

Behind the screens of Facebook: an interactional study of pre-post editing and multicomunication in online social interaction

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Hannah Ditchfield

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This thesis explores the construction of posting activity within peer interactions on the social networking site, *Facebook*. At the heart of the thesis is an interest in how Facebook users negotiate online activities that are not possible in face-to-face, or other, communicative contexts. Two such activities are examined: pre-post editing and multicomunicating. Each of the activities explored in this thesis presents challenges to Facebook users. Users, for example, are presented with the unique, yet complex, ability to craft and re-craft their messages before sharing them with their audience as well as managing the interactional difficulties associated with engaging in multiple interactions at the same time. With such activities changing the dynamics of online interaction, this thesis explores how users utilise and manage these activities within their Facebook interactions as well as questioning the extent to which 'interactional order' is maintained.

This thesis addresses these concerns by examining real time video recordings of four *Facebook* user's interactions that were generated through the use of screen-capture technology. Informed theoretically by the work of Goffman and methodologically by conversation analysis, this thesis goes 'beyond the screen' to examine the maintenance of interactional order within this pre-post activity. In doing so, the thesis makes a number of original contributions to knowledge relating to the study of online communication; presenting a unique perspective on how Facebook users maintain 'face' in pre-post interaction, exploring the use of "simplification techniques" within multicomunication activity and contributing to existing understandings of temporal organisation within online communicative environments. The thesis also makes a series of distinctive methodological interventions; challenging existing understandings of the public/private distinction in writing on online research ethics and working through methodological challenges of using screen capture software that have not yet been confronted by scholars.

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Chapter One: Introduction

It has recently been noted that “as analysts of social interaction we are interested in how people, together in real time, make sense to do whatever it is they are doing, with whatever resources are available, including talk, body, objects, and the surrounding environment” (Nevile, 2015, pg. 141). For the past 25 years, these ‘resources’ have included that of the internet, as well as other computerised devices, and the “various kinds of social interaction they support” (Paulus, Warren and Lester, 2016, pg.1). Facebook is one such online environment in which social interaction now occurs. Launched in 2004, Facebook has been argued to have “changed the way hundreds of millions of people relate to one another and share information” (Wilson, et al., 2012, pg.203), with latest statistics showing Facebook to have 1.4 billion *daily* active users (Facebook Newsroom, 2018). As well as being notable for its prevalent usage, Facebook is a complex environment that offers multiple interactive options within the boundaries of one virtual space. Users can, for example, engage in interactions ranging from private ‘one on one’ conversations (Facebook messages) to much more public exchanges visible to entire networks (status updates, wall posts and comments). Users can also communicate with ‘friends’ through multiple modes including images, video, hyperlinks and written, or typed, words.

Such a multifaceted and hybrid environment brings with it many interactive opportunities, such as the ability to communicate via various modes within one setting, and transcend the boundaries of time and space to communicate across vast distances. It also presents new possibilities for the construction of self and identity. Online platforms such as Facebook require users to “self-consciously create virtual depictions of themselves”; this is achieved both through the information and material that they choose to share and also the way they express themselves in their interactions with others (Marwick, 2013, pg. 355-358). Such spaces therefore provide users with the opportunity to construct different identities and personalities (Turkle, 1995) and engage in self presentation (see Papacharissi 2002; Baym, 2010; boyd, 2010) armed with “a new set of tools for self-expression” (Marwick, 2013, pg. 355-358)

These opportunities can be seen to be made possible through certain technological *affordances*. ‘Affordance’, referring to the relationship between an environment and its organisms (Gibson, 1979), is an idea that was originally applied to natural environments. More recently however it has been recruited in the exploration of mediated settings and the questioning of how the features of technological environments make possible, or *afford*, certain interactive possibilities (see Hutchby 2001; Hutchby and Tanna, 2008; Meredith 2017). This thesis is interested in two activities that are made possible by affordances of the online environment of Facebook and that are not possible in the same way within offline, face to face communications. The first is what I will refer to as ‘pre-post editing’: the ability that Facebook users have to edit, alter and ‘tweak’ their posts (be that comments, status updates or private messages) *before* sending these to their interactional partner/s. The second is that of multicommunicating: the ability users have to engage in more than one interaction at the same time.

Being able to engage in these two activities provides users of Facebook with important interactive opportunities. Users can multi-task their interactions, saving time by holding numerous conversations at once as well as having an increased opportunity to carefully craft their presentations of self within their messages before sharing with an audience. At the same time, however, pre-post editing and multicommunication present users with certain demands; not least the challenge of working through the added complexity that such activities bring to our social interactions. These demands raise questions about how the activities made possible by technological affordances are managed in practice. How, for instance, do users go about utilising this ‘pre-post’ construction space for interactive purposes and how do they negotiate the splitting of attention between multiple conversations at once?

Broader questions can also be asked about whether engaging in these activities online works to alter, or perhaps threaten, the interactional order on sites such as Facebook. Erving Goffman, known by many as the “supreme analyst of face to face

social interaction” (Pinch, 2010, pg.410) argues that all interaction has an underlying ‘social order’ (1963). By this, he refers to the idea that interaction is surrounded by certain rules and rituals that set expectations around the most appropriate, or moral, way to act and behave when in the ‘presence’ of others. In other words, interactional order and norms are there to guide us toward good and proper conduct and to come across as ‘appropriate’ and ‘moral’ beings within our encounters with others. In this way, the interactional order is intrinsically linked with the ‘presentation of self’ and how we ‘perform’ interactions to come across in particular ways (see Goffman, 1959). With activities such as pre-post editing and multicomunication changing the dynamics and possibilities of interaction online, then, one question that we might ask is whether this order of interaction is maintained within the interactive environment of Facebook, or whether, indeed, an order is orientated to at all.

The interactional challenges described above are intensified by the fact that Facebook, along with other online environments, is in a constant state of development with new features and structures being continuously added to the site. In the last 6 years, for example, Facebook has included ‘read receipts’ on all group messenger interactions showing exactly who has read the message (2012); created a separate application for Facebook messenger (2014); and added ‘reactions’ to both the Facebook newsfeed and messenger forms of communication, meaning that users can now express a range of emotions towards a ‘friends’ post (2016). This changing landscape not only presents challenges to researchers in our attempts to understand an ever-moving target, but also presents challenges to users themselves. It means that users are continuously having to renegotiate their interactive practices in relation to the features, or ‘affordances’, of these online spaces.

It is this process of renegotiation – specifically, how users negotiate the interactional possibilities and demands of this environment - that is of interest within this thesis. As I have suggested, of particular concern is how Facebook users manage the challenges posed by the activities of pre-post editing and multicomunication and whether, if at all, interactional order is maintained in this process. In this research I explore these questions from a micro analytic perspective, examining how Facebook

participants engage in these activities *within* their online interactions. Through the analysis of digital recordings of interactive activity on Facebook, this thesis considers what the crafting of interactions in this setting may tell us about the nature of online interactive and communicative work.

For reasons set out later in the thesis, my analysis focuses on language and interactive structures - the organisation of the 'typed' talk on Facebook - rather than other interactive modes on the platform such as the sharing of photos, videos, or hyperlink material. To interrogate this material, I draw upon the analytic approach of conversation analysis (CA) (see Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson, 1974). At its most basic level, "CA is the study of talk-in-interaction" and is the "systematic analysis of the kinds of talk produced in everyday naturally occurring situations of social interaction" (Hutchby, 2001). Significantly, it is an approach that shares Goffman's vision of interaction having a social order. With the application of CA to digital environments on the increase (Giles, Stommel, Paulus, Lester and Reed, 2015), this project joins a growing body of research that focuses on the micro, interactive detail of the online world (see Giles, 2006; Gibson, 2009; Bou-Franch, Lorenzo-Dus, Garces-Conejos Blitvich; Stommel, 2016). To date, however, the primary focus of this academic interest has been on the 'products' of online interaction; the content that is eventually made visible in messages, posts or tweets. In contrast, I am interested in the activity that occurs *'pre-post'*; the work that goes on before content is shared with a user's network and that which operates behind the scenes in the multicommunication process. To capture such 'pre-post' activity this project uses screen capture software to record participants' on-screen activity, including keystrokes and click-throughs. Through the use of this technology, the thesis is able to explore online activity from 'behind the screen,' with access to the edits made to messages *before* they are shared. My thesis therefore takes as its focus the *construction* side of online interaction, rather than the 'completed' utterances that are made visible to interactive audiences.

As I will demonstrate, screen capture technology has also given me a unique insight into processes of multicommunication, with the digital recordings not only revealing the content of conversations produced in multicomcommunicating instances, but

also the movements made by participants *between* their multiple, simultaneous conversations. As I will describe later in the thesis, my analysis of this activity can be seen to contribute to broader discussions of the experience of multiplicity within the contemporary media landscape. Couldry (2016), for instance, has recently questioned the multiplicity of our media world. He argues that, with the growth of online media, we have gone from a “mere world” of media to a “virtual universe” (pg.27), one in which the number of media channels, mediums and platforms that we can now interact with, and on, has reached unimaginable levels. As users, we do not necessarily navigate this media ‘universe’ by accessing one channel, medium or platform at one time; our interactive experiences are therefore ‘multiple’ in many ways. We can, for instance, access multiple platforms off one single device, working, shopping and communicating all in one temporal zone. We can ‘media multitask’ and move between different devices; watching, for instance, entertainment on a laptop whilst instant messaging on a mobile. This thesis seeks to contribute to such discussions by exploring the negotiation of multiplicity within *one* site; how possible interactions with multiple individuals within the same setting are handled by users.

By researching the ‘pre-post’ stage of interaction in this way, this thesis builds on antecedent moves to explore the *construction* of both offline and online artefacts. In the study of fine art, for example, x-ray technology has been used to ‘peel back’ the layers of paint on works to reveal the edits that were made by artists as they crafted their work (see Gooch and Tumblin, 2007). Such work makes visible an aspect of the process of artistic production that is normally hidden from the naked eye. Similarly, in online contexts, new methodological technologies have been developed which reveal ‘behind the screen’ details of deleted tweets and Facebook posts (see Almuhiemedi, Wilson, Sadeh and Acquisti, 2013 and Das and Kramer, 2013) opening up hidden dimensions of online life. Screen capture technologies have also been used to capture pre-post activity in the contexts of class room discussion forums and social networking sites (see Garcia and Jacobs, 1999 and Meredith 2014). However, this ‘pre-post’ perspective has not yet been used to explore multicomunication and interactional order online.

Despite such interest in the 'pre-post' stage of online activity, the behind the screen dimension of the internet is an interactive space that has gone largely unnoticed in social science research. The lack of attention to this subject can be explained by the methodological difficulties involved in accessing this usually hidden space, as well as the ethical questions raised in trying to gain access to data that is only usually ever seen by the individual user themselves. As well as offering an empirical analysis of 'pre-post' activity on Facebook, this thesis therefore also explores the methodological and ethical challenges presented to anyone wanting to examine this hidden activity.

Having worked through these challenges, the research presented in this thesis also seeks to make an intervention into ongoing debates relating to the *quality* of online interactions. Scholars such as Sherry Turkle (2011), for instance, have expressed concerns relating to this, drawing attention to the pressures surrounding interaction on online platforms. She has argued that we "flatten out what we say to each other in new reductive genres of abbreviation" on digital platforms, and that we are increasingly becoming accustomed to reductions within our daily interactions (2011, pg. 280). This thesis seeks to challenge existing discourses relating to the quality, not by psychologising such issues but rather, by examining the communicative strategies that are actually demonstrated within their interactions. In doing so I approach the idea of 'quality' through the notion of interactional order: is quality and order maintained, oriented to, or simply ignored within the interactions I observe?

As I have indicated, my interest in social interaction online stems back to the *interactive opportunities* available on platforms like Facebook and the technological features that make possible certain activities that are not doable in face to face, physically co-present situations. Next, then, I return to the two activities of pre-post editing and multicomunication with the intention of exploring the 'features' of Facebook communication that make such activities possible. I will then move forward to present an outline of the structure of my thesis.

Pre-post editing on Facebook

The ability to pre-post edit allows individuals to change the content, appearance or completely delete and restart a turn in interaction before it is shared with an interactional partner. This ability is not possible in face to face or phone to phone communication where turns “can only be amended through repairs after the fact rather than before they are articulated” (Walther, 2007, pg.2541). Such an activity is made possible by a number of specific features available on the platform of Facebook. One such feature is the fact that, as with many other forms of text-based online interaction, “messages are constructed and sent separately” (Meredith, 2017, pg. 46). Hutchby and Tanna (2008) speak of this feature as a ‘half duplex,’ describing it as a situation in which “participants engage in one way asynchronous communication where they cannot both occupy the communication channel at the same time meaning a text can only be responded to once it has been composed, sent and received” (pg. 146). They compare this to the ‘full duplex’ where “participants engage in two way synchronous communication and occupy both speaking and listening channels simultaneously” (ibid). The ‘half duplex’, or the separation of message construction and sending, then, creates an interactional situation which is quite different to that of face to face scenarios. Online, unlike in a face to face conversation, a user’s message construction process is not seen by their interactional partner meaning that Facebook users can go back and make ‘corrections’ to their talk without the knowledge of those whom they are talking to, allowing users to “change what they write before they transmit their messages” (Walther, 2007, pg.2541).

What I am interested in exploring within this thesis is how Facebook users manage the challenge of having access to this additional interactive space online. How do they utilise this space within their interactions? Also at issue is how/whether the opportunity to pre-post edit challenges interactional order and processes of self-presentation within Facebook interactions. Is the pre-post space used by users to construct a ‘moral’ and ‘appropriate’ self as Goffman’s interactional order would expect?

Multicommunication on Facebook

The second activity examined within this thesis is that of multicommunicating (see Stephens and Pantoja, 2016; Reinsch, Turner and Tinsley, 2008). Multicommunicating, by which I mean instances where Facebook users are engaged in more than one interaction at the same time, may involve participating in multiple Facebook chat conversations or engaging in simultaneous conversations across modes such as comments and messages. My specific interest is in how a number of separate interactions may occur within the same interactive environment at the same time, rather than, for instance, how users might engage in communicating across multiple different medias or channels or conducting other activities (such as watching television) whilst interacting on Facebook.

Again, the ability to multicommunicate is made possible by a number of features of the Facebook platform. Firstly, conversations on Facebook have the feature of creating a “persistent textual record of interaction” (Herring, 1999, no page number) meaning that there is a typed record available to interlocutors to help them “keep track of what is going on” and reduce interactional incoherence (ibid). This allows for the possibility of multicommunicating as users can re-read messages to remind themselves of what was said - a particularly useful feature when more than one conversation is occurring at once. Secondly, there is often an extended temporal frame to interactions online as compared to those of face to face talk. Being able to re-read messages and edit messages pre-post all work to delay the synchronicity of interaction on Facebook. Due to this, the “extent to which a participant may delay a response (allow a gap in silence) without giving offence or disrupting an interaction” is often increased (Reinsch, et al., 2008, pg.396). This feature of online communication allows for multicommunicating in the sense that users have time to move between conversations and respond as it is more acceptable to have time gaps between turns (I return to this in the analysis presented in Chapter six).

Finally, interactions on Facebook are ‘compartmentalised’, a feature that enables interactions with individuals to be separately contained (see Reinsch et al.,

2008) resulting in Facebook chats, messages and comments with different interlocutors occurring within separate threads of communication. Within my data, for instance, different 'chats' are arranged in separate mini windows along the bottom of the computer screen resulting in a situation where users are unaware of whether or not their interactional partners are engaged in other communications at the same time. In the face to face context, such compartments would not exist and, if attempting to communicate in a multiple way, one could expect considerable overlap to occur within talk as well as considerable confusion as to which response was for whom. However, the feature of 'compartments' online makes possible an easier flow of multicomcommunication. It should perhaps be noted here how the affordances discussed above that make both pre-post editing and multicomcommunicating a possibility on Facebook are also affordances of written communication in general. For example, one of the oldest communicative forms- that of letter writing- also provides 'writers', rather than 'typers' with a 'persistent textual record', and 'extended temporal frame' and separate, compartmentalised interactions. Such opportunities for interaction then are not 'new' and are not just affordances of online communication but more generally *written* communication.

Further to this, just because these technological features make multicomcommunication easier in an online context does not mean that there are not any challenges when it comes to engaging in many simultaneous conversations on Facebook. Users still have to divide their attention in multiple ways, often engaging in multiple topics of conversation across different modes of Facebook communication (e.g. private chat messages and profile comments). In fact, within the data collected for this study, participants can be engaged in up to four separate interactions at one time, creating an incredibly complex interactional environment. My interest here, then, is in how users manage this environment, what strategies, if any, do they employ to manage the competing demands of their multiple interactions? My overall concern here is again related to interactional order and the presentation of self. Do users orient to this order at all? Do they manage to maintain order and the presentation of self as moral and acceptable beings in this complex space?

Thesis Outline

Having introduced some of the key themes and questions that this thesis poses (questions that will be presented in more formal terms at the end of Chapter Two), I now want to outline the content of the eight chapters that make up this work.

Chapter Two, which follows this introduction, examines the theoretical basis of the study, elaborating on the approach I have taken in understanding interaction and how this has been informed by key aspects of the work of Erving Goffman. This chapter also explores the relevance of the concept of 'affordance' in the context of my study, drawing on recent literature that has applied the term to the study of technologically mediated settings. Before moving on to introduce the methodology of this thesis, Chapter Two also outlines the research interests and questions that this study poses and the various contributions that this thesis intends to make to the field of scholarship relating to the study of online interaction.

Chapter Three presents an overview of my research design and considers the methodological issues that my study presents, focusing in particular on the use of screen capture software and conversation analysis as methods of data collection and analysis. In the chapter I demonstrate how my project builds on earlier research that has been conducted through the use of screen capture and outline the details of my data collection process including sampling and participant recruitment procedures. I also examine the fundamental CA concepts that I draw on within my analysis, including that of turn design, repair and turn-taking.

As highlighted in this introduction, accessing the 'pre-post' stage of interaction presents many ethical challenges: these are explored in Chapter Four. In this chapter, I explain how I established an ethical stance in relation to the specific details of my project and how my approach to ethical issues might contribute to ongoing discussions of the ethics of online research. In doing so I consider ethical issues relating to participant control, the sensitivity of data, consent, and the public/private distinction.

Having laid out the theoretical, methodological and ethical basis of my

research, Chapter Five presents the first part of my analysis. Here, I introduce the notion of the 'rehearsal stage' in my exploration of pre-post editing. Through a detailed analysis of screen capture material, I explore my interest in how users utilise this ability in processes of self-presentation and how the Goffmanian concept of 'face' might inform our understanding of this. This analysis is framed within a consideration of how the activity of pre-post editing has been examined in antecedent research and a consideration of the implications that such an activity may have on processes of online self-presentation.

Chapter Six, my second analysis chapter, focuses on the activity of multicomcommunication. In this chapter I explore research on multiactivity, distinguishing my own research from previous work by taking a focus on similar activities happening simultaneously within the same space. I develop a unique approach to understanding the temporal nature of Facebook interactions through my analysis of instances of multicomcommunication, questioning how participants work to manage this rather complex activity.

Chapter Seven extends my exploration of the theoretical concepts that underpin my research (such as 'affordances' and 'interactional order', explored Chapter Two) by bringing these into dialogue with the analysis presented in Chapters Five and Six. I also address some broader implications of this project, considering what my findings suggest about the nature of multiplicity and hybridity in the digital media landscape. The chapter also includes a reflection on the methodology adopted in this project, paying particular attention to a number of unexpected issues that emerged through the analytical process.

The thesis closes with Chapter Eight. This sets out the empirical, methodological and theoretical achievements of the study, considers the limitations of the work, and identifies potential lines of future enquiry highlighted by my research.

Chapter Two: Theoretical Concepts

In this chapter I present an initial exploration of the theoretical underpinnings of my research, one that is extended in Chapter 7. In doing so, I focus on two key areas of thought: writing on the idea of “affordances” and Goffman’s work on interaction. My aim in this chapter is to specify how these have informed my thinking about the nature of online interaction.

‘Affordance’ is a key idea that has been developed and adopted by scholars as a way of understanding the relationship between our technological environments and the possibilities, opportunities and constraints that such environments make possible (see Hutchby 2001; Hutchby and Tanna, 2008; Meredith 2017). Different interactive environments are understood to possess different affordances that constrain and enable communication in different ways (Marwick, 2013). A telephone call, for instance, affords for synchronous forms of communication and “tonality” (ibid, pg, 358) whereas email exchanges afford for the ability to re-read messages and forward content on to one another (ibid). And, as explored in the introduction of this thesis, Facebook can be seen to afford the activities of pre-post editing and multicomunication.

With my thesis focused on two possibilities for interaction enabled by technological environments, the concept of affordance is an important point of reference in relation to the analytical interests of my thesis. It is a concept that is not without its challenges, however, and I have since found myself reflecting on the meaning and application of this concept to my own research; often feeling unsettled by the way that its meaning slides around in the literature. This chapter therefore provides an exploration of what is meant by the term ‘affordance’, addressing its origins, how it can be applied to the Facebook context, and some of the problems associated with ‘recontextualising’ a concept designed for a natural environment to a technological one. The concept of affordance is then returned to in Chapter Seven, where I reflect on what my analysis has revealed about the ‘affordances’ of Facebook.

‘Afforded’ activities, such as that of pre-post editing and multicomunication, raise important questions for those interested in communicative practices: how, for example, do we manage the challenge of having access to a new construction space – one available for the formation of online identities and maintenance of social relationships - that is not available to us in face to face interaction? How do we utilise this space within our interactions? How do we manage the challenge of juggling numerous simultaneous conversations?

My interest in these questions is informed by my understanding of interaction as having an underlying moral order, a position that has been strongly influenced by the work of Erving Goffman. By this, I am referring to the idea that interaction is surrounded by certain rules and rituals which set expectations in respect of the most appropriate, or moral, way to act and behave when in the ‘presence’ of others. Interaction, in other words, says something about good and proper conduct. As I noted in Chapter One, with the activities of pre-post editing and multicomunication changing the dynamics and possibilities of interaction online, how we respond to the new spaces and challenges outlined above may affect how we maintain this order within interaction, or indeed, whether we maintain it at all. This chapter then, elaborates on this theoretical underpinning, addressing the value of Goffman’s work for the analysis of online interaction, and how his writing – and specific concepts within this - informs my approach. Before exploring this, I turn to the concept of affordances.

Affordances

An affordance is a term that has its origins in describing the relationship between an organism and its environment, for example, how certain features of an environment such as ‘a rock’ afford for the possibility for an organism such as a reptile to hide from prey (see Gibson, 1979). One strength of the concept of affordance is in the way that it offers an alternative to the “unfashionable realist perspective” that assumes the world exists independently of social factors whilst also rejecting the “radical nominalist

position” that understands properties to only exist as an outcome of interpretative accounts (Hammond, 2010, pg, 2). It is this benefit of the concept of affordance that Ian Hutchby works to bring out in his paper on ‘*Technologies, Texts and Affordances*’ highlighting how “affordance” offers a “reconciliation” between these two stances acknowledging the role that both the “essential technical properties” of technology play as well as the “interpretative textual properties” (2001, pg.444).

Despite ‘affordance’ having ontological benefits as a concept, it is nevertheless a complex notion whose meaning and significance has been discussed by numerous scholars since its conception in 1979 (see Gibson 1979; Norman, 1988, Hutchby 2001). Although heavily used within literature on digital interaction (see examples Meredith, 2017; Stommel and Te Molder 2015; Rintel, 2013) it is rarely explored in any depth. Questions, for example, are rarely asked about recontextualising what is essentially an ecological concept to the study of technological contexts and there is also significant variance in the ways the term is understood and applied. Hammond (2010) is one scholar who *has* attempted to map out the different ways in which the concept of affordance has been drawn upon as well as outline some of the complications that exist around its use. His discussion, however, is focused on the use of affordance in educational contexts. Instead, what I intend to do in this review is address some of the challenges that exist when applying the idea to a *technological* environment. I will begin, though, by exploring the origins of the concept of affordance, outlining how I see it applying to the context under study in this thesis of Facebook.

The idea of affordances was first introduced by Gibson (1979) in the context of a natural rather than technological environment. The central interest for Gibson was how organisms, such as animals, insects and birds, oriented to the objects within their world, for instance, rivers, rocks and trees. For Gibson, such ‘objects’ are oriented to in terms of what they afford, with the specific affordances of an environment being “what it offers the animal, what it provides or furnishes, either for good or ill” (1979, pg. 127). Gibson refers to examples of how an environmental feature such as a rock may have the affordance for a reptile of providing shelter from the heat of the sun or, for an insect, shelter from a hunter. Alternatively, a river, as an object, could have the

affordance for a buffalo as a place to drink and for a hippopotamus a place to bathe (See Gibson, 1979). Before Gibson's conceptualisation, the verb 'to afford' was found in the dictionary, but the noun 'affordance' was not. The reason for this is that, for Gibson, the term 'affordance' meant something that referred to both the environment and the animal that no existing term at the time captured (1979, see pg. 127). The uniqueness of the affordance concept is encapsulated in the below quotation from his work:

"An important fact about the affordances of the environment is that they are in a sense objective, real and physical, unlike values and meanings, which are often supposed to be subjective, phenomenal, and mental. But, actually, an affordance is neither an objective property nor a subjective property; or it is both if you like. As affordance cuts across the dichotomy of subjective-objective (...) it is equally a fact of the environment and a fact of behaviour. It is both physical and psychical, yet, neither. An affordance points both ways, to the environment and to the observer" (1979, pg.129)

Here, Gibson describes how the concept of affordance is neither, or perhaps both, an objective and subjective property: pointing to both environmental features (the objective) and the perceptions, or behaviours, of organisms (the subjective). This concept, then, is neither a label for the features of an environment nor is it simply a label for the behaviours it allows for. Rather, it is a concept that encapsulates the relation between the two: the relation between the environment and the actions made possible.

It is this unique element of the term affordance that, for me, makes it an attractive concept to apply in the study of online interaction. Firstly, it captures a key interest of my work, which is in how technological features allow for, or make possible, new possibilities within our everyday interactions. Secondly, the subjective and objective elements can also be applied to the context of online interaction. It could be seen, for example, how the more 'physical' and 'objective' element of discussion are the *technological features* of online platforms and the subjective side are *the possible activities that can be enacted* by such features, for example, the 'behaviour' that users engage in when presented with these objective features.

These subjective and objective elements of the affordance concept can be applied to the activities explored within this thesis. Certain technological features, so the objective element of the concept 'affordance', can be seen through the features that I discussed in Chapter One, such as the separation of message construction and sending as well as the compartmentalisation of conversations on online platforms such as Facebook. The more subjective 'activities' or 'behaviours' examined within this thesis are those that lie at the heart of this projects analysis: the empirical shaping of pre-post editing and multicomunication practices.

For this project, then, I could do away with the concept of affordance, simply using the labels of 'feature' and 'activity' to describe the focus of my analysis. However, what the introduction of the term 'affordance' adds to my exploration of Facebook and interaction is a way of understanding the unique relation between these two elements that no other term does: the unique relationship between environment and organism. It also, as highlighted earlier, has important ontological benefits when it comes to understanding the relationship between technology and society. It provides a way of understanding technology and society that acknowledges the opportunities that technological features offer but at the same time acknowledgements the role of 'organisms' and their enactment of such opportunities. This is a particularly relevant stance for my analysis that is focused on two opportunities made possible by technological features but that also, importantly, intends to explore the different ways in which these opportunities are engaged with and managed by 'organisms' (Facebook users) within their interactions. Having now outlined the origins of the concept of 'affordance' and how I see it applying to the online context, and particularly, the Facebook context, I will move on to address some of the complications that exist when it comes to recontextualising an older theoretical term to a newer environment.

Recontextualising 'affordance': from a natural to technological environment

Recontextualisation is a concept discussed by Paul Dowling (2009) where he addressed the way one practice regards another. This term was recruited by Claudia Lapping

(2011) who referred to the process as when concepts “are deployed in contrasting contexts and used in the analysis of a new object of study” (pg. 1). Lapping was working to indicate the challenge of this recontextualising process when recruiting a concept from one discipline into another; in her case the recruitment of terms from psychoanalysis into sociology noting her concern to be “[...] the formation and reformation of concepts across the contrasting activities of psychoanalysis and research” (pg.7). In the case of ‘affordance’ there are two ‘layers’ of recontextualisation that are occurring. First, the concept is being adapted from Gibson within psychology to the discipline of media and communication. Secondly, the notion is also being recontextualised in relation to the empirical setting e.g. I am taking the concept of affordance – a term that as I have described was developed in the study of natural environments - and applying it to the contrasting context of a technological setting.

This process of recontextualisation is common in academic work yet isn’t without its complications. In this section, I intend to address two complications in relation to adapting the term ‘affordance’ to technological setting. Firstly, I will explore the central differences between a natural and technological environment and how this may affect our understanding of a concept such as affordance. Secondly, I will turn to address the different ways the notion of affordance has been used and interpreted within the field of online interaction; highlighting the importance of reflection when researchers adapt a term to a new research environment.

An important factor that distinguishes the technological environment from the natural is that technology is socially, rather than naturally, designed and shaped (Mackenzie and Wajcman, 1999). What this ultimately means is that technological artefacts could arguably be ‘political’ unlike natural artefacts. Langdon Winner was one of the early scholars to explore this idea. In his 1980 paper *‘Do artefacts have politics?’* Winner noted how technologies contained political properties through their design, arguing that certain technological designs produce certain sets of social and political consequence. To illustrate this idea, Winner referred to the highways of Long Island, New York, where many of the overpasses are deemed to be “extraordinarily low”

(pg.123). The design of these low bridges, then, created a very particular social effect in that “poor people and blacks, who normally used public transit, were kept off the roads because the twelve-foot tall buses could not get through the overpasses” (pg. 124). In contrast, the “automobile owning whites of ‘upper’ and ‘comfortable middle’ classes”, could travel under them with ease (ibid). In this example, roads and overpasses afford the activity of being able to travel to a given destination. However, this case also demonstrates how certain groups of potential users were excluded from accessing such an activity through the very design of technology.

More recently, David Wittkower (2016) has explored similar ideas by examining how technical design can produce exclusionary and even discriminatory effects for users. He has spoken of the notion of ‘disaffordance’ where the technology fails to recognise and cater for all the relevant user groups. In this sense, then, it can be seen how the overpasses of Long Island could have been understood as a *disaffordance* for certain class and racial groups. The use of the term affordance in the technological context indicates similar enabling elements e.g. making possible new interactive activities such as the ones at the heart of this thesis. It also, though, bears the idea of potential constraining factors in the sense that affordances can, through their design, be exclusionary. For my analysis, I am more concerned with the enabling ability of affordances.

The second element to consider when it comes to recontextualising established ideas in the study of new empirical phenomena is that, often, different scholars adapt and reapply concepts to new environments in different ways. The concept of affordance is no different. ‘Affordance’ as a notion has been recruited in the study of online interactive environments by many scholars (see Meredith, 2017; Hutchby and Tanna, 2008; Stommel and Te Molder, 2015 and Rintel, 2013). Yet, the ways in which it has been applied and interpreted in this new technological context have varied greatly in terms of what authors actually described an affordance to be. As I will demonstrate, in some works an affordance is described more as a technological ‘feature’, so, referring back to Gibson, a more ‘objective’ element. In other works, an affordance is

described more as an 'activity made possible' by features, thus a more 'subjective' element. Here, I will explore some examples of the ways in which affordance has been understood and framed within the literature on online interaction before reflecting on why it is important to consider processes of recontextualisation when adapting older concepts to new situations.

The first way I have recognised authors to frame affordances when researching interaction online is through understanding affordances as 'features'. In Meredith's work (2017), which examines how conversation analysis can be used to explore technological affordances, features such as written messages being constructed and sent separately, the textual persistence of messages online and the typing icon on Facebook messenger are described as 'affordances' that then allow for, or make possible, certain activities such as typing at the same time or sending multiple turns one after the other. Rintel (2013), who explores 'trouble' in interaction during video calls, however, frames affordances differently. In his work, Rintel describes audio and visual distortion within video calls as an 'affordance' that constrains and limits the quality of interaction but also enables individuals to avoid potential relational troubles. Technical distortion, though, is not a 'technological feature' in the same way that, say, 'textual persistence' is. Disruption and distortion to audio and visual quality is more a technological consequence that is caused, or made possible by, technological features (such as internet connection) breaking down. Thus, rather than attaching the label of 'affordance' to the 'feature' here, as Meredith (2017) did, Rintel is instead attaching the term 'affordance' to the activity enacted in relation to the feature. This is a similar approach to Stommel and Te Molder (2015) in their study of pre-screening in online counselling sessions. Here, the pre-screening of patients is referred to as an affordance that has potential to make online counselling sessions more effective. Again, similarly to Rintel (2013), it can be argued that the 'pre-screening' of patients is not a 'technological feature' but more so an activity made possible by technological features such as online surveys. Thus, these authors can again be seen to attach the label of an affordance to an online activity, rather than an online technological feature.

What this brief exploration of literature shows is that there appears to be a

kind of 'slippage' between whether an affordance is a *feature* or in fact an *activity* made possible by such features. Where the problem perhaps lies, is that it may not be possible to understand 'affordance' as a static element to which a clear definition or label can be attached. This is reflected in Gibson's original understanding of the concept, where he refers to it as "pointing both ways" toward "the environment and to the observer" (1979, pg. 129). It is a concept that is not meant to represent either one of these elements, but is instead a concept that represents *the relationship* between the two. Thus, in the technological context, the affordance is neither the 'feature' nor the 'activity' but is instead a term that captures the relation between these two elements: the relation between Facebook features and its users. Within the literature discussed above, this understanding of affordance 'as a relationship' is getting lost with scholars either emphasising one side or the other.

Returning to Lapping (2011), she notes how concepts are in fact "necessarily reiterated and transformed in the process of research and analysis" (pg.1). This I agree with and see the adaptation of older notions to new environments as a process that has the potential to help researchers to move forward and expand scholarly horizons. However, I also acknowledge the risks associated with such a process: the risk that the original meanings of such concepts may get lost after numerous processes of recontextualisation. This, in itself, is not problematic, as I would argue that as terms are adapted and developed their central notions may do the same. What I do find problematic, though, is the lack of discussion around these adaptations and the shifts in meanings that they represent. I have therefore worked to take a step back from the use of the term affordance and reflect on how such a term has been interpreted in order to inform my own understanding and deployment of this term. Through such an exercise I have added to Hammond's (2010) work which questioned the use of the term affordance, extending this by applying these questions to my own research context of online interaction. Secondly, it has allowed me to establish my own interpretation of the 'affordance' idea: an interpretation that sees an 'affordance' to represent the relation between the technological features of platforms like Facebook and the activities and behaviours which such features make possible such as pre-post editing and multicommuting explored further in the Chapters five and six.

Taking 'affordances' forward

My discussion of the concept of affordances has outlined the origins of the idea as well as how I see it to relate and transfer over to the context of online interaction in Facebook. I have worked to bring out how, as a concept, it encapsulates the relationship between technology and society in a way that simply referring to 'features' and 'activities' does not. The term affordance also represents a position that strikes a balance between the role of technological and societal factors. As I have argued, despite affordance being a popular concept to apply to online contexts, scholars have rarely taken the time to reflect on the process of recontextualising 'affordance' from a natural to a technological environment. This review has filled this gap by reflecting on some of the new issues that arise when using the term affordance in the technological context as well as considering how such a concept has been engaged with to date in the field of online interaction. Now though, I wish to highlight how, empirically, my analysis aims to contribute and extend existing studies that have explored the notion of 'affordance' in mediated settings through 1) questioning the challenges that Facebook affordances present and 2) focusing on a more multi-dimensional interactive space.

A study that has explored the concept of affordance in the context of Facebook is Meredith (2017). Meredith, in recent research that explores how conversation analysis can be used to examine technological affordances, focuses on examining "which affordances are relevant" in the context of instant messaging on the social networking site (2017, pg.43). She successively does this through a conversational analytic analysis that works to highlight technological features and the opportunities and constraints that they present. In my work, however, I am not examining what affordances 'are relevant' in interaction; I have already highlighted relevant affordances of the Facebook environment within the opening chapter of this thesis. Rather, my central concern is to explore and analyse how users *manage the challenges* that such affordances introduce to interaction in the online context. How is the ability to pre-post edit managed and utilised within online conversations? How is the ability to multicomunicate online managed by users on Facebook? What interactional

strategies do they implement? My analysis therefore goes beyond highlighting the relevant affordances of online communication to question the ways that the activities made possible online are used, managed and oriented to within the context of Facebook.

