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Reviewed by Yida Cai

## 1 Introduction

*Conversation Analytic Perspectives to Digital Interaction: Practices, Resources, and Affordances* is an edited volume offering diverse research perspectives on studying interactions occurring on various digital platforms. The data analysed in the book are diverse in terms of both language and digital platforms. The languages studied in the book are Hebrew, Finnish, German, Dutch, and English, while the digital platforms range from casual messaging apps to human-computer interaction environments. The studies presented in the volume approach interaction from both micro-level perspectives, such as specific language resources in particular sequential positions, and macro-level perspectives, such as the structure of an entire sequence organization.

As the title of the book suggests, Conversation Analysis (CA; see, e.g., Sidnell 2010; Clift 2016) is utilized in all the chapters in the volume as the primary method for studying digital interactions. CA is a fine-grained method for studying talk-in-interaction. It enables systematic exploration of how interlocutors achieve mutual understanding in conversation by examining various aspects of the organization of conversation, such as turn-taking, sequence organization, and repair (e.g., Schegloff & Sacks 1973; Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson 1974; Schegloff, Jefferson & Sacks 1977). However, the tradition of CA is based on ordinary spoken interactional situations. When the interactional platform shifts to a digital environment, traditional CA may not be able to be utilized directly. The main reason is that the interaction occurring on digital platforms differs from ordinary spoken interaction in many aspects.

Several of these differences are discussed in the introductory chapter, *Applying conversation analysis to digital interaction*, written by the editors of the book, Aino Koivisto, Mikko T. Virtanen, and Heidi Vepsäläinen. Here, the editors outline some core concepts and analytical aspects of CA and assess their applicability to analysing digital interaction contexts. When the editors explain why the concepts related to turn-taking cannot be directly applied to analysing text-based messaging interaction, they point out, for example, that *projectability*, a main property of the turn-constructive unit, cannot be realized in a non-synchronous interactional environment. Readers can thus gain a solid understanding of how digital interaction differs from ordinary spoken interaction, and why it may be necessary to adapt CA to suit digital contexts (on digital CA, see, e.g., Jucker 2021). In addition, the introductory chapter includes an overview of the following chapters' topics and main findings.

Each of the chapters considers the specific affordances of digital interaction environments and discusses how participants use them to manage interaction. The chapters are grouped into four sections, each focusing on a specific type of digital environment: 1) casual mobile messaging, 2) social media, 3) video conferencing, and 4) human-computer interaction. This review is also divided into four parts.

## 2 Casual mobile messaging

The section on casual mobile messaging consists of three chapters. All of them deal with WhatsApp chats. The first chapter *Why say 'hi'? : Framed openings in Hebrew WhatsApp messaging* is written by Michal Marmorstein. It investigates greeting-initiated opening formation and ascription in Hebrew WhatsApp interaction by using data from both dyadic and group conversations. As the author points out, if an interlocutor chooses to greet other interlocutor(s) to frame a new interactional span in WhatsApp in which the communication does not necessarily require an official opening and closing, the greeting is much more like a design choice, which functions interactionally in a specific way.

The study analyses how greetings are designed, their sequential positions, and participants' responses to them. The central part of the findings comprises sequential analysis, which reveals that greetings occur in three locations: 1) at the beginning of a chat, 2) at the beginning of a new topic span, or 3) in the position where an interlocutor resumes a topic or (re)joins an action. The latter two are discussed in more detail, as the first is a typical location for greeting.

Greetings mostly occur at the beginning of a new topic span, framing the sequence as a disjunctive span which does not continue the previous interaction. The topic-initial openings are further divided into three types: reciprocated openings, non-reciprocated openings, and openings in response position only. As the author points out, individualized initial openings are usually reciprocated. Also, an elaborate and personalized design seems to enhance the response relevance. For instance, in one example that the author analyses, the greeting token and inquiry about one's personal state are placed in the first line of the message, and after one empty line, the information request is placed. Thus, the information request is structurally separated from the elaborate opening. The recipient responds to all the actions and mirrors the structure of the initial message. When topic-initiation is not individuated, the recipient can direct to the first action and/or the package of actions following the greeting-initiated opening, since they appear to be the urgent matter. In terms of the greeting-initiated opening occurring in the response position only, the author uses an example to demonstrate that the recipient can use it as a design feature for displaying a positive stance to the interlocuter.

