласување и несогласување“ (English title: “Communicative Function of Language and the Sociolinguistic Component ‘Expressing Opinion, Agreement and Disagreement’.” *Annual collected works at the Faculty of Philology 32* (2007-2008), Skopje, R. Macedonia: Filoloshki Fakultet, 2007-2008.

“Writing University Project.” Mira Bekar, Margaret Reid and Anastazija Kirkova-Naskova. *Annual Collected Works at the Faculty of Philology 30* (2004-2005), Skopje, R.Macedonia: Filoloshki Fakultet, 2004-2005, pp. 233-235.

Projects

Spring 2012-2014

LIDHUM-Literacy Development in the Humanities

(member of the national team of R. Macedonia)

http://www.zhaw.ch/fileadmin/php_includes/popup/projekt-detail.php?projektnr=1320

Spring 2014	Collaborative teaching project on computer-mediated intercultural communication with University of Manchester, UK and RMIT International University Vietnam
Spring 2012	Collaborative project on education and CMIC with University of Manchester, UK
2004-2007	Member of the Writing University Project team in collaboration with the British Council in Skopje, R. Macedonia
September 2006	Participation in the Appleseed Writing Project Inaugural Conference: Building Multicultural Learning Communities, Indiana University-Purdue University at Fort Wayne, USA
March 2005	Participation in the Seminar on Corpus Linguistics at Vilem Mathesius Center for Research and Education, Prague, Czech Republic
2004- 2006	Writing Project Seminars, English Department, Faculty of Philology, Sts. Cyril and Methodius, Skopje, in collaboration with the British Council - R. Macedonia

2004 Member of the team of translators of *Macedonian Art and Culture in 20th Century*, encyclopedic, electronic version

2000-2001 Member of the team of translators for the *Anthology of English Short Stories* (not published)

Translations

2013 Translation of Lukoil monograph

2006 Translation of “Tesla Bequest” by Lewis Perdue (in collaboration with Biljana Nikolovska, published by the local publishing house Kultura, Skopje, R. Macedonia)

2005 Translation of the *National Strategy for the Development of Education in the Republic of Macedonia*
(<http://www.npro.edu.mk/dokumenti/strategija-mk.pdf>)

2005 Translation of the *Handbook - Games and Exercises* aimed at the foreign learners of Macedonian by Lidija Tanturovska

Service, workshops and invited talks

September, 2014	Workshop for a SCOPES project “Online support for student writers” (ONWRITE), Zurich University of Applied Sciences, Winterthur, 2014
October, 2012	Работилница за академско пишување (Academic Writing Workshop), Faculty of Philology, Skopje, Macedonia
June, 2012	“Developing Trainer,” Summer school (18 hour course), British Council, Macedonia
January, 2012	“Developing Trainer”, Winter school (a 30 hour course), British Council, Macedonia
January 24, 2012	How to be a successful student at a public university in the US? Talk at the American Corner, Skopje, Macedonia
November 8, 2011	Teaching creative and academic writing: Few activities that will help you acquire new writing skills. Workshop with Gligorova Bela at the American Corner, Skopje, Macedonia

November 1, 2011	Speaking assessment workshop, British Council, Macedonia
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2010-2011	Speaker Series chair at ESL/SLS Program at Purdue University
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April 2011, November 2010	Prelims and Prospectus Panel (GradSEA at Purdue University)
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Professional memberships:

2013	EATAW
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2009	TESOL/INTESOL and ESSE
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2007	Fulbright Alumni
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2007	Member of MAAA (Macedonian-American Alumni Association)
------	------------------------------------------------------------

2005-2007	Member of the Writing University Project team in collaboration with the British Council in Skopje
-----------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

2003 Member of ELTAM (Association of English Language Teachers in Macedonia)

Fellowships/Grants

2011-2012 Global Supplementary Grant Program (OSI)

2010-2011 Global Supplementary Grant Program (OSI)