Hutchby (2001b) is one example where a scholar has questioned how the *challenges* of certain affordances are managed within interaction. His work explored interaction on Internet Relay Chat (IRC), a form of instant messaging medium that allows for multi-party chat- a situation in which more than two people are engaged within the same thread of conversation. Hutchby notes here how, in such environments, more than one single conversation occurs within the chat thread at one time creating a complex sequential order. This complex situation is then paired with the way:

In IRC, turns can only be make their appearance in the interactive space in the serial order in which they are distributed by the server. And from the users' perspective, they may not retain the same temporal order in which they are sent to the server (Hutchby, 2001b, pg. 186).

What this leads to, as Hutchby argues, is “sequential ambiguity” (ibid) with turns from two or more conversations appearing in the chat thread in a potentially different temporal order to which they are sent. Managing the sequence of talk in such spaces, then, is challenging and Hutchby’s analysis explores some of the ways in which users work to ‘handle’ this ambiguity e.g. through the use of “next speaker selection techniques” such as naming which helps identify which turns are directed to whom (ibid, pg. 187).

This research, then, takes a similar line of questioning to Hutchby in relation to how the challenges presented by affordances are managed within interactions. However, the interactional environment in which instant messaging now occurs has changed dramatically since 2001. Unlike IRC spaces, Facebook users do not have to ‘be online’ in order to receive messages. The space also takes on a much more multi-dimensional form in terms of the different levels of public and private modes of communication varying from public status updates to inbox to inbox messages with

traditional IRC channels being much more singular in their make-up. In this sense, IRC was more of a 'mode of communication', a method of sending interactions between one another. Facebook, however, is an 'environment'; it is a space where many different forms of communication can occur within the 'boundaries' of one platform.

This project intends to make a contribution to existing knowledge on affordances in the online context by drawing on elements of both the work of Meredith (2017) and Hutchby (2001b). In this project, I take a similar line of questioning to Hutchby in the sense of exploring the *challenges* presented by affordances and how such challenges are managed within online interaction itself. However, in a similar vein to Meredith, I do this in the more multidimensional context of Facebook.

For the next section of this chapter, I want to shift thinking away from the notion of 'affordances' and towards an important theoretical underpinning of this thesis: Goffman's interactional order. It is here that I discuss why such ideas are interesting to consider in the online context as well as how they inform my work and how I see myself contributing to the Goffmanian approach to interactional study.

Goffman and the interaction order

Goffman is known by many as the "supreme analyst of face to face social interaction" (Pinch, 2010, pg.410) whose primary objective was "unravelling the procedures employed by people in their face to face dealings with each other" (Drew and Wootton, 1988, pg.4). His concepts, such as 'face work', 'front', 'stages' and 'framing' along with notions such as the 'presentation of self' have become indispensable when thinking about social interaction (Pinch, 2010). However, throughout his career and writing his major concern was to promote the acceptance of the face to face interactive domain as an analytically viable one, a domain he called the 'interaction order' (Goffman, 1983).

Of course, it is important to note how Goffman's own work focused on the

study of face to face communication, however, numerous scholars have applied Goffmanian concepts to the world of new media (see examples: Birnbaum, 2008; Davies 2012; West and Trester, 2012; Lillqvist and Louhjala, 2014; Zhang and Kramarae, 2014). In fact, there is such fascination with Goffman's work in this context Ytreberg (2013) has called it a time of 'Goffmania'. Such 'mania' surrounding his work has been attributed to the fact that new media technologies have "become part and parcel of everyday interaction" (Pinch, 2010, pg. 411). We now spend so much time interacting on these technologies that "the role they play in framing and mediating interaction is obvious" (ibid). Thus, with Goffman being "the" theorist of everyday social interaction, Pinch (2010) argues that he seems like a good theoretical place to start when it comes to understanding our everyday interactions in these online spaces (ibid).

As mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, Goffman and his notion of 'interactional order' inform the theoretical framework of this thesis: a framework that understands interaction to have a form of social and moral order. Goffman himself referred to such order as "the consequence of any set of moral norms that regulates the way in which a person pursues their objective" (1963, pg.8). By this, Goffman is not arguing that the objectives of interaction are determined by such moral norms, but is more so highlighting that such norms may influence the "modes" in which people seek such objectives (ibid). To illustrate, when making a request, 'moral norms' do not necessarily determine whether we make the request or not, but may alter the way in which that request is made, or, as Goffman may put it, how the request is 'framed'. If there was no social order with moral norms we would conduct interactive acts such as 'requests' in any way we pleased; in ways that, perhaps, would resemble a likeness to direct demands. However, there is something more at stake within interactions; something that encourages us to adhere to these moral norms of what is deemed appropriate and polite behaviour.

It is perhaps relevant to highlight here how there are two different types of 'norms' or 'rules' that may exist around interaction. First, there are 'systematic requirements' of interaction, something Goffman spoke of in *Forms of Talk* (1981).

Here he is referring to the more practical organisation of encounters, referring to how in interaction there is a need for a clear, two way capability for sending and receiving messages, for showing signals that reception of interaction is taking place as well as signals to show that a channel of communication is opening or closing, to name a few. However, what is noted is how there is something *more* occurring within interaction than just these 'systematic' norms. When closing interactions, for example, interactants do not simply close down the channel of communication, rather what occurs is an "elaborate process of forewarning of closure"; a process where an agreement to close is sought, where the closing ceremony is hedged and an indication that the channel will soon again be open is communicated (Kendon, 1988, pg.34-35). Similar thoughts can be applied to the example of requests. We could, for instance, directly ask someone for a favour thus achieving the objective of the interaction. However, what we often do instead is hedge or 'frame' this request in ways that seem more morally appropriate. It is this secondary system that Goffman refers to as 'ritual requirements' (see Kendon, 1988). Ritual requirements refer less to the practical organisation of interaction like the 'systematic requirements' and more so to the rules that govern interactants as "moral beings" and the "reciprocally held norms of good or proper conduct" (Kendon, 1988, pg.32).

My questioning of how certain challenges of online interaction are managed in the Facebook context is informed by Goffman's understanding of interaction order. To elaborate, I understand interaction to have 'ritual requirements'; certain moral norms that are expected in order to conduct what is understood as appropriate interaction. Such interactional order is interesting to consider in the online context due to the differences in the communicative environment compared to Goffman's site of study of face to face interaction. With the different 'affordances' online environments offer, alternative interactive activities are made possible within these online space; activities such as the ones under study in this thesis. With activities such as pre-post editing and multicomunication changing the dynamics and possibilities of interaction online, posing challenges such as providing more construction space for messages and the dividing of attention, I am interested in looking at how this moral order, or these 'ritual requirements', of interaction are maintained within the interactive environment of

Facebook or whether, indeed, they are orientated to at all.

As introduced, Goffman's concepts and work on the 'interaction order' have been most influential in the fields of both face to face and mediated interaction and have been well received by scholars such as Pinch (2010) who have referred to him as the "the supreme analyst" of social interaction (pg. 410). As well as Pinch, Levinson (1988) recognized Goffman for his work noting particularly how fields of study such as linguistics are a "beneficiary of his provocative suggestions" (pg.223). In addition, Schegloff, one of Goffman's own students and harshest critics, marks his appreciation for Goffman by crediting him for "almost single handed, sketching and warranting (...) the coherent domain of inquiry – that of face to face interaction" (1988, pg. 90).

Despite these praises, however, there are of course many who have questioned Goffman's ideas and approaches with Schegloff, as mentioned, being one such scholar. In his 1988 chapter '*Goffman and the analysis of conversation*', Schegloff highlighted two central critiques of Goffman's work. The first of these was in relation to Goffman's focus on the 'ritual requirements' of interaction. For Schegloff, Goffman "too often, or perhaps even on the whole" remained preoccupied with issues of ritual and 'face'. This meant that within Goffman's work 'ritual' became the centre of the sociological study of interaction with the 'systematic' requirements being 'put aside'- something that Schegloff viewed as a mistake. The central critique here was that in keeping the focus on the ritual, Goffman's analytical attention was too entangled with the individual and how such interaction was 'maintaining' 'face' whereas significantly less attention was placed on the actual systematic organisation and order of interaction, what Schegloff refers to as the 'syntax'. All in all, what Schegloff is putting forward is an argument that Goffman remained too focused on the 'drivers' of interaction which kept him from understanding the behaviour of the 'traffic' (see, 1988, pg.94).

The second critique Schegloff highlighted with Goffman's work was centred on his methodological approaches- an issue also raised by scholars such as Manning (1992). A particular problem for Schegloff was that Goffman "rarely, if ever, shows us a spate of real talk" (1988, pg.104) and in cases used "invented data" to illustrate his

points and arguments (pg. 107). The problem with this, Schegloff argues, is not only that his renderings become “empirically not accurate” (pg. 106) but also that readers of Goffman do not have access to the empirical foundations of his arguments and are not able to produce an independent competitive analysis. In this way, Goffman does not ‘ground’ his analytical insights; something seen as an essential practice when studying interaction (Wood and Kroger, 2000)¹.

Considering the above, this thesis acknowledges both the influential, and problematic, nature of Goffman’s work when drawing upon key notions such as ‘the interaction order’. The particular issues highlighted by Schegloff, particularly around the methodological problems with Goffman’s ‘empirical’ writings, will be explored further in my own methods chapter. In the next section, however, I go on to discuss elements of Goffman’s work that have particular significance in this research: that of the presentation of self and the participation framework.

The two sides of Goffman: the presentation of self and the participation framework

According to Goffman’s approach, interactional order and norms are there to guide us toward good and proper conduct in order to come across as ‘appropriate’ and ‘moral’ beings within our encounters with others. In this way, Goffman’s interactional order is intrinsically linked to identity and the ‘presentation of self’; the process of managing impressions others form of you in interaction to come across in the most moral and appropriate fashion. Identity and self, as a field of study, is incredibly broad and is not something that this thesis has the scope to delve into (for a review of identity in the context of online life and interaction see Marwick, 2013). However, what is important to highlight is how Goffman’s approach to self varies from perceptions of identity that understand individuals to have a “single, essential personality tied to an earthly body” that remains consistent throughout life (see Stone, 1996 in Marwick, 2013, pg. 256). For Goffman, ‘self’ was the focus of much of in his earlier writings where he understood interaction through dramaturgical metaphors, understanding individuals as actors who ‘perform’ self when in the co-presence of others (see Goffman and *The* -

¹ See more discussion on the practices of grounding data in Chapter three.

Presentation of Self in Everyday Life, 1959). Goffman's position on self communicates the idea that people present themselves differently depending on the situation, the context and their audience. It promotes the notion that identity is flexible, changeable and research has shown how people "are highly skilled in varying their self-presentations appropriately" (Marwick, 2013, pg. 356).

Online platforms offer numerous spaces for individuals to put these self-presentation skills to the test through personal homepages (Papacharissi, 2002); blogs (Reed, 2005); dating sites (Ellison et al., 2006) and social networking sites (boyd, 2007) as well as numerous modes of presentation such as photos, profile information and within interactions themselves. Despite the many opportunities the online environment brings in relation to self-presentation, it is not without its challenges. Social media technologies, for instance, often "collapse multiple audiences into single contexts" (Marwick and boyd, 2010, pg. 114) which, arguably, results in the "need for variable self-presentation to be complicated" by technologies that bring together "commonly distinct audiences" (ibid, pg. 115). This thesis, informed by Goffman's understanding of the self, is concerned with the challenges that the activities of pre-post editing and multicomunication may bring to the way self is presented online. If the moral order of interaction is perhaps threatened by the challenges posed, it is perhaps conceivable to think that our presentation of self may be effected to?

As well as the construction and presentation of self, however, I am also interested in broader issues of how interactional activities are actually organised, specifically the activity of multicomunication. This focus moves away from the Goffmanian concerns of the presentation of self and towards other areas of his work that centre on the concept of 'the participation framework'. As Hutchby explains:

the participation framework refers to the range of ways that persons within perceptual range of an utterance are able to position themselves in relation to it; for example as addressed or not addressed, ratified or not ratified (Hutchby, 2014, pg. 85).

It is essentially a concept that "differentiates how people involved in an interactional setting participate in that setting" as well as categorising a participant's "orientation,

alignment and involvement with a task” (Rae, 2001, pg. 253). Before the notion of the ‘participant framework’ was introduced, a simple dyadic modal of communication with roles such as ‘speaker’ and ‘hearer’ was commonly used to explain the organisational structure of interactions. However, the participant framework replaced this understanding by providing a more complex modal which divided the simple dyadic framework down into specific speaker roles such as ‘animator’, ‘author’ and ‘principle’ and hearer (or reception) roles such as ‘ratified’, ‘overhearers’ and ‘eavesdroppers’. This research, however, is less concerned with the specific ‘speaker’ or ‘hearer’ roles that participants adopt within their Facebook interactions, or particularly ‘how they position *themselves*’ within interactions, but more so interested in how they position certain *interactional tasks* and how they organise their ‘involvement’ with the different multiple interactions that occur on the Facebook platform.

In the following sections of this chapter, then, I explore how certain Goffmanian concepts and interests inform my analysis of Facebook interaction. Having established an interest with ‘self’, I begin by exploring a concept of Goffman’s that is commonly used in relation to exploring such a concern: that of ‘face’. Following this, I take the discussion away from Goffman concepts associated with the presentation of self and turn my attention to concepts used to help understand the organisation of interactions. This discussion is specifically interested in notions such as ‘multi-focused gatherings’, ‘frames’, ‘strips’ and ‘involvements’ which can all be used to help understand the phenomenon of multicomcommunicating.

Goffmanian concepts and interests

‘Face’ is a concept coined by Goffman in 1967 which may be “defined as the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself” and as “an image of self-delineated in terms of approved social attributes” (Goffman, 1967, pg.5). Brown and Levinson worked to expand understandings of face in their work on ‘Politeness’ by explaining the concept as the “public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself” (1987, pg.61). For Brown and Levinson, face is a concept “tied up in notions of being

embarrassed or humiliated, or 'losing face'". Therefore, they say, "face is something that is emotionally invested, and that can be lost, maintained, or enhanced, and must be constantly attended to in interaction" (ibid). Brown and Levinson extended Goffman's concepts by highlighting how face consists of two related aspects: 1) negative face and 2) positive face (1987, pg.61). Here, negative face is understood as an individual's concern to protect their autonomy whilst positive face is related to an individual's concern for their self-image to be liked and approved of. My analysis will explore predominately how positive face is attended to within the extracts of Facebook interaction. With a focus on the construction of the right self image; an image that communicates the right 'social attributes', this concept of 'face' is a relevant one to draw upon when interested in the process of self presentation; and specially, in whether acceptable self-presentation is maintained in complex online environments.

One strength of the concept is that it not only recognises the process of individuals maintaining their own 'face' but it also highlights how interactants work to maintain the face of those they are talking to with Goffman seeing "one's own face and the face of others as constructs of the same order" (1967, pg.6). To expand, "just as the member of any group is expected to have self-respect, so also he [sic] is expected to sustain a standard of considerateness; he [sic] is expected to go to certain lengths to save the feelings and face of others present" (1967, pg.11). In fact, Goffman comments on how a "person who can witness another's humiliation (...) is said in our society to be 'heartless'", which, in turn, is a negative reflection of such an individual's own face (1967, pg.11). This interactional need to achieve both self-respect and considerateness therefore tends to result in individuals working to maintain both their own face and the face of other participants within encounters (Goffman, 1967). This has led scholars such as Benwell and Stokoe to comment on how interaction is "a constant balancing act between protecting our own face and the face of others" (2006, pg.274). Thus, "a person will have two points of view- a defensive orientation toward saving his own face and a protective orientation toward saving others' face" (Goffman, 1967, pg.14).

The notion of 'face', then, informs my analysis in two ways. Firstly, it is a way of conceptualising processes of self presentation and the construction of appropriate 'self-image' in interaction; an important broader concern of this thesis. Secondly, although I am interested in how interactional order and appropriate self-image is maintained in relation to both analytical interests, I particularly draw on the concept of 'face' within Chapter five on pre-post editing. This chapter is informed by the notion of the protective and defensive orientations and explores, in detail, empirical examples of how such orientations are accomplished within pre-post edit examples. It is in Chapter five that my specific concern is with how the ability to pre-post edit is utilised within the processes of maintaining face in these two ways.

I am, of course, not the first to use the concept of 'face' to help gain an understanding of self construction processes in the online media environment (see Davies 2012; West and Trester, 2012; Lim, Vadrevu, Chan and Basnyak, 2012 as examples). However, I am extending discussion on the concept through taking more of a focus on the *two way* nature of 'facework' (the protective and defensive orientations) than has been achieved in previous research. Studies such as Davies (2012), who explored how users presented selves and 'do friendship' on Facebook and West and Trester (2012), who examined politeness norms on Facebook, focused more so on the *defensive* nature of 'face' where participants work to maintain their own face and focused less so on the protective element where the face of others is more of the concern. This was highlighted in Lim et al's (2012) work where they noted how western interpretations of 'face' often took this more one-sided route with Asian interpretations being more balanced. Here, they outlined how Asian understandings of 'face' took into consideration "self-face", concern with one's own image, as well as "other-face", concern for another individual's image. In my analysis, then, I am taking on this more balanced approach to exploring facework online by considering how users are utilising the ability to pre-post edit in most defensive (self-face) and protective (other-face) ways.

I am also extending the existing body of literature on this topic by accessing the 'pre-post' stage of online messages. Lim et al.,(2012), as well as Davies (2012),

interviewed their participants in order to understand the ways in which they maintained or gave face within their online interactions. West and Trestler (2012) conducted a 'netography' on their data; observing interactions such as Facebook posts and status' once they had been shared with participants networks. These methods, although allowing these authors to contribute valuably to the field in respect of the 'products' of online interaction and self-reported accounts of social media use, do not comment on how defensive and protective orientations of face are constructed and put together *before* being sent to their intended recipients as done in this project.

In addition to 'face', a second Goffmanian interest that informs the analysis of my work is that of 'multiplicity'; an interest Goffman explored in his thinking on 'multi-focused gatherings' (1963). Goffman's standard example of a multi-focused gathering was that of a 'cocktail party', a situation where you have a number of individuals within the "boundaries of a defined space" and where there are many "separate jointly focused gatherings" (Kendon, 1988, pg.27-28). Drawing on such work in this research, then, is helpful as many similarities between the 'cocktail party' environment that Goffman observed and that of Facebook can be observed. Firstly, multiple simultaneous interactions occur within 'defined', albeit virtual, 'boundaries' of the social networking site, similar to that of a party. Second, 'separate jointly focused' gatherings are seen to occur through the separate threads of interaction that Facebook users are engaged in at any one moment, for instance, the number of different Facebook chat sessions open at one time. Goffman's concern with multi-focused gatherings was with observing how the integrity of such situations was maintained, looking at how these encounters were organised and managed by participants. In my analysis of multiplicity, I am asking similar questions to this: how do participants manage and maintain this multiple environment? The difference, however, is that at a face to face cocktail party one individual is only ever usually part of one interaction at one time (even though there may be other interactions occurring around them) whereas during Facebook multicomcommunication, individuals are engaged numerous interactions that *overlap* in time.

This arrangement of interaction can be understood using Goffman's notions of 'primary frame' and 'strips'. Goffman defined a 'frame' as "a principle of organisation that defines a situation" (1974, pg. 11) with the most fundamental framework being understood as the "primary framework". A 'strip' is then understood as a "slice cut from the stream of ongoing activity" within a frame (ibid, pg. 10). In Goffman's example of a multi-focused gathering, I would understand the primary frame to be that of the 'cocktail party' itself. The 'strips' or 'slices' of interaction would then be the separate, individual interactions occurring between different individuals at the party. In the context of Facebook, however, I would suggest that the overarching, primary frame would be that of an individual's Facebook account. Again, similarly to the party, this primary frame is then split into 'strips' or 'slices' of interaction which on the Facebook platform are represented by the separate threads of interaction that a user is engaged in, for example, the separate chats. The key difference between these two scenarios, however, is that on Facebook the one user is involved in all the 'strips' of interaction whereas, at a cocktail party, one person is only ever involved in one interaction at one time. This means that a Facebook user is not just situated within a 'frame' where many interactions are taking place but are instead situated in a 'frame' in which they are part of all the interactions.

Thinking about this form of multicomcommunication in relation to Goffmanian rules of interaction is interesting as it challenges them in terms of both the systematic and ritual requirements of encounters. Firstly, from a systematic standpoint, engaging in numerous conversations would make it difficult to maintain a clear communication channel between interactants as overlapping talk would most likely occur. As explored in the introduction, though, this problem is solved online due to the technical feature of 'compartmentalisation' which works to keep threads of interaction separate from one another, preventing overlaps. In terms of the ritual requirements to interaction though, there may not be a clear technical solution. Goffman speaks of how, when engaged in interaction, participants have "jointly agreed to operate (in effect) solely as communication nodes, as transceivers and to make themselves fully available for that purpose" (1981, pg.15). According to this, then, there is a form of moral expectation in

interaction in which a participant of talk becomes fully available to their interactional partner. Kendon (1988) reiterates this in his interpretation:

“if a person is to undertake to operate as a ‘communication node’, however, he can do so only in respect to one system at a time (...): and this has the consequence that he must relinquish, for a period, some other pursuit” (pg.34).

When multicomcommunicating on Facebook however, participants are not ‘fully available’ to their interactional partners and they certainly are not operating one ‘system’ at a time or relinquishing other interactive pursuits. In this sense then the very nature of multicomcommunication is threatening to the ritual requirements or moral order that Goffman believes underpins all interaction.

What the activity of multicomcommunicating is essentially about is that of dividing attention. With the opportunity to be engaged in numerous, simultaneous interactions users they are faced with the challenge of dividing their attention between these conversations or ‘systems’. As highlighted above, this results in individuals not delivering their ‘full attention’ or ‘full availability’ to certain interactions. This issue of the division of attention can be understood further through the use of Goffman’s concept of ‘involvement’. Involvement “refers to the capacity of an individual to give, or withhold from giving, his concentrated attention to some activity at hand” (Goffman, 1963, pg. 43). What Goffman identified was that we have the ability to divide our attention into ‘main’ and ‘side’ involvements. By main involvements, he was referring to activities that “absorb the major part of an individual’s attention and interest” (ibid) whereas a side involvement is an activity that “an individual can carry on in an abstracted fashion without threatening or confusing simultaneous maintenance of a main involvement” (ibid). My interest in the second analytic section of this thesis, Chapter six, is informed by the challenges and concepts posed above. How do Facebook users manage the threat posed to their interactions through multicomcommunication? How do they work to divide their attention between interactional tasks? Do they work to organise interactional responsibilities into main and side involvements?

Through my application of Goffmanian ideas to my analysis of multicomunication, I am extending this current field of literature by focusing more so on the organisation of the interactive *environment* than individuals themselves. A large majority of work that has applied Goffman to new media has, for example, focused their attention on issues such as the presentation of self, impression management and face-work; all concepts that are concerned with the image of a particular individual(s) constructed within social encounters (see Lillqvist and Louhjala, 2014; West and Trester, 2012; Davies 2012; Birnbaum, 2008). Some studies have of course applied alternative Goffmanian ideas to social media data, for instance notions of framing and footing (see Zhang and Kramarae, 2014) and the participant framework in relation to audience roles (Androutsopoulos, 2014). My chapter on multicomunication, though, is instead concerned with the organisation of multiplicity in interactive environments and how facebook users position and organise the multiple strands of interaction that they are engaged in. This is an area of new media platforms that has not been explored through a Goffmanian lens.

Research questions

Throughout the first two chapters of my thesis, I have outlined an interest in the interactive opportunities available on online platforms such as Facebook. I have explored such 'opportunities' through the notion of 'affordances' outlining how certain features of technology allow for, or afford, certain activities that are not possible within face to face interactions. The two activities of interest within this thesis are that of pre-post editing and multicomunication. I have highlighted in the previous material how these activities bring opportunity for an additional 'constructive' space in our interactions as well as an ability to hold numerous conversations simultaneously within one platform. However, alongside this, I have noted the concurrent challenges that such activities bring; raising important questions around how users utilise this space and manage the complexities that multiple interactions may bring. Of broader concern, though, is how, ultimately, the activities of pre-post editing and multicomunication work to affect the interactional order of our communications.

Drawing on the notions of Goffman, I have highlighted a concern in whether the challenges and changing dynamics that such activities threaten the way we maintain and orient towards interactional order and how this may affect the way we are able to manage self within our interactive encounters. Such interests and concerns have led to this work asking the following questions:

1) How do users utilise the capability to pre-post edit within their Facebook interactions?

- Specifically, how do they manage this ability in the process of managing 'face'?

2) How do users manage the capability to multicomunicate within their Facebook interactions?

- How do they manage the challenge of dividing their attention multiple ways?
- What interactive strategies do they implement?

3) How does the use of pre-post editing and multicomunication shape the interactional order of our interactions on Facebook?

- Is interactional order maintained and orientated to whilst pre-post editing and multicomunication take place?

Question one is addressed predominately in Chapter Five, question two predominately in Chapter Six, and question three predominately in Chapter Seven. In asking these questions I seek to contribute to existing research by exploring the 'pre-post' construction of 'face' within Facebook interaction which a particular focus on both the protective and defensive elements of face-work as well as exploring interactional order in relation to the management of interactional *environment* rather than just the management of an individual.

In the coming chapters, I will work to outline the specific contributions that this thesis makes within different fields of research. In Chapter Three, for example, I explore previous research on screen capture technologies and how my own research is situated within this field as well as the field of conversation analysis. Chapter Four opens a discussion on the research ethics of using the data collection approach of screen capture, developing an important contribution in terms of how we may

approach ethics in online research. It is in the analysis chapters themselves, Chapters Five and Six, that I explore previous research on pre-post editing and multiactivity and thus indicate how my particular analysis contributes to knowledge on such activities.

Chapter three: Methodology

This chapter sets out the approach taken to research design within this thesis. The chapter is split into two sections, the first of which explores my processes of data collection. I start by introducing the method of screen capture, an approach that uses software to record the screens of participants allowing for real time, video data of users' online interactions to be accessed. I then explore how this method is suited to addressing the research interests of this study as well as addressing some of the practicalities of how I collected data in this way from the research site of Facebook. As I will discuss, screen capture is an innovative form of data collection and has been applied by few in the field of social media research. The fact that the method records the screens of participants is what, as I will explain, makes this method so suited to this project. However, the nature of the method introduces an array of ethical issues to consider such as consent, sensitivity of information and participant control. Such issues will be explored in detail in Chapter 4. The second section of this methods Chapter addresses the analytical approaches adopted within this thesis. Here, I explain how I have drawn on methods developed within conversation analysis, but also how approaches such as discursive psychology and Goffman's analytical interests have influenced my approach to data analysis.

Data collection: Screen capture and the collection of pre-post activity on Facebook

The nature of my research interest requires that I go 'behind the screens' in my study of Facebook activity. For my project, my aim is to explore how Facebook users are managing the challenges brought about by the activities of pre-post editing and multicommuting. In order to see how my participants are utilising the ability to pre-post edit, for instance, I have to be able to have access to this 'pre' stage of Facebook interaction: the stage before messages and posts are sent. Simply having access to the finished and sent 'product' of interaction, i.e. the post that is shared with interactional partners, through the provision of a transcript, for example, would not allow me access to the 'pre-post' space of interaction that this project requires. In

relation to the exploration of multicomunication, I also need access to this 'hidden' dimension of the Facebook environment. Although time stamped transcripts would allow me to see how many interactions were occurring simultaneously, such data would not allow me to see how participants move between interactions and negotiate the multiplicity of the Facebook environment, thus making it difficult for me to understand how processes of multicomunication are indeed managed. Alternatively I could ask participants how they utilise the ability of pre-post editing and the challenge of multicomunicating through the use of interviews. This would give me access to participant accounts of such issues; enabling me to explore their experience of the site and expressions of the strategies they might use in engaging with this, for instance. However, what I am interested in is not user 'accounts' but instead the empirical material of interactive detail and the way in which the management of such activities online is interactionally accomplished.

Screen capture, then, is a method that allows me access to the 'pre-post' stage of Facebook interaction. Screen capture software can be downloaded onto a laptop and run in the background of any computer activity in order to record whatever is on the screen. In other words, what the computer user sees on their screen, the software captures. Once the activity is recorded, the screen capture data is saved as a video file that can be played back, stopped and reversed. Videos display interactive detail ranging from keystrokes and deletions to cursor movements and click-throughs revealing how users navigate through the social networking platform and thus allowing me to address the research questions of this study. Whilst screen capture software has limitations (to which I will return to in the conclusion of this study) collecting data in this way allows me to go 'beyond the screen' and examine exactly what is happening during the construction of interactions.

Up until the last decade, it has "been physically and therefore methodologically difficult to record the moment-by-moment operations" that comprise textually mediated settings (Geisler & Slattery, 2007, p.186) and although modern screen capture software is a method that fills this gap, its uptake in research has been rather limited (Bhatt and de Roock, 2013). The first attempt at using screen capture in

research was conducted by Bigum and Gilding (1985) who captured students writing movements and talk around completing a certain task. This project required two monitors, a video mixer and a video tape recorder, perhaps leading authors such as Geisler and Slattery to highlight the methodological difficulties involved in 'moment to moment' recording. However, today, it is possible to simply download a screen capture program on to a computer and record with the use of one piece of software, on one device. In the case of my project, for instance, the screen-capture software's liteCam (for Android devices) and Movavi (for Apple devices) were used on participant's own laptops.

Since Bigum and Gilding's work in the 1980's, there have been a handful of linguistic orientated studies that have adopted the use of screen capture including work on journalist writing strategies (Van Hout and Macgilchrist 2010; Van Hout, Pander Maat, and De Preter 2011) and on conversational repair (Garcia and Jacobs, 1999; Meredith and Stokoe, 2014). Garcia and Jacobs (1999) used screen capture technologies to study turn-taking within quasi-synchronous computer mediated communications focusing on how users edited their messages pre-post as new turns were entered into the conversation. The captured interactions within Garcia and Jacob's work were recorded by four students within a classroom setting, making for quite a different environment to that captured in this project. In my project, participants recorded their interactions on their own laptops whilst communicating with their peers who were located in various other locations making for a less 'educational' and more 'everyday', 'natural' and 'mundane' interactional context.

Meredith and Stokoe (2014), however, did apply screen capture to explore more mundane interactions that occurred within the social networking site of Facebook. Rather than focusing on turn taking processes like Garcia and Jacobs (1999), they focused specifically on the phenomenon of pre-post editing itself, questioning to what extent processes of the 'repair' were different within Facebook chat interactions compared to the face to face context. Similarly to the work of Meredith and Stokoe (2014), then, I am applying the methodology of screen capture to the social media context of Facebook in order to capture processes of pre-post editing. However, in this

work, I have used screen capture not just to record pre-post editing within Facebook chats, but have captured recordings of interactions across the whole Facebook environment including that of status updates, wall posts and comments (a fact that, as I will discuss in the next chapter, raises complex ethical issues). This broader use of screen capture technology has also allowed me access to the movements of participants across the whole platform, an element of pre-post social media activity not focused on in the work of Meredith and Stokoe (2014).

Unlike the small body of literature that has used screen capture as its method of data collection, the amount of research on the social networking site of Facebook is unprecedented in comparison. Since the launch of Facebook in 2004 there has been a rapidly growing body of research on the platform with researchers attracted “the utility of Facebook as a novel tool to observe behaviour in a naturalistic setting, test hypotheses, and recruit participants” (Wilson, Gosling and Graham, 2012, pg. 203). With such a large amount of research conducted on and about the platform (for a review of Facebook research see Wilson et al., 2012), there have inevitably been numerous ways in which scholars have collected data from the site.

There is, of course, research that is *about* Facebook but that doesn’t actually collect data *directly* off the site e.g. work that conducts interviews, focus groups or surveys gathering participant accounts of use: for example, Robards and Lincoln (2016) whose participants narrated their reflections on their online activity and Jung, Walden, Johnson and Sundar (2017) who used interviews in their work on digital divide and Facebook use. However, there are numerous approaches to collecting data directly from actual Facebook content. Zhao, Grasmuck and Martin (2008), for instance, recruited participants who allowed their profile information to be downloaded from their accounts, focusing particularly on self-descriptions, networks and contact information. Lillqvist and Lauhaila-Salminen (2014), on the other hand, did not recruit participants but instead copied and pasted posts directly from Facebook corporate pages. Data collection can also be participant-led. For example, Bazarova et al., (2012) asked participants to submit their six latest status updates, chat messages and wall posts. Alternatively, researchers have also “friended” participants on Facebook during

the period of collection in order to collect interactions, such as status updates, directly from profile pages at certain intervals (Carr et al., 2012). Compared to these approaches of collecting data directly from Facebook, West and Trester (2013) adopted a more ethnographic approach, describing their work as a 'netnography' (see Hine, 2000; Kozinets, 2010). In this study, data was collected primarily through observational field notes on users' Facebook behaviours and activities. These field notes, though, were used in combination with collecting status updates and comments from participants' profiles thus drawing from both online collection techniques (directly collecting posts) as well as offline collection techniques such as field notes.

These approaches however, as alluded to earlier, do not allow researchers to access the 'pre-post' stage of interaction on Facebook. They instead allow access to participant accounts or to the 'published' interactions on Facebook and thus are not suitable to address the concerns of this project. My project, then, extends research on the social media site of Facebook by capturing this 'hidden' pre-post space of interaction previously not accessed by other forms of data collected applied to the site. Further to this, my thesis extends the small body of literature that has applied screen capture in the Facebook context (e.g. Meredith and Stokoe, 2014) by taking a wider focus within the analysis, not just focusing on pre-post editing behaviours but also how users negotiate and manage the multiplicity of the Facebook environment. Until now, I have addressed what screen capture is, how it addresses the concerns of this thesis and how I am extending both the fields of screen capture and Facebook methodology by collecting data in this way. Next, I address the practicalities of my data collection: how, for instance, did I recruit participants to record this hidden space of their Facebook worlds? What did the participants need to do with the software and how many participants did I need? Before addressing such questions, though, I begin with a brief discussion on why I chose Facebook as a research site to study processes of pre-post editing and multicomunication.

The practicalities of data collection: selection of research site and participant recruitment

As mentioned, numerous social researchers have “recognised the utility of Facebook as a novel tool to observe behaviour in a naturalistic setting, test hypotheses and recruit participants” (Wilson, et al., 2012, pg. 203) with Facebook providing an entirely preserved archive of data for researchers. Facebook’s content is made up of users’ individual profiles usually featuring information ‘about them’ and pictures. In addition, they can post status updates on their own profiles, wall posts on other people’s profiles and comment on both their own and other people’s statuses. There is also the possibility of sending private messages to individuals or groups of Facebook friends. In terms of scope of research on Facebook, there is a predominance of work on *who* uses Facebook, the motivations for use, as well as about relationships on Facebook and how these are managed through social interactions (Wilson et al., 2012). There is a large array of data types and materials that can be collected from Facebook including written comments and wall posts (Lillqvist and Salminen, 2014), status updates (Carr et al., 2012), chat messages (Meredith, 2014; Meredith and Stokoe, 2014), pictures (Tifferet and Vilnai-Yauetz, 2014) and profile information (Zhao et al., 2008).

In addition to the amount of data available on Facebook, there are two reasons why I found this particular platform to be the most suitable research site for this thesis. Firstly, as highlighted within the introduction, our online platforms, Facebook included, are becoming increasingly hybrid in nature, offering multiple interactive modes and options within the boundaries of one virtual space. I highlighted how, on Facebook, users could engage in interactions ranging from private one on one conversations (Facebook messages) to much more public interactions visible to entire networks (status updates, wall posts and comments). This makes for an interesting interactional environment in which interactants move between both public and private interactions within one space. In terms of my focus on multicomunication, it is interesting to see how users not only move between separate, simultaneous interactions generally, but also how they do this between varying levels of public-private forms of interaction. This dimension to multicomunication would not be

captured on social media applications such as WhatsApp, for example.