Furthermore, the author suggests that a greeting-initiated message can also work as a resource for resuming a topic or (re)joining an action. In this case, the interlocutor uses the greeting to show availability. However, the author also found that the greeting in this case has differences between dyadic and group conversations: in dyadic conversations, the greeting is used for reactivating the conversation and accounting for the delayed response, while in group conversations the greeting is used to go back to the prior conversation whose texter was previously absent, allow for contributions to this prior conversation, and construct contributions as not contextually misplaced.

The author clearly and logically defines the essential terms before heading to the analysis. For instance, as she points out, the sequence organization in messaging is not necessarily temporally or spatially contingent, and the conditional relevance can also be weak in terms of forming paired actions. Therefore, she uses the term *message-exchange* to refer to the system of organizing message exchanges between participants. This term does not require that the messages produced form paired actions. By introducing terms, the author shows what aspects of traditional CA (e.g., turn-taking and sequence organization) are not suited to WhatsApp interactions and also what kinds of terms can potentially be utilized, so that the interaction organization in WhatsApp can be explored systematically.

The second chapter, *Proposing joint activities in WhatsApp group messaging: Notes on action formation, action ascription and response relevance*, written by Aino Koivisto, focuses on the formation, ascription, and response relevance of one-off invitations and inquiry-like proposals in Finnish WhatsApp group conversations. Both actions belong to the directive-commissive actions – an extended family of initiating actions where a speaker attempts to prompt a “future action, event or situation” (Couper-Kuhlen 2014: 624).

As the author points out, it is challenging, and may even be inappropriate, to precisely distinguish between invitations and proposals. She carefully describes the criteria for clarifying the two actions she examines: a one-off invitation features a clear inviter, and a proposed event will only happen once, while an inquiry-like proposal suggests a recurring activity with no specific organizer.

The author emphasizes the comparability of the actions. For instance, the author reports how the interrogative and declarative form is used to formulate one-off invitations. By using CA, the author found that the former made the invitation more response-relevant, preferring accepting responses, while the latter made the invitation more like an announcement, lowering the need for a response. For proposals, even the interrogatives did not strongly mobilize responses. As the author shows, when using an interrogative in the indicative mood to form an inquiry-like proposal, the realization of the proposed event does not require positive responses from the participants.

The author also points out that it is necessary to take into account the interactional history in the offline world, since repeating a proposal of a certain event can make the proposal a routinized action. Thus, the texter can just write the time and place, or even less information, such as only the place, with a question mark forming the proposal, and the participants can still recognize it as such.

The author also considers various digital features and affordances of WhatsApp, including the use of emojis for conveying emotions, and the impact of message-sending time on the organization of interactions. For instance, as shown in one example, a co-participant replies late, and before the response, there is another unrelated sequence. The co-participant thus uses an explicit reference to indicate that the response targets the relevant first pair part.

The discussion on coordination of joint activities in WhatsApp chats, focusing on directive-commissive actions (Couper-Kuhlen 2014), continues in *Response design in WhatsApp chats: Contextualising different stances of confirmation and agreement in text-based interactions*, contributed by Katharina König. This chapter explores how the German response particle *ja* and its variants *jaaa* and *joa* are used in response to directive-commissive actions in WhatsApp chats. The author comparatively examines the differences in the interactional use of the three particles.