2009-2010 Global Supplementary Grant Program (OSI)

2006-2007 Fulbright Fellowship – a visiting student/young scholar in the US

Languages

Proficient in English, Serbian, Croatian, Macedonian

Good reading competence in German and average speaking competence in German

Letters of recommendations:

Purdue University:

Prof. Dwight Atkinson email: datkinso@purdue.edu

Prof. Richard Johnson-Sheehan email: rjohnso@purdue.edu

Prof. Tony Silva email: silvat@purdue.edu

Sts Cyril and Methodius University:

Prof. Margaret Reid, *honoris causa*, email: pgreid99@gmail.com

Prof. Graham Reid *honoris causa*, email: pgreid99@gmail.com

Prof. Eleni Buzarovska, PhD, email: elenibuzarovska@mt.net.mk

IPFW

Prof. Richard Ramsey, PhD, email: ramseyr@ipfw.edu

The University of Manchester

Prof. Teresa O'Brien, PhD, email: teresaobrien92@hotmail.com

PUBLICATIONS

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“Educational Genres in Eastern Europe: A Comparison of the Genres in the Humanities Departments of three Countries” *Journal of Academic Writing* 5(1), 119-132.

“Language as social action in e-communication” *Blesok, no 93, volume 16*, November-December 2013.

“Openings and Closings in Macedonian and English Text-based Chats” *Jezik, Knizhevnost, Vrednosti (Language, Literature, Values), Collected Works, University of Nish*, 2013 (pp. 381-393).

“Writing curricula design: Aims and practices” *FLOW (Foreign Language Opportunities in Writing)* Lodz: Lodz University Press, 2013.

„Варијантите на англискиот јазик и протестната уметност: улогата на англискиот јазик во протестни натписи, транспаренти и постери” (English title: World Englishes in Protest Street Art: A Case Study of the Use of English in International Protest signs, Banners and Posters). *Annual collected works at the Faculty of Philology* 38, pp. 153-165 (2012-2013), Skopje, R. Macedonia: Filoloshki Fakultet.

„Култура и настава: Зошто е важно да се разбере концептот *култура* при предавање на немајчин јазик?“ (English title: Culture and pedagogy: Why is it important to understand the concept of *culture* when teaching a foreign language?). *Annual collected works at the Faculty of Philology* 37 (2011-2012), Skopje, R. Macedonia: Filoloshki Fakultet, 2011-2012.

“Second language writing: Concerns and positive changes in the field” *TESOLIN*’ 29 (3) Pre-conference/Fall 2011 (pp. 5-7).

“Self-reported problems of L1 and L2 college writers: What can writing instructors do?” Ch. 2 in Jan Majer and Lukasz Salski (Eds.) *FLOW (Foreign Language Opportunities in Writing)* (pp. 97-125). Lodz: Lodz University Press, 2011.

“Пишан дискурс кај говорителите на англискиот јазик како мајчин и немајчин: Фактори кои влијаат на правилно разбирање на даден текст” (English title: “Written Discourse of NESs and NNEs: Factors which Influence Text Comprehension”). *Annual collected works at the Faculty of Philology* 35 (2010-2011), Skopje, R. Macedonia: Filoloshki Fakultet, 2010-2011.

„Комуникативната функција на јазикот и социолингвистичката компонента изразување мислење, согласување и несогласување“ (English title: “Communicative Function of Language and the Sociolinguistic Component ‘Expressing Opinion, Agreement and Disagreement’.” *Annual collected works at the Faculty of Philology* 32 (2007-2008), Skopje, R. Macedonia: Filoloshki Fakultet, 2007-2008.

“Writing University Project.” Mira Bekar, Margaret Reid and Anastazija Kirkova-Naskova. *Annual Collected Works at the Faculty of Philology* 30 (2004-2005), Skopje, R.Macedonia: Filoloshki Fakultet, 2004-2005, pp. 233-235.