Another way Facebook is 'hybrid' in nature is through the *modes* of communication which can be engaged with within the one platform. Users interact on Facebook through images, video, audio, hyperlinks as well as written communications making it a multimodal interactive site (Kress, 2001). Yet, despite the range of modes utilised on Facebook, a large amount of interaction still occurs in a written, or typed, form. This is particularly highlighted when thinking about other social media sites such as Snapchat, Instagram or YouTube, which are more largely reliant on visual and audio content. This is important for my study as I am interested in the pre-post construction of *messages* online (rather than say, the pre-post editing process of videos being uploaded to YouTube or the process of choosing a filter for a photo on Instagram). I am also interested in the ways in which users manage the challenge of being engaged in numerous conversations at one time, for example how they manage different topics of conversation and go back and forth between different interlocutors. Such concerns, then, require access to the more written interactive content of social media, something Facebook as a platform offers in abundance.

Sample size and hours of data

When it came to actually collecting Facebook data for my own project I recruited four participants who recorded their interactions on the social networking site. It is important to highlight, though, how my study also involved what I, and other scholars, have referred to as 'secondary participants' (see Meredith and Potter, 2013). Secondary participants are those who are not recording their screens, but who are interacting with the 'primary' participant who is. Thus, their interactions are also captured by the software and analysed within my analysis. I address the ethics of accessing such secondary participants in Chapter four of this thesis.

My four *primary* participants - my recording participants - downloaded the software of *liteCam* (for Android devices) or *Movavi* (for Apple devices) on to their own personal laptops. I chose these softwares due to their ease of use for participants with

no screen capture experience as well as their limited cost compared to other similar softwares. Once screen capture was downloaded on to participant laptops they began to capture their interactions on Facebook at times to suit them, saving their recordings as video files as they went along. Once a collection of recordings were captured by each participant, the video files were passed on to me, via USB, for analysis.

In total I received six and a half hours of screen capture video files for analysis, with some participants returning over two hours of data and others around an hour. In comparison to many projects, a sample size of 4 participants and six hours of data is, most definitely, small. However, the interest and aim of my analysis was to explore how the challenges of pre-post editing and multicomunication were managed *within the interactions* of my participants, with my analysis focused on the interactional *details* on participant's messages. Details of interest, as will be revealed in the analysis chapters, include the editing of just a few words of a message or the slight cursor movements participants make when moving between different interactions. In order to focus on such minute detail, I employed a micro form of analysis on the data sent back to me which I will explain in more detail later on in the analysis section of this chapter. When employing such micro analysis, it is common to have small sample sizes in terms of the amount of data collected. As explained in relation to discourse analytic methods by Wood and Kroger (2001), the "the labour intensive, time consuming nature of discourse transcription and analysis usually requires that sample size in the traditional sense of number of participants be relatively limited" (p.80).

By drawing heavily on discourse analytic methods, such as conversation analysis, the focus of my analytic work was on the user's interactive behaviour and not, say, the user themselves. This means that the critical issue at hand was the size of the sample of *interactive movements* and engagement with the activities of pre-post editing or multicomunication, rather than the amount of time I recorded for, or indeed the number of people that I gathered the data from. What I actually found was that using these more traditional units of analysis, such as participants, number of interactions, or hours of recording as markers was actually unhelpful for me in terms of gauging how rich the data was. Some videos, for example, may have been 10

minutes long but had limited pre-post editing or multicomunication occur within them. Other videos of a shorter nature, however, were much denser in terms of participant's engagement in these interactive activities.

In order to deal with this uncertainty around how much data participants should actually collect, and to minimise the risk of having either not enough or too much data, I began my analysis alongside the data collection process. This allowed me to gauge how rich the data was; giving me a more realistic idea of how many videos I would need for my project. Although in my initial estimations I anticipated that I would need around 40 hours of data, so 10 hours per participant (a calculation based on Meredith's PhD thesis (2014) that also used screen capture to collect social media data), I found I only needed a fraction of this amount due to the amount of interactive detail contained within the small periods of video recordings I received. My suggestion is that my own project required significantly less data than Meredith's due to the broader analytic interest held within my own work. In this thesis, for example, I was interested in two activities, pre-post editing and multicomunication, whereas Meredith focused on just the one of pre-post repair work. Meredith also kept her focus on the private Facebook chat interactions, whereas in my own work I broadened the analytic sample by also exploring alternative modes of interaction of the platform such as comments, wall posts and status updates.

In addition to having a small sample in terms of hours of recording, my work also features a small sample in terms of number of participants. Again, due to the analytic focus and methods applied to this study I feel that this has not hindered the validity and quality of the research. My analysis is also, in no way, attempting to provide a representative and generalisable sample of how Facebook users indeed manage the activities of pre-post editing and multicomunication. Instead, my aim is to provide an empirical *insight* into some of the ways in which these activities are engaged with within the Facebook environment; one that makes a contribution to existing understandings of online interaction.

Participants and recruitment

The four participants who recorded their interactions on Facebook for this project were individuals whom I already had an existing connection with as all four were my own 'Facebook friends'. Recruiting participants who you already have a personal relationship with of course raises a range of ethical concerns, concerns which I will address in the following chapter of this thesis. My four participants were made up of 2 males, 2 females and within the age ranges of 25-40 at the time of data collection. Participant demographics such as age, gender and background were not determining factors as to who I would recruit for this project. As this project is concerned with the interactional work that individuals do online, my priority was on the interactional moves that the participants made rather than the user's identity or demographic. Due to this, as often the case in much discourse analytic work, "any text or person who speaks to the issue at hand will do as well as any other" (Wood and Kroger, 2000, p.79). The issue at hand in this thesis is how people manage the activities of pre-post editing and multicomunication, thus, any Facebook user who engages in such interactive activities through Facebook messenger, comments and status updates was seen to perform well as any other user would, making common criteria categories such as gender, age, nationality and ethnicity irrelevant criteria.

Practically, however, there were some more purposive criteria that participants did need to meet. Firstly, they needed to be regular Facebook users and use a range of communications on the site (e.g. messages, comments and status updates). They also needed to be active contributors. By this, I mean not only did they regularly log in and scroll the news feed, but they actively contributed and produced written content. Participants also needed to use Facebook on their laptops rather than mobile phones, or at least have access to using Facebook on their laptops, as using screen capture software on mobile or tablet devices has not been technologically or ethically possible in the scope of this project (more discussion on this in Chapter eight).

In terms of the recruitment of my participants, my initial approach was conducted via a mass Facebook chat message sent through my own Facebook account.

I sent this initial message to large groups of my Facebook friends at once as opposed to sending individual, personal, messages to each friend in my network. The message (found in the Appendix A) adopted a friendly tone and briefly described the research topic and design. It then invited interested parties to come forward and directly message me themselves. It is at this point that I adopted a one to one form of communication where I sent over materials that described the project and the data collection process in more detail allowing the potential participant to process this information and ask any questions they may have. I decided to send out the initial group message to half of my Facebook network. I did this so that if I needed to recruit more participants due to lack of interest or lack of data I would have a secondary pool of people to recruit from. As it turned out, I did not require this secondary pool, recruiting enough participants and collecting sufficient data from the first grouping.

The next step in participant recruitment involved an initial visit to interested participants. This was a useful step in the recruitment process as it allowed me to go over the details of the project and give potential participants the opportunity to ask any questions they might have. I also used these visits to introduce participants to the screen capture software and help them download the software on to their own laptops. Once participants were happy, recordings began within the participants own time. As mentioned earlier, I had once predicted that I would collect 10 hours of recording from each participant. Once talking to participants, though, I found this amount of recording time to be intimidating to them. Thus, participants collected data on a more flexible 'ad-hoc' basis, simply recording as much or as little as they wanted to. If I felt I was not getting enough data for the project, my plan was to simply recruit more participants to increase the hours of data received, however, as analysis began, I realised this was not necessary. Once participants had recorded a collection of videos I re-met with them in person to collect the data via a USB which I had provided for them.

Having outlined how screen capture enables me to access the 'pre-post' space of interaction, address the research interests of this thesis and how I practically approached data collection, I now shift my attention to how I approached my data

analytically. Of course, as signalled throughout my discussion on data collection, there are many ethical challenges and issues to address when applying screen capture technologies to online environments. I address such issues in the following Chapter of this thesis. I also return to data collection approaches in Chapter seven and Chapter eight where I reflect on my use of screen capture and some of the limitations that such a method has.

Data analysis: the micro analysis of pre-post activity on Facebook

As introduced in Chapter two, I am approaching interaction through the lens of Goffman's 'interaction order', a stance that understands all interactions to have a social order: a set of moral norms and expectations that guide us towards 'appropriate' interactive behaviours. However, with the challenges that certain affordances present to interaction in the Facebook environment, I have expressed concern around whether such order is threatened in the online context. The central interest of my analysis, then, is to explore how these challenges are managed and how, or indeed whether, this social order of interaction is maintained. It is important to highlight, though, how I am interested in approaching these questions in a micro analytic way. My interest is in how participants manage the challenges of the online environment *within* their interactions with a specific focus on the interactional *details* of their conversations and the devices and strategies which they use within them. In terms of analysis, then, I needed an approach that helps me integrate these central concerns and that maintains a focus on the micro details of participant's interactive lives. Such a need has led me to the approach of conversation analysis.

Conversation analysis

Since its early development in the lectures of Harvey Sacks at the University of California between 1964-1972 (Sacks 1992) conversation analysis (CA) "has emerged as one of the most powerful approaches to the study of human communicative interaction" (Hutchby, 2001b, pg. 55). At its most basic level, "CA is the study of talk-in-interaction" and is the "systematic analysis of the kinds of talk produced in everyday naturally occurring situations of social interaction" (ibid). For CA, naturally occurring

conversations refer to interactions that arguably would have occurred whether or not the research was taking place. Such conversations are also often referred to as instances of ‘mundane talk’. Here, mundane is not used in a way that understands such conversations as any “lower” or “less serious” than other forms of talk-in-interaction (Hutchby, 2001b, pg.60). Instead, it refers to the way that such interactions are variable in terms of the form, content and length compared to more formalised forms of talk such as interviews or ceremonious forms of talk where more parameters tend to be in place (ibid).

In terms of the claims to knowledge that CA makes, like other discursive approaches to analysis, it’s purpose is not to “find out what people really mean” when they say certain things or to “discover the reality behind the discourse” (Jorgensen and Phillips, 2002, p.21). Instead, the starting point is that “reality can never be reached outside of discourse and so it is discourse itself that becomes the object of reality” (ibid). This perspective does not deny the existence of truth and reality. Rather, what is focused on is not ‘what is real?’ but the slightly different question of ‘how do people create a sense of what is real through talk?’. Ultimately, CA, like other discursive approaches, argues that yes, reality does exist but it is *constructed within* the discourse and talk itself, not merely *reflected* in it. In this way, research moves away from treating *data-as-resource* and moves towards treating *data-as-topic* (Rapley, 2001). In other words, rather than seeing online interactions, for example, as “a way to reach the people behind the screen” (Flinkfeldt, 2011, pg. 763), interactions are analyzed as “social practices in their own right” (Lamerichs & te Molder, 2003, pg. 461).

From this perspective, psychological attributes such as intentions and motivations are seen to be created and constructed within discourse and interaction and not just reflected within in it as cognitive states. So in an analysis, analysts are not claiming what cognitive processes the participant is going through, rather they aim to show these procedures being played out in the discourse. Similarly, analysis is not focused on the *frequency* in which interactive acts occur but rather *how* such acts are displayed:

the focus of...analysis is not on how often [participants] joke but how they joke, not on how often they display nervousness but how they display nervousness...in short, not on the frequency of some activity but on the details of its management and accomplishment (Drew, 1989, pg. 99-100)

It is this interest in the *details* of interaction and the processes of how interactional acts are *managed* and *accomplished* in talk that suits the questions posed by my project. With CA interrogating what it is people 'do' in talk, I am able to use specific aspects of this approach to further understand the key concerns of my thesis such as how participants use the 'pre-post' space to *accomplish* certain presentations of self or how they organise their conversations to '*do*' multicommunicating.

Alongside CA's central interest in how people 'do' and 'accomplish' things within their interaction, CA also "shares Goffman's vision of the social order as simultaneously a moral one" (Bischoping and Gazso, 2016, pg. 69) with a primary concern being to seek understanding on *how* speakers "go about orientating to and creating social order" through the structures and organisation of their conversations (ibid, pg. 66). This concern of CA links directly with my thesis' interest in how, or whether, the challenges presented by the Facebook environment work to effect interactional order in any way.

Despite this overlap of interest, there are also distinct differences between Goffman's perspective on interaction and CAs. Such differences are closely related to the issues discussed in Chapter two of this thesis where I explored Schegloff's critiques of Goffman's approach. The first of these differences is centred on what the two perspectives *focus* on. As mentioned in Chapter two, Goffman predominately focuses on 'the ritual requirements' of interaction rather than the 'systematic requirements'. Schegloff argued, for example, that Goffman was committed to ritual with an "unwillingness" to detach from the organisation and maintenance of face (1988, pg. 95). CA, on the other hand, is much more concerned with the 'systematic' organisation of interaction. Rather than 'ritual', 'rules' and 'face', CA sees the organisation of turn taking, sequences and interactional repair as the centre of social action (Schegloff, 1988). In this way, then, although both approaches seek to understand how social

order is created and orientated to, the approaches are preoccupied with different aspects of this order.

As well as their 'focus', a further important difference between CA and Goffman is in their approaches to data collection and analysis. Although both known for their 'micro' approaches to sociology and their empirical detail, as I highlighted in Chapter two, Goffman rarely provided full transcripts of 'real talk' and in cases even 'invented' data that supported his larger arguments of ritual (see Schegloff, 1988). CA, however, takes a much more systematic approach to data collection and presentation. With CA, data is always presented in a form which allows readers "independent access" to the data and therefore the opportunity to perform an "independent competitive analysis" (Schegloff, 1988, pg. 104).

In my own analysis, then, I draw on aspects of both Goffmanian and CA perspectives. I take, for example, an interest in the 'ritual' and 'face' much like Goffman with a focus on how, or indeed whether, Facebook users maintain a sense of 'order' and 'face' in this specific online context. However, alongside this concern I am interested in how they do this through the organisation of the more systematic features of their interactions. As will be seen in my analytic chapters, I am interested in how Facebook users organise *repair* using the affordance of pre-post editing and how users organise *turn taking* and *sequences* when engaged in practices of multicomunication. These CA concerns, that Schegloff (1988) argues are the 'heart' of social action, then, do indeed take a central role within my analysis much like Goffman's notion's of the interactional order and 'face'. I also present "spates of real talk" taken directly from my participant's online interactions and present these in a way that can be independently analysed by any reader (Schegloff, 1988, pg. 104). In this way, I take a more "CA" inspired approach to the presentation of empirical data. In the next section of this chapter, I go on to explore the CA concepts, or 'fundamental structures' that are central to my analysis: that of repair, turn design, turn taking and sequentiality.

The 'fundamental structures' of CA

As noted in the opening chapter of this thesis, the application of CA to digital environments is on the increase (Giles, Stommel, Paulus, Lester and Reed, 2015) with this project joining a growing body of research that focuses on the micro, interactive detail of the online world (see Giles, 2006; Gibson, 2009; Bou-Franch, Lorenzo-Dus, Garces-Conejos Blitvich; Stommel, 2016). To date, however, the primary focus of this academic interest has been on the 'products' of online interaction; the content that is eventually made visible in messages, posts or tweets. In contrast, I am interested in the activity that occurs '*pre-post*'; the work that goes on before content is shared with a user's network and that which operates behind the scenes in the multicomunication process.

In their literature review on how CA has been used to understand online interaction, Paulus, Lester and Warren (2016) identified seven 'fundamental structures' of CA that analysts use "to understand the social actions accomplished in online talk" (pg. 4). Such features include sequence organisation, turn design, repair and turn-taking, all structures that I draw upon within my own analysis. I will now introduce each of these structures, indicating how they become relevant within my own research. I will begin with turn design and repair, concepts relevant in relation to pre-post editing followed by turn-taking and sequentiality, concepts relevant for my chapter on multicomunication.

'Turn design', then, is referred to as the process of a speaker "selecting what will go" into a certain interaction (Drew, 2005, pg.82). Drew highlights how individuals do this "in two quite distinct respects" (ibid, pg.82). First, interactants "select what action the turn will be designed to perform" (pg.82). This refers to the notion that a number of possible activities might be performed within a certain "slot" such as, for instance, a disclosure, a complaint or a piece of advice (pg.85). Second, speakers "select the details of the verbal constructions through which that action will be accomplished" (pg.83). This refers to the idea that there are multiple ways of saying something or performing the same action. Unlike the study of turn-design present in

Drew's (2005) telephone call research, though, this thesis does not focus on how different versions of actions are produced within the run of actual interaction but, instead, explores how turns are designed *before* publication, thus, before the turn is even part of the run of interaction. Specifically, my analysis is interested in how Facebook users are designing their turns in relation to constructing and maintaining 'face' in the pre-post space of the social media site.

Despite turns in interaction undergoing this process of 'design', interactions are of course "also marked with frequent trouble sources including misunderstandings, mispronunciations and mishearing of words, confusion over names and facts, silences, contradictions, and the like" (Bischoping and Gazso, 2016, pg. 80 also see Sacks et al., 1974). Due to such 'troubles', an important focus of CA work has been on mechanisms of repair and correction, a second 'fundamental structure' of CA focused on within this analysis. The two terms of 'repair' and 'correction' are often used interchangeably in CA discourse, however Schegloff et al., (1977) noted how he preferred 'repair' as it "encompasses instances in which a speaker revises an utterance even without having made a factual error" (cited in Bischoping and Gazso, 2016, pg. 80)². My project, then, shares this analytical interest with CA in terms of the 'revisions' made to utterances. Rather than focusing on such instances *after* the utterance has been shared with interlocutors, I am interested in the revisions that are made *before* sharing and how such revisions work towards accomplishing a certain 'turn design'. In the online context, then, this would occur in the 'pre-post' space of Facebook activity- the space of interaction recorded by the screen capture software.

One CA study has explored processes of repair in the pre-post stage of Facebook interaction; that of Meredith and Stokoe (2014). Here, as introduced earlier on in this chapter, the authors focused specifically on the phenomenon of pre-post editing itself, questioning to what extent processes of the 'repair' were different within Facebook chat interactions compared to the face to face context. These authors make the important distinction between what they call 'visible' repairs and 'message construction' repairs. Visible repairs occur within the interaction thread itself; repairs

² I return to the differences between repair and correction in Chapter Five

that “can be seen and orientated to by both participants in the interaction” (2014, pg.181). Message construction repairs, in contrast, remain ‘invisible’ to interactional partners and occur within the construction of a written interaction before it is sent to the interlocutor/s (2014, pg.181). My analysis extends Meredith and Stokoe’s research by exploring the phenomenon of ‘message construction repair’ but with a particular focus on how such repairs are utilised by users in processes of self presentation and the maintenance of ‘face’. Questions such as ‘how are users managing this pre-post space when it comes to maintaining ‘face’?’ and ‘how are users ‘designing’ their turns in ways that constructs certain versions of self?’ are concerns that are not addressed in Meredith et al., (2014) but that are addressed in my analysis of pre-post editing.

Two other ‘fundamental structures’ of CA are that of sequences and turn taking with the key concern being around how “participants in conversation create sequences of talk by taking turns at speaking” (Gibson, 2009b, no page number). Gibson describes how Sacks (1992) proposed a number of maxims that could be seen to operate as “general procedures for talk” (2009b, no page number):

- 1) that one person speaks at a time; 2) that conversational turns do not overlap; 3) that people take turns at producing turns (Gibson, 2009b, no page number; see also Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson, 1974).

Turns in talk, then, are directly related to the CA interest in ‘sequences’ as it is understood that turns of talk are organised in sequential ways. Such sequences can take the form of ‘adjacency pairs’ such as invitation/acceptance or question/answer sequences, longer sequences for organising story telling (see Bischooping and Gazso, 2016) or sequences such as greetings which, according to Sacks, often form six or seven turns of interaction (1992).

Problems, however, have been identified in relation “working out the organisation of talk through sequential turns” in the online environment (Gibson, 2009b, no page number). This is due to instances where conversational participants do not interact within the same interactional moment with interactions distributed across time, with no single temporal point (ibid). Hutchby (2001b) also identified problems

to sequence organisation in the online context of multiparty chats in IRC. Here, multiple conversations occurred within one thread of communication with turns simply appearing in the order in which they were distributed on to the chat thread resulting in a less transparent sequential order than we are used to seeing in offline, face to face contexts. Despite such difficulties, though, scholars such as Gibson (2009b) and Hutchby (2001) have both applied CA methods to study the organisation of order in these complex environments, both finding evidence of turn taking strategies and negotiation within their data sets.

Within my analysis, then, I draw upon these CA structures of sequences and turns in my chapter on multicomcommunication. However, unlike Hutchby and Gibson who focus on sequences and turn organisation within *single* conversations and threads of discussion, I am interested in how these structures are organised across *different* conversations. How, for instance, do participants take turns and move between the multiple conversations that they are engaged in? How do they organise the sequence of responding to these different threads? My analysis also shows an interest in how particular sequences are orientated to and organised within multicomcommunication instances on Facebook, for example, how do participants organise the opening and closing sequences of their interactions in this complex environment?

As seen from this discussion, conversation analysis as an analytical approach has a lot to offer to my thesis' concerns. It aligns with my interests in how people accomplish and 'do' things within their talk- such as how they accomplish 'face' and 'do' multicomcommunication- as well as sharing the vision that there is a social and moral order to interaction. As well as this, many of the fundamental CA structures outlined by Paulus et al., (2016) are useful concepts when it comes to exploring the activities of pre-post editing and multicomcommunication. In addition to highlighting the relevance of CA concepts such as turn design, repair and sequences, I have noted how my analysis works to extend these areas of research by 1) asking questions of the presentation of self and 'face' and 2) approaching turn taking and sequences in relation to how participants take turns between different, multiple, interactions in the Facebook environment.

These extensions of interest, though, result in my analysis taking a slightly broader approach toward the CA structures I have discussed. By considering how participants construct certain versions of self and manage 'face' within their interactions, I am working to understand "broader social practices" of interaction (Paulus et al., 2016, pg.6). Broader social practices, such as identity construction, relationship development, racism and community participation are often approached through the perspective of Discursive Psychology (ibid; see also Potter and Wetherill, 1987; Edwards, 1997). DP, like CA, is interested in the accomplishment and management of such things in talk but maintains more of a focus on how these broader social practices are achieved rather than focusing purely on how conversation structure and intelligibility is achieved, which is more so the concern of CA.

In terms of my analysis of multicomcommunication, I am again taking a broader perspective of CA issues than that of existing research such as Hutchby (2001b). This time, I am not extending out in terms of an interest in broader social practices like identity, but, instead, I am adopting a broader perspective in relation to what could constitute 'turn-taking' online. Above all, though, my analysis of multicomcommunicating behaviours online does not just question how *conversation* is ordered but also questions how interactional order is maintained and whether the challenges presented by multicomcommunication threaten such an order. In this way, I am taking an interest in both the 'ritual' and 'systematic' requirements of interaction. In Hutchby's analysis on multiparty IRC interactions, for example, he is focused on the sequential organisation of the conversations, primarily concerned with the devices that are used by participants to manage the challenge of turn taking in the IRC environment. Here, we share analytic interest in how participants are managing the challenges of their technological environment within their interactions. Hutchby, however, is focused on the challenges it poses to conversational structure e.g. the challenge it poses to the structural organisation and turn taking online. So, in Goffman terms, the 'systematic' requirements of interaction. I, however, have a broader concern: that of the challenges posed to interactional order on a whole.

With the challenge of dividing attention between multiple conversations at one time participants are no longer making themselves 'fully available' to one interactive encounter; an act that may threaten the ritual requirements of interaction outlined in chapter two of this thesis. What this means is that unlike Hutchby, and other CA works, I am not just asking how conversational order is maintained when users are multicommuting but more generally how, or whether, interactional order is maintained. It is here then that I see myself taking a broader, more Goffmanesque approach to analysis than that adopted by most CA studies. In fact, it is in this way that I am combining the focuses of both Goffman and CA. I am both concerned with the systematic order of interaction but, simultaneously, concerned with the ritual.

Through this section of discussion I have made clear how I predominately draw on the analytical approach of Conversation Analysis to analyse my screen capture data. I have also highlighted how my approach draws on discursive psychology as well as Goffmanesque interests resulting in me engaging in more hybrid approach to data analysis. In the next section, I intend to move discussion toward the first analytic chapter by briefly outlining how I, in more practical terms, conducted my analysis.

Approach to data analysis: some practicalities

In discursive approaches to analysis, such as CA, the overall goal is often understood to be "to explain what is being done in the discourse and how this is accomplished, that is, how the discourse is structured or organised to perform various functions and achieve various effects or consequences" (Wood and Kroger, 2000, pg. 95). When it comes to conducting a form of discursive analysis scholars are often "reluctant to identify specific steps" to approaching data (ibid), with discourse analysts often trying to avoid being overly restrictive and prescriptive when it comes to engaging with data. There is therefore "no necessary sequence of activities, no standard or required way" of carrying analysis out (ibid, pg. 96). In fact, Hutchby and Wooffitt (1998) claim analysts rely as much on "conversation analytic mentality" (pg. 93), or what Wood and Kroger call the "discourse analytic orientation" (2000, pg. 96) as on any formal rules of

analytical approach. In the analysis of this thesis, as in most discursive studies, I did not follow any particular 'rules' for analysis. However, I did employ a number of common analytical strategies. In this section I will briefly outline these, whilst also explaining how my analytic themes came about. In doing so, I also introduce the analytical challenge of the 'interpretative gap' (Edwards, 2012) and address how I have attended to such issues throughout my work.

The original focus of my analysis was on the ways that participants negotiated their identities in their messages and posts on Facebook, with a particular interest in how the ability to pre-post edit was utilised in this process. This built on my MA dissertation, a project that was also interested in how pre-post editing was used in processes of self presentation. However, as I conducted an initial read through of the data videos I had collected, I found multicomunication, as well as the process of pre-post editing, to be a major activity engaged with in the videos. This broadened the focus of my analysis.

After initial readings of my data, I noted examples in which these activities occurred. To help guide my analysis, I used certain analytical concepts such as the 'fundamental CA structures' explored earlier in this section. When drawing on concepts such as turn design, repair and turn taking I was careful to attend to such notions but not be "overly constrained by them" (Wood and Kroger, 2000, pg. 99). I drew on them to help me understand the organisation of the interaction but in a way that adapted them to suit the context under study. Throughout the process of analysis, I also drew on common discursive analysis techniques such as noting 'negative cases' e.g. examples that are outside of the claim you are building within your analysis (drawn on particularly in Chapter Six). I also recruited the strategy of 'substitution' (Wood and Kroger, 2000); where an analyst asks how an utterance would read if a word or phrase was omitted or an alternative was used. This approach helps to form ideas around what it is that certain discursive features 'do' in interaction, and was particularly helpful in the analysis of pre-post editing activity presented in Chapter Five. However, within that chapter, I have access to different 'versions' of a particular message e.g. a first draft of a response and a second draft of a response following one

or a series of edits. In this sense, I have not had to make these 'substitutions' in quite the same way. Instead, I commonly took the approach of comparing the different versions of the messages produced by primary participants, asking the question of what the new versions of messages 'do' e.g. what do they accomplish that the first draft of messages did not?

Engaging in a discursive form of analysis is not without its challenges; one of which is what Edwards has labelled the 'interpretative gap' (2012). The interpretative gap refers to the process that exists between "phenomena, data, analysis, and conclusions" (Edwards, 2012, pg.1); "the distance between the object under scrutiny and, via method, data processing and inferences, what you eventually want to say about it" (ibid, pg. 4). Essentially, in the context of this research, it is the 'gap' between the interactions of my primary participants and my interpretations of such interactions.

This gap exists within all types of research, both of quantitative and qualitative forms, but it is a particularly contested issue within discursive approaches to analysis (Edwards, 2012). The central concern in relation to this 'gap' is with how researchers arrive at the interpretations made. One issue that is often raised is that discursive analysts are often part of the culture under study and therefore "share many of the taken for granted, common-sense understandings expressed in the material" (Jorgensen and Phillips, 2002, pg.21). It is argued then that analysts have to be careful not to imply that analysis is done without any prior knowledge of the world (Potter, 1998), acknowledging that we use and partake in many of the interactional procedures that we work to highlight and understand. This shared knowledge and usage does make interactions coherent for both the participant and the analyst (Edwards, 1998) and this does, of course, have its benefits in potentially aiding an analyst to understand and make insights into the data. However, having this existing cultural and interactional knowledge can also make it difficult for the analyst to distinguish between what the discourse is actually telling them and what may be pre-existing knowledge.

To deal with such challenges within my own analysis, I have worked to not necessarily 'narrow' the interpretive gap between my data and my interpretations, but instead to 'map' the journey out by 'grounding' my analytical interpretations. Grounding analytical interpretations is "not about how you come up with patterns, interpretations and so forth, but how you justify your identification of patterns" through drawing on evidence in the discourse itself (Wood and Kroger, 2000, pg.95). Through such 'grounding' I have been able to "extract other meanings from the material than those which are in the foreground" (Jorgenson and Phillips, 2002, p.189) whilst also maintaining "a certain loyalty to the original empirical texts" (ibid).

By drawing on common analytical strategies, such as the ones mentioned earlier in this section, I have also engaged in what Potter has referred to as "critical interrogation" (1998, pg. 48). This is achieved by asking questions such as: 'why am I reading this passage this way? And what features of the discourse allow me to produce this reading?'. According to Potter, asking such questions leads to a "reflexive analytical strategy" that creates distance between the data and an analyst's own assumptions (ibid). Through the processes of grounding, I have worked to make this 'reflexive analytical strategy' transparent to the reader by presenting as much of the data as possible and documenting my reasoning process, from discursive material to conclusions, in detail in Chapters Five and Six. By engaging in reflexive questions as well as grounding I have not 'solved' the challenges posed by the 'interpretative gap' but I have worked to 'manage' them and 'map out' my interpretative journey for the reader. Through this, I hope to have created a valid analysis that has the potential to provoke academic debate and that can be evaluated in a critical manner.

Within this chapter I have addressed the methodological issues raised by this thesis. I have outlined how screen capture software is a data collection approach that allows access to the 'pre-post' stage of interaction thus allowing me to address the research questions of this study. I have worked to highlight how my use of the software extends current screen capture research through capturing a broader array of activity on the social networking site of Facebook, and I have provided a detailed account of the practicalities of data collection and participant recruitment. In the

second half of this chapter, I have addressed my approach to data analysis, specifically focusing on how my analysis draws on some of the fundamental structures of Conversation Analysis. Whilst drawing heavily on this approach, I have described how I have taken a more 'hybrid' approach to data analysis by adopting analytic interests from Discursive Psychology and Goffmanesque questions. In the next Chapter, I turn to the ethical issues raised by my project and how these were addressed in the study.

Chapter Four: The ethics of screen capture and revealing a hidden layer of privacy online

Over the last 20 years the ethics of social research has become an increasing topic of concern within academic culture. During this time, social research activity has become increasingly bureaucratised and regulated from an ethical perspective. Ethics committees have taken the role of overseeing social research projects and the discussion of ethical issues has become increasingly visible in the social science literature (Whiteman, 2012). This general change in academic culture has coincided with the growth of research into new media technologies and digital environments, resulting in a rapid growth of interest in the specific challenges and questions of online research ethics (see Baym and Markham, 2008; Markham and Buchanan, 2012; Whiteman, 2012; Eynon, Fry and Schroeder, 2017; Tiidenberg, 2018). The development and expansion of the internet and mediated technologies has been seen to unsettle some of the ethical practices and expectations that researchers have built up within the study of offline activities, meaning that traditional ethical debates, such as privacy, consent and confidentiality, have been reignited by the need to respond to the characteristics of these new technologies and practices (Whiteman, 2012).

Throughout recent debates, arguments have been made suggesting potential guidelines for researchers to follow when it comes to online ethics (see Markham and Buchanan, 2012). However, “whilst the field of internet research ethics is now well established, the ‘rights’ and ‘wrongs’ of online research remain contested” (Whiteman, 2017, pg.4). In fact, the complexity faced by scholars in relation to online ethics is encapsulated by the very guidelines set by Markham and Buchanan in 2012 which set out “eleven questions and fifty-two considerations that might be relevant to internet researchers” (Whiteman, 2017, pg.4). One reason for such complexity in the area is that the internet is still in a “formative phase” with new phenomena continually emerging (Eynon et al., 2017, pg.19). As well as the emergent platforms and features of the internet, our methods to research the online environment are also continually developing. Traditional data collection methods such as interviews and surveys, for

example, would not be suitable to collect the pre-post activity that this thesis is researching. Thus, newer, more technological methods, such as screen capture, are introduced in order to capture and document internet life as it develops. Due to the ever-changing landscape of both research sites and methods, internet research ethics is in need of constant reflection (Tiidenberg, 2018).

In terms of the ethical stance of this thesis, then, I have not attempted to find the most suitable online ethical guidelines for my project. Instead, I have drawn on one of the emphasis' of Natasha Whiteman's work; a stance that views "ethical decision making as embedded in the local details of research rather than involving the application of general ethical principles" (Whiteman, 2012, pg.9). What this approach prioritises is ethical practice *in context*, with attention given to the "specific nature of the research setting" (ibid). What I intend to do in this Chapter is to explore my processes of ethical decision making in relation to my 'specific research setting' of Facebook. However, perhaps more importantly, I will be exploring my ethical decisions and processes in relation to this project's data collection method; that of capturing interactions via screen capture technology. What I consider in this chapter, then, is how accessing the 'pre-post' and 'hidden' side to online interactive life may affect the way in which privacy is understood in writing on ethics and research. I also explore how using technologies to access 'behind the screen' data may comment on the way in which we as researchers think about sensitivity of information and our research relationships when conducting research in this particular online context.

Making the invisible visible: opening a 'hidden layer' of privacy

One traditional ethical debate that has been reignited in discussions of online research is that of the public/private nature of our data. Much of this debate is centred on and around 'defining' our data as either public or private, a task that has become increasingly difficult within online research sites (see for examples of this discussion: Nissenbaum, 2010; Markham and Buchanan, 2012; Whiteman, 2012; Eynon et al., 2017; Tiidenberg, 2018). I will address how I have approached defining my data as either public or private in my discussion on informed consent later in this chapter.

Here, however, I want to draw attention to how issues relating to the public/private debate are wider and more complex than simply defining our research site and data types. What I argue here is an approach to ethical decision making that places particular attention onto the ways in which we collect our data. This approach proposes that we need to ask questions of how we are accessing our data and consider what issues such methods may raise when it comes research ethics, in particular, in relation to the privacy of our participants.

Central to this argument is the fact that as digital technologies are developing, new methods of data collection are, too, emerging in order to capture the changing landscape of online life. Many of these new techniques are digital in nature and provide different ways of accessing, revealing and recording data that would not normally be visible to online observers. From the retrieval of deleted tweets via Twitter APIs, to the use of visualisation tools for mapping networks, the use of such software opens up 'hidden' aspects of online life. As mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, this can be seen in previous studies of social media activity. Almuhiemedi, Wilson, Sadeh and Acquisti (2013), for example, retrieved deleted tweets via Twitter APIs and in a study conducted at Facebook by Facebook, Das and Kramer (2013) accessed what they termed 'aborted posts' on Facebook; posts that were drafted out by users but never actually sent. Deleted tweets and 'aborted' Facebook posts are both forms of social media data that usually remain invisible online; they are, for instance, only usually seen by the writer of content. However, through new technological methods, this usually 'invisible' data is becoming 'visible' to researchers.

As highlighted in my introduction, such interventions can be linked to earlier techniques that have been developed in other contexts - including the x-ray examination of art objects - by which the hidden repair work – or pentimenti - involved in artistic works might be revealed and examined. The use of x-ray technologies has been presented as enabling art scholars to “Retrac[e] the steps of a master artist [...] and help reveal artistic processes, decisions and influences that produced historically important paintings.” (Gooch and Tumblin, 2007, pg. 133). From this perspective, screen capture technology can be understood as yet another way in which invisible

actions – but in the context of screen capture software, invisible action *in action* - is made visible to the observer. One difference between the x-ray examination of art objects and the capturing of online activity is that with art, the ‘pre-product’ edits of the work remain ‘under the paint’, thus, it is possible to retrospectively go back in time and recover them. In contrast, pre-post activity on Facebook is fleeting and is not captured unless done so by technologies such as screen capture. What I want to highlight here is that by going ‘beyond the screen’ in this way, definitions of privacy/publicness that are often anchored in relation to the nature of environments or perceptions of users (Whiteman, 2012) can be unsettled and that attention is instead drawn to the revealing gaze of the mechanisms that researchers deploy in their work and what this grants them access to. This approach to thinking about the definition of research sites as public/private has received little consideration in the context of qualitative research online.