The author shows that both *ja* and *jaaa* particles can be used to form straightforward confirmation or agreement. However, compared with *ja*, by using *jaaa* a texter also conveys an enthusiastic stance in their confirmation or agreement. In contrast, the use of *joa* tends to confirm or agree with the prior message, but it also expresses that the confirmation or agreement is restrained, not fully determined. The author considers various resources that WhatsApp affords to support her arguments. For instance, she notes that the *jaaa* particle is recurrently followed by emojis that further co-contextualize the enthusiastic mood. In addition, the author brings out two methodological challenges of the interactional approach when analysing response particles: the idiolectal preference of texters can affect the quantitative accuracy of a certain result, especially when the data are small, and stance-taking can sometimes be ambiguous in text-based messaging.

These challenges open a view into what directions the digital CA analysis method could still be developed.

In the discussion, the author expands on the comparative view. For instance, she establishes that simple *ja* confirmations and *jaaa* responses recurrently co-occur with specific emojis. The discussion also contains a table with various levels of analysis concentrating on response design in the text-based WhatsApp interactional environment. The levels of analysis are sequential embedding, linguistic design, orthography, sequential design, multimodal design, and hypertextual design. The table enriches the theoretical framework of digital CA, supporting future research on text-based chat interactions.

### 3 Social media

The social media section consists of two chapters. The first discusses interactions on Tinder, while the second focuses on interactions on Twitter. Each highlights a distinctive interactional environment. Users on Tinder primarily aim to find personal relationships, so communication is private, while Twitter is an online public communication platform where everyone can publish posts and comments. The two chapters provide readers insight into the unique affordances each platform provides and how users use them to form and ascribe actions.

*Where to start?: Initiating post-match chat interaction on Tinder*, written by Lynn de Rijk and Wyke Stommel, investigates how users on Dutch Tinder initiate interaction after a match. The authors analyse chat openings by examining how the participants organized actions and sequences, how they designed turns, and how they utilized the affordances of Tinder. Additionally, the authors interviewed the research participants, who provided context on their conversations and experiences of chatting via the app.

The authors reported opening types based on the actions forming the openings. These include 1) a greeting and possibly initial inquiries, 2) a greeting and possibly initial inquiries and a topic initiation, and 3) a topic initiation. The latter two types are further discussed in terms of how the topic initiation is formed. One way is for the opening to be initiated based on an original topic. Another way is to initiate a topic based on specific commonalities that the texter and the co-participant both share. Both the original topic and commonalities can be motivated by utilizing the affordances of Tinder, such as by watching the profiles of the co-participant. Both of the topic initiation types aim to make the opening more attractive than other possible “matches”, so that the conversation between the texter and the co-participant can continue. This reflects the research participants’ aim of using Tinder. As they pointed out in interviews, the main reason for using Tinder is to find a romantic and/or sexual partner. Therefore, a successful opening and continuing the chat is important to them.

Interaction on another platform is discussed in the chapter *The Finnish anteeks(i) mitä ‘sorry what’ as a resource for expressing affect on Twitter*, written by Helena Nurmikari. This study examines the interactional use of the Finnish lexical expression *anteeks(i) mitä ‘sorry what’* by focusing on how it is used in different sequential positions on Twitter. The reporting of the results begins with cases where the stand-alone *anteeks(i) mitä* is used as an open-class repair initiator for responding to a prior tweet. As the author points out, this interactional function is similar to the open-class repair initiator in spoken interaction, but it is comparatively more common in that it does not receive a reply on Twitter.

The main finding is that *anteeks(i) mitä* is mainly used for displaying stance-taking on Twitter. When it is used at the beginning of an opening, it can work as a cue that elicits the writer's affiliation or disaffiliation, after which the writer can elaborate on the stance-taking in response to the previous tweet or comment on a resource outside of the platform. Notably, the stand-alone *anteeks(i) mitä* can also display disaffiliation from some other prior content. The author gives an example where the stand-alone *anteeks(i) mitä* works as an evaluative response to retweeted content without receiving a reply.