By using screen capture software in the study of Facebook activity, I have been able to gain access to the ‘pre-post’ activity of Facebook users, a stage of interaction that is only ever usually seen by the user themselves. This opens up a usually ‘hidden’ layer of interaction. Not only am I gaining access to users private Facebook interactions, I am also accessing a space that even users’ interactive partners do not see; a space where users ‘prepare’ their messages and move between the multiple interactions they are engaged with online, both actions which I will be exploring within my analysis chapters. Gaining access to this usually hidden layer of interaction has therefore created a rather unique research context in which I can see the most intricate details of user’s online life. Having access to this space has impacted the ethical decision making of my project, in relation to how I have approached data sensitivity and associated issues of participant control and research relationships as well as how I have dealt with classic ethical dilemmas of consent and data confidentiality, anonymisation and security. This rest of this chapter will address my ethical decision making processes in all of these areas, referring to particular instances where I had to consider the consequences of accessing the hidden layer of pre-post activity.

Participant control, sensitivity and research relationships

Participant control has been an important aspect of my study due to my data being produced and recorded by the participants rather than being captured by me, the researcher. It has also been an important aspect of the study in relation to the sensitivities of the data being recorded. Previous research that has used screen capture to collect online interaction has done so within a more 'researcher controlled' setting. Garcia and Jacobs (1999), for instance, recorded "conversations between students in a college classroom" (pg. 338). All participants were talking to one another within one classroom discussion thread at the same time, with each of their screens being individually videotaped. Collecting screen capture data in this scenario requires much less participant control as researchers are in charge of recording all participants in one space at one time. There is also minimal risk of any sensitive information being captured by the software as recordings are contained to classroom discussion on the particular educational activity in hand. Using screen capture to record four different participants' screens, across four different locations, recording more 'naturally occurring', mundane, everyday interaction, as done in this study, however, presents different challenges.

Meredith and Stokoe (2014) are authors that have also used screen capture recording different participants, across different locations in the context of social media. In this work, they also applied a data collection approach that involved much more participant control than Garcia and Jacobs (1999). In Meredith et al's research, recording was conducted by the participants themselves and this is the approach that I have decided to adopt within my own project. One reason why enhanced participant control works for this project is that with such a private dimension of social media interaction being accessed through screen capture technology, it is reasonable to assume that participants would not want to record their interactions at all times. They would need, for instance, to maintain the ability to use Facebook away from the eyes of research in order to conduct conversations that they deemed as too 'sensitive' or too 'private' for the study. To provide them with this space, participants were asked to record their interactions as and when they wanted to, having full control of when they

pressed play, when they paused, and when they stopped recordings. Once recording had finished, participants then decided which video files they wanted to send back to me. This meant that if any data was captured during the recording that they were not happy sharing they could simply delete the video file and not pass it on for analysis. By having this level of control, participants could maintain a level of privacy and protection of their sensitive interactions and 'behind the screen' behaviours.

A further reason why it was important for participants to have more control over their recordings was to minimise the risk of any unwanted data being sent to me for analysis. By unwanted data, I am referring to instances where perhaps secondary participants introduced sensitive topics of conversation that could not be predicted by the primary, recording participant. Screen capture also, of course, does not just operate on social media; it records whatever is on a participant's screen at the time. This meant that if a participant accessed any other platform whilst recording I would also be able to see this. This issue posed a particular risk around sensitivity if, for example, the participant engaged in online banking or internet shopping whilst the software was recording. Although I included a warning on participant information sheets reminding them to be mindful of such an issue, I appreciated that participants could temporally forget that recording was taking place and thus access these sites as normal. To deal with these more 'accidental' or 'unpredictable' captures, then, participants also had control over what videos they did and did not send over to me for analysis. This meant that anything that was recorded, but that participants did not want sharing, could remain just for the eyes of the participant themselves.

It can be seen from this discussion, then, that the participants of this study had high levels of control when it came to the data collection process of this project, evident through their ability to choose when and when not to record, stop recording when needed and choose which videos to ultimately send back to me for analysis. This data collection arrangement was ethically beneficial as it allowed participants a space for interactions they deemed to be more private or sensitive, a particularly important space when participants are unveiling this alternative, private layer of pre-post behaviour. However, allowing participants to have such a level of control over the data

collection process also brought about its own set of challenges in relation to the risks posed to both participants and the success and validity of the research itself.

Firstly, in terms of the participants, it can be understood that they not only adopt the role of 'observee' (through going about their behaviour in an environment whilst I observe), but that they also play a more active role in the data collection process themselves taking on the role of an 'observer'. Participants took on the role of an observer in the sense that they had to make decisions in relation to suitable times to record e.g. do they have time? Who will they be talking to? Is this person happy to be recorded? Are any sensitive issues going to be raised? Once all pre-recording decisions are made, the participant then resumes the role of 'purely observee'. Often, in methodological discussions, the focus is on how the researcher moves between the roles of participation and observation; something I reflect on in Chapter seven (see Whiteman, 2012). Here, however, the focus is instead on the shifting role of the *researched* from the position of an 'observer' in the process of data generation to the position of the 'observed' in the process of data analysis. The fact that the primary participants shift roles in this way results in participants having a heightened sense of awareness when it comes to the project and actually minimises their vulnerability. However, for me, the vulnerability around giving a participant this amount of control in the data collection process is actually the potential pressure that it may put on them throughout the data collection process.

In order to deal with this risk, I adopted a flexible approach to the data collection process that was very much guided by what participants felt comfortable with. An example of such flexibility is demonstrated through me initially proposing 10 hours of data recordings from each participant. However, once making contact with my participants I was made aware how they saw this as a daunting figure. Thus, to relieve the pressure of the data collection process I applied a much more flexible approach where participants simply recorded when and what they could. Seeing as my participants were also existing contacts of mine, an element of friendship existed that meant that I was in a comfortable position to advise and guide participants through the data collection process. In this way, I was able to provide support and talk through

any highlighted concerns and make any necessary adjustments as the project evolved.

In addition to considering how the design of my study might be potentially harmful to my participants, it was also important for me to consider how my data collection process could be harmful to the reliability and validity of my analysis. As highlighted, in order to deal with the issues of privacy and sensitivity, participants were given a large amount of control throughout the data collection process. This meant that the resulting data was more like snapshots of their social media worlds rather than a continuous stream of their Facebook activity. Arguments could be made here that the data generated, then, is unlikely to be a representative sample of Facebook interaction due to participants ultimately deciding what interactions to record and then send to me for analysis. For studies whose aim it is to be representative, this, of course, would be problematic. However, as alluded to with my discussion on the sampling of participants in Chapter three, my project does not aim to provide a representative and generalisable sample of data. My research questions do not rely on participants talking about certain topics, for certain times or with certain people. Rather, I am interested in the micro analysis of activity on Facebook and what that might tell us about the nature of the interactional and communicative work that goes on.

A further potential risk resulting from high levels of participant control is that, in effect, I have been fully reliant on participants collecting the data 'correctly' and in the ways agreed. They have, for instance, had control over how much data they collect, how much interaction they engage in during their recordings, and, as will be explored later, control over the consent process in respect of the involvement of secondary participants. To deal with such a risk, I made the decision to recruit participants with whom I already had an existing connection. Recruiting participants with whom the researcher has a previously established friendship can bring with it many advantages, a few of which Taylor notes in her article exploring how to manage friendships with field research:

[...] deeper levels of understanding afforded by prior knowledge; knowing the lingo or native speak of field participants and thus being 'empirically literate' (Roseneil, 1993); closer and more

regular contact with the field; more detailed consideration of the social actors at the centre of the cultural phenomenon making access to, and selection of, research participants easier and better informed; quicker establishment of rapport and trust between researcher and participants; and more open and readily accessible lines of communication between researchers and informants due to the researcher's continuing contact with the field. (2011, pg. 6)

Of these advantages, reaching a quicker establishment of rapport and trust between myself and my primary participants was of particular importance to my work. By building a quick foundation of trust and rapport, the threat and anxiety I was feeling in relation to handing over a large amount of control to the participants was reduced. This foundation of trust, however, also worked in the benefit of the participants themselves as they could trust me to access their private, pre-post, interactions responsibly.

However, of course, collecting data from those you already know also presents ethical challenges in need of consideration. Firstly, through approaching existing friends and contacts to participate in my study, I ran the risk of such contacts feeling more inclined to participate (even if they did not want to) in order to make me (their acquaintance/friend) happy. In order to try and minimise this potential social pressure, I decided to send out a mass Facebook message rather than individual messages. I did this as it is generally easier to ignore a message addressed to multiple contacts rather than one that is just addressed to one person. The second issue was related to the fact that I may have obtained certain knowledge about my participants that as a friend they may not have shared with me, but that I can see as a researcher. To deal with this situation, I made it clear to participants that they could pick and choose when to record. Therefore, if there was something that they don't want me to see as a friend and/or as a researcher, they do not have to capture that particular interaction. Finally, I considered how participants may be more embarrassed with someone they know seeing and analysing their interactions on Facebook. Although a relationship between researcher and researched would result in an existing level of trust, participants may feel that their actions are more accountable when being seen by someone known to them from their social networks rather than someone who is outside of their social

networks (Bargh, McKenna & Fitzsimmons, 2002). Again, to deal with this, I go back to the idea that the participant is in control of when and what they do not record. Therefore they have the opportunity to not involve me in the interactions in anyway. If there is anything that a participant may find embarrassing, they can simply not record at that time or choose not to include that file in the data the researcher collects.

Although the high levels of participant control and recruitment of primary participants with whom I have an established relationship with has created challenges for my research, I believe that the approaches taken were the right ones in relation to both the research setting of this project as well as the data collection approach of screen capture. In terms of participant control, I have here been emphasising the control that primary participants have had throughout the study. Secondary participants, who were drawn into the research through the primary recorders, have had less control throughout the data collection process. I have worked to deal with this through keeping secondary participants informed and by giving them power over whether they were happy to be part of the research in terms of recording and analysis. In the next section of this chapter, I talk in detail about my approach to consent within the data collection of this project, paying particular attention to how I worked to protect the rights of these secondary participants captured on the screen.

Consent

A significant ethical issue for any research project is that of informed consent. Informed consent refers to gaining permission from potential participants of your research. When participants give such consent, it is important that the individual understands what they are agreeing to do, the potential risks and benefits of the research as well as having the option to withdraw participation (Eynon, et al., 2017). The issue of informed consent is often wrapped up in ethical dilemmas around the public and private nature of the data collected. Data and information that is publicly available, for example, is often understood not to require consent from owning parties or users, for example, you do not need consent to access and use a public park. Data and information that is of a more private nature, though, is usually considered to need

such consent in order to access and use, for example, you need consent to enter an individual's home. In the introduction of this chapter I noted how the ethical approach of this project also considers the implications for understanding the public/private distinction of the *technologies* that researchers use, particularly methods such as screen capture that 'peel back' and reveal hidden layers of interactions. Here in this section, though, I want to address the public/private distinction in a more traditional way, addressing how I have understood the data collected in this study as either 'public' or 'private' and how this has affected my consent decisions.

Defining spaces as public or private in an online environment is often argued to be more complex than defining the status of offline environments:

Offline, people are accustomed to having 'architecturally defined boundaries' (e.g. walls, limited audio ranges) that help give a sense of how 'public' actions are (Boyd, 2008, p.14). The digital world lacks these clear boundaries, making it difficult to define spaces as either private or public. This has led to criticisms of those 'who regard the public/private distinction as a 'black or white' issue for failing to take into account the complex nature of online environments (Boyd, 2008, p.54)".

This complexity in distinguishing private/public spaces online is most definitely the case with Facebook. As a site, Facebook features different modes of communication within the 'boundaries' of the one platform. In terms of 'typed' communications, users can interact with one another through status updates, comments, wall posts and messages; communicative modes that have different levels of 'publicness' attached. Messages via Facebook chat and messenger, for instance, are shared between selected individuals and travel between personal inbox to personal inbox thus taking on a private nature. Status updates, posts and comments, however, are harder to define as either private or public appearing on the user's profile pages as well as the news feed of anyone that the individual is Facebook friends with. These modes of communication, then, reach a much larger potential audience and are thus more public in nature than a Facebook message. It is important to consider, though, that comments and status updates are not completely public in the sense that the site requires a membership (e.g. a sign-in email and password) in order to create a profile

and build a network. However, anyone with an email address and internet access can create an account as there are no other entry requirements. Secondly, users can make all their content and interactions only visible to other users whom they have accepted as 'friends'. Thus, if a user has such settings in use, accessing the content of Facebook is firstly restricted to Facebook members and also potentially by being a user's friend.

With such 'barriers' in place the more 'public' communications on the site, such as status', comments and posts, could be understood as a 'semi-public' space (Whiteman, 2012). In terms of this projects approach to informed consent, then, I considered not just the public/private nature of Facebook as a whole, but rather looked at the different modes of communication under study, evaluating my approaches to consent for each one. As a result of this, I applied two different approaches to consent within my project. I will firstly explore my approach to my Facebook messenger data followed by an exploration of my approach towards the more 'public' data of Facebook status', posts and comments.

To begin I want to highlight how informed consent was gained from the 'primary' participants of the study, as in, those who used the screen capture software to record their interactions on Facebook. One challenge in relation to gaining informed consent when studying online environments is that often researcher-to-participant contact is also made via online technologies. Gaining informed consent online can be seen to be more challenging due to it being difficult to determine whether "the participant truly understands what they are consenting to" (Eynon, et al., 2017, pg. 24). Due to my project accessing a 'hidden' layer of 'behind the screen' activity, however, I decided to meet my primary participants face to face when consent was given for the project. This way I was able to ensure my participants were as fully informed about the research and its methodology as possible, and that they had the opportunity to discuss their concerns and questions with me in person prior to agreeing to participate.

As mentioned in my methodological chapter, however, this research did not just include the participation of primary, recording participants: it also included the

participation of those they were interacting with. Similarly to the screen capture study conducted by Meredith (2014), I have understood these participants as 'secondary participants': "those whose screens are not being recorded but who are participating in the interaction" (Meredith and Potter, 2013, p. 376). Secondary participants were involved in the recording of all communicative modes on the Facebook site and I have thus approach gaining the consent of such individuals in two ways.

Firstly, in relation to Facebook *messages*, I asked for informed consent from all secondary participants who were recorded via the screen capture technology. I did this due to messages being the most 'private' form of interaction on the Facebook platform accessible only to the Facebook friends involved in the conversation. As secondary participants were located across the UK, I did not gain this informed content personally through face to face meetings. Instead, an online consent form was distributed to such participants. In order to reduce the risks highlighted above regarding online informed consent, I designed an online consent *survey* which required users to answer individual questions before submission. I produced this survey consent form on 'Survey Monkey' where users had to select answers to show they understood the different elements of the project. This was done to maximise chances of potential participants reading and understanding the information given to them. Secondary participants were provided with my contact details in order to ask any questions that they had regarding the project and were of course giving the option to 'opt out'. Secondary participants could opt out of the study in the following two ways: 1) communicating their wish to not be recorded at all and secondly 2) being happy to be recorded but not included in the analysis. If the first of these 'opt outs' was selected by secondary participants, the recording participant was asked to not record during interactive time with this individual. If they were recorded accidentally, the primary participant simply did not send this file on to me.

When it came to gaining informed consent from secondary message participants, Meredith (2014) took the same approach of gaining consent via online methods. However, unlike Meredith, my project also collected interactions from other written modes of communication such as comments and status updates. This

expansion of the research interest adds further complexity by increasing the number of 'secondary participants' that were incorporated into the project, meaning that any of a primary participant's 'Facebook friends' could become involved, in a secondary way, in the data collection. This involvement could take an *active* form in the sense that my primary participants would engage with secondary individuals comments e.g. the reply to one of their posts or status update or vice versa meaning that this data would become part of the analytic material. Alternatively, this secondary involvement could take a more *passive* form in the sense that their profile information and interactions may just be captured by the recording software. However, if my primary participant did not actively engage with such content, I decided that I would not include this within my analysis.

In terms of my approach to these modes of data, then, due to the 'semi-public' nature of content such as posts, comments and status' I decided against collecting this form of data covertly. There were a number of reasons for this. Firstly, as explored earlier, there are still certain barriers in place that prevent this form of data being completely 'public' e.g. needing to be a Facebook member and, in cases where privacy measures are activated, an individual's Facebook friend, in order to view such content. Secondly, scholars have also argued that even if such 'friend' barriers do not exist it is still ethically questionable to use such data without the knowledge of participants. This is due to content on sites such as Facebook being shared within a particular context; a context not intended for use in research (D'Arcy and Young, 2012). This, therefore, raises distinct issues about people "choosing to reveal information and having it used for a different purpose" regardless of whether the data is technically publicly available (D'Arcy and Young, 2012: 536).

Having considered the above issues - and faced with the potential scenario of a large proportion of a primary participant's network, often made up of hundreds of 'friends', becoming secondary participants - I decided that obtaining informed consent from every potential secondary participant was an unfeasible task. Rather than attempting to obtain individual informed consent from each secondary participant I decided to take a different approach to the consent issue: asking primary participants

to inform their networks of the research being conducted and giving secondary participants the opportunity to 'opt out' of the research if they wished to. The reason that primary participants, rather than myself, were asked to send this information out was access to the relevant Facebook network is only possible through the primary participant's personal Facebook account. By taking this approach, I adopted the role of an 'overhearer': a position that allows the analyst to sit outside the action but be *known* to potential participants (D'Arcy and Young, 2012). Such a position is understood to be more 'ethical' than that of an 'eavesdropper' where participants do not give informed consent and are not aware that the research is taking place (ibid). Adopting this position as an 'overhearer', then, worked to respect the private barriers in place on Facebook whilst also reaching a feasible approach to collecting data from these more 'public' modes of communication on the platform.

In order to inform secondary participants of the research, my primary participant's sent an initial message out to their networks providing details on the research project and provided my contact details so that questions could be directed back to me (a template of this message can be found in Appendix B). This message also provided secondary participants with the opportunity to opt out of the study by: 1) stating that they do not want to be recorded at all for the project or 2) that they are happy to be recorded but do not want their data used within the analysis of the project. If the first option was chosen, the primary participant did not record when interacting with this individual. Similarly to the recording of Facebook messages, if this individual was accidentally recorded by the software, this video file was not sent on to me for analysis. If the second 'opt out' option was chosen, I simply did not include the data recorded from that individual in my analytic material. One risk of such an approach is that potential secondary participants would not see the message and thus not be 'informed' at all. To minimise this risk, I asked primary participants to send the information via *direct message* as well as status updates to their network. This meant that not only would this message appear on newsfeeds, there would also be a direct notification to each potential secondary via their inbox, minimising the risk that this message would be missed.

An associated methodological issue that often comes with the decision to gain consent and inform participants of the research is that participants may act or behave differently due to the knowledge that they are being recorded, a notion referred to as the Observer or Hawthorne effect (see McCambridge, Witton and Elbourne, 2014 for a systematic review on hawthorne effect research). Of course, with all participants in my study being aware of the research, particularly primary participants who are not just 'aware' of the recording but who are in control of it, it is feasible to assume that behaviours may be altered. Despite this risk, though, I feel that the foundations of what this thesis is interested in is not threatened by such an effect. I am looking at, within my analysis, at how users are handling the challenges of pre-post editing and multicomunication within their interactions. Whether or not participants 'play up' to their parts, if they are engaging in such activities I was still be able to understand more about the ways in which these phenomenon's are engaged with and managed, thus achieving the goals of thesis. This project's aim is also not to uncover and reveal 'the truth' behind interactions on Facebook. Instead, it aims to provide a glimpse into particular versions of Facebook interaction through the lens of four participants. Thus, if participants are not quite using Facebook as they usually would, I will still be able to provide this 'glimpse' of how affordances of the Facebook environment *can* be oriented to with interactions. Having explored the ethical issues and decisions encountered before and during the data collection process, I now shift discussion to the ethics of storing and presenting the data once it is collected, working to address classic ethical concepts of confidentiality, anonymity and security.

Confidentiality, anonymity and security

A final issue that I want to consider relates to my handling of the data that was generated during the study and my protection of participants in respect of my handling of issues of data management and reporting. Anonymity and confidentiality are "classic promises made to research participants" within social science research (Tiidenberg, 2018, pg. 427). They are notions that are often contemplated together by researchers, however, their focuses are slightly different. Confidentiality refers to the access and sharing of the data, with information usually only being shared between

researchers of the project and in other previously agreed contexts such as publications and conferences. Anonymity refers to the protection of participant's personal identity information such as names, workplaces and locations (for more on what is understood as personal identity information see Zimmer, 2010). When presenting data in the context of publications and presentations then, academics often anonymise the information of their participants. Linked to these two issues is that of data security referring to the storage of the original data: in this case the screen capture video files. With the data collected in my research being particularly private, included not just the private interactions of Facebook users but the 'behind the screen' details of their online worlds, issues around protecting the identity of my participants and the security of my data were a priority.

Firstly, throughout the research process I have adhered to the normal process of only sharing the data with researchers involved in the project (myself and my PhD supervisors). In terms of anonymising the data I used pseudonyms for all identifying information such as names, places of study, public places visited etc. When using screen shots to illustrate my research at conferences and data sessions I used Adobe Photoshop to blur out names and images. Similarly, when using the videos themselves, I used Adobe Flash Professional which allowed me to blur and anonymise names and images that appear. In terms of data security I encrypted the video files sent to me using specialist video encryption software: *Video Padlock*. I chose video padlock as it is particularly suited video file data and was also cheap and easy to use. Once encrypted, I stored the encrypted data on an external hard drive in a locked cash box. To back up this data, I also stored it on the Universities research file store.

Moving towards analysis

After working through the ethical issues discussed in this chapter, I successfully obtained ethics approval in 2015. The review process itself directly informed the approach to ethics that I have described: it was through dialogue with the ethics committee reviewers, for instance, that I altered the way that I handled the issue of

informed consent in respect of secondary participants (requiring primary participants to directly message their Facebook networks with details of the research rather than just sending status updates). I agreed with the advice given by the Committee that this would increase the likelihood of potential secondary participants seeing the message and thus having the opportunity to 'opt out' of recording or analysis if they wished.

Before moving forward on to Chapter Five, the first of two analysis chapters, I want to reflect on the implications of the ethical discussion I have presented. The central argument that I have made here is that, with the methods of researching the online context in constant development, we need to adopt an ethical stance that not only considers ethics in relation to the 'specific research setting' but also in relation to the methods we are using to access our data. I have illustrated this through the example of my own data collection method; how usually 'hidden' layers of privacy and online work can be revealed by the technologies we utilise in our research. I have demonstrated how access to such a 'pre-post' space requires researchers to reflect on the ethical implications of the visibility of data, suggesting that this needs to be considered in relation to issues such as participant control and the sensitivity of information. Within this project, I have also applied screen capture technologies to wider array of data than previous screen capture studies of Facebook and have thus developed an approach to consent in a context where whole Facebook networks could become secondary participants of the study.

Although I worked through these ethical issues in detail before I started collecting data, I do not view research ethics as a 'tick box' exercise, something that just must be done before research can begin, or a simple boundary to be crossed and then forgotten. While I was engaged in the data collection and analysis stages of my study, a number of unanticipated ethical challenges and queries arose. These included the issue of myself becoming a secondary participant within the data, and emergent complexities associated with secondary participant consent. In Chapter Seven and Eight of my thesis I will return to my consideration of method and ethics and elaborate on these unexpected issues.

Chapter Five: Pre-post editing in Facebook interaction and the protective/defensive orientations to ‘face’

Pre-post editing refers to the ability individuals have to revise, ‘tweak’ and alter their online interactions before sending them to interactional partners. As explored in the introduction to this thesis, such an ability is afforded by certain features of technological platforms, for example, the fact that “messages are constructed and sent separately” (Meredith, 2017, pg. 46). This means that a user’s message construction process is *not* seen by their interactional partner allowing Facebook users to go back and make revisions to their talk without the knowledge of those whom they are talking to. The ability to pre-post edit, then, creates an additional ‘space’ of interaction that is not available in face to face, co-present encounters: a space where users of online platforms like Facebook can construct and ‘practice’ their messages or posts before ‘publication’.

This first analysis chapter explores how Facebook users utilise this space in respect of the construction and management of ‘self’ online. As introduced in Chapter Two, I am specifically drawing on the Goffmanian notion of ‘face’ (1967) in asking how participants utilise the ability of pre-post editing in both defending their own face and the protection of the face of others. ‘Face’ or ‘facework’ as a concept has been applied to the context of social media by many (see for example: Davies 2012; West and Trester, 2012; Lim, Vadrevu, Chan and Basnyak, 2012). However it has often been approached with a focus on how individuals work to defend their own face, or ‘self face’ (Lim et al., 2012), with less attention being paid to how the face of others is also protected (ibid). Such studies have also not accessed the ‘pre-post’ stage of interaction online, meaning that the construction of facework has not yet been captured and analysed. This chapter works to extend this thinking by looking at empirical examples of how Facebook users attend to these interactional needs in their talk. I will begin this chapter by exploring how ‘pre-post editing’ has been researched by scholars to date before moving into the first analytical section of this thesis.

'Pre-post editing'

A number of scholars have focused attention onto pre-post editing on computer mediated communication (CMC), with the phenomenon being referred to in different ways as a process of 'editing', 'self-censorship' and interactional 'repair'. Walther (2007) is one such author who explored the phenomenon of pre-post editing through developing a model that he terms the hyperpersonal theory. This posits that "users exploit the technological aspects of CMC in order to enhance the messages they construct and manage impressions" (pg.2538). By looking at editing behaviours in relation to different 'targets' - e.g. professors vs. peers - he explored the formation of University students' online messages as defined in relation to different audiences, with the hypothesis being that different presentations would be constructed for different 'targets.' As in my own research, Walther's work can be seen to take as its focus how CMC participants utilised the affordances of CMC within processes of self presentation. However, his research was conducted using experimental methodologies and was concerned with investigating hypotheses based upon the *amount* of editing, verbiage and pronouns that occur in message edits to different target groups. In contrast, this thesis is less concerned with the *frequency* of editing occurring or the amount of certain *types* of words involved in pre-post edits and is more concerned with how editing is utilised in the *design* of interaction itself.

A more recent study by Das and Kramer (2013) again focused on quantifying the *amount* of pre-post editing, or what they referred to as 'self-censorship', within messages. Here the term 'self-censorship' is used to describe interactions "that users began to write on Facebook but ultimately did not post" (2013, pg.120). The study focused on identifying the amount of self-censoring across different modes of communication (status's, comments, group messages etc) and demographics. Data for this research was collected from 3.9 million Facebook users and recorded instances of text being entered into a composer (such as the status or comment box) but then not being shared or posted within 10 minutes of the beginning of composition. Whilst the scale of the data set enables the authors to gain a broader insight into the 'self censorship' activities of Facebook users, the data collection was limited in terms of

gaining information about user's keystrokes or the *content* of the posts that were never posted. Researchers were only aware of when a post was begun but never sent. This is where the contribution of the data collection method used in my thesis – the use of screen capture software to make visible the processes of message and post construction – comes in. This means that the content of the posts users ultimately decide to not share become an available part of the data set, unlike in Das and Kramer's study. Das and Kramer's study also only focused on self-censorship that occurred in posts or comments that were *never* shared, as in, no post was made after a 10 minute time span from characters first being entered into the composer. This means that posts that were ultimately shared but that users perhaps edited and amended before 'enter' was struck were *not* included in this study of self-censorship. Screen capture also works to capture these moments of 'self-censorship', not only capturing the content of unshared posts but capturing the crafting process of the ones that are.

In contrast to these two studies, I am approaching pre-post editing from a perspective influenced by conversation analysis. In doing so, as discussed in Chapter Three, I am drawing on two of CA's fundamental structures: turn design and repair. From this perspective, and drawing on these structures, I am interested in examining how participants use the pre-post editing space to 'do' and 'accomplish' certain presentations of self. Other CA research has of course taken an interest in pre-post editing, and key studies by Garcia and Jacobs (1999) and Meredith and Stokoe (2014) have also used screen capture technologies to access such data. Garcia and Jacob's research focused particularly on the turn taking process within online discussion threads and was interested in the way that users repaired their messages in response to new turns appearing within conversations. Meredith and Stokoe (2014) were more concerned with the phenomenon of pre-post repair itself. As mentioned in Chapter Three, these authors make the important distinction between what they call 'visible' repairs and 'message construction' repairs, exploring how both these types of repair were both similar and different to repair in spoken conversation. What neither Garcia and Jacobs (1999) nor Meredith and Stokoe (2014) question, though, is how pre-post editing is utilised by users in processes of self presentation and maintenance of 'face'.

As noted in my discussion on Conversation Analysis in Chapter Three, ‘repair’, the notion used within Garcia and Jacobs and Meredith and Stokoe’s research, is one of the ‘fundamental structures’ of CA analysis (Paulus, et al., 2016). However, what I want to explore next is the extent to which the term ‘repair’ is applicable to the online context. Through this discussion, my aim is to raise certain problems that arise when it comes to recontextualising the term to this online environment, as well as to clarify the terminology I intend to use throughout my analysis.

Repairs or edits?

Repair, as a fundamental CA concept, is a “much studied feature of spoken conversation” (Schegloff, 2007 in Meredith and Stokoe, 2014, pg.183) and refers to the “processes by which speakers deal with troubles which arise in speaking, hearing or understanding talk” (ibid.). Although the concept of ‘repair’, in many ways (such as maintaining order in talk-in-interaction), works for the phenomenon I am discussing within this chapter, I have decided to refer to the changes made within interactions instead as ‘edits’. The reason for this is that repair is often understood as a process of “restoring” intersubjectivity (Bischoping and Gazso, 2016, pg.81), of “dealing with troubles that arise” (Schegloff, 2007, cited in Meredith and Stokoe, pg.183), and as a notion of how “problems of communication and understanding are managed” (Tudini, 2010, pg.52). In these ways, then, repair is understood as something that is *reactive* in nature and that follows an interactional trouble that occurs *first*. Such troubles are then restored, managed or dealt with by interactants through methods of repair. However, with message construction repairs, no interactional trouble has actually occurred as the interaction has not been ‘published’ into a space shared by the interlocutors. There is, then, nothing interactional to ‘restore’, ‘manage’ or ‘deal’ with. The changes that are made to messages and posts within this stage of interaction are thus *pre-emptive* in nature, working to *prevent* troubles and problems in understanding from happening in the first place. It is because of this difference between *reacting to* and *pre-empting* trouble in interaction that I prefer to use the

term 'edit' when referring to the changes made pre-post in these Facebook interactions.

It has been made clear how the focus of this chapter is on edits to messages that occur 'pre-post' rather than repairs that occur within the run of interaction itself. However, before moving on to the analysis of the screen capture data, there is another important distinction to make here. There are, within my data set, two different types of pre-post 'edits' that can be observed: the first corrects factual errors or typographical mistakes and the second, works on the actual *design* of a turn working not to correct 'factual' or 'production' errors but rather *re-design* an interaction in terms of its structure and content. As highlighted in Chapter Three, within conversation analysis literature, a distinction is often made between what is labelled as a 'correction' and as a 'repair'. Correction refers to "faults in the contents of what someone has said" (Hutchby and Wooffitt 2008, pg.57) and is commonly assigned to factual or production errors in interaction (such as the first type of edit seen within my data). Repair, though, is often used in preference of the term correction as it encompasses the idea that repairs can occur when there is "no accountable error" made (Macbeth, 2004, pg.707). This recognises the fact that repairs may be made to manage interactional, rather than factual, trouble. What I find problematic with this distinction is that dealing with "accountable error", here aligned with making factual or production mistakes, indicates that interactional repairs are not, then, "accountable" and not in fact "errors" at all. However, doesn't the fact that a participant works to repair an instance of interaction indicate that, to them, this is something that needs to be accounted for? And doesn't it show, that at least within the particular context of the repair, that the participant deems there to be something wrong, or at 'error', with the original utterance or turn? These questions lead me to see the difference between correction and repair as rather blurred.

Jefferson (1974), however, highlights these two types of edit differently. She understands the first of these to be 'production' related edits which involve correcting factual errors in interactions which, in a CMC context, would involve 'typos', spelling and grammar mistakes. The second type of edit she understands as 'interactional

errors' defined as "mistakes one might make in an attempt to speak appropriately to some co-participant(s) and/or within situations" (1974, pg.181). I prefer this distinction between these types of edit as it not only addresses the interactional side of the phenomena (as in, fixing interactional trouble) but also acknowledges that participants orientate towards these instances as an error to be fixed, just as they do with 'production' mistakes. Working with this understanding, then, this chapter focuses on how *interactional errors* are attended to in the pre-post stage of Facebook interaction.

Overall the activity of pre-post editing has been referred to and studied in numerous ways. In this analysis chapter, however, I am examining pre-post Facebook communication in ways that have not been done to date. Firstly, I am looking at the actual *design* of interactions themselves rather than counting instances (Walther, 2007) or simply knowing that editing of some kind did in fact take place (Das and Kramer, 2013). Secondly, I question how such a phenomenon is utilised in processes of self presentation. As I have described, the process of changing and working on messages pre-post is understood, in this chapter, as *editing* rather than repairing and my focus is on interactional edits, rather than production edits. I will now turn to my analysis, focusing on examples taken from my screen capture data to explore how participants are utilising the ability to pre-post edit on Facebook.

Pre-post edits and the management of self: defensive and protective orientations to 'face'

As I described in my exploration of Goffman (Chapter Two), scholars Brown and Levinson (1987) have extended Goffman's thinking in relation to 'face.' For Brown and Levinson, face is a concept "tied up in notions of being embarrassed or humiliated, or 'losing face'". Therefore, they argue, "face is something that is emotionally invested, and that can be lost, maintained, or enhanced, and must be constantly attended to in interaction" (pg. 67). One of the main contributions that Brown and Levinson made to Goffman's work was to highlight how face consists of two related aspects: 1) negative face and 2) positive face (1987, pg.61). Here, negative face is understood as an individual's concern to protect their autonomy whilst positive face is related to an

individual's concern for their self-image to be liked and approved of. My analysis will explore predominately how positive face is attended to within the extracts of Facebook interaction that are the empirical focus of my analysis. It is important to note here that throughout my analysis I am making no claims to know what my participants intentions and motivations are when it comes to the edits that they make to their messages. Therefore, when exploring how users attend to their 'positive face wants' within their talk, I am doing so in the sense of applying a theoretical notion to the data rather than making a claim that I, as the analyst, know what the participant actually 'wanted' or 'intended' to do within their talk.

The following analysis is structured into two sections. The first of these explores how self is constructed in Facebook interactions in terms of this 'defensive orientation'. In other words, how individuals save and maintain their own face within their messages and posts. Here, discussion and extracts are focused around 'secret disclosures' and how the design of messages works to protect the speaker from constructing a negative image of self or damaging face. The second section within this analysis examines the protective orientation. Here, my discussion focuses on how messages and posts are designed to protect and maintain the face and self-image of the addressee. Although the 'defensive' and 'protective' orientations are looked at separately within this analysis, it is of course important to highlight how it is common for these two perspectives to be worked on simultaneously. For example, "in trying to save the face of others, the person must choose a tack that will not lead to loss of his own; in trying to save his own face, he must consider the loss of face that his action may entail for others" (Goffman, 1967, pg.14). Together, both sections of analysis develop an understanding of how pre-post editing is utilised in the process of constructing and maintaining self-image and face within Facebook interactions.

The defensive orientation to managing 'face'

The analysis presented within this section examines the construction of one Facebook messenger interaction. The primary participant in this interaction is Mark, so it is his pre-post editing work that is captured by the screen capture. The secondary

participant in this interaction is Poppy. The fully transcribed version of Poppy's and Mark's messages can be found in the Appendix of this thesis. This full transcript documents all *66 edits* made by Mark in the construction of a response to one of Poppy's messages, with the recording demonstrating that Mark's response was produced during a period of 12 minutes and 54 seconds. To begin, I will discuss this extract in relation to the act of disclosing information, I will then change the direction of analysis to explore how pre-post editing aids the process of orientating towards co-participants in interaction.

Pre-post edits in the design of secret disclosures

For this section of analysis, I will be focusing on the message interaction presented below (please see the edit list and transcription key in the appendix).

Extract 1³:

Poppy:

1 Hey Mark, aw that's okay I thought it was perfectly fine but you know what I'm like everything confuses
2 me haha! How ru? I'm missing your face ☺ iv got half marathon a wk sun, the survival of the fittest
3 wks later then that same day travelling to Manchester ready to go to America next day, so pretty quiet
4 this end haha! Saw you went on hol ☺ looks like you had a fab time!! How's the job & life & stuff? Hope
5 to cu very soon xx

Mark:

6 Haha ~~it's fine~~ (E1) welcome to my world Poppy. I'm confused everyday. Ye I'm really good thanks. ~~After~~
7 ~~about 8 months of stress finally got things sorted and got another that~~ (E3) * (E4) property. Whooooo!
8 ~~It's not in the flashiest of arears and there does seem to be more mobility scooters than cars but I'm~~
9 ~~still happy ☺~~ (E5) * (E6) I haven't told Katie yet as I promised her I would stop ~~after this one~~ (E11) but
10 I've just started to sneekily push forwards to ~~try and~~ * (E7) * (E8) get one more before the market picks
11 up again * (E2) (...) (E9) or I go * (E10) (E12) Just busy, busy as usual. Had a nice holiday in Spain though
12 and please (E35) * (E36) ~~to~~ (E24) * (E25) ~~to~~ (E37) * (E38) ~~don't tell Katie though I think she worries seeing~~
13 ~~as I can only just about co-ordinate~~ (E26) ~~as she worries about my coordination when~~ (E27) * (E28)
14 ~~changing gears in~~ (E18) ~~driving~~ (E19) * (E20) ~~a car~~ (E39) * (E40) (E16) * (E17) ~~I might~~ (E29) (E23) but I
15 * (E30) randomly (E41) * (E42) woke up one morning and randomly (E43) * (E44) decided (E31) ended
16 up taking up (E32) I wanted to have some (E33) * (E34) helicopter (E45) * (E46) flying a helicopter so
17 I've started taking (E47) * (E48) lessons. Why I don't know... Watch this space. (E49) * (E50) ~~Don't tell~~

³ The full abstract and transcript key can be found in appendix C and E

18 ~~Katie though I think she worries seeing as I can only just about co-ordinate **changing gears in**(E18)~~
 19 ~~driving (E19) * (E20) a car (E16) * (E17) I might (E23) die (E21)*(E22)) (E14) * (E15) // (E51)~~

For this part of analysis, I am going to narrow my focus to look at the one of the most major repairs made within this message construction. This repair evolves between lines 6-11. Mark begins in line 6 by constructing a response based on the narrative of buying and renovating property. However, this narrative is then deleted and replaced with a response that talks about taking helicopter lessons (which begins in line 11).

Although the topics of these two answers (property vs. helicopter lessons) are very different, there is a similarity between them: both versions involve disclosing a secret to Poppy. More specifically, disclosing a secret to keep from a particular individual - Katie. This can be seen through the utterances *"I haven't told Katie yet as..."* (line 9) and *"please don't tell Katie..."* (line 12). The first response that was deleted involved disclosing a secret about property and the second topic of response (that was sent to Poppy) involved the disclosure of Mark taking helicopter lessons. To set these two versions of disclosure out in a clearer fashion, I have presented the two constructions (property vs. helicopter lessons) below. The below transcripts are 'clean' in the sense that they do not feature any of the edits made in the process of getting the message into this state (these can be seen in the full extract above). Therefore they are the most 'finished' versions of the two narratives (version two was eventually sent to Poppy, whereas the transcript of version one shows it in its most completed state before deletion). Rather than looking at the more minor edits made within the construction of each of these versions, I want to focus on comparing the two versions in their most finished states with a focus on what effects the two designs may have on the construction of self image and maintenance of face.

Extract 1.1:

Version one: (on buying and renovating property)

- 1 I haven't told Katie yet as I promised her I would stop after this one but I've started to sneakily push
- 2 forwards to get one more before the market place picks up again or I go

Extract 1.2

Version two: (on taking helicopter lessons)

- 1 Had a nice holiday in Spain though and please don't tell Katie (as she worries about my coordination
- 2 when changing gears in a car) but I woke up and randomly decided I wanted to fly a helicopter so I've
- 3 started taking lessons. Why I don't know...Watch this space.

There has been academic interest in how disclosures operate within interactions (see (Petronio, 2002; Antaki, Barthes and Laudar, 2005 and Venetis, Greene, Magsamen-Conrad, Banjeree, Checton and Bagdasarov, 2012). One way of understanding the act of disclosing has been through the 'Communication Privacy Management' (CPM) framework put forward by Bello, Brandau-Brown and Ragsdale (2014). The CPM framework "provides rich and complex understandings of what information should be disclosed and what information should be protected" (Bello, Brandau-Brown and Ragsdale, 2014, pg. 389). Disclosure within this framework is understood as "an interaction between at least two individuals where one intends to deliberately divulge something personal to another and the information shared tends to be of a private or secret nature" (Venetis, Greene, Magsamen-Conrad, Banjeree, Checton and Bagdasarov, 2012, pg.344). The term 'private disclosure', within this framework, is often preferred to 'self disclosure' as these interactions can involve not just disclosures about self, but also others.

CPM research tends to approach the topic of disclosures through researching them as either dependent or causative variables focusing on, for instance, the likelihood to reveal secrets based on the privacy rules given (Venetis et al., 2012) or whether personality traits have an effect on the likelihood of disclosing information (Bello et al., 2014). Disclosures in interaction have, however, also been researched from the conversation analysis perspective (see Antaki, Barthes and Laudar, 2005). Compared to Ventis et al., (2012), who define disclosures as tending to be of a private or secret nature, Antaki et al., take a broader approach, understanding disclosure as "the process of making self known to others" (Jourard and Lakasow 1958 cited in Antaki, Barthes and Laudar, 2005, pg.181). The main difference between the CPM research and the conversation analysis perspective, though, is their approach to

researching disclosures. Antaki et al., outline an approach that moves away from the “operationalised” treatment of disclosures as a dependant or causative variable and instead advocate that disclosures are understood as a social performance which must be “brought off” in interaction (pg.181). What Antaki et al., specifically focused on is “how it is that people design talk to come off as a disclosive” (pg.183). This is more akin to the methodological approach that this analysis takes. However, although I will address how the two versions of disclosures seen within extract one are indeed designed ‘to be’ disclosures, the primary interest for me is how the construction of the two disclosures work to “bring off” a certain self-image and work to ‘defend’ the face of the speaker.

A disclosure, then, can be thought of as a “high risk episode” (Petronio, 2002, pg.67) within interactional situations. This is because secrets tend to “revolve around encounters that may cause shame, threat, or embarrassment” (ibid). As seen in the above extracts, two different types of ‘threat’ to Mark (the speaker) can be identified. Firstly, there is the ‘threat’ of Poppy telling Katie about Mark’s property or helicopter lessons. This threat creates what Petronio (2002) calls ‘relational risks’: a risk to the relationship between two people, in this case, Mark and Katie. Petronio, however, also speaks about ‘face risks’ which occur when our disclosures “cause us embarrassment, embarrass others in our group or serve as threats to face” (pg.70). Here, I would argue that the disclosures themselves, as in the act of ‘pushing’ for another property or taking helicopter lessons, do not present a ‘face risk’ to the formation of Mark’s identity as they present minimal embarrassment in their revelation. In contrast, the actual interactional act of disclosing a secret to be specifically kept from another is, indeed, a ‘face risk’. This is because, as part of this ‘telling,’ Mark is implicitly admitting to keeping secrets from someone who could be assumed to be close to him (due to him making ‘promises’ to her (V1 L1) and the fact that ‘she would worry’ (V2 L1)). This puts Mark in a vulnerable interactional situation: the threat being that he could appear to be someone who possesses secretive and untrustworthy tendencies, creating a risk to Mark’s ‘face’. The discursive practices employed to manage this potentially threatening situation to Mark’s positive face are the focus of my analysis below.

When disclosing private information about the self or others it is common for individuals to explicitly request, or state, that interlocutors should not share the information they give (Bello et al., 2014). By stating the boundaries of the information, disclosers work to “safeguard private information when sharing it with others” creating parameters around how and if this information can be further shared (Venetis et al., 2012, pg.345). Such statements that communicate the boundaries of disclosures have been named by Petronio (2002) as ‘disclosure warnings’ and can be found in line 1 of both V1 and V2 messages: *“I haven’t told Katie yet as...”* (V1) and *“please don’t tell Katie...”* (V2). It is these ‘disclosure warnings’ that I am going to focus on in this part of analysis, taking particular interest in the different ways that these disclosure warnings are designed.

What I firstly what to address, however, is how such ‘disclosure warnings’ work to actually accomplish - or as Antaki et al., (2005) mentioned, ‘bring off’ - the interactional act of disclosing. As I mentioned earlier, Antaki et al., (2005) worked to identify ‘how people design talk to come off as a disclosure’. Through exploring this question, they identified interactional features that most disclosures within their data set possessed. Features included the idea that a disclosure would “be a report of some matter owned by the disclosing party” (pg.188), would take the form of reporting some news (rather than remembering or puzzling over an event), would be designed to “sound significant” and be “above public knowledge” (pg. 190), and that they would be volunteered in a way that “the speaker designs what they say as somehow over and above what would be expected given the run of the talk” (pg.191).

In the case of version one *“I haven’t told Katie yet as...”* and version two *“please don’t tell Katie...”* the warnings work to present the up and coming information as ‘owned’ as the discloser works to set the parameters of such information in terms of how far they are willing to let it go. A high level of secrecy is created around the information by the act of being informed that someone else has not been told it, or should not know it, working to design the utterance as ‘above public knowledge’. The information is also volunteered. This can be seen by looking back at Poppy’s original message and noting that Mark’s message is responding to

Poppy's question of "*how ru?.*" Therefore both accounts of property and helicopter lessons can be regarded as 'over and above' what is expected from the sequence of talk. This example therefore demonstrates how disclosure warnings are used to successfully 'perform' and 'bring off' the interactional act of disclosing.

Such disclosure warnings can also be 'brought off' in implicit and explicit ways. Explicit statements directly address the question of boundaries of further disclosure whereas implicit privacy statements tend to simply hint towards the parameters of further disclosure (Petronio, 2002). In version one, the disclosure warning is implicit in nature as Poppy is simply informed that Mark hasn't yet told Katie this information, merely hinting that this information should not travel back to Katie herself. It almost works as a 'pre-disclosure' before the actual disclosure of 'pushing for' another property. However, in version two, the message that was eventually sent to Poppy, the disclosure warning has been edited to something much more explicit. Rather than just disclosing that Katie 'has not been told', Mark's message requests to Poppy that she does not tell Katie the up and coming information, thus clearly marking the boundaries of where this information can and cannot travel. What this does is manage one of the 'threats' presented to Mark through this act of secret telling: that of the information being revealed to Katie. By being more explicit in the way design of the disclosure warning, the "expectations for the way a confidant is to treat the information are unambiguous" (Petronio, 2002, pg.76), as compared to that of version one.

In terms of self-image, though, there is the second 'threat' to Mark which is that of damaging his 'face' through this act of secret telling. As well as both versions of this message featuring a disclosure warning, both also feature an account for why Mark is not telling Katie about both the property and lessons. In version one, this account can be seen on line one with "*as I promised her I would stop after this one*". This reason reveals to Poppy that an interaction has clearly occurred between Mark and Katie that involved a promise being made. It is then revealed that Mark has indeed broken said promise through "*pushing forwards*" anyway. Through this particular message design, the message constructs Mark as someone who breaks promises and

who could be inferred to have untrustworthy tendencies. This disposition of being untrustworthy is further worked up by the description of Mark's action as "*sneakily pushing forwards*". Being 'sneaky', or to do things 'sneakily', is in alignment with other descriptions such as being deceitful, shifty and dishonest and further invokes negative connotations in terms of the construction of self. The design of the utterance "*as I promised her I would stop after this one*" is also reminiscent of an addiction narrative. The phrase, for example, would also work in the context of promising to "*stop after this one*" in the context of smoking, drinking or gambling. Therefore, this construction of the reason Mark has 'not told Katie' not only works to present Mark with an untrustworthy quality, but also with a tendency to lack control to 'stop'.

In version two of this message, the motivation/rationale that is presented for 'not telling Katie' is quite different. It can be seen that there is a shift in terms of who is accountable, or to blame, for Mark keeping a secret from Katie. In version one, the emphasis is on Mark's action of 'promising' (or the breaking of) as the reason that Katie must not know about the property. However, in version two, Katie's 'worrying' is constructed as the reason to keep this information from her: "*(as she worries about my coordination when changing gears in a car)*". This works to shift the blame of Mark's secret telling away from Mark himself and on to Katie. As well as this edit re-designing accountability within the message, the reason itself "*as she worries*" works to present Mark as someone who is wanting to 'protect' the people he cares about. The implication is that he is not keeping this information from Katie due to his own, selfish reasons (such as in version one where he is working to protect himself from the threat of Katie finding out he broke a promise) but for the selfless reason of protecting Katie from the stress of 'worrying' about him. By editing the message in this way Mark's presentation of self shifts from someone who is 'untrustworthy' and 'lacking control' to a 'caring' and 'concerned' friend who is committed to protecting those he cares about.

From this discussion, then, it can be seen how both version one and version two of Mark's message feature a disclosure warning as well as a presentation of reason for the secret keeping. The third feature present in both messages is, of course,

the disclosure itself. What I am interested in here is how the two constructions of the disclosures differ in the way self is constructed. In version one, when talking about property, Mark discloses that he has started to *“sneakily push forwards to get one more”*. The verb that communicates Mark’s action, *“push”*, works to create a certain level of commitment towards the disclosed activity. To *“push forwards”* suggests that some kind of conscious effort is being put in to achieve a certain goal (in this case, ‘getting’ another property). It also connotes that a level of work or difficulty is involved in achieving the action, as compared, for example, to saying ‘starting to *move* forward’. What this message does, then, is construct the ‘getting of this property’ as a ‘thought about’ action that has actually required some determination and work in order to be achieved (or work towards achieving), thus positioning Mark as committed towards his ‘secret’ action. At the end of this message construction, before the narrative is deleted, *“before the market place picks up again”* is added providing a clear reason to Poppy as to why he is doing this now and further supporting the construction that this has been a conscious and premeditated decision.

In version two, however, the disclosure itself begins with *“but I woke up and randomly decided I wanted to fly a helicopter”*. The idea of waking up and ‘randomly deciding’ to do something presents the decision to take helicopter lessons as a spur of the moment, spontaneous action with little (or no) forethought. This lack of thought is reinforced by the utterance of *“why I don’t know”*. This creates a stark contrast with version one’s more purposive and conscious action of ‘pushing forwards’. Generally, planning and intending to do something harmful (in this case keeping secrets) is seen to be a more severe and malicious act compared to carrying out a harmful act ‘accidentally’ and without intent (take, for example, the difference between premeditated murder and manslaughter). Therefore, although in both versions Mark is essentially ‘doing’ the same thing: exposing the fact he is hiding something from Katie, hiding something from Katie ‘randomly’ and ‘spontaneously’ is perhaps a more favourable construction of secret keeping compared to ‘sneakily pushing forwards’.

These two versions of Mark’s message to Poppy, then, can be seen to have a similar narrative structure in terms of providing a disclosure warning, an account for

the secret keeping and the actual disclosure itself. I have demonstrated through this analysis how in version one, which is focused on property, the message constructs a self who possesses 'untrustworthy' tendencies through being 'sneaky' and 'breaking promises' as well as displaying a malicious disposition through consciously and purposively 'pushing' towards the secret act of 'getting another' property. Such a construction runs the risk of damaging Mark's positive face want of being "liked" (Brown and Levinson, 1987). However, in the final edited version of this message, an alternative self is constructed who, rather than untrustworthy qualities, has tendencies of being a caring and concerned friend who intends to protect those he cares about from 'worrying'. Mark's secret behaviour (taking helicopter lessons) is also constructed as being unplanned through his 'random' decisions. Therefore by utilising the affordance of being able to edit messages before pressing send on Facebook messenger, the presentation of self in Mark's response has been altered to a more favourable construction in relation to "doing secret telling." In this way, the positive face want of being approved of is defended.

This analysis has moved away from the more 'operationalised' questions that the Communication Privacy Management framework asked around who is more likely to reveal private information and what disclosures are more likely to be revealed. Instead I have drawn attention to how secret disclosures, as evident in the two 'versions' discussed, are constructed and designed. As Petronio (2002) describes, secret disclosures can be designed in different ways in terms of the implicit or explicit disclosure warnings given. The analysis I have presented has revealed how the disclosure itself and the reason given for secret keeping can also be designed in different ways in order to manage self and defend face. This, as mentioned, is more in line with Antaki et al's approach of looking at the design of disclosures. However, rather than specifically focusing on how the messages are designed to successfully 'be' disclosures as such, I have demonstrated how the use of pre-post edits have been used to design or 'do' secret disclosures in relation to defending self-image and face in the midst of threatening interactional acts.

The use of pre-post edits in interactional orientation

For this next section of analysis I am going to stay with the theme of defending face within the Facebook message exchange between Mark and Poppy. Here, however, my focus moves away from the construction of secret disclosures and on to how interactants work to orientate towards their co-participants. To begin, a closer look at how *Poppy's* self image is constructed is required.

Extract 1.3

Poppy:

1 Hey Mark, aw that's okay I thought it was perfectly fine but you know what I'm like everything confuses
2 me haha! How ru? I'm missing your face ☹ iv got half marathon a wk sun, the survival of the fittest 2
3 wks later then that same day travelling to Manchester ready to go to America next day, so pretty quiet
4 this end haha! Saw you went on hol ☺ looks like you had a fab time!! How's the job & life & stuff? Hope
5 to cu very soon xx

For this analysis, I will focus on lines 2-4 in interest of exploring the precedence that Poppy sets here in terms of lifestyle and self-presentation. Here, three activities are mentioned including a '*half marathon*', '*survival of the fittest*' and '*travelling to Manchester ready to go to America*'. A number of things are notable about the presentation of these plans. Firstly, these activities are all of an 'adventurous' nature either in terms of being a physical challenge or in terms of travelling the world and could arguably be understood as either out of the ordinary or as valuable achievements. Secondly, the way they are listed one after another is connotative of a high number of tasks needing to be 'checked off'. What this perhaps does is to convey the impression that Poppy, who has all of these big events coming up, has a limited amount of time to be able to go into detail for each item, thus working to reflect a sense of 'busyness' in Poppy's life. Time itself is something that is also made relevant within this message as it is mentioned in relation to each activity, for instance '*a wk sun*', '*2 wks later*', and '*that same day*.' This makes it explicitly clear that there is a short amount of time between Poppy's adventurous and admirable tasks. Poppy's 'jammed packed' life is then reinforced further by her ironic evaluation of things being

'pretty quiet this end haha!'. What I am interested in, then, is how Mark builds a response to his friend's busy and exciting lifestyle.

Below, version one of Mark's response to Poppy is shown. This features the narrative of buying another property (the narrative that is ultimately deleted and replaced with one on helicopter lessons).

Extract 1.4

Version one: (on buying and renovating property)

5 Haha ~~it's fine~~ (E1) welcome to my world Poppy. I'm confused everyday. Ye I'm really good thanks. After
6 about 8 months of stress finally got things sorted and got ~~another that~~ (E3) *(E4) property. Whooooo!
7 It's not in the flashiest of arears and there does seem to be more mobility scooters than cars but I'm still
8 happy ☺ (E5)*(E6) I haven't told Katie yet as I promised her I would stop after this one (E11) but I've
9 just started to sneekily push forwards to try and *(E7)*(E8) get one more before the market picks up
10 again * (E2) (...) (E9) or I go *(E10)(E12)

To begin, I am going to focus on edit five (lines 7-8), again, due to the interest in the way it works to present Mark and his lifestyle in relation to Poppy's. Here, the utterance *"it's not in the flashiest of arears and there does seem to be more mobility scooters than cars but I'm still happy ☺"* was added into the message retrospectively. This meant that Mark moved the cursor from after *"again"* on line nine back up to line six in order to add the utterance in. In relation to the topic of property, it can be assumed here that the property being bought is not necessarily for Mark himself to live in. This is indicated within edit three, where Mark types out that this is in fact *'another'* property (line six), suggesting that Mark is in the business of buying (and perhaps selling or renting) a number of properties (reinforced in line eight where Mark refers to promising to *'stop after this one'*). It is conceivable that the buyer of multiple properties would need to be financially successful in order to fund purchases before selling onwards. What the insertion of edit five works to do is to downgrade such success by highlighting the more 'negative' aspects of this purchase, for instance, it not being in a 'flashy' area (line seven). By depreciating in this way, any sense of bragging about financial success is diminished. Bragging is often grouped with other such actions such as 'showing off' or 'gloating' and is seen as an unattractive, undesirable

interactional act. Therefore, by working to diminish this, this message aligns with the positive face want of being liked and approved of. Yes, Mark is obviously successful, yet his self-image is defended as modest.

I mentioned above how one aspect of the ‘downgrading’ of Mark’s success was the property not being in the ‘*flashiest of areas.*’ The second downgrading aspect within edit five is that there are ‘*more mobility scooters than cars*’ (line seven). What is hinted at here is that the population of the ‘non-flashy’ area of his property has a higher percentage of elderly people (who are most strongly associated with mobility scooters) compared to younger people. An area with a dense elderly population could perhaps be understood as being quieter and less ‘lively’ and ‘exciting’ than an area more popular with younger generations. This clashes with Poppy’s narrative of a busy, fast paced and exciting lifestyle that encompasses extreme physical challenges and travelling, as seen in 1.3. A sense of ‘excitement’ is built into Mark’s message. However this is more explicitly conveyed through the use of “*Whooooo!*” on line six. In comparison, Poppy’s message does not include an explicit reference to excitement and is constructed instead through the many adventurous activities mentioned and the fast-pace list design employed. Although there is clear evidence that this message works to defend Mark’s positive face, there is therefore a discrepancy between the identity and lifestyle that is created within Poppy’s message and that constructed within Mark’s.

Extract 1.4 is then deleted from Marks response and replaced with extract 1.5 which, as discussed earlier, is focused on taking helicopter lessons rather than buying property:

Extract 1.5

Version two: (on taking helicopter lessons)

10 Just busy, busy as usual. Had a nice holiday in Spain though ~~and~~ please (E35)* (E36) ~~/D(E24)*(E25) /~~
 11 (E37) * (E38) ~~don't tell Katie though I think she worries seeing as I can only just about co-ordinate~~ (E26)
 12 ~~as she worries about my coordination when~~ (E27) * (E28) **changing gears in** (E18) ~~driving~~ (E19) * (E20)
 13 ~~a car~~ (E39) * (E40) ~~(E16) * (E17) I might~~ (E29) (E23) but I * (E30) randomly (E41) * (E42) woke up one

14 morning and randomly (E43) * (E44) decided (E31) ~~ended up taking up~~ (E32) I wanted to have some
 15 ~~(E33) *(E34) helicopter~~ (E45) * (E46) flying a helicopter so I've started taking (E47) * (E48) lessons. Why
 16 I don't know... Watch this space. (E49) * (E50) ~~(Don't tell Katie though I think she worries seeing as I can~~
 17 ~~only just about co-ordinate changing gears in~~ (E18) driving (E19) * ~~(E20) a car~~ (E16) * (E17) I might
 18 ~~(E23) die~~ (E21) * (E22) (E14) * (E15) // (E51)

The series of changes that are made here can be seen to construct a more “exciting” Mark. Compared to buying and selling property, flying helicopters could be perceived as more adventurous, leading this narrative to match Poppy’s activities of half marathons and fitness competitions more suitably. This more adventurous nature is further worked up through the utterance of “*I woke up one morning and randomly decided I wanted to fly a helicopter so I’ve started taking lessons*” (lines 13-15). Here, there is a construction of very little forethought being attributed to the decision to take lessons. This is in sharp contrast to 1.4 where Mark is describing something he has been thinking about and working on for months (“*after 8 months of stress*” lines 5-6). Therefore not only is the narrative of helicopter flying more adventurous than buying property, the presentation of Mark as someone who is spontaneous as opposed to working on something for “8 months” works to construct Mark’s self-image as generally more unpredictable in 1.5 than in 1.4. This more exciting lifestyle is also ‘teased’ within this message through the closing utterance of “*Watch this space*” (line 16), indicating that further developments are likely to come, adding a sense of mystery to the account that Mark is putting together. Through the more adventurous, unpredictable and mysterious lifestyle presented within this message, it generally works to align with Poppy’s presentation of self more closely. For example, two features highlighted within Poppy’s response were that of her ‘busy’ lifestyle and an indication of a like to travel. In Mark’s first response, neither of these features were orientated to. However, in this second version, the message echoes Poppy’s sense of busyness, albeit in a more explicit manner, through the first statement of “*busy, busy as usual,*” and also introduces a reference to travel, with Mark claiming that he “*had a nice holiday in Spain*” (line 10).

In order to make more sense of the changes made within extract 1.5, it is

productive to draw on the notion put forward by Sacks and Grice that conversation participants have a “shared or common purpose” (Houtkoop-Steentra, 2000, pg.64):

our talk exchanges do not normally consist of a succession of disconnected remarks, and would not be rational if they did. They are characteristically, to some degree at least, cooperative efforts: and each participant recognises in them, to some extent, a common purpose or set of purposes, or at least a mutually accepted direction (Grice, 1975 cited in Houtkoop-Steentra, 2000, pg.64).

Through the changes made within Mark’s message to Poppy, then, it can perhaps be argued that the response seen within 1.5 is more ‘*connected*’ to Poppy’s initial message than the first response drafted in 1.4. Through the construction of a more adventurous and exciting self, extract 1.5 is more ‘*cooperative*’ with Poppy’s constructed self: each conveying a busy and adventurous nature. Therefore not only are Poppy and Mark’s messages connected on the sense of adjacency pairs (as in, Poppy asking “*How ru?*” and Mark answering) they are also connected on characteristically too.

As well as this notion of connectedness, ideas of recipient design can also be seen at work here. Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974), refer to recipient design as “a multitude of respects in which the talk by a party in a conversation is constructed or designed in ways which display an orientation and sensitivity to the particular other(s) who are co participants” (pg.177). Extracts 1.3, 1.4 and 1.5 demonstrate how, by utilising the affordance of being able to edit responses before sending, the final sent message in 1.5 orientates to and shows more sensitivity towards Poppy’s construction of self and lifestyle, thus sustaining the conversational need to find a ‘*mutually accepted direction*’ within an interactional space. In terms of how this message works to defend Mark’s face and self image, displaying a sense of sensitivity and cooperation to a co-interactant could work in the favour of achieving the positive face want of being liked and approved of. This is due to the common idea that people are likely to be more connected to someone who shares a similar lifestyle, ideas and interests.

The protective orientation towards saving face

Section one of this analysis focused on the more 'defensive' orientation to constructing a self-image and maintaining face within interaction. Here, however, I am going to shift attention to the 'protective' orientation: that is, where individuals work to maintain the face of those whom they are interacting with. Rather than focusing on one message interaction as I did in section one, this section is comprised of two different examples of Facebook interactions in which the self-image of the addressee, rather than the speaker, is maintained.

The first example that I want to consider is from Facebook message one that was discussed in relation to secret disclosures. The focus now is on the very first line of Mark's response:

Extract 1.6

Poppy:

1 Hey Mark, aw that's okay I thought it was perfectly fine but you know what I'm like everything
2 confuses me haha! How ru?...

Mark:

3 Haha ~~it's fine~~ welcome to my world Poppy. I'm confused everyday. Ye I'm really good thanks...

In this extract, I am now focusing on Mark's response to Poppy's message about being confused. Mark's message is initially started with "*Haha it's fine.*" This is then deleted and replaced with "*welcome to my world Poppy. I'm confused everyday*". What I find interesting here is how the response of "*it's fine*" works to treat Poppy's "*you know what I'm like everything confuses me*" as an action that needs 'accepting' in some way. More specifically, "*it's fine*" is often an utterance used to 'accept' some kind of wrong doing and commonly follows apologies - it would, for example, sit well as a reply to 'sorry I couldn't be there last night' or 'sorry I forgot that you asked me to do that'. This ultimately creates segregation between Poppy and Mark within this interaction, with Poppy's confusion positioning her as the apologetic and Mark's "*it's fine*" positioning him away from such confusion as the acceptor. In popular culture, there is

also a form of (humorous) social acceptance of *"it's fine"* to mean exactly the opposite: that everything is, actually, not 'fine' at all. This understanding of *"it's fine"* is usually gendered (as in, jokes centred on when women say *"it's fine"* but not actually meaning it (Urban Dictionary, 2006)) but still works to support an interpretation that this is a term loaded with connotations of (potentially unforgivable) 'wrong doing'. If interpreting the use of *"it's fine"* to actually mean 'it's not fine', this utterance could be understood to express a level of dissatisfaction towards Poppy. From this perspective, *"it's fine"* potentially works as an "expression of disapproval" that indicates that Mark "does not like" one of Poppy's "personal characteristics" of being confused (Brown and Levinson, 1987, pg.66). In terms of Poppy's self-image, then, this is potentially damaging as it might threaten her positive face wants of being "ratified, understood, approved of, liked or admired" (Brown and Levinson, 1987, pg.62).

In contrast, the edited response of *"welcome to my world Poppy"* performs a different treatment of Poppy's confusion. Rather than working to accept (or 'pretend' to accept) Poppy's action as an apology or acting as a mark of disapproval, the phrase *"welcome to my world"* works to align, instead of segregate, the two participants in this interaction. By 'welcoming' Poppy to 'his world' this message communicates a sense of understanding to Poppy that Mark too experiences confusion and knows what Poppy is 'going through'. This communication of understanding demonstrates how Mark's message is performing, or in other words 'doing', empathy through language. The practice of 'doing empathy correctly' involves "demonstrating an understanding of another person's situation and/or feelings and communicating that understanding back to the person" (Pudlinski, 2005, pg.267). Expressing similar experiences or feelings is a common way that individuals 'do' empathy and understanding within their interactions (Pudlinski, 2005). This is often accomplished through "an assertion of similarity" (e.g. *"welcome to my world"*) followed by "a report of similar feelings" (e.g. *"I'm confused everyday"*) (Pudlinski, 2005, pg.281).

Pudlinski also suggests that repetition is common when sharing similar experiences: this is evident in Mark repeating that it is indeed the 'confusion' that he is sharing in. However, repetition can also be seen in relation to extreme case

formulations (ECF) (Pomerantz, 1986) used within the two messages. ECF's refer to expressions using extreme terms such as none, every, absolutely, completely and so forth. See, for instance, in Poppy's message: it is not 'something' that confuse her but "*everything*". Within Mark's message, an ECF is also used for he does not go through this shared experience 'a lot' or 'most days', he experiences it "*everyday*". The use of a similar ECF in Mark's message, then, echoes the intensity of Poppy's problem, communicating that he not only understands what Poppy is going through, but understands this to the same level and extent that she does herself.

Overall, the edited version of this message works to align and empathise with Poppy rather than segregate from and disapprove of Poppy's problem of 'being confused'. Through the discursive moves I have identified within this message Poppy's positive face is protected with Mark's message being constructed in a way that satisfies her face want to be "understood" (Brown and Levinson, pg.62). This avoids the potentially face damaging result of "disapproval" that the use of "*it's fine*" could entail. In terms of Mark's self presentation, it could be argued that the second version of this message also constructs a more understanding, approachable self-image through the empathetic nature of the response. Therefore, through this edit, not only is Poppy's face protected, Mark's self-image is also maintained.

The next extract I am going to discuss is from a second Facebook message from this data set between Mark and John (see Appendix: Facebook message two for full transcription of the interaction). This comes from a conversation in which John and Mark are discussing Mark's recent engagement. John then makes an enquiry into who Mark's best man is going to be:

Extract 2⁴:

John:

1 I take it Joe is your best man?

⁴ Full extract and transcription key can be found in Appendix D and E

Mark:

2 ...it was really hard trying to decide who would be the best man for this as I've been blessed to have you,
3 Mike, Joe, and Richard as really close contenders. ~~Ultimately I've known Joe the longest so thought it~~
4 ~~was only fair to.~~ However, I would still like to have you as my right hand man if that's ok? xx

Within this interaction it can be seen how John's self-image is threatened. John is asking Mark, in an indirect fashion, who will be best man at his wedding. It can be assumed from Mark's response that John and Mark are close friends as John is listed as one of Mark's "*really close contenders*" in line 3. By inquiring into who is Mark's best man, John is thus taking an interactional risk. He could find out that he is in fact Mark's best man, a positive outcome for John's 'face'. However, he also runs the risk of finding out that one of his close friends has not picked him for this role at his wedding. In fact, due to Mark describing his friends as "contenders" in line two of his reply, it can be seen how a narrative of competition is built up around this choice. Thus, if John is not chosen he loses this 'competition' in which he is 'contending' and is put in a position of rejection rather than approval. This makes John vulnerable within this interaction as this particular outcome would damage his positive face want of desiring to be approved of and liked (Brown and Levinson, 1987). It is of course revealed in line 3 (within the deleted utterance) that it is Joe that he has "*ultimately*" been chosen and not John. What I want to consider in this analysis, is whether and how Mark's response works to protect John's positive face within this risky interactional encounter.

As with the other extracts in this chapter, my primary focus is on the edits and repairs made within the interaction. In this message the edit is made in lines 3-4. Initially, Mark begins to construct an account of his best man decision that explains the reasoning behind the choice he has made: "*Ultimately, I've known Joe the longest so thought it was only fair*". This account *indirectly* works to answer John's question as although Mark does not explicitly answer in a way such as 'yes, Joe is my best man', he begins to justify the reason why he has, in fact, chosen Joe for this role ("*I've known Joe the longest so thought it was only fair*"). It has been suggested that accounting for and explaining one's behaviour is often used as a strategy to "protect the receiver of the explanation from being hurt by one's actions and/or to maintain a positive relationship between the giver of the explanation and the receiver" (Hareli, 2005,

pg.359). Within this interaction the 'giver', Mark, initially did begin to provide an explanation for his 'action' in line two, however then deleted this account from the message and instead continued with: *"However, I would still like to have you as my right hand man if that's okay?"*. This edited version of the response is even more indirect and vague in its nature than the first as it features no mention at all as to who will be best man. What it does do, though, is communicate to John (indirectly) that he is *not* the best man but is still needed as the *"right hand man"*.

This edit works to highlight the importance of John to Mark rather than the importance and role of Joe in Mark's life; the focus is on how John is *"needed"* rather than the qualities that make another *"contender"* more qualified for the job (e.g. knowing Joe the *"longest"*). Through this move, this message protects John's positive face even though he is indeed not the best man. If the response had remained as a documentation of why Joe qualified over John, the face want of being 'approved of' would not have been addressed in the same way. This example therefore demonstrates that accounting for decisions and actions (as Mark began to do so in the initial justification) is not always the technique employed to 'protect the receiver' as Hareli (2005) spoke of. Here, this technique is actually rejected in order to protect and maintain positive face of others.

Discussion

This chapter has explored how Facebook users utilise the ability to pre-post edit to manage 'face' within their interactions. I have argued that users do this in two ways: firstly, a defensive way that works to protect the face of the speaker and second a protective way that works to defend the face of whom the user is talking to. As well as the protective and defensive orientations to face, this analysis has also examined how pre-post editing can be extensively used in processes of turn design. As discussed in Chapter Three, I highlighted how turn design was the process of a speaker *"selecting what will go"* into a certain turn (Drew, 2005, pg.82) and involved two distinct stages. The first of these was the selection of the actual action to be performed within the interaction and the second referred to the notion that there are multiple ways of

constructing the same action within talk. What this second stage of turn design is about, then, is the detail of a turn and how the action in question is constructed to accomplish certain things or, in the case of this chapter, create certain constructions of self and face within interaction.