In addition to the retweet function, the author also considers other affordances of Twitter. One is the hashtag format. The finding of *anteeks(i) mitä* in hashtag format (i.e. *#anteeks(i)mitä*) is presented as an independent subsection in the findings. According to the author's observations, *#anteeks(i)mitä* recurrently appears in non-initial positions and functions to display an affective stance.

#### 4 Video conferencing

The first chapter in the video conferencing section, *Graphicons as a vehicle for eliciting negative emotions in multimedial workplace interaction*, written by Elina Salomaa and Esa Lehtinen, examines how the sequentiality is constructed and how emotional orders are managed during a video-mediated workshop. The analysis focuses on the completion process of two assignments that the participants were asked to do. The participants were invited to display their emotions in terms of an external project that they were involved in. They were asked to choose graphicon(s) (GIFs and images) representing their emotions and then comment on their choices on Howspace. The comments were later discussed under the guidance of the facilitator in Teams meetings.

Regarding sequence organization, the authors investigate multiple levels of the sequential structures, including the structure in the discussions on the two digital platforms and how the structure is extended from Howspace to Teams. For instance, the authors suggest that the assignment instruction and the GIFs can be viewed as a package which works as a first pair, while the comments typed by the participants can be viewed as the response to the package. The authors emphasize the importance of understanding "nextness", by which participants can figure out who should take the next turn. When the sequence extends from Howspace to Teams, the facilitator can form the "nextness" with various resources, such as addressing the name of the producer of a comment and reading parts of the comment to guide the interaction and indicate the "nextness".

In terms of emotional order, the focus is on the management of negative emotions, since expressing negative emotions in an acceptable manner is essential in an organizational context. The authors discuss how the participants managed to stepwise enter into and exit from the negative emotion discourse in the workshop. They focus on the case where the participants chose a mad face image to present negative emotions. By writing comments below the image on Howspace and then elaborating on the comments orally on Teams, the participants formulated their troubles-talk. The authors found that the participants were cautious in their troubles-talk in order to neutralise the negative emotion elicited by the mad face image. This suggests that the negative emotion expressed by the mad face image may be too intense and require mitigation. According to the authors, when exiting from the negative emotion discourse, the participants moved their orientation from complaining to problem-solving. They expressed that they believed the problems they pointed out in troubles-talk would eventually be solved. In this way, the participants

mitigated the negativity, showed their professionalism, and built solidarity among the interlocutors.

The section ends with the chapter *Thanking and positive assessments in video-mediated workshops: Managing creativity exercises remotely*, contributed by Mikko T. Virtanen and Jarkko Niemi. It examines how thanking and assessment practices are completed in art-based workshops organized via Teams. In the workshops, the attendees did exercises under the guidance of the hosts. During the Teams meeting, two hosts were located together, as were the attendees. Therefore, the authors consider both the remote setting of the interaction occurring via Teams and the co-present interaction between the co-located participants.

Before analysis, the authors introduce the necessary concepts, low-grade and high-grade assessments, based on previous studies. Regarding their findings, the authors concentrate on the functions and the design of thanking and assessment in various activity contexts. They point out that in verbal exercises, hosts can use simple thanking to present the attendee's performance as completed, making a low-grade positive assessment, to display that the performance was satisfactory. In this way, the hosts can reach closure and make a transition space for the next attendee. In responding to the attendees' performances of their works, the hosts also used intensified thanking and a high-grade positive assessment to make a closure. However, this response design showed that the attendee's performance was an accomplishment worthy of further attention by the hosts.

The study also pays attention to the attendees' role as webcam operators. When hosts cannot see attendees' exercises via the webcam, and attendees adjust it so that their activity is visible, this is ascribed as a service to the hosts and thus deserves thanking and a positive assessment. As the authors point out, hosts treat the attendees' operation of the webcam not as an obligation but as extra help.

## 5 Human-computer interaction

The last section focuses on human-computer interaction. The section begins with the chapter *Computer as a conversational partner: Responding to the uncomprehending computer*, written by Salla Kurhila and Lari Kotilainen. It examines how human participants react to the turns produced by LanCook, a computer designed to promote language learning in a cooking context.