My analysis has demonstrated how pre-post editing is utilised by participants in both of these ways. The data I have examined reveals how during the editing phase of Facebook interactions the actual action being performed within a message or post can be altered before the publication of the said material. In extract 1.6, for instance, Mark goes from performing an act of 'acceptance' to an act of 'aligning' himself with Poppy resulting in her positive face being 'protected'. In extract 2, an alteration of actions is not performed but rather completely removed. Here we saw Mark eliminate the action of 'accounting' for his decision, which I argued works towards the protection of his friend John's face within interaction. As well as participants using pre-post editing to include or exclude a certain action from a conversation, this data has shown that participants use pre-post editing in the second stage of turn design too: that of the constructing actions in particular ways. This is perhaps best illustrated in extracts 1, 1.1 and 1.2 of the analysis where Mark makes a narrative change from buying property to helicopter lessons. Here, although the same 'action' of disclosure was included in both versions of the message (1.1 and 1.2), the way it was 'designed' and the way that self was constructed was different. Thus, from this analysis, it can be argued that the ability to pre-post edit is used within processes of managing both defensive and protective orientations to face in interaction as well as both stages of the turn design process.

Empirical contributions

This chapter has contributed to understandings of interaction by revealing the processes of turn design *pre*-publication and has demonstrated how the two distinct stages of turn design occur before the interaction is out into the public space. This has extended Drew's commentary on turn design in the sense that he explored the phenomenon through 'self repairs' made within the actual run of interaction that are

seen by all interactants whom are part of the conversation. It is due to affordances such as pre-post editing, then, that the process of turn design is more pronounced in online communication and it is due to methodological advances such as screen capture that such design processes can be captured for research purposes. As well as simply revealing the processes of pre-post 'turn design' or editing, this chapter has shown the *interactional detail* of such editing behaviours, such as the actions that are altered and how constructions of such actions are changed. This extends the work of Walther (2007) and Das and Kramer (2013) who focused more on how frequent such editing behaviours were and more linguistic features of talk such as length of messages and types of words chosen.

In this analysis, and in contrast to previous scholarship exploring the interactional details of pre-post edits in Facebook/social media (e.g. Meredith and Stokoe, 2014), I have framed the discussion from an angle of self presentation, examining how such an affordance is used in processes of managing the self online, particularly in relation to the construction and management of face. Empirically, then, this analysis has shown how pre-post editing occurs within communication on Facebook, enabling users to both defend their own face and protect the face of others as well as edit actions and their constructions pre-post. In *Frame Analysis*, Goffman commented on the notion that in natural, informal talk, creating what could be seen as the perfect response in conversation was a rare occurrence:

it is rare in 'natural conversation' that the best answer is provided on the spot, rare that witty repartee occurs...indeed, when during informal talk a reply is provided that is as good as the one that could be later thought up, then a memorable event has occurred (Goffman, 1974, p.xi).

From this, it could be understood that creating the perfect presentation of self on the spot, as in a presentation that is as good as the one that could later be thought up, is also rare occurrence within interactions. However, through this analysis, it can be argued that users of Facebook utilise the ability to edit their interactions before posting to craft the design of the self and face they wish to portray, working to perfect their presentations with each edit they do. Thus, through utilising this feature of online

communication, more of these “memorable events”, as in unusual circumstances whereby no better reply can be ‘thought up’, occur.

On top of these insights into the performance of self and management of face online, this analysis also exposed an element of the variety of pre-post editing behaviours that users engage in on social media sites such as Facebook. This data, for instance, has shown how pre-post edits can be simple swaps that occur immediately within the typing out of a message or post (see extract two) or involve elaborate editing processes that require several minutes of work and include multiple edits, sometimes large deletions, with participants moving around to different points within the message making changes before reading over their ‘work’ to send (see extract 1). The complexity of the latter is something that has not been captured in data on pre-post editing before, with Meredith and Stokoe’s (2014) work, for example, capturing and analysing examples more of the immediate, word swap nature.

The ‘rehearsal stage’

In this section of discussion, I want to think about the extent to which face to face notions and theory may be useful when considering pre-post activity on Facebook. In face to face interaction, as well as other more synchronous forms of communication, there is of course some form of construction or planning stage to responses in conversation however this is simply a matter of seconds, if not less, with ‘edits’ (or repairs) often occurring post publication, so within talk, rather than before, as seen within this chapter. What this analysis has shown, then, is an *extended constructing stage* of interactions in an online environment compared to that of face to face. As mentioned, this may involve smaller and more immediate edits but also – and perhaps more interestingly for those concerned with the nature of online communication – more extensive editing behaviours that really highlight the degree of changes that can be made to messages before they are shared with interlocutors. To theorise this phenomenon, I am going to recruit this concept of ‘stages’ of interaction but approach it in a more dramaturgical fashion, drawing upon the work of Goffman and his conceptualisation of the front and back stages of interaction.

Since the publication of Erving Goffman's work on the '*presentation of self*' (1959) his ideas and concepts, including those of the front and back stages, have not only become indispensable in thinking about social interaction in an offline context, but also in terms of thinking about interaction online, particularly social media (Pinch, 2010). Unsurprisingly, the notions of the front and back stages (or regions) of interaction have been adapted in different ways by different scholars. One such adaptation is the understanding that the frontstage of interaction applies to more public communications on social media sites. Within Facebook, for example, front stage interactions would occur within status updates, wall posts and comments. The backstage of interaction, then, would occur in more private modes of communication so, in the Facebook context, on the messenger and chat communicative modes (see Stenros, Paavilainen and Kinnunen, 2011 and Davies, 2012).

A second adaptation of the stages concept can be seen within studies such as Rettie (2009) and Lillqvist and Louhiala-Salminen (2014). This adaptation is less defined on the 'place' the interaction occurs and more concerned with the actual nature of the communication itself. For instance, Rettie describes the front 'region' as a space where "the main performance takes place" (2009, pg.427) and for Lillqvist et al., it is where "impression management is most relevant" (2014, pg.6). The backstage, then, is interpreted as "where an individual can drop the role performed on the front stage, prepare props, collude with other team members, or relax in privacy" (Rettie, 2009, pg.427), with the notion of the backstage being 'relaxing' being echoed in Lillqvist et al (2014). What is made clear is that rather than certain 'areas' being for certain 'stages', one communicative place (such as Facebook messenger) may be the front region of one performance and the backstage region of another (Rettie, 2009). It is also argued that there can be fluidity within single interactions, with an 'actor' potentially engaging in both frontstage and backstage moments, thus the distinction between these two stages, within this understanding, is often not "clear cut" (Lillqvist et al., 2014, pg.6).

In terms of processing these understandings of 'stages' in the social media context, I would have to argue that defining stages by 'place', as Stenros et al., (2011)

and Davies (2012) do, is problematic. Davies argues that “Facebook helps individuals avoid situations associated with losing face or being in wrong face by providing tools to talk “backstage” through its messaging system” (Davies, 2012, pg.23). However, the interactions that take place in this “backstage” of Facebook still carry with them risks of ‘losing face’ or being in ‘wrong face’. The extent to which participants work to construct and craft a certain face within their interactions even within the private, ‘backstage’ messaging system of Facebook has been shown even within the small sample of data I have introduced.

The second understanding of ‘stages’, that of them not being anchored in ‘place’ but instead as fluid and dependant on the nature of interaction itself, still does not address the type of interactional work that is evident within the data analysed in this chapter: that of the construction phase where turns are designed. The defining features of this understanding do not resonate with what I have observed. For example, I would not argue that individuals ‘drop’ their roles in my data, I would instead say that roles are constructed within them. Rather than suggesting that individuals ‘collude with other team members’ within the stage of interaction apparent to me, I would instead argue that this is a phase that is usually only visible and only includes the performer themselves. The idea that this is a space of ‘relaxation’ can also be challenged. As I noted earlier, in one example explored within this analysis, an interaction was designed for over 12 minutes before it was sent, thus demonstrating the complexity of the work involved in getting a message ‘right’. Rettie and Lillqvist et al’s understanding of stages, then, works for ‘published performances’, i.e. messages and posts that have been shared with other interlocutors, but my data reveals something else, an alternative stage of interaction.

To understand what this alternative stage could be conceptualised as, I return to Rettie’s (2009) definition of the ‘backstage’. Although, as argued, I do not think this concept transfers well to what this thesis examines, one element of the definition is, I think, useful in this context: that of ‘preparing’. This refers to the fact that the ability to make pre-post edits provides an opportunity and a space for users to draft, prepare and *practice* their final interactions before sending. To pick up on this, I want to draw

on some of Goffman's later work in Frame Analysis and his discussions around "technical redoinings" (1974, pg.58).

By technical redoinings, Goffman is referring to "strips" of interaction that "could have been an ordinary activity" but are "performed out of their usual context for utilitarian purposes" (pg. 58). One type of such a 'redoing' is *practicing*. Goffman speaks of how the:

capacity to bring off an activity as one wants to (...) is very often developed through a kind of utilitarian make believe. The purpose of this practicing is to give (...) experience in performing under conditions which (it is felt) no actual engagement with the world is allowed, events have been 'decoupled' from their visual embedment in consequentiality (1974, pg. 59).

This notion of practicing can be transferred and applied to the context of individuals working on their interactions pre-post. This is an activity that is 'decoupled' from consequentiality as the process is not visible to the other interactant and therefore not accountable. One type of such practicing that Goffman refers to is 'rehearsal'. Rehearsals as 'redoinings' are chances where "all parts are eventually practiced together" allowing for "more or less full anticipation of what will be done in the live circumstances" (1974, pg.60). This is evident in the construction processes of Facebook messages as all parts and elements of an interactional turn are put together before the "live circumstances," which, in the context of Facebook, is the message or comment thread available to other interactants. Goffman does, actually, comment on 'rehearsing' interaction more directly by highlighting how an "individual may 'rehearse' in his mind what he is going to say on a particular occasion" (ibid). In face to face communication, you have a chance to rehearse, in your mind, the first turn of communication. After that, you are likely to be enrolled into the quick time succession of turn taking in conversation. However, in the CMC environment users have the opportunity to rehearse each and every turn of interaction.

Overall, then, the practice of editing interactions pre-post cannot be understood, I argue, through the application of the Goffmanian concepts of 'frontstage' or 'backstage,' even though I am observing the 'behind the scenes' nature

of Facebook communication. What is seen through this analysis, in contrast, is a third stage of interaction: that of the 'rehearsal stage'. Here, a type of 'practicing' occurs that is "distinctive from the real experience" of interaction (Goffman, 1974, pg.61).

Facebook 'editors'

This understanding of pre-post edits as a rehearsal stage leads me to a further conceptual contribution of this chapter: that of understanding this phenomenon as a practice of editing rather than repair. I appreciate how the conversation analytic concept of repair can work to understand the process of making changes to messages before publication. Repair, for example, is seen to "maintain order in talk-in-interaction" (Bischoping and Gazso, 2016, pg.81) and my analysis has shown how users alter the design of certain actions in their messages (see extracts 1.1 and 1.2) or even completely change their actions in order to suit the context or recipient of the message (see extract 2), working to maintain a certain order or, in the case of this chapter, self-presentation within their talk-in-interaction. Repair can also be understood to reveal operations around "how interacting parties construct and maintain intersubjectivity" (Meredith and Stokoe, 2014, pg.183) and a "shared orientation of the world" (Bischoping and Gazso, 2016, pg.81). Again, as seen in the data discussed in the chapter, it is apparent how users utilise the opportunity of repairing their messages pre-post in order to accomplish a shared level of understanding (see extracts 1.3, 1.4, 1.5).

However, by conceptualising pre-post editing as a process of rehearsal of interaction, I am again urged to highlight the more *pre-emptive* (rather than reactive) nature of the phenomenon in hand. Rehearsals, in Goffman's understanding, are about "doing things that explicitly do not count, even when (...) they are done before an audience" (Goffman, 1974, pg.60-61). Despite the fact that rehearsals, in some cases, may have an audience, it is important to highlight that the rehearsal cannot yet be classed as performed (Bauman, 1996). To be 'performed', Bauman argues, the performance needs to be *accountable* to an audience and subject to evaluation. In

other words, to reiterate Goffmans's point, a performance "counts" and a rehearsal does not (pg. 310). If I translate this metaphor of rehearsal to the context of constructing interactions on Facebook, it can be seen how the message construction phase of interaction does not yet 'count' and is not 'accountable', or even yet available, to be evaluated by any audience member. The crafting of a given message involves *practicing* for the accountable performance of when the message or post is sent to its interlocutors, thus reiterating the proactive state of the phenomenon examined in this chapter, how can something be "repaired" when it does not 'count' in the first place?

In the drama context in which Goffman (and Bauman 1996) discuss the notion of rehearsal, the potential presence of an audience to such practice performances is highlighted. One member of such an audience would likely be the director, engaging with the actor/s throughout the performance, instructing them on elements that they could work on and improve for the final performance. In the context of Facebook, though, there is usually no 'audience' present during the 'rehearsal' stage of an interaction and it is usually just the writer themselves who sees the process. Thus, there is no separate 'director' in this context, with judgements about the quality of the performance in hand being made by the Facebook user themselves. They are, then, their own director, or perhaps, due to the written/textual context of the communication, their own 'editor'. They work on their performances by immediately making word swaps or going back into the depths of their scripts (messages) to change or 'improve' the work in which they have done. This process is therefore better understood as one of editing rather than repair. This is partly due to my understanding of this rehearsal stage as a proactive practice space, rather than a reactive, repairing space. However, it is also due to the understanding of participants as the own 'directors' or 'editors' of their interactional performances.

Concluding remarks

This analysis chapter has argued that Facebook users utilise the ability to pre-post edit in the process of managing 'face' in both protective and defensive ways. Pre-post

editing is used by participants in processes of turn design by both altering the actions performed within talk and also by altering the design of the action itself. Empirically, this chapter has contributed to existing scholarship by revealing turn design practices 'pre-publication'. My analysis has extended existing knowledge by focusing on the interactional detail of such designs framed with a particular interest in the presentation of the self. It has revealed, in Goffman's terms, how pre-post editing is utilised in ways to create more frequent 'memorable events' and to endeavour to perfect users' management of face. This data has also exposed a more elaborate editing process than that seen in previous studies, a style of pre-post editing that involves intricate work of moving around the drafted message to make changes, resembling more the process of script or story writing than simple corrections. Conceptually, I have argued that in online communication there is in fact a third, alternative stage of interaction where interactional performances are 'practiced' or 'rehearsed'. To expand this metaphor, I have also argued that the phenomenon captured in this analysis is one of editing rather than repair.

Chapter Six: Multicommunicating on Facebook

Chapter five of this thesis examined how the ability to pre-post edit on Facebook was utilised by participants within their interactions. In this chapter, I move the discussion forward by exploring a second activity afforded on the Facebook platform: that of multicommunication. As introduced in the opening Chapter, multicommunicating is understood as the practice of engaging in two or more “overlapping” conversations (Reinsch et al., 2008, pg.392). Within my data set, this practice takes two forms: participating in numerous Facebook messages or chat conversations simultaneously and engaging in both Facebook messages and comment interactions at the same time. Multicommunicating in these ways presents a challenging interactional environment for participants and this chapter explores the ways that Facebook users manage this within their interactions by interrogating the screen capture data collected.

Before turning to the analysis, the chapter begins by exploring how multiactivity has been researched to date and examines, in detail, what multicommunicating is. Here, I distinguish between the different temporal orders seen within my data set and how such orders are different to those observed in previous research on multiactivity. I will then recap on the challenges posed by multicommunication within an online environment before moving on to examine empirical examples of multicommunicating instances. My analysis of these instances pays particular attention to the strategies employed by participants in relation to the openings and closing of interaction, temporal gaps, topics of conversation and response patterns.

Temporal Orders of Multicommunicating

Doing multiple activities at once, often referred to as multitasking, is a topic of common interest. Within the media, questions are asked around whether multitasking is good or bad for productivity, harmful to wellbeing and who is ‘better’ at multitasking

(see Telegraph, 2015; Forbes, 2012; Huffington Post, 2017) with commentators suggesting that it “causes cognitive overload, impedes concentration, or distracts and creates stress” (Haddington, Keisanen, Mondada and Nevile, 2014, pg.4). Within academia, multitasking has been conceptualised in numerous ways. These include simultaneous activities, concurrent task management, parallel activities and primary and secondary activities (Haddington, et al., 2014, pg.5). Research on multitasking within mediated environments has approached the topic from various angles including multitasking between different activities such as social networking and academic work (Judd, 2014; Yeykelis, Cummings and Reeves, 2014) and multitasking across different devices such as a phone and laptop (see work on ‘media multitasking’ e.g. Foehr, 2006). Work on mediated multitasking has also been studied from a more interactionist perspective with a specific focus on how individuals manage multiple activities within interactions themselves. One example of such work is Licoppe and Tuncer (2014) who explored how individuals engaged in concurrent activities across categories of interaction: for example, a face to face meeting and a Skype call.

Many of the examples of research given above focus on the merging of different interactional types, forms and contexts in which two *different* kinds of activity or interaction are combined to occur simultaneously: for instance, face to face and mediated interaction (Licoppe and Tuncer, 2014); activities conducted on a phone and a laptop (Foehr, 2006); or social activities on Facebook and academic activities such as reading and writing (Judd, 2014). In contrast, my interest is in is when *similar* kinds of activities or interactions (online, social conversations) happen within the *same* environment at the same time. I am referring to such a phenomenon as ‘multicommunicating’, rather than multitasking, as what I am specifically interested in is the one ‘task’ of interaction, namely conversations, and how they are overlapped within the same time frame.

When thinking about multicommunicating, it is important to consider the different temporal orders that can occur in situations where more than one interaction is happening simultaneously. Within my data set, for instance, two temporal orders of interaction occur. As outlined in the table below, one such order is where participants

‘queue’ up their interactions and tend to open one conversation, send a message, close that interaction and then move on to the next. The second is where participant interactions are overlapped. Here, for instance, participants would open ‘interaction A’, send a message, then open ‘interaction B’, send a message, before returning to ‘interaction A’ to continue that thread of talk. It is this latter order (temporal order two) that is the focus of analysis within this chapter due to the enhanced complication involved in simultaneously attending to numerous ongoing communications.

Figure 1: temporal orders of multicommutating on Facebook

Temporal Order One:	Temporal Order Two:
<p>Opens Interaction A</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Sends message in Interaction A</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Closes Interaction A</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Opens Interaction B</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Sends message in Interaction B</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Closes Interaction B</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Opens Interaction</p>	<p>Opens Interaction A</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Sends message in Interaction A</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Opens Interaction B</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Sends message in Interaction B</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Returns to Interaction A</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Sends a message in Interaction A</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Returns to Interaction B</p>

Within academic literature, temporal order one is often referred to as either ‘successive’ or ‘sequential,’ with temporal order two referred to as ‘simultaneous’ (see Reinsch et al., 2008). However, Mondada (2014) - who defines successive orders as activities that occur one after another and simultaneous as when activities are attended to at the same time - argues that orders are intrinsically linked to the resources available to an individual. In Mondada’s work, the focus is on a face to face context: surgeons operating on patients whilst recording the demonstration for teaching purposes. Here, simultaneous multiactivity can occur as participants engage in both oral (speaking about the operation) and physical (conducting the operation) activities at the same time. What I want to highlight here is how the resources being

used are *complimentary* as the participants (in this case surgeons) are able to utilise their voices and embodied movements in a combined fashion. In contrast, on Facebook, the multiple 'activities' engaged in (e.g. the multiple conversations that may be sustained) require the *same* or *competing* resources, for example the one mouse and one keyboard that is available. Mondada highlights how "as soon as the same modality is used in the two different courses of action, the participants have to switch from a simultaneous mode to a successive mode" (2014, pg.38). If we extend this idea to the context of Facebook it would imply that the only possible action is to post in one interaction and then *successively* move on to the next (ibid).

Mondada's understanding of successive and simultaneous orders would suggest that, due to the technical constraints of the platform, all of the interactions observable within my data would be of a successive nature. Yet, as can be seen from the Figure above, temporal order two (the focus within this chapter) is distinct from the very successive nature of temporal order one and involves much more communicative overlap. My data reveals, then, something that is *between* the modes of successive and simultaneous. Because multiple activities on Facebook use the same resources, what is observed is not 'technically' simultaneous, but there is a more complex and overlapping nature to the communications than simply moving from one interaction to the next (as seen in temporal order one). The meanings attached to simultaneous and successive orders in Mondada's study, then, do not work for the context being studied within this thesis.

For this reason I have developed a different conceptual approach to understanding multiactivity (or multicommuting) drawing on the Goffmanian concepts of 'frames' and 'strips' (1974). As introduced in Chapter two of these thesis, Goffman defined a 'frame' as "a principle of organisation that defines a situation" (1974, pg. 11) with the most fundamental framework being understood as the "primary framework". A 'strip' is then understood as a "slice cut from the stream of ongoing activity" within a frame (ibid, pg. 10). As I suggested in Chapter two, my understanding is that the context of Facebook has the overarching, primary frame of online, social interactions occurring within this particular platform. Within this primary

frame there are 'strips' which split the overarching frame into 'slices' of interaction. These strips, or slices, constitute the individual chats or threads of interaction. The phenomenon of multicomcommunicating occurs when one or more of these strips of interaction overlap in time, meaning the different chats or threads share a time frame within the primary framework (such as temporal order two). This is different to temporal order one where interactions do not overlap and are queued up one after another. It is also distinguished from Mondada's research (2014) as, although she was examining two activities that overlapped and shared a time frame (the operation and the recording), these were two different primary frames of activity running in parallel: a physical primary frame of conducting an operation and a verbal primary frame of describing the operation for recording. The focus of this analysis, then, are activities that overlap and share a time frame but are also set within the same primary frame of activity: that of online, social interaction.

Difficulties in multicomcommunicating

As has been outlined at various points of this thesis (see Chapter one and two), 'multicomcommunicating' is a difficult and uncommon practice to engage in when conducting face to face talk. This is due to the increased chances of confusion as well as the existence of certain interactional rules, such as minimal time gaps and overlaps in talk that are ultimately stretched or broken when engaging in more than one conversation at one time. On top of this, I noted in Chapter two how multicomcommunicating puts strains on the ritual requirements that Goffman outlined for social encounters in the sense of not being able to give your full attention to the one interaction in hand. However, as discussed in the introduction of my thesis, multicomcommunicating is afforded in the online context by certain features that allow for more interactions to be "concentrated within a single temporal frame than is possible in face to face" (Herring, 1999, no page number). Such features include the "persistent textual record of interaction" (ibid), the extended temporal frame to interactions online as compared to those of face to face talk, as well as the 'compartmentalisation' of Facebook interactions.

This is quite a different scenario to that studied in other research interested in multi-activity and multiple interactions. In Licoppe and Tuncer's work (2014), for instance, a participant of a Skype call conversation puts the mediated interaction on hold in order to attend to a knock on the door and begin engaging in a face to face interaction. The process of the merging of interactional frames in Licoppe et al's work is a collaborative one in the sense that the participant makes their Skype partner aware of the interruption, with the partner acknowledging the need for their interlocutor to attend to the door. The Skype participant then orientates to the situation by 'keeping quiet' online whilst the face to face door participant is dealt with (2014). Thus, the fact that there are multiple interactions occurring at one time becomes an *overt* part of the interaction itself. Due to features of the Facebook environment though, such as compartmentalisation, the movement between interactional frames within Facebook interaction does not need to be an overt part of the communications. In fact, rather than this movement being managed by multiple participants, only the Facebook user is involved in the management and interplay of the multiple interactions that they may be attending to at one time.

The fact that the movement between interactional frames does not need to be *overtly* handled within conversations on Facebook, does not necessarily mean that there is nothing too 'manage' when multicommunicating online. Communicating in this 'multi' way, moving swiftly between different Facebook chats and comments, creates a complex interactional environment where participants in my data set participate in up to four chat interactions at one time. The stakes involved in multicommunicating in an effective way are also argued to be high within professional contexts, with pressures of self presentation and impression management entwined into each interaction engaged in (Stephens and Pantoja, 2016 and Reinsch et al., 2008). This can also be argued for the context of Facebook, where, as seen in Chapter five, issues of self-presentation and impression management are also prevalent within peer to peer online interactions. Due to this significance, my interest is in how users handle and manage the affordance of being able to multicommunicate.

To address this, I am referring to video recordings of 'naturally occurring data'

collected via screen capture technology that – as demonstrated in Chapter three - allow “for the fine grained temporal details of simultaneous actions or switches between actions” to be explored as “they unfold moment to moment” (Haddington et al., 2014, pg.12). Most research exploring the phenomenon of multitasking and multicommuting has tended to adopt a “broader, individual and cognitive perspective (...) largely omitting the detailed practices through which multiple activities are actually managed together, in real time, in social interaction” (Haddington et al., 2014, pg. 5). Such studies have approached the phenomenon as observed within face-to-face interactions and semi-mediated contexts using methods such as surveys, time logs, user diaries and interviews (see Foehr, 2006; Reinsch et al., 2008; Judd, 2014 and Junco, 2012). However, using screen capture data provides access to these more ‘detailed practices’ of multicommuting that Haddington et al., argue are missing from research in this area. Such detailed practices include how conversations are opened, how response times are handled and how attention is divided between simultaneous activities, activities not analysed through screen capture data to date. In terms of my approach to analysis, like the collection of studies in Haddington et al., (2014), I am approaching multicommuting as an interactional ‘accomplishment’ by focusing on the interactional techniques that participants use to help navigate such a complex space. To do this, as discussed in Chapter three, I will be drawing on conversation analysis to interrogate my data drawing on fundamental structures such as sequences and turn taking. Although taking similar analytical approaches, I am extending the work of Haddington et al., (2014) by exploring multicommuting from an interactionist perspective in the *online* context of Facebook rather than in the offline contexts explored in their work.

The next section of this chapter will go on to present examples from my screen capture data to help illustrate the ways in which participants manage multicommuting. The section begins with a consideration of the openings and closings of conversations, followed by an exploration of interactional time gaps, conversational topics and response patterns within Facebook multicommuting instances.

Analysis of Multicommunication on Facebook

Openings and closings of interaction

Within the data set for this study, there are many examples of participants opening new interactions with interlocutors via both messages and comments on Facebook. Within the data collected, opening new interactions happens in two different ways. One, through opening numerous new interactions one after another in quick succession e.g. open interaction A, open interaction B, open interaction C and so on. The second, however, occurs in moments where participants have been engaged in one (or more) interactions for a period of time and then, alongside that existing interaction, begin a new one through opening a new 'chat' compartment. For me, such interactional practices are interesting due to the difficulty of conducting such behaviours in face to face contexts. In effect, the first pattern would be equivalent to entering a colleague's office, opening an interaction and immediately leaving to open another interaction with a separate colleague in a separate office. The second is comparable to an individual engaged in an interaction with a friend at a restaurant table suddenly turning to the table next door, opening a new engagement before returning to their friend. Both of these face to face interactive situations are difficult, yet a little amusing, to imagine due to the interactional norms that would essentially be broken. However, these multiple openings occur regularly on Facebook due to certain features of the platform, including the ability to compartmentalise interaction and the delayed response times.

Not only are openings relevant to this analysis in terms of their multiple nature in the online context, they are also understood more generally as essential parts of conversational structure. As introduced in Chapter three, openings and greetings are one of many forms of sequences in talk (Sacks, 1992) with the production of orderliness within openings having long been an area of exploration within the study of conversation (Psathas, 1995). Openings to interactions, and especially greetings, are argued to be "very important linguistic routines to negotiate social and interpersonal relationships" (Zhang, 2013, pg. 529 see also Rintel and Pittam, 1997). Schegloff

identifies them as providing “continuity into the body of conversation” (Schegloff, 1967, pg. 51) whilst also working to check the availability of your interlocutor and negotiate topics of conversation (Schegloff, 1986). Goffman, too, found the openings of interaction to be of huge importance, highlighting greetings (the use of a salutation or someone’s name) as “access rituals” that mark “a transition to a condition of increased access” with an interlocutor (1971, pg.79). As well as availability and access markers, greetings also operate as “politeness markers” and are thus involved in the process of managing ‘face’ within interactions and constructing the desired impression within the interactional event (Waldvogel, 2007). Due to the multiple nature of openings in the Facebook context, as well as the essential role they play in conversational structure, this section of analysis explores how users conduct the openings of their interaction when in multicommuting situations. Do they, and if so *how do they*, perform openings in a way that manages the complexity of being engaged in more than one conversation at one time?

Research on openings has been conducted across a variety of mediated platforms with the first interest being in telephone call interactions (see Schegloff 1968; 1986). Schegloff (1986) established four interactional sequences that needed to take place before a telephone conversation could proceed: 1) the summons-answer sequence, which works “to alert the intended recipient to the fact that someone wants to interact with them and tells the summoner that their intended interlocutor is available” (Meredith, 2017, no page number), 2) the identification-recognition sequence, where the caller works to identify who may have answered the phone and the receiver works to identify who has called, 3) greetings and 4) initial inquiries such as ‘how are you’ (Meredith, 2017). My interest is in to what extent these sequences appear within the opening of Facebook interactions in order to explore if, and how, participants organise their opening sequences differently when engaged in multicommuting. Here are two examples of openings from one of my participants in messages to me.

Extract 1:

A: Hey Hannah, Sorry I forgot to reply to this...My details are [sensitive information provided] and I will send that receipt over later 😊

Extract 2:

A: Hey Hannah, I'm recording this hehe. Just thought I might as well instead of text haha

These two extracts demonstrate that the first two sequences identified by Schegloff - summons-answer and identification-recognition - do not necessarily occur within the Facebook chat opening. Both conversations are instead opened with the third sequence, that of greetings. Meredith (2017; 2014) argues that such changes to opening structures in online communication demonstrate how users orient to the affordances of the medium in which they are interacting. An example of this can be seen through the redundancy of the identification-recognition sequence. Such a sequence, in the context of Facebook, is no longer needed as the names of interactive participants are provided on the screen. This process is even more redundant in the context of Facebook chat interactions than that of other online platforms such as internet relay chat rooms (IRC), the first widely popular real time quasi-synchronous CMC medium. This is firstly because, although internet relay chat (IRC) is a similar medium to Facebook chat/messenger in the sense that is a predominantly text based online messaging system, IRC 'channels' are often between individuals who do not know one another on discussion forums or chat rooms. Facebook, though, is generally known to accommodate interactions between individuals who are familiar with one another due to the presumed connection between online and offline identities. Secondly, Facebook chat users also have an individual account and profile available to their interlocutors, meaning that the "chat starter can be fairly certain that the person who answers the summons will be the intended recipient" (Meredith, 2017, no page number).

Within my data set, I identified 16 multicommuting openings. There were, of course, more than 16 openings within my screen capture videos. However, for the purposes of answering the research question of this analysis chapter, I have narrowed down my selection to openings that occurred within *multicommuting instances*. By this, I mean an opening to a conversation that occurred when another interaction was happening within the same time frame. I have also classed an opening as when my participant began a *new* interaction - as in, selected, opened and composed an

utterance in a new Facebook message. I did not, for example, class re-entries into interaction - for example when participants began new lines of conversation after lengthy conversational lapses - as openings within this analysis. Of the 16 multicommuting openings, two took the format displayed above, omitting the summons-answer and identification-recognition stages of interactional opening but beginning with a form of greeting. The majority of openings in my data set (the 14 remaining examples), though, also omitted the greeting stage, with interactions starting with topic initiation questions or statements. This can be seen in the following examples:

Extract 3:

Jamie: *You'll be pleased to know I've been working hard in the gym...I might be able to come and get you lot some points ;)*

George: *Oh yyyyyyyy*

Extract 4:

Zoe: *"I hear we have Zane and Sophie joining us in Manchester fun"*

Liam: *Looking forward to it ☺*

Liam: *Where did you hear this?*

Extract 5:

Jamie: *can't believe you didn't stop out Williams!!*

Extract 6:

Jamie: *Are you bothered about coming to see the Hunger Games mate?*

Daniel: *I'm not fussed pal I not seen any of the others*

Extract 7:

Jamie: *"so what actually happened to you last night lol?"*

Extract 8:

Jamie: *"How was work?"*

These interactions are opened with either a statement-response (see extracts 3, 4 and 5) or question-answer sequence (see extracts 6, 7 and 8) that initiate conversational topics straight away. Meredith (2017) argues that this is a way that users orient to the

affordances in which they are interacting and she highlights the fact that Facebook chats are written forms of interaction and, due to the affordance of conversational persistence highlighted by Herring (1999), the opening 'topic initiation' remains on the screen. This affords the possibility of opening an interaction with a topic rather than a greeting or initial inquiry sequence because, due to the persistence of the text, it is "not necessary for the chat starter to check whether the recipient is available prior to starting the interaction" (2017, no page number).

It is clear, then, that compared to the activity of a telephone call, some of the important processes that conversational openings accomplish, such as gauging availability, access and clarifying identity, become redundant on Facebook. The way that users orient to the affordances discussed above often results in a lack of greeting sequences and instead immediate topic initiation. However, I want to extend this idea by arguing that the lack of greeting sequences within Facebook chat interactions also works as a way for users to manage multicommuting. With multiple conversations to attend to, often discussing multiple topics and across different Facebook modes, eliminating the routine of opening sequences of greetings and initial inquiries, such as 'how are you', could be argued to save both time and energy dedicated towards interactions. Greetingless messages were also commonly seen within Waldvogel's (2007) research that explored openings and closings within two different workplace emails. What was highlighted was that the sheer number of messages that had to be dealt with and workers lack of time were often "given as reasons for not using a greeting in a routine email message" (no page number). Waldvogel commented on how one participant received over 60 emails a day and that "in these conditions niceties such as greetings (...) may be the first thing to be sacrificed" (2007, no page number). Similar themes of interactional overload could be applied to the more 'social' setting of Facebook. When users are in multicommuting situations, cutting out greeting sequences acts as a way of simplifying a complicated interactional scenario, reducing it down to the main question or statement that the chat starter wishes to make to the recipient without the ritualised niceties surrounding it.

Although the affordances of Facebook chat may not require processes such as gauging availability, access and identification, no such affordance eliminates the purpose openings and greetings have in terms of acting as ‘politeness markers’. This therefore poses the question of whether these ‘greetingless’ messages are impolite and damaging to managing impressions and face. In considering this, I am going to draw on the notion of accountability. The notion of accountability is an important one in conversation analysis and stems from the ethnomethodological foundations of the approach as understanding individuals as ‘members’ of a ‘collective’ that share a set of anticipations, expectations or interactional rules (see Bischoff and Gazso, 2016 and Schiffrin, 1994). Such a perspective echoes the work of Goffman as discussed in Chapter two and his notion that interaction has a ‘moral’ order. These ‘rules’ of interaction are seen to be used as a tool to help members “make sense of their environments of action” (Heritage, 1984, p. 292). Our actions within our conversations, then, are held accountable to these rules.

My analysis, however, suggests that these interactional expectations, such as the expectation that conversations are opened through a greeting sequence, are commonly not adhered to. Despite the fact that such (lack of) action works against usual interactional expectation, the lack of greetings within the examples shown is not orientated to, or made accountable, by either participant in the conversations I have observed. To expand, the lack of openings in these messages goes “unnoticed” by both participants and does not appear to cause any interactional trouble with the conversation continuing on in a smooth fashion (see for example extracts 3, 4 and 6). This suggests that it is deemed acceptable by my participants, in this particular context, to communicate in this greetingless way (Waldvogel, 2007, no page numbers).

The interactions that *do* include greetings (extracts 1 and 2), can be argued to be carrying out the purpose of being a mark of politeness. This is due to the greeting itself of ‘*Hey Hannah*’ being included in the same message entry as the main topic of the message. This is not playing the role commonly seen within telephone call openings of gauging the availability of the interlocutor as, if this was the case, the

greeting would be sent in a separate message beforehand. Interestingly, the only two examples I have of multicomcommunicating openings that include greetings within my data set are in interactions with me (Hannah). Each involves the participant communicating with me via Facebook chat about the data collection of the project. Due to this more formalised interaction, compared to those of a completely social nature, it could be understood that the interactions require a more standardised approach to 'polite' openings. In Chapter seven of my thesis, I will reflect on the methodological issues of my own interactions being included in the data set as well as what these extracts suggest about my position as a researcher. However, here, I want to highlight the important notion that the greetings and opening sequences that do (or do not) take place depend on the context of the interaction itself and are not necessarily defined by the technological affordances or constraints of the platform. This was also highlighted by Waldvogel's (2007) work in the sense that the amount of greetingless emails was different between two different organisational cultures. More greetings also occurred in emails that were sent 'up' the status ladder than down.

Within academic literature, openings of interaction are often explored alongside closings (see Rintel, Mulholland and Pittam, 2001; Waldvogel, 2007). It therefore seems relevant, and appropriate, to touch upon the closings I have observed within this section of analysis. Yet, as seen within the examples below, there are no 'traditional' closures present, as in, no notifications of leaving the interaction or signing off. For example:

Extract 9:

Jamie: *You taken that car for a run about yet?*

Daniel: No not yet im going to tomorrow now as the traffic is daft round here at mo

Jamie: *you are a useless person*

Daniel: *how!? Haha I been doing other stuff*

Daniel: *I will tomorrow or later tonight even*

Jamie: *like what—go on pleaseeeee impress me*

1 min 10 secs

Closes down chat

Extract 10:

Sarah: *I like 'the feeling'*

Jamie: *yeah that is a decent one...a bit more upbeat!*

Sarah: I bet you don't really like 'life is worth living'

Jamie: is it soppy?

Jamie: like their old songs?

Sarah: yes very haha

Jamie: yeahhhhhh I won't like that! I might stop doing work now- I think I've done enough for one day!

3 seconds

Closes down chat

As the above examples demonstrate, conversations are commonly ended with topic-related utterances and are closed down by the participant with no indication to their interactional partner that they have exited, finished, or dropped out of the interaction. In extract 10, Jamie does give some indication that they are stopping with one activity- that of work- but does not orientate towards the fact that they are also intending to stop and close down the interaction. This again highlights a way in which participants are working to simplify interactions in multicommuting instances, eliminating certain rituals and niceties of interactional sequences.

Along with my data on the openings of interaction, what this also suggests to me is that there is a culture of '*dropping in and out*' of interactions within online, Facebook chat communications. What I mean by this is that participants often give little (or no) orientation to expected opening or closing formalities of interaction. It can thus be argued that the strips of interaction seen within this data, as in the chat threads, can be orientated to in a way that creates a rather unique temporal frame: one that does not seem to officially start and one that does not seem to officially end. Participants are instead engaged in a long, loose time frame in which they are continuously co-located in some way; one that continues even when they are not actively engaging in synchronous communication; a time frame in which they drop in and drop out of engaged interaction. To illustrate this further, please see the extract below:

Extract 11:

Sun 14.18

Jamie: *why did you go home on Friday btw?*

Sophie: *I was knackered!*

Mon 20.47

Jamie: *when are we gonna see the hunger games?*

Sophie: *dunno when do you want to go?*

This extract shows an exchange occurring on the Sunday with the next exchange occurring more than 24 hours later on the Monday. There is no opening or closing to the communication in Sunday's interaction. On Monday, Jamie re-enters the strip of interaction, again with no orientation towards traditional or expected opening sequences. This example illustrates the long, loose timeframe in which participants are continuously engaged and that they simply drop in and out of. The way that this data reveals a lack of clear beginnings and endings to conversations leads me to pose the question of whether what is seen here are even 'openings' at all or whether these might be better regarded as 're-entries' into interaction following extended lapses.

In this section I have demonstrated how traditional openings and closings to conversations are rare within multicommuting instances with messages often beginning with questions or statements and ending with topic-related utterances. I have argued that this may be a strategy used by participants to aid them in managing the demands of multiple interactions, working to simplify the interactional task at hand by 'cutting out' some interactional norms and niceties. This analysis has also suggested, however, that there is a need to consider interactional context in these multicommuting instances as depending on who the interaction is with may alter whether or not certain patterns of simplification occur. I have also argued there is perhaps something more than just simplification strategies to be noted here, with a culture of 'dropping in and out' of Facebook interactions becoming evident through the lack of conversational beginnings and endings on Facebook chat.

Response times and gaps in interaction

This next section of analysis continues to explore the notion of accountability (or lack of) within Facebook interactions. Rather than focusing on accountability in relation to (omitted) opening sequences, my focus is now on the time gaps between turns in interaction and whether, and to what extent, such gaps are made accountable in multicommuting instances on Facebook. As mentioned above, the concept of accountability is rooted in the understanding that members of society share a collective set of rules and expectations when it comes to interaction. As well as conversations including greetings another such 'expectation' - especially within face to face interaction or other synchronous communicative modes such as telephone calls – is that turns are meant to occur with no (or minimal) gaps between (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson, 1974). Jefferson (1989) has argued that the maximum tolerance of silence between turns in these contexts is around one second before there is the potential for interactional trouble to occur.

With this in mind, it is interesting to look at the following two examples from my data, paying particular attention to the time gaps between participant turns:

Extract 12:

Jamie: up to much?

[5 seconds]

Daniel: no not really mate you?

[36 seconds]

Jamie: naaaaaa- just doing some work- footy has been called off now

[51 seconds]

Daniel: ahhhhhh

Daniel: how come?

[31 seconds]

Jamie: wind and rain apparently

[7 seconds]

Daniel: ah

[1 minute 9 seconds]

Jamie: you taken that car for a run about yet?

[5 seconds]

Daniel: not yet im going to tomorrow now cos traffic is daft round here at mo

[6 seconds]

Jamie: you are a useless person

Extract 13:

Olivia: Ameila Grace on fb

[32 seconds]

Jamie: oh yeah shes pretty nice- why would she eat me alive aha?

[1 min 8 seconds]

Olivia: shes just extremely independent and I think your probably a bit too nice

Olivia: I mean that in a nice way haha

[44 seconds]

Jamie: Haha, im not too sure how to take it aha

[4 minutes 4 seconds]

Olivia: because of the job we do she kind of go's for manly men she would just have you whipped

Olivia: shes a really nice girl though

[1 minute 4 seconds]

Jamie: hahaha, I wouldn't want a relationship with her

[1 minute 26 seconds]

Olivia: hahaa why shes a babe

Olivia: are you a player nowadays is that what your telling me haha

[37 seconds]

Jamie: hahaha, im not a playa- just scared of commitment lol

Jamie: need to find the right person *sick face*

In the two extracts above (12 and 13) it can be seen how the time gaps between turns (marked in bold and within brackets) are considerably longer than the 'acceptable' one second gap commonly seen within face to face or telephone interactions, thus deviating from the interactional expectation highlighted by Jefferson.

The interactional gaps seen within these two examples can be seen to display two different forms of 'communication synchronicity' (see Joinson, 2003 and Mckenna and Bargh, 2000). The first is described as 'synchronous' and refers to when information is exchanged in a rapid fashion between interlocutors with the best examples being that of face to face and telephone interactions (Madell and Muncer, 2007). The second is described as 'asynchronous' and refers to interactions where the speed is much slower, such as, for example, letter writing (ibid). Instant message technologies, such as Facebook chat, have been previously described as a third form of communication synchronicity: quasi-synchronous (see Garcia and Jacobs, 1999). This term refers to interactions that are available synchronously to participants, however, the message construction process of the interaction is not available to interactional partners but only the speaker (or typer) themselves, thus being 'quasi' synchronous rather than synchronous. This form of quasi synchronous interaction is of course seen

within this data set, as the message construction process is not shared with interactional partners. However, another form of 'quasi' synchronicity occurs in the examples shown. This is apparent as a form of fluidity that involves moving between what could be defined as more synchronous patterns of communication and asynchronous patterns. For instance, in extract 12, synchronous gaps of 31 and 7 seconds are followed by a longer gap of over 1 minute before the temporal frame returns to the quicker pace of 5 and 6 second gaps. In extract 13, it can be seen how the shorter gaps of 1 minute 8 seconds and 44 seconds proceed a lengthy gap of over 4 minutes before returning to shorter gaps of 1 minute 4 seconds and 1 minute 26 seconds.

As with the extracts explored in relation to greetings and openings, there is a breaking of a usual interactional expectation (that of there being minimal gaps between turns) in this data. Yet, interactional gaps, even those of over 4 minutes long, are not orientated to within the interaction by either participant. Conversation instead continues in an unproblematic fashion despite the length of gap between turns. Thus, the way that participants orientate to and account for such time gaps within their interactions is to actually 'naturalise' them. By this, I mean that participants do not tend to orient towards these time gaps by making them relevant within the conversation (they do not comment on the lag of a given response, for example). Instead, participants simply reply and continue the interaction as normal.

Working to 'naturalise' longer interactional gaps has another consequence in terms of how participants manage multicommuting. I would argue that through this process, the practice of multicommuting is again simplified. This is due to the need to highlight lengthy time gaps as an interactional problem, or to deal with the potential interactional trouble post acknowledging the gap, being cut out of the interactional process. This means that, similarly to the lack of openings and greetings, certain sections or rituals of communication are eliminated. Again, my argument is that this may aid the complicated process of managing more than one interaction at one time as users no longer having to 'go through the motions' of making relevant interactional gaps as they would in face to face conversations.

Within this data set, however, there was one example that broke this pattern of ‘naturalisation’:

Extract 14a:

- 1 **Jamie:** No you won’t
- 2 **Jamie:** you’ll have half a cider and give up
 [53 seconds]
- 3 **Daniel:** never
- 4 **Daniel:** dont drink cider
 [22 seconds]
- 5 **Jamie:** OK, a Heineken?
 [10 seconds]
- 6 **Daniel:** 5
 [27 seconds]
- 7 **Jamie:** and then that’s you done?
- 8 **Jamie:** thats what you call getting really drunk?
 [1 minute 36 seconds]
- 9 **Jamie:** ????
 [34 seconds]
- 10 **Daniel:** nahhhh
- 11 **Daniel:** ill drink more

Here, what is of interest is the turn taken by Jamie on line nine. In a conversation where Jamie is questioning Daniel on what he will drink on an up and coming night out, Jamie asks *‘and then that’s you done? that’s what you call getting really drunk?’* (lines seven and eight) which is followed by a 1 minute and 36 second time gap (the longest seen in this interaction at this point). Jamie then sends a further message of *‘????’* (line nine). What occurs in this extract then is a shift between forms of communication synchronicity. The conversation begins by following a more synchronous response time pattern before dropping into a more asynchronous response time with a gap of over one minute. This fluidity between temporal patterns, though, does not go ‘unnoticed’ and is not ‘naturalised’ in the ways it was in the previous examples as Jamie follows up their turn with a row of question marks. If the question marks were sent immediately after entries seven and eight it would have indicated that Jamie was simply eager to receive a response from Daniel. However, because these question marks were sent over a minute and a half after the questions asked, the question marks actually work to probe and encourage an answer following

the gap in silence, thus making the increased time gap relevant to the interaction.

My suggestion is that this fluid way of moving from synchronous to asynchronous patterns can in fact be problematic. This example perhaps displays that the uncertainty around whether an interaction is synchronous or not is sometimes something that needs to be interactionally ‘worked out’ within the run of interaction itself. Here the ‘????’ works to define the situation (in terms of time frame) that the interactants are operating within. However, later on within the same interaction, an even longer interactional gap occurs:

Extract 14b:

Jamie: Haha why will you? What makes the 21st any different to every other night out?

[9 seconds]

Daniel: dunno

Daniel: just feel like it

Daniel: first night back in country

[18 seconds]

Jamie: haha, have you been drinking whilst over there?

[5 mins 36 seconds]

Daniel: nope

Daniel: no point

[17 seconds]

Jamie: loooooool, your gonna be such a light weight

Here, a few turns on from the conversation seen within extract 14a, a longer time gap of over 5 minutes (5 minutes 36 seconds) occurs. Yet, this longer time gap, one that is significantly longer than the 1 minute 36 seconds previously discussed, is not made relevant in the interaction and is, similarly to extracts 12 and 13 ‘naturalised’. This led me to take a closer look at the *style* of interaction present within the two extracts in question. See below the interaction that occurs prior to the time gaps of 1.36 minutes in extract 14a and 5.36 minutes in 14b:

14a: Jamie: you’ll have half a cider and give up

Daniel: never

Daniel: don’t drink cider

Jamie: OK, a Heineken?

Daniel: 5

Jamie: and then that’s you done?

Jamie: thats what you call getting really drunk?

[1 minute 36 seconds]

14b: Daniel: I'll get on it

Daniel: I will be in the mood

Daniel: its basically all day drinking

Daniel: 1pm until early hours aha

Jamie: haha why will you? What makes this day different to every other night out lol

Daniel: dunno

Daniel: just feel like it

Daniel: first night back in country

Jamie: haha, have you been drinking whilst over there?

[5 mins 36 seconds]

In extract 14a Jamie is teasing Daniel about how much they can drink or will drink on an up and coming night out, suggesting that Daniel's '5' Heinekens is not enough. Due to the interrogative nature of the questions being asked before the interactive gap, it is a possibility that Daniel could take offence at the teasing propositions being put forward by Jamie, thus leading to interactional unrest. With an expanding time gap, the chance that Daniel would have taken offence to the questions asked becomes a more likely outcome, thus potentially probing Jamie to work to encourage a response (with '????') to help determine whether there is, indeed, any interactional unrest to resolve.

In contrast, the nature of the question asked before the interactive gap in 14b is much less interrogative, with Jamie simply asking whether Daniel had been drinking whilst '*over there*' (the participant had been travelling for a few months prior to this conversation). Given that there is less of a risk of causing offence or interactional trouble with this utterance, there may have been less of a need to 'chase up' or encourage a response despite the significantly longer time gap of 5 minutes 36. The fluid nature of moving between synchronous and asynchronous forms of communication, then, does indeed seem problematic, with the potential for participants to have to 'work out' and 'define their situation' within the interaction itself. However, as seen from extract 14b, the context and nature of a particular conversation is still an important factor to consider. Therefore, whether the fluidity of temporal frames is 'naturalised' within Facebook interactions is not necessarily determined by the technological affordances of a platform or the multicommuting

context. It also depends on the very context and content of the interaction taking place.

Overall, this section of analysis has highlighted how participants on Facebook message are working in a different form of quasi-synchronous environment where fluidity exists between interacting in synchronous and asynchronous ways. The data explored shows how even longer response times with gaps of over 5 minutes are often not orientated to or made relevant within the interaction by participants, thus suggesting that the way individuals 'account' for such gaps is by interactionally ignoring them or 'naturalising' them by continuing on with the conversation as normal. I have argued that this naturalising process of longer interactional gaps works to simplify the process of multicomcommunicating on Facebook by cutting out practices of both 1) highlighting the issue and 2) dealing with the potential trouble to follow. Despite this, though, the fluid nature of communication on Facebook can lead to uncertainty in terms of defining the situation in which you are communicating and the content and context of interactions online is something that is equally important to consider.

Topic overlap

So far in this chapter I have discussed examples of data that feature an overlap in time, as in, one or more interaction is occurring within a single time frame. However, in some of my recordings of data, a double overlap is present. Here, not only do interactions overlap in terms of time, but they also overlap in terms of topic and theme. In this section of analysis, I will explore three occasions where simultaneous conversations are also overlapped in terms of conversational topic. To transcribe this data, I have presented each chat in an individual column in order to represent the threads of separate communication occurring. However, I have organised the extracts in a way that also represents the temporal order that these overlapping conversations occurred in. To do this, I have numbered the 'turns' within conversation to show the order that the utterances were sent. I have also included the time in which they were

sent in order to give a sense of the temporal gaps between turns. This is presented within the brackets following the utterance:

Extract 15a. Chat with Liam	Extract 15b. Chat with Matt
<p>1. Zoe: so are James and Ally/Amy and Karl coming up on Friday too? [20.32.20]</p> <p>2. Liam: yeah. Aaron/Katie Kate/Tom as well I think [20.32.31]</p> <p>3. Zoe: Cool, but Matt and Joanna will meet Ally and Amy and I Saturday? As they're staying somewhere else and going Sat? [20.32.49]</p> <p>[opens conversation with Matt]</p> <p>6.Liam: yeah you got it [20.33.01]</p> <p>7. Zoe: exciting! [20.33.06]</p>	<p>4. Zoe: I hear we have Ally and Amy joining us in Belfast fun [20.32.55]</p> <p>5. Zoe: Looking forward to it 😊 [20.32.58]</p> <p>8. Matt: Where did you hear this? [20.33.07]</p>

In the extracts above, the shared topic of conversation between chats 15a and 15b is a trip to Belfast and who/who isn't coming to which parts of the weekend. In extract 15a, Zoe is speaking to Liam about this before she opens a second chat with one of the discussed participants, Matt, updating him on some of her new-found knowledge (15b). This example shows that not only can conversational topics be shared across simultaneous conversations, but that the theme of one interaction can initiate the opening, and also topic, of another.

Here is another example:

Extract 16a. Chat with Sophie	Extract 16b. Chat with Daniel	Extract 16c. Chat with Alison
<p>1.Jamie: Oi Oi when are we gonna see the Hungergames? [17.25.17]</p> <p>2.Jamie: Hunger Games**** [17.25.20]</p> <p>3.Sophie: Dunno, when do you want to go? [17.25.31]</p>		

<p>4.Jamie: Ermmmmmm im free most nights really [17.25.45]</p> <p>5.Jamie: Guessing it will have to be booked![17.25.49]</p> <p>[opens conversation with Daniel]</p> <p>7.Sophie: Yeah probably, ermmmm Thursday? [17.25.57]</p> <p>8.Jamie: Are there any cheap nights? [17.26.08]</p> <p>10.Sophie: Dunno [17.26.32]</p> <p>11.Sophie: Have a look [17.26.34]</p>	<p>6.Jamie: You bothered about seeing the Hunger Games mate? [17.25.56]</p> <p>9.Daniel: I'm not fussed pal I not seen any of the others haha [17.26.29]</p> <p>12.Jamie: Bell aha- trying to sort it with Sophie now [17.26.35]</p> <p>13.Jamie: Will Alison wanna see it? [17.26.43]</p> <p>14.Daniel: When you thinking of going? [17.26.44]</p> <p>15.Daniel: Ermmmm probs! [17.26.46]</p> <p>16.Jamie: I'll mention it to her [17.26.52]</p> <p>[opens conversation with Alison]</p>	<p>17.Jamie: Are you interested in coming to see Hunger Games? [17.27.01]</p>
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16a, b and c show my participant Jamie engaging in three Facebook chat interactions. Two of these conversations manifest into interactions that include responses from interlocutors (a and b) but for 16c the video recording ended before it was seen

whether a response was received or not. As well as occurring simultaneously, and thus being understood as multicomcommunicating instances, all three of these conversations overlap in terms of the topic: a trip to see the Hunger Games at the cinema. As in the discussion of the previous example, it can be seen how one interaction can inspire the opening and topic of a second interaction. This is particularly relevant in 16b where Jamie asks Daniel whether Alison would like to see the movie too which is immediately followed by Jamie initiating an interaction with Alison on the same topic.

My interest, though, is in the fact that for the first time within the data shown, interlocutors are made aware that Jamie is engaged in other interactions at the same time. References to this are seen within 16b. In the last line of the extract Jamie tells Daniel that he is going to '*mention*' the idea to Alison, indicating to Daniel that another interaction will indeed take place. In this case, though, no indication is given to Daniel as to when, exactly, this interaction will take place (even though as an '*audience*', it does overlap in 16c). Earlier in 16b, though, Jamie comments on how he is '*trying to sort it with Sophie now*'. Here, timing is made relevant within the interaction with it being clearly communicated to Daniel that there is a concurrent interaction taking place. Due to the same topic being discussed across multiple chats, there is perhaps an increased chance of interlocutors becoming aware of other interactions occurring within the same time frame. In this context, conversations are still compartmentalised as the chats are kept within their '*sections*' on the participant's screen and the content of conversations is not made available to other interlocutors. However, despite the maintained segregation the boundaries of interaction are widened as participants' conversational partners are made aware of the additional interactions taking place.

In my next examples, I remain focused on topic overlaps, but my focus is instead on how the same conversational topic is presented within conversation:

Extract 17a. Chat with Daniel	Extract 17b. Chat with Oliver
<p>1.Jamie: Wtf is that picture of Oliver ahahaha [15.09.22]</p> <p>[opens conversation with Oliver]</p>	<p>2. Jamie: Will they let you into work looking like that? [15.09.28]</p>

<p>3.[response from Daniel] [15.09.29]</p> <p>5.Jamie: What would make you do that aha [15.09.36]</p> <p>6.[response from Daniel] [15.09.42]</p> <p>8.Jamie: Need to get him out this weekend now!!!! [15.09.50]</p> <p>10.[response from Daniel][15.09.58]</p> <p>10.Jamie: I might re-think growing my beard now [15.10.16]</p>	<p>4.[response from Oliver] [15.09.33]</p> <p>7.Jamie: Looks like you could kill someone [15.09.43]</p> <p>9.[response from Oliver] [15.09.57]</p> <p>11.Jamie: We need to get you and your tough man look out on the booze Saturday – just no Stella [15.10.10]</p>
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For this example, I have been unable to use the responses from interlocutors due to issues of consent. However, what can be seen are the messages that my participant, Jamie, sent out to two of his friends, Daniel and Oliver. The data video in which these conversations are taken from began with a view of Jamie's newsfeed where a photo of Oliver appeared as the top post. This photo featured an image of Oliver who had shaved all his hair off but left the moustache he was growing for 'movember'. After seeing this photo, Jamie opens a conversation with Daniel shortly followed by opening a conversation with Oliver himself. The previous two extracts (the 15's and 16's) have illustrated how the openings and topics of conversations can be inspired by other Facebook interactions. What is different about this example is that the inspiration comes from 'across Facebook modes' in the sense that it is a status update that then triggers the initiation and content of the two chats seen above.

As well as featuring a 'cross-mode' approach to communication on Facebook,

this extract is also interesting because of the way that the two conversations are designed. Although they are on the same topic of conversation - the fact Oliver has shaved his hair off - the nature of the two chats is different. In the first chat, 17a, Jamie expresses a lack of understanding of Oliver's actions through phrases such as '*wtf*' and '*what would make you do that*'. There is also an indication that Jamie is of a mind to avoid such an appearance by suggesting he will 're-think' growing his own beard. This lack of understanding and lack of alignment with Oliver's actions creates a mocking, more critical tone within the interaction. In the second chat, however, Jamie is addressing Oliver himself. The mocking tone is again apparent through the 'jokey' question of whether he will be able to go to work looking the way he does. However, rather than being critical, there is perhaps a more idealistic, positive undertone to the interaction. I would argue that this is due to the 'tough man' image and presentation that is drawn upon in this exchange. Jamie comments on how it looks as if Oliver could '*kill someone*' and that he has a '*new tough man look*'. This could, potentially, be construed as a more positive take towards Oliver's picture as it draws on the connotations of a strong and masculine image rather than an image that Jamie himself cannot understand or aspire to.

Such differences in the tone and design of these Facebook chats can be related back to my discussion of 'face' in Chapter Five; something that needs to be maintained and managed within interactions (Brown and Levinson 1987). This management can be done in two ways: firstly, individuals can work to *defend* their own face within interactions and secondly, they can design their interactions to *protect* the face of those that they are communicating with. In example 17b, as Jamie is speaking to Oliver about his appearance, there is a need for Jamie to 'protect' the face of Oliver and work to avoid causing offence on this issue. In the chat with Daniel, though, this need for face protection is not there. This may explain why there may be a more critical tone present with 17a compared to the more positive tone taking in 17b.

Reisch et al., (2008) have argued that the more topics presented across conversations the more *intense* a multicomcommunicating experience will be. Within the examples seen above, it can be argued that by *overlapping* conversational topic across

interactions, the multicomcommunicating experience is in fact *less* intense and therefore simplified. By discussing the same topic across interactions, participants are preventing a situation where they are not only having to manage multiple simultaneous interactions but also different threads and themes, meaning there is one less element of 'multiplicity' present. However, when taking into consideration the examples discussed within this analysis, it is possible to demonstrate how this process of overlapping topics, yes, in some ways simplifies, but in other ways brings with it complications. Firstly, whilst compartmentalisation is one affordance of mediated technology that helps to simplify and afford multicomcommunication (Reisch et al., 2008), as seen in 16 a, b and c, the potential exists for communicative boundaries and 'compartments' to be widened in situations where interlocutors become aware that other interactions are also taking place. Secondly, I have shown through examples 17a and b that even though very similar themed conversations can take place at the same time, the actual design of such interactions can be quite different in the defence, or in this case the protection, of 'face' within communication. This therefore brings me back to the notion of context, as even the same topics can, in specific cases, require different treatments depending on the recipient and context of the interaction itself.

Response patterns

The first two sections of analysis presented in this chapter have focused on elements of multicomcommunicating that were isolated to specific interactions. By this, I mean I examined specific features within certain message threads my participants were engaged in: such as how such threads were opened and what response times looked like within such threads. My discussion on topic overlaps, though, took a broader overview of the phenomenon of multicomcommunicating by not focusing on patterns existing within individual conversations. Instead my interest was in the relationships between separate interactions: for instance, how similar conversational topics can occur across different multiple, individual Facebook chats at the same time.

This final section of analysis again takes this broader approach to

understanding multicomcommunicating activity by looking at the response patterns of participants in instances where they engaged in one or more overlapping interactions. By response patterns, I am referring to the order in which participants attend to the multiple interactions that they are engaged in. As I highlighted in Chapter three, this can be linked to the conversation analysis concept of turn-taking: one of the fundamental CA structures (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson, 1974) which is concerned with “how parties engaged in talk manage to take turns at speaking” (Psathas, 1995, pg.34). Rather than speaking of ‘turns’ in the sense of how individuals organise the order of responses within one interaction with one another (e.g. often speaking one at a time with little overlapped speech and with smooth speaker change transitions), I am concerned with how participants take it in ‘turns’ to attend to the different interactions that they have going on at the same time. Specifically, how do they manage movements between multiple separate interactions that overlap within the same time frame?

To begin, I have included two typical examples of responding orders seen within my data set. These examples indicate the order of activities that happen on my participants screen, documenting how they move between the multiple interactions:

Extract 18: Jamie

- 1. Receives message from Daniel
- 2. Receives message from Sarah
- 3. Receives message from Olivia
- 4. Responds to Daniel
- 5. Responds to Sarah
- 6. Responds to Olivia

Extract 19: Jamie

- 1. Receives message from Daniel
- 2. Responds to Daniel
- 3. Receives message from Olivia
- 4. Receives message from Sarah
- 5. Responds to Olivia
- 6. Responds to Sarah

In the first example (extract 18), my participant Jamie receives three messages in separate threads of conversation, from three separate interactional partners: firstly

Daniel, followed by Sarah, followed by Olivia. In this scenario, Jamie has three messages to respond to and is faced with a decision around who to respond to first. Quite simply, Jamie responds in the order in which he received the messages, replying to Daniel, followed by Sarah, followed by Olivia. In extract 19 Jamie is faced with a similar decision in terms of receiving two responses one after another and being in the position of choosing who to respond to first. Again, Jamie chooses to respond to the messages in the order in which they were received, responding to Olivia followed by Sarah.

What is observed in these extracts is what Mondada (2014) terms an “embedded order” of multiactivity: an order that is “organised in an intertwined and alternating way” (pg. 35). The interactions above are clearly organised in a way that is overlapping in time (thus intertwined) and also in an alternating fashion. I want to suggest, however, that there is perhaps some kind of specific ‘alternating way’ in which these interactions are ordered. I argue this as from the extracts above it seems that there is a *‘first come-first serve’* pattern of responding: whoever sends the message first is the first person that the Facebook user responds to, whoever sends a message second is responded to second, and so on. In a sense, what users like Jamie are doing is following the order in which the notifications of messages are received on their screen, almost allowing the technology - the notification system - to make the decision for them in terms of who to respond to next.

The pattern of ‘first come-first serve’ has been found in other turn taking studies such as that of Hutchby and Tanna (2008) who compared exchanges made via text message to spoken interaction. Here, the researchers found texts to take both ‘simple’ and ‘complex’ formats. Simple format text messages included just one action within them whereas complex format text messages included numerous actions within them. Such complex formats, then, left ‘texters’ with a decision around “which of these actions should be responded to in a reply and in what order?” (pg.153). This is a similar dilemma to the one which faces my own participants, however, instead of choosing which ‘action’ to respond to my participants are faced with the task of deciding which ‘person’ or ‘thread of conversation’ to respond to first. In face to face interaction,

Sacks (1987) found that individuals tended to adhere to what he called a 'contiguity rule' in which respondents would attend to the last, or most recent, action first. This, then, is different to what this research and Hutchby and Tanna have found in relation to texting and Facebook communication. In our cases, actions- or conversations- were attended to with the *first* action being attended to first. What this highlights is a similarity in the way that 'turn taking' is handled in written communicative contexts compared to that of spoken interaction. Whether it be the turn taking of actions or the conversations themselves there appears to be a pattern of managing 'complex' or 'multiple' interactive cases with the 'first come, first serve' approach.

As well as being a pattern of managing complex written communications, following such a first come first serve order simplifies the rather complex, and potentially overwhelming, task of responding to multiple interactions. By following this pattern, there is no difficult choice or decision to be made in terms of which conversation is 'more important' than another. This thus reveals yet a further way in which users simplify the process of multicommuting on Facebook. Further to omitting greetings, naturalising long interactional gaps and overlapping conversational topics, participants also almost 'opt out' of the decision making process of the response order, handing over the choice to the fate of message notifications.

There are of course exceptions to this rule. One such exception is presented below:

Extract 20: Zoe

- 1. Receives message from Liam
- 2. Responds to Liam
- 3. Opens Chat with Vicky
- 4. Begins message to Vicky
- 5. Receives message from Liam
- 6. Responds to Liam
- 7. Receives reply from Liam
- 8. Responds to Liam
- 9. Continues message to Vicky
- 10. Receives message from Liam

- 11. Responds to Liam
- 12. Continues message to Vicky
- 13. Sends message to Vicky

Extract 20 shows an exchange between my primary participant Zoe and her friend Liam (seen within lines 1-2). In lines 3 and 4 Zoe turns this into a multicommuting instance by opening up and beginning a second thread of communication with Vicky. Whilst writing a message to Vicky, Zoe receives a reply from Liam (line 5) and it is here that Zoe *pauses* her message construction to Vicky, moves her cursor back into the chat with Liam and sends Liam a reply (line 6). Zoe and Liam are then engaged in a few turns of interaction before Zoe returns to the thread with Vicky and continues to write the message (line 9). The same pattern then occurs for a second time. As soon as Liam responds, Zoe pauses the construction of Vicky's message, engages with Liam before returning to Vicky and finally sending the message (lines 10-13). Rather than the 'embedded order' that was highlighted within extracts 18 and 19, what is observed here is that of an "exclusive order"; one where "one activity is momentarily abandoned in order to carry out another" (Mondada, 2014, pg.35). What is seen is an occurrence where one activity, or interaction, is *put on hold* (in this case the construction of the message to Vicky) to attend to another interaction (in this case responding to Liam).

Putting activities 'on hold' in this way demonstrates the establishing of a hierarchy between the multiple interactions that are occurring at one time (Mondada, 2014). By suspending one activity to attend to another, participants reveal how one activity may be prioritised over another. In other words, participants actively display which activity is main and which activity is side (ibid). As introduced in Chapter two, the main involvement can be understood as the one that "absorbs the major part of an individual's attention and interest" and the side being the one carried out "in an abstracted fashion without threatening or confusing simultaneous maintenance of the main involvement" (Goffman, 1963, pg.43). In extract 20 the interaction with Liam is prioritised over the interaction with Vicky; the latter being 'suspended' by Zoe on two occasions (lines 6 and 11). Through this response pattern, Zoe displays how her activity with Liam is her 'main' involvement with the thread with Vicky taking the position at

the 'side'.

One difference between these two overlapping interactions is the sense of co-presence within the conversations. Liam, for example, shows signs of being virtually present on Facebook as he replies to Zoe in a relatively synchronous manner. In the chat with Vicky, however, Zoe is *opening* the conversation meaning that Vicky is not yet (virtually) present or engaged within the interaction - in fact, Vicky is unaware that this interaction is about to take place. This means that Zoe has entered into a two-way interaction with Liam where interactional rules and norms apply, one being the expectation of minimal interactional gaps discussed earlier on within this chapter. Such rules, though, are yet to become applicable in the conversation between Zoe and Vicky as their interaction has, technically, not begun. Extract 20, then, highlights how more synchronous interactions, or interactions where the presence of the interactional partner is more pronounced, are given greater precedence over interactions in which interactional engagement is yet to begin.

This can be linked to Goffman's articulation of 'ritual requirements' as outlined in Chapter Two. There, I introduced Goffman's thoughts on how, when engaged in interaction, participants have "jointly agreed to operate (in effect) solely as communication nodes, as transceivers and to make themselves fully available for that purpose" (1981, pg.15). According to this, then, there is a form of moral expectation in interaction in which a participant of talk becomes fully available to their interactional partner. Kendon (1988) reiterates this idea in his interpretation of Goffman's work:

if a person is to undertake to operate as a 'communication node', however, he can do so only in respect to one system at a time (...): and this has the consequence that he must relinquish, for a period, some other pursuit (pg.34).

Extract 20 shows how Zoe 'relinquishes' another pursuit (her chat with Vicky) to provide her (near) full attention to her interaction with Liam. Thus, despite not completely orientating herself to 'one system at a time' - as, she of course, opens a new interaction whilst engaged with Liam - she most definitely orientates herself towards the moral expectation laid out here by Goffman.

A further example of where an 'exclusive order' of response is apparent in my data is shown below:

Extract 21a: Mark

- 1/5. Opens chat with Laura
- 2/6. Begins message to Laura
- 3/7. Comment notification from Josh
- 4/8. Clicks on comment notification
- 5/9. Likes comment
- 6/10. Continues with message to Laura
- 7/11. Sends message to Laura

In this extract, my primary participant Mark opens a chat and begins constructing a message to Laura (lines 1-2). Mark then receives a comment notification, which appears as a box in the bottom left-hand corner of the screen informing him that Josh has commented on a recent interaction between them. Mark clicks on this notification box, sending him through to the comment interaction thread and leaving the page in which he was writing the message to Laura (line 4). Mark then engages with Josh's comment through 'liking' it before returning to the message with Laura and pressing send (lines 10-11).

Within this extract, one interaction is again paused, or put on hold, in order to attend to another. In this case, the message to Laura is put on hold for the interaction with a comment notification. Rather than having a clear main and side involvement as seen in extract 20, Mark is 'attending to a summons' (Licoppe and Tuncer, 2014). A summons, or a 'summoning event', in the context of multiple interaction has been referred to in studies of face to face communication as events initiated by some remote party, such as when a phone or door bell rings (ibid). When summoned by such events, Licoppe and Tuncer argue that often interactants put their other involvements on hold and temporarily become subordinate to the summons. Licoppe et al., look at how phone or door bell rings are managed as summoning events. Within extract 21a, the comment notification acts in the same way: it is an interactive event, initiated by a remote party, that results in the participants placing on hold their message construction with Laura and changing course or 'subordinating to' the summoning

event. Within this example, however, attending to such a summons appeared to present a challenge to my participant:

Extract 21b: Mark

- 1/5. Opens chat with Laura
- **2/6. Begins message to Laura**
- **3/7. Comment notification from Josh**
- 4/8. Clicks on comment notification
- 5/9. Likes comment
- 6/10. Continues with message to Laura
- 7/11. Sends message to Laura

After receiving the comment notification from Josh, the screen capture data shows Mark's cursor moving from the message construction box to hovering over the notification that appeared in the bottom left-hand corner. The cursor then returned back to hover over the message to Laura, before again moving back to hover over the notification box before clicking through. All of this cursor movement occurred between the response lines of 6 and 7, as shown in bold above. What I want to infer here is that this could be seen to indicate signs of hesitation and indecision around whether to attend to the summoning event of the notification or stay focused on the activity at hand which was that of messaging Laura. This highlights the difficulty and challenge of continuously having to make decisions between where, and where not, to place your attention when multicomputing online. Perhaps sometimes, and in some cases, it is actually rather difficult to know which activities or interactions should be prioritised over others.

In summary, this section of analysis has explored how participants 'take turns' whilst attending to the multiple interactions in which they are engaged in on Facebook. The first response order identified within this analysis was that of an 'embedded order': an order of an intertwined and alternating nature (Mondada, 2014). I suggested that there was a specific order in relation to which conversations were alternated, with participants often following a first come first serve pattern, working to simplify the complex process of multicomputing by handing over the decision making process to the technology itself. The second response order I have

marked out was that of an 'exclusive order': an order in which one activity is placed on hold to attend to another. Here, it was noted how participants actively display their interactional priorities within their response patterns, often featuring a 'main' and 'side' involvement (Goffman, 1963) with the argument being that synchronicity and a more pronounced presence of an interactional partner are prioritised factors in multicomcommunicating instances. A further form of exclusive order identified within this analysis is that of 'attending to a summons', discussed in the context of receiving a comment notification. What was particularly interesting here was how cues of hesitation and indecision were noted within the screen capture data, perhaps orientating to the challenges and difficulties present when deciding where to place your interactive attention online.