LanCook is a face-to-face, computer-mediated language learning environment where human participants follow instructions given by LanCook to cook a certain dish while practising their language skills. The LanCook program can produce three types of turns: directives, questions, and compliments. The directives are imperatives, and the questions are polar interrogatives. The study focuses on investigating the human participants' responses to questions (e.g., "Do you need help?") and compliments (e.g., "You cook excellently.").

The study emphasizes a comparative view between human-computer interaction and interaction only involving human beings. As the authors establish, one obvious contrast to the latter is that participants commonly do not respond to questions produced by LanCook, and the response missing is not viewed as a "noticeable absence". Nevertheless, as the authors note, human participants can also respond to LanCook, treating the computer as an interactional participant with interactional rights. In this case, the human participants can also contextualize their responses with prosodic features, such as a smiley voice and/or laughter, marking them as non-serious and humorous. The data of this study also

contain one case in which a human participant apologizes to LanCook after accidentally dropping a bunch of fresh dill on the table, even though LanCook does not produce any speech. In this case, the human participant credits the computer with a conversational role, which further marks his turn as a performance.

Compared to the interactional situation where humans know they are talking to a noncomprehending computer, the final chapter in this section, *Unknowingly conversing with a non-human: How can a bot deceive a telescammer?*, contributed by Heidi Vepsäläinen and Henna Paakki, investigates the opposite scenario. The chapter explores how the pre-recorded robocallee bot Sally, designed to waste telescammers' time, deceives telemarketers or telescammers in such a way that they do not realize they are talking to a bot. The authors examine the overall structure of the interaction between the telescammer and the bot, exploring how the bot can successfully deceive the telescammer by maintaining the conversation while preventing the telescammer from closing, so that their time is wasted. Before their detailed analysis, the authors introduce the interactional context, including the respective tasks of the telescammer and the bot, to help readers understand how certain turns are produced in interaction. This also clarifies the goals of the telescammers and the bot.

The analysis focuses on how the bot uses pre-recorded scripts to manage the opening, the sales discussion, and the closing stages of the conversation. In the opening stage, the bot displays hearing problems and reports being in the middle of something to pass the opening routines and proceed in the interaction to the next stage. In the sales discussion stage, the bot produces turns which are sometimes side-tracking and sometimes agenda-oriented. The latter encourages the telemarketer to continue their agenda, evoking the interpretation that Sally can be the prospective client. In contrast, by producing side-tracking turns, Sally talks about other things, showing inattention to the telemarketer's introduction of the agenda. Thus, the telemarketer barely reaches the stage of selling the service and closing the conversation. Since the bot is not designed to achieve a proper closing, it is generally terminated unilaterally by the caller, who realizes that Sally does not seem to be a potential customer but is deceiving them for amusement.

## 6 Conclusion

Through a collection of chapters examining interactions across various digital platforms, the edited volume offers a comprehensive discussion on how digital interaction can be analysed from the CA perspective. Readers are offered in-depth insight into how users leverage the unique affordances of various digital platforms to organize interactions in the digital environment, as well as how the constraints of each platform impact interaction organization. The book also opens an avenue for readers to reconsider the applicability of the CA method to interactions on different platforms and to understand how traditional CA concepts can be adapted for analysing digital interactions, providing concrete examples and discussions. The chapters offer multidimensional discussions, including comparing findings with the ordinary spoken interactions, sharing challenges of the analysis, and offering possible future research directions.

The development of digital information technology is undeniably shaping the future, making digital platform interactions an integral part of modern life. Understanding how humans interact in digital environments to achieve mutual understanding is crucial for both interaction research and societal progress. This necessitates ongoing studies alongside technological advancements. I believe the readers of this work will benefit

from the analytical perspectives it provides on digital interactions and gain a better understanding of human interaction in this fast-developing, technology-mediated world.

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