Discussion

Previous work on multiactivity, multitasking and multicomcommunicating has often focused on the combination of *different* activities across *different* platforms and mediums (Foehr, 2006, Judd, 2014 and Licoppe and Tuncer, 2014). The analysis presented in this chapter has contributed to extending this field of knowledge by focusing on how people multitask (or multicomcommunicate) whilst engaging in the *same* kind of activity on the *same* platform. Although using similar methodology to previous work on multiactivity e.g. videos of naturally occurring data (see Haddington et al., 2014), this analysis has explored the phenomena of 'multiness' in an *online* context rather than face to face or semi-mediated environment. Due to this change of context, my focus was not on how multiple interactions were handled or orientated to within individuals talk, as, actually, due to the affordances of platforms like Facebook, it is not necessary to *overtly* address such issues within the run of the actual interactions. Instead, I have approached multicomcommunicating from an alternative angle, exploring some of the other ways that Facebook users have handled and managed the potentially challenging task of being able to multicomcommunicate online.

This chapter has addressed this concern by looking at four different elements of interaction that occur within multicomcommunicating instances: openings, interactional

gaps, topics of conversation and response patterns. Overall, what has been found is that my participants, in relation to these four elements, work to *simplify* their interactions on Facebook when engaged in more than one conversation at one time. One way this is achieved is through participants 'cutting out' or eliminating certain interactional norms and practices: by, for instance, opening conversations with questions or statements rather than greetings or 'naturalising' longer interactional gaps so that processes of highlighting and dealing with this as interactional trouble are no longer needed. Another simplification strategy highlighted within this analysis involves participants overlapping their topics of conversation across threads of interaction. Here, another form of elimination is evident as participants 'cut out' the number of conversational themes that they are juggling across interactions, eliminating an element of multiplicity from the process of multicommuting. My analysis has also revealed how participants tend to stick to a first come first serve pattern in relation to responding to their interactional partners. Here, participants are almost 'cutting out' or eliminating their own role within the decision-making process of who to respond to next, following the system in terms of whose notification came through the first.

Whilst it has demonstrated the ways that participants cut out and eliminate factors and processes from their interactions when communicating in this multiple way, my analysis has also shown that there are exceptions to these simplification patterns. Therefore, although I can answer this thesis' question by arguing that multicommuting is managed through various simplification techniques, my analysis has also shown that it is essential to consider the context of interactions in these multicommuting scenarios. This became evident in relation to *who* participants were talking to. Participants, for example, did include greetings in what could be understood to be less 'social' interactions (for instance in those directed at myself as a researcher: extracts 1 and 2) and although overlapping topics of conversation did occur, participants designed their interactions in different ways depending on who the recipient of the conversation was (for example the interactions with Daniel and Oliver, extracts 17a and 17b).

As well as *who* the interaction was with, this analysis has also highlighted how the *nature* of interactions can cause deviations from simplification patterns. The first example of this relates to participants working to 'define' their interaction (e.g. what kind of interaction this is). In extracts 14a and 14b, for example, I argued how the simplifying pattern of naturalising longer time gaps was ignored when the participant was working to define whether their interaction was of a synchronous or asynchronous nature and whether or not they had caused interactional unrest within their last turn. The second example was seen in extracts 20 and 21 where it seemed that certain types of interaction were prioritised over others (for instance, more synchronous interactions). Overall, then, in order to handle the complexity of multicomcommunicating on Facebook it can clearly be seen that users engage in numerous strategies to simplify their interactions. However, this does not mean that interaction within multicomcommunicating instances is, in any way, 'simple'. There is still much complexity to be found within the examples of conversation explored within this chapter, with participants orientating toward many contextual issues within their conversations, no matter how many interactions they have going on at the same time.

In addition to my exploration of how the ability to multicomcommunicate is managed online, the analysis and data examples I have discussed reveal something else about the nature online interaction in general: that there is a kind of *drop in, drop out* culture to online communication. By this, I am referring to situations in which participants seem to be able to casually engage and disengage with interactional activities and expectations with little or no disruption to the order and flow of interaction itself. In my analysis of the openings (and closings) of interactions online I argued that due to the lack of formalised openings and closing of conversations, and thus the lack of clear beginnings and endings to interactions on Facebook chat, it was as if participants were engaged in one long interaction that hosted a loose time frame that participants could drop in and out of. Further to this, each strip of interaction not only had the potential to be orientated to in this way, but also featured its own temporal order in terms of communication synchronicity e.g. synchronous and asynchronous speeds of responding. Within this discussion, I highlighted the fluid shifts

between whether participants were interacting with their partners in more synchronous, fast moving fashions or whether the pace of their interaction took a slower turn, resembling something more like asynchronous conversation. As well as there being a culture of dropping in and out of Facebook interaction as part of a long, loose time frame, participants also tend to drop in and out of different forms of communication synchronicity, moving, often, in a fluid fashion between the two

In the final section of analysis I explored how, and particularly in what order, participants responded to the multiple interactions they were engaged in. There, I demonstrated not only how *drop in, drop out* culture emerges *within* interactions, but also how this manifests itself *pre-publication* in the construction phase of interacting online. This was shown through the way that users, on occasion, put interactions on temporary hold in order to attend to another interaction, with examples of participants dropping in to work on the construction of a message and dropping out to attend to another several times (extract 20). This creation of a casual, *drop in, drop out* culture of online communication suggests that Facebook communication is located within some kind of hybrid interactional context. The form of interaction seen within this analysis is revealed to be somewhere between what could be understood as face to face, synchronous communication (in the sense that participants can, and do, respond relatively quickly to one another) and a much more asynchronous, letter writing context in which participants are engaged in a long, loose, extended time frame in which they can drop in and out of constructing responses to attend to other matters.

Throughout this thesis, I have referred to the challenges of multicommuting as an interactional task, noting that it is one that is often not engaged with in face to face settings due to interactional rules and norms being threatened by the principle of talking to more than one at one time. Rules such as interactions involving minimal gaps of silence (Reinsch et al., 2008) and overlaps in talk are challenged by the notion of multicommuting as a participant of interaction is forced to divide his or her attention among two or more speech events, thus degrading coordination and creating an increased delay in response time creating gaps of silence

(ibid). Plus, in situations where participants divide their attention between conversations, overlaps are bound to occur between the two (or more) streams. It is due to these general rules of interaction that multicommutating is typically discouraged in face to face contexts with people often choosing to interact in more sequential ways or within group interactions (as this allows for attention to be focused on single interactions and rules to be adhered to). However, the features of the Facebook environment such as compartmentalisation and the flexibility of tempo, multicommutating online becomes a more feasible possibility. Problematic issues, such as the challenge of coordinating actions and dividing attention, do still exist in this online context however. Firstly, as captured in extract 21, there are indications that participants find making decisions between activities a difficult task. Further, the simplification strategies I have identified – those that work to shape the casual, *drop in, drop out* culture of online communication - can only be regarded as a pragmatic response to these challenges.

Chapter Seven: Emerging from analysis-conceptual, methodological and broader reflections

In the discussion sections of Chapters five and six, I addressed how the activities of pre-post editing and multicomunication were managed within the screen capture data collected for this research, thus addressing research questions one and two set out in Chapter Two of this thesis. In this chapter, I want to broaden the discussion of these findings by relating my analysis directly back to two of the central theoretical premises of this work: the concept of affordances of technology and Goffman's interactional order. In addition, I have found through the analytical process of this project that my data and findings have touched upon broader communication issues than those simply reflected within the research questions of my thesis. With such a unique insight into this hidden, pre-post space of Facebook, I have been able to see not just how users are engaging with certain affordances of the technology but how, more generally, they navigate through such a complex environment. This has led me to reflect on the structure and nature of interactions online and how these might be altering as individuals negotiate the possibilities for communication presented by online platforms. It is these issues that I want to explore here.

The chapter is organised in three main sections. To begin, I reflect on what my analysis has revealed about the two theoretical bases of this work. I begin by exploring what my analysis has contributed to existing understandings of technological affordances, linking back to my initial consideration of this concept in Chapter Two. I then return to Goffman's notion of the interaction order, asking to what extent such an order has been maintained within the extracts analysed in my analysis. In section two, I return to methodological aspects of my research. It is here that I reflect on methodological issues that arose *during* the process of analysis. This is followed by a third section which considers issues that emerged during my study relating firstly to issues of hybridity of the Facebook environment and secondly, issues of multiplicity and selection within this space.

Theoretical and Conceptual Reflections

Technological affordances

In Chapter Two of this thesis I introduced the concept of affordance as an important notion that encapsulated the relationship between environment and organism. I discussed how this concept, originally applied to the context of a natural environment, could be applied to a technological space by understanding the environment as the online platform or features and the organism as the platform users. I highlighted how one of the key strengths of the affordance notion was how, as Hutchby (2001a) had argued, the idea reached a “reconciliation” between two approaches to understanding technology and society. It does this by acknowledging the opportunities that technologies make possible, whilst also acknowledging the role that ‘organisms’ or ‘users’ have in the process of engaging in such opportunities. Through the use of the term affordance, then, researchers can achieve a balance between acknowledging the way in which technology can ‘frame’ social action, paired with an acknowledgment that users of technology can engage with such technological affordances in alternative ways. What I want to do now is explore what my data analysis has told me about the ways in which technology frames our social interaction and consider the diverse ways that my participants have engaged with the activities of pre-post editing and multicomunication.

To begin, I want to discuss ways that my analysis has shown technology to ‘frame’ social action; and by frame I mean ‘become consequential to’ our social media interactions. Firstly, as made clear in Chapters One and Two of this thesis, certain technological features make possible, or afford, certain activities that we can engage in within our online interactions. Technological features, such as the separation of message construction and sending, textual persistence, compartmentalisation and the fluidity of tempo, make possible activities that are difficult to engage in when in face to face conversations; two of these activities being those of pre-post editing and multicomunicating. Put in the most basic way, technology can simply ‘frame’ our social actions by making certain actions possible for us in the first place. Meredith

(2017) makes a similar argument in her analysis, highlighting how technological features such as 'conversation persistence', as in conversations remaining visible, afford activities such as typing multiple messages out one after another. In my analysis, however, I have gone beyond outlining relevant affordances and the activities that they make possible for us and have instead questioned the extent to which the activities made possible online are *used* and *managed* within the context of Facebook.

In Chapter Five, for example, I explored how users of Facebook are presented with a new 'stage' of interaction - a rehearsal stage - a space in which they can carefully construct certain presentations of self through the possibility of pre-post editing. The challenge here, and the analytical interest, was how this new opportunity - this new 'space' of interaction - was utilised within online conversations. I argued that this affordance of pre-post editing was consequential, or 'framed', online interactions by allowing participants to more selectively defend their own 'face' as well as protect the 'face' of others. Further, in Chapter Six, I showed how users are again faced with challenges created by the opportunities that affordances bring - such as how to manage multiple threads of simultaneous communication. I argued there that the affordance of multicomcommunication was consequential to social interaction by *simplifying* interactions such as by omitting openings and closings as 'neutralising' longer interactional gaps. It was in this analysis that participants were seen to employ simplification strategies in order to manage the challenges of the 'multi' environment. Therefore, as well as reiterating how technological features can 'frame' our social actions by making certain activities a possibility, my analysis has also demonstrated how such activities 'frame' our social interactions by being consequential to the ways in which we can present ourselves online as well as to the interactional content of our conversations.

Another important aspect of my argument, though, is not just how these affordances effect, change and frame our social interactions online, but also the role and level of agency that Facebook users have when it comes to engaging with the newfound possibilities online. In Chapter Two of my thesis, this was referred to as the more 'subjective' side of the affordance relationship. One way in which this was

illustrated in my data was through the ways that participants responded to the *context* of their interactions. This occurred particularly in data where participants were seen to multicomunicate. In such instances, participants revealed sensitivity towards how they managed the challenge of multiple interactions in relation to *who* they were addressing and *the nature* of the interactions taking place. This demonstrated that certain affordances allow for activities that do, indeed, frame interaction, but has also revealed the varying ways in which such activities can be engaged with by users in order to attend to specific interactional needs. This insight works to empirically evidence Hutchby's notion that "there is not one but a variety of ways of responding to the range of affordances for action and interaction that a technology presents" (Hutchby, 2001a, pg. 453). These arguments, then, bring into relevance an important defining factor of the notion of affordance: their *relative* nature; the more open character of affordances representing how activities are not determined by the features of technology.

Gibson (1979) refers to the relative element of affordances in his work noting how "an affordance cannot be measured as we measure in physics" but instead has to be measured as "relative to the animal" (Gibson, 1979, pg.128). Gibson goes on to explain that affordances cannot be measured by their physical properties with scales and standard units. This is due to the fact that different properties - such as a flat surface, a horizontal surface, and a rigid surface, for example - all have a different relationship to different animals. Hutchby (2001a) also picks up on the relative aspect of the concept, explaining how it refers to the idea that "the affordances of an object may be different for one species than for another" (pg. 448). He goes on to explain how the surface of water, for instance, does "[...] not have the affordance of walk-on-ability for a lion or a crocodile, but they do for an insect waterboatman" (ibid). What my analysis has demonstrated in respect of this idea is not how the affordances are relative in terms of a *natural* environment but rather a *technological* one. Engagement with affordances online is shown to be relative depending on the local empirical details of the communicative context; as in, dependent on the person users are addressing and the topic of conversation.

As well as demonstrating how participants engage with affordances in different ways depending on the context of the interaction, my data set also revealed how different participants used and engaged with the activities of pre-post editing and multicomcommunication to different intensities and in different ways. Two of my participants, Zoe and Jamie, for example, were very active in terms of multicomcommunicating during their sessions on Facebook with instances occurring in most (but not all) of the videos they submitted. Another participant, Mark, recorded very few instances of him multicomcommunicating and tended to engage more frequently in 'sequential' movement (the pattern observed in temporal order one, see Figure one, Chapter Six) between different conversations that involved replying to one interactant and closing that conversation before opening an interaction with another. Pre-post editing as an activity was also enacted in different ways by different participants. As mentioned within my analysis, Mark engaged in very detailed pre-post editing of his messages. He, at times, spent several minutes crafting his messages, going back and forth throughout the construction phase, making word and structural changes. Other participants, in contrast, made much quicker edits, instantly swapping a word or phrase for another in the process of writing their utterance. Of course, in some chats and videos, no edits were made at all. This variation in uses highlights that the role and agency of a user is indeed of central importance in terms of how, and indeed whether, a technological affordance is utilised and thus consequential for social action. Overall, then, what my data has empirically demonstrated is how affordances do just 'frame', and not determine, our actions as technology users (Hutchby, 2001a). Just because the opportunity to multicomcommunicate or pre-post edit is available does not mean that it is necessarily utilised by all users of a platform.

There is, however, an important caveat to make here in terms of what it is I am and am not claiming in relation to the relative dimension of affordances. Although my data has had implications in terms of the relative nature of affordances by revealing the different ways affordances are engaged with online, my data has *not* revealed the *reasons why*, or the *motivations behind* why participants may or may not engage in pre-post editing and multicomcommunicating activity. I am unable to comment on this area of discussion due to the methodology I adopted for the collection of my data. One

interesting perspective put forward by Gibson, Webb and Vom Lehn (2014) is that some of our methodological practices actually have affordances themselves. In their work, they focus on the process of transcribing data and how this affords the research certain opportunities as well as constraining the ways in which the data can be read. In relation to my project, I can also see how my methodology of using screen capture has presented affordances and constraints of its own. However, the difference between screen capture and transcription is of course that screen capture is itself a technology. To explain, the fact that the software records every on-screen movement *affords* me the possibility to see and access the construction side to Facebook interactions. It enables me to witness the way that users put together their utterances and how they move between and organise their multiple screen activities. As a technology, though, it does have its constraints and limitations on what it can show and thus the assertions that I can then make. One such constraint is that this method does not allow me to question participants in order to enquire about their motivations for engaging or not engaging in activities such as pre-post editing. Of course, I could have done this 'questioning' separately by employing a mixed methods approach to data collection. However, my interest in this work was that of online interaction itself rather than *accounts of* interaction. Thus, this research interest in itself places constraints on the conclusions that I can and cannot make from this project. Therefore, although I acknowledge the role of users' agency in the eventual use and management of technological affordances, I am constrained by the technology of my own methodology and research questions in my inability to comment on why users decide to engage with such affordances in the way that they do. These methodological constraints mean that I am unable to make assertions about whether my participants do not engage in such pre-post editing and multicommuting activities because they *do not want to* or whether, instead, they are in some way *excluded* from accessing such opportunities through lack of knowledge or means.

The latter line of thought echoes back to the discussion presented in Chapter Two where I highlighted how technological affordances may exclude, or even discriminate against, certain groups of users. There I referred to Langdon Winner's notion that technological designs can produce political consequences whereby certain

groups of potential users are excluded from accessing such an activity. I also noted David Wittkower's work (2016) which spoke of the notion of 'disaffordance': where the design of technology fails to recognise and cater for all the relevant potential user groups. In the context of Facebook it should be noted that activities such as editing messages pre-post require a certain level of writing and communicative skill, especially in the instances of heavy editing where users demonstrate processes of editing similar to that of editing a script or story. Multicommunicating also requires a level of skill to conduct, this time an ability to multitask and juggle numerous lines of enquiry and activity at once. Different individuals, as with any skills, have different capabilities in these areas. Thus it is conceivable that participants' editing and multitasking abilities could affect the extent in which users are able to access and draw upon affordances to engage in such activities. As mentioned, from my data I am unable to make assertions on such lines of enquiry. But I deem it important to draw attention to and consider such issues and how affordances on Facebook may actually be 'disaffordances' for some users. This presents a line of enquiry for future research.

In the next section of this chapter, I shift my focus of discussion on to the second theoretical interest of this project- Goffman's interactional order. Here I explore what my analysis have revealed about interactional order on Facebook, addressing the specific concerns reflected in research question three: *How do the activities of pre-post editing and multicommunication affect the interactional order of our interactions on Facebook?*

Goffman and interactional order

Investigating how the challenges posed by pre-post editing and multicommunication were managed by participants on Facebook has been a key concern of this study. However, a further interest has been in how, or whether, these activities posed any challenge to the *interactional order* of communication. This notion of the interactional order was outlined in Chapter Two of this thesis where I introduced the work of Erving Goffman and his notion that there is an underlying order to interaction. He refers to this as a 'social order' which he defines as "the consequence of any set of moral norms

that regulates the way in which a person pursues their objective” (1963, pg.8). In that discussion, I outlined two different types of interactional norms: system and ritual requirements. I explained how system requirements refer to the more practical organisation of encounters, e.g. how there is a need for a clear, two-way capability for sending and receiving messages, for showing signals that reception of interaction is taking place, as well as signals to show that a channel of communication is opening or closing. Ritual requirements, on the other hand, are less about the practical organisation of interaction and more so about the rules that govern interactants as “moral beings” and the “reciprocally held norms of good or proper conduct” (Kendon, 1988, pg.32).

My interest was in how activities such as pre-post editing and multicomcommunication may change the dynamics of interaction online, and thus how the moral order, or the ‘ritual requirements’, of interaction would be maintained and orientated to within the interactive environment of Facebook. It was in Chapter Two where I also highlighted the intrinsic link between interactional order and the presentation of self; expressing the ‘sub’ concern and question of whether our ability to ‘present’ and ‘manage’ self would also be threatened due to the challenges posed by the activities of pre-post editing and multicomcommunicating. My analysis, particularly in Chapter Five of my work, focused on this analytic interest approaching it through the Goffmanian concept of ‘face’. In this section of discussion, I address what the analysis presented in Chapters Five and Six has revealed on these matters of interactional order and the presentation of self. I will start by referring to Chapter Five on pre-post editing which explored the challenge posed to users of having an additional ‘space’ in which they could construct their interactions.

In Chapter Five I referred to how this space could be seen as an additional ‘stage’ of interaction: a rehearsal stage where interactants could ‘practice’ their interactions before sending them to interactional partners. I described how participants utilised such a ‘stage’ to both defended their own face and protect the face of others, exploring in some detail an extract in which my primary participant, Mark, performed the interactive action of a ‘disclosure’ to Poppy. What was

interesting about the disclosure made in that extract was that Mark typed out one disclosure based on buying property (extract 1.1) which he then deleted and replaced with a second disclosure based on helicopter lessons (extract 1.2). Both versions of Mark's disclosures featured similar narrative structures including disclosure warnings (e.g. 'don't tell Katie but...') as well as accounts for the reasons in which such information should be kept a secret. In these ways, then, both versions of the response were *systematically* recognisable as a disclosure. However, the difference between the two versions was in the way they were *designed*; with the second disclosure working to present Mark's 'face' as much more positive than the first, I suggested. Empirically, this demonstrated for me that the ability to pre-post edit is not simply used to amend utterances in terms of systematic rituals, as both versions of this message were equally recognisable as disclosures. The ability to pre-post edit can instead be utilised in the process of maintaining the ritual requirements of interaction. By 'practicing' such a response, Mark's reply to Poppy was able to achieve a presentation of self that was more 'morally acceptable' than his first attempt. This indicates to me that the ability to pre-post edit, in the examples explored in this study, may actually help to maintain social and moral order within online interaction rather than challenge it and may be utilised in ways that help users present more morally acceptable selves.

Of the two activities explored within this thesis, multicomcommunication perhaps posed the most pressing challenges to online interaction. As highlighted in Chapter Two, in relation to the systematic requirements of interaction, multicomcommunication in face to face encounters is challenging due to the overlaps in conversations that are bound to occur. However, as mentioned, there are certain technological features of Facebook that manage this risk - such as the way interactions are compartmentalised in interaction online. In terms of the ritual requirements of interaction though, I argued that there was perhaps not such a clear solution with there being no 'feature' to help manage the challenge of users dividing their attention between separate, simultaneous interactions. This, as explored in Chapter Two, poses challenges for the moral order of interaction in the sense that participants are not giving their full and undivided attention to an interaction - a common moral expectation according to

Goffman. The aim of my analysis in Chapter Six, then, was to question how users of Facebook were managing the challenges of communicating in this multiple way.

Overall, my analysis revealed that participants simplified their interactions online in numerous ways in order to manage the complexity of engaging in multiple interactions. Simplification occurred, for example, through participants rarely including greeting or closing sequences within their interactions (see Chapter 7 extracts 1-11), which worked to simplify the task of engaging in multiple interactions by 'cutting out' some interactional norms and niceties. In my data, participants' conversations online were also seen to include varying temporal gaps between turns of interaction with some extracts including time gaps of over five minutes (see extract 14b). This, as highlighted in Chapter Six, significantly exceeds the length of such gaps in other forms of communication such as face to face or telephone interactions.

Both the cutting out of conversational sequences and the examples of lengthy response times between turns would be seen as problematic when engaged in face to face communication. However, in the context of Facebook, I found the lack of openings and closings, as well as extended temporal gaps (excluding that of extract 14a), were not *made relevant* in the interaction. In this way, these problematic issues for face to face interactive contexts went 'unnoticed' and were orientated to as 'normal' within these interactions in an online context. Due to this lack of orientation on Facebook, I suggested that such issues were accounted for in interaction through being 'naturalised': a strategy I argued worked to simplify the process of multicommuting on Facebook by cutting out practices of both 1) highlighting the issue and 2) dealing with the potential trouble to follow. The fact that the lack of opening/closing sequences and lengthy response times were 'neutralised' in these online encounters suggests to me that there is no threat or challenge to the order of our communications. To expand: whilst there are indeed differences in the way that elements of interaction are conducted online compared to face to face contexts these, in most instances, are not orientated to as interactional problems by participants.

Within the discussion above, it can be seen how participants do not orient

towards certain norms of interaction that are expected within face to face encounters. However, in Chapter Six, Extract 20, the data shows an example that demonstrates the opposite of this. In this extract analysing response patterns, I show how Zoe, my participant, seems to prioritise responding to more synchronous interactions (in this instance, her conversation with Liam). I argued here that this prioritisation of her more synchronous encounters orients towards Goffman's ritual requirements of interaction with Zoe adhering to the moral expectation that participants of encounters make themselves fully available to their interactional partners. Of course, in ways, Zoe is not orientating to this expectation as she does initiate a parallel interaction with secondary participant Vicky that overlaps with Liam. However, what is shown is how she puts on hold her message to Vicky, or 'relinquishes' this interaction, to give back her attention to the more synchronous chat.

Through this data analysis, it has been revealed how some traditional interactional norms commonly observed within face to face interaction are omitted or drastically altered within these interactions on Facebook. Yet, interestingly, these omissions or alterations do not appear to cause trouble or disruption to the interactional order of encounters, with such instances being neutralised within the interactions of my participants (albeit apart from extract 14a). There are, though, also instances, such as Zoe in extract 20, where participants are seen to orient towards more traditional, face to face, expectations of interaction. This shows how despite the changing dynamics that multicomunication brings to online interaction, the ritual requirements of interaction laid out by Goffman are still oriented to. The data explored in Chapter Five, as highlighted at the beginning of this section, also demonstrates how the ritual requirements of interaction are orientated to within the *design* of messages on Facebook, with users utilising the ability to edit their messages pre-post to construct the most 'morally' acceptable presentation of self.

Methodological Reflections

Having reflected on how my analysis has commented on the central theoretical bases of this work, in this section I want to return to my consideration of methodology,

building on the discussion presented in Chapter Three. My aim is to indicate some of the unanticipated methodological issues that arose during my project, whilst drawing out some more general reflections on researching pre-post spaces in social research. I begin by thinking about my own role and position within the project and how this shifted.

The role of the researcher

As I described in Chapter 3, I recruited participants for this study from my own Facebook network. The result of this was that I had an existing connection with the primary participants who were recording their online interactions for my research. As our connection was through Facebook, our main form of contacting one another about project-related activity was through the site itself, predominantly through the Facebook message function. This meant that some of the recordings sent to me by these participants included conversations with myself. At these moments I became a 'secondary participant' within the study as well as the researcher.

Seeing my own interactions in the recordings, sent to me by primary participants, has led me to reflect on my position as a researcher and how my presence within the data informs the analysis I have presented. Examples of interaction where I was involved as a 'secondary participant' became relevant when I was analysing multicommuting instances of communication, specifically when I was exploring openings of interactions in multicommuting instances. What I found was that the only traditional 'greetings' that were used in these multicommuting examples were included in the messages to me (see extracts one and two, Chapter Six).

In methodological literature, a distinction is often made between taking an 'observation' or 'participation' role in research. Taking the position of an observer is often synonymous with maintaining 'distance' from the research participants and setting whilst taking a 'participant' role is more synonymous with adopting a closer position to participants and setting (Whiteman, 2012). As Whiteman describes, there

are, of course, strengths and limitations to both positions. Maintaining distance is argued to prevent researchers from “muddying the waters” (ibid, pg. 111) but has been argued by some to produce an impoverished understanding of empirical situations. Taking a participant role, however, is argued to allow the researcher access to a level of understanding empirical phenomena in ways that being ‘distanced’ cannot. Yet, this potentially runs the risk of researchers losing perspective and over-identifying with the research setting (see Robson, 2002). Due to my approach to data collection in this project, I have adopted a rather ‘close’ role in terms of my position as researcher. As explored in Chapter Four, in accessing the ‘pre-post’ stage of interaction online, I made certain methodological and ethical decisions including recruiting participants from my own Facebook network. This, in turn, resulted in me being a part of my primary participants’ research setting; a member of their Facebook friends collective. Despite this element of closeness and my level of ‘participation’ in the research setting, however, throughout most of the data collection and analysis period I maintained a relatively ‘distant’ role from the research. I, of course, was there throughout the processes to support primary participants in the data collection process, but I did not, for example, intervene in the processes of recording and the content eventually sent on to me. This, in ways, creates more ‘distance’ than in other forms of data collection, such as the work involved in interviews where a researcher is a direct participant in the interaction.

The boundaries of this adopted position, however, are blurred by the fact that on occasion the screen capture software captured my utterances. This moves me closer to the position of being a ‘participant’ in the research. During the analysis stage of this project, I decided against including my own messages and talk in the analysis of this work. I did this to reduce any risk of my own perspective on the data in front of me resulting in a reduced “observation acuity” (Jackson, 1983, pg. 41). To avoid self-analysis, but simultaneously avoid excluding valuable data, I decided to include the opening messages that primary participants sent on to me (see extracts one and two in Chapter Six). That way, I was indeed *captured* as a secondary participant but I was not *analysed* as one. By reflecting on my position as a researcher throughout the data collection and analytical process, I can see how my position has changed throughout

different points of the research, a notion captured in Whiteman's work where she notes how:

[...] it is perhaps not enough for the researched to be observer or participant, the researcher must instead enter into a dialogue between these perspectives (2012, pg. 112).

What can be brought out of this reflection is that when accessing and researching this hidden, pre-post dimension of online life, researchers can expect to move between these different positions, perhaps even 'becoming' a participant themselves. This then calls for attention to their placement as a researcher throughout the process of data collection and analysis.

Extracts one and two in Chapter Six have not just resulted in me reflecting on my position as a researcher, but have also encouraged me to reflect on my position within the actual extracts themselves. To expand, I will refer back to the analysis presented in that chapter where I argued that such greetings were carrying out the purpose of being a marker of politeness. This was due to the greeting itself of '*Hey Hannah*' being included in the *same message entry* as the main topic of the message. It was therefore not playing the role commonly seen within telephone call openings of gauging the availability of the interlocutor as, if this was the case, the greeting would be sent in a separate message beforehand. Due to this, I suggested that greetings were perhaps included in the interactions to me as these conversations could be seen to take on a more formalised form compared to those of a completely social nature. Thus, it could be understood that the interactions required a more standardised approach to 'polite' openings.

In my analysis, I used these examples to illustrate the argument that engagement with affordances can be dependent on the context of the interaction itself. In my exploration of openings, I referred to the work of Waldvogel (2007) and their research on opening sequences in workplace email interactions. In that study, it was found that more greetings occurred in emails when the messages were being 'sent up' the status ladder rather than down e.g. participants would include greeting in messages sent to their seniors but less so to their peers or employees in which they

managed. As the online multicomunciation greeting examples were of messages sent to myself, this has led me to question the hierarchy involved in participant-researcher relationships. Do, for instance, these examples indicate that *interactionally* we as researchers are positioned as higher 'up' the status ladder? This leads me to suggest that perhaps 'researcher position' is not the only issue to consider when you, as a researcher, become a part of your data corpus. It may also be important for us to consider questions around the emergent hierarchy involved in the researcher-researched relationship.

Research subjects in the pre-post space of online interaction

Having explored how, at times, my position as a researcher shifted during the analytical process, I now want to reflect on how my research subject shifted in certain examples of data. Throughout my analysis the subjects of my research were my participants, or, more specifically, participants' interactions: the words, the phrases, and the organisation of their many conversations. However, through the use of screen capture technology, I had access to more than just the comment or message 'box' in which they typed. I had access to the entire Facebook environment, as viewed on their screens, including where they scrolled, where they clicked and where they hovered their cursor. As seen throughout both my analysis chapters, for the mass majority of the extracts analysed I focused on the 'research subject' of participants' talk and the conversational details of their interactions.

In Chapter Six, extract 21, however, the research subject changed. Here, rather than focusing on conversation features or structures as the subject of analysis, I became interested in the movement of the cursor itself. In this example, the cursor moved between the typing box on Facebook messenger and a comment notification tab that had appeared in the top right hand corner of the screen. My participant in this case, Mark, moved his cursor to and from the two interactive activities before finally clicking through to the comment notification page. From this, I read the cursor as displaying 'hesitation'; as showing a form of indecision around what interactive activity should be attended to first by Mark.

In recent years, there has been increasing scholarly interest in cursor movements. Huang, White and Dumais (2011) looked at “mouse cursor behaviour” (pg. 1225) as a way of researching how individuals used and interacted with search engine sites and Guo and Agichtein (2012) examined cursor movements in order to estimate the relevance of documents, claiming cursor movements to be a more accurate indicator than page dwelling time. Yamauchi and Xiao (2017) have recently published on the relationship between emotion and cursor movement, focusing on how our emotions effect our mouse movement. Although, in extract 21 within my analysis, I am indeed interested in the cursor and a particular emotive state of hesitation, my interest is not around how such emotions effect our cursor movements but more so how a cursor can *represent* emotive states such as hesitation.

As I have already acknowledged, through the form of data that I have access to (the screen capture videos) there are certain limits in terms of what knowledge claims I can make. I cannot, for instance, claim to know what the emotion of my participant ‘Mark’ was at the time of moving his cursor between these two interactive acts (as I only have details on the cursor movement itself). This means, that in ways, I am ‘imagining’ the emotion behind my research subject of the ‘cursor’. Whiteman (2012) speaks of this notion of ‘imagining research subjects’, referring to it in relation to the way that researchers bring the identities of the researched into being in their work. In my case, rather than imagining the identity behind, say, a survey respondent or the embodied person sitting in front of me during an interview, I was ‘imagining’ what was occurring ‘behind’ the cursor’s actions. The cursor, in a way, is informing the way in which I am visualising what it is my participant is experiencing e.g. hesitation. In this way then, I am, within this analysis, using the cursor as a ‘marker’ or ‘indication’ of mediated hesitation. This is much like the way conversation analysts treat interactional features such as ‘erm’ as hesitation markers within talk (see Knowles, 1987; Kjellmer, 2010), I am simply interpreting this cursor movement as a virtual representation of this kind of experience.

This discussion of how I interpreted ‘the cursor’ demonstrates how - when accessing and researching online activity - the signifying material that constitutes the

‘research subject’ under study can shift. I have found, for instance, not just the interactional details of participants to be the focus of my research in my analysis but also, in this example, their cursor movements. In interpreting the observable activity of research subjects I have experienced the tendency to ‘imagine’ what lays behind them; with the fact that cursor movement alone can provoke the formation of conclusions as to what is ‘going on’ behind the screen revealing the very limited material researchers may require to start to imagine up their [motivated] research subjects. Thus it is essential for researchers to maintain a level of reflexivity in their thinking around what they can and cannot claim for these ‘virtual markers’ on the Facebook landscape.

This section of discussion has explored methodological issues that arose during the analytical process of my research. In the next, and final chapter, of my thesis I return to methodological discussions reflecting on the contributions that this project has made in relation to screen capture research, providing a broader reflection of what can be learnt about accessing the ‘pre-post’ space of online activity from this work. I now, however, shift attention to discuss broader analytical themes that emerged from my data.

Broader reflections

During this study, I have become increasingly interested in what my data reveals about the hybridity of the interactive environment of Facebook as well as issues such as multiplicity and selectivity online. Such issues were highlighted as broader interests in the field of online communication within the opening chapter of my thesis, however through the analytical process I have found that my data more directly comments on such issues than I originally expected. I therefore want to address how my analysis has commented on and contributed to these broader communicative topics in this next section of discussion. To begin, I will reflect on what my analysis has revealed about *hybridity* in the online environment.

Facebook as a hybrid interactional context

Hybridity as a notion has been understood as where “overlaps” between norms, genres, technologies and organisational forms occur and as where “in-between spaces open up” (Chadwick, 2017, pg. xi). Hybridity has been a topic of interest for media researchers from a number of different perspectives including the consumption and production of media (Jenkins and Deuze, 2008), culture, race and ethnicity (Kraidy, 2005), as well in relation to newer and older forms of media (Chadwick, 2017). In my introduction chapter, I highlighted how there are many hybrid elements to the Facebook environment; elements that include various levels of public/private forms of communication (e.g. status updates to one on one messages) as well as different modes to interact through e.g. written, video or audio with many alternative platforms such as news sites and video sites bleeding into the Facebook space. What this results in is a space where one can perform many functions and interact in many alternate ways within the ‘walls’ of one platform creating an environment where the boundaries between different spaces and ‘apps’ are increasingly blurred. This demonstrates how Facebook is a hybrid space where ‘overlaps’ occur in the form of technologies, genres and forms of interaction and activity online.

In addition to these broader examples of hybridity, more micro ‘overlaps’ and ‘in-between spaces’ have emerged through my analysis. One such ‘in between space’ became clear through the lack of formalised openings and closings in the Facebook chats observed. Without such openings and closings, interactions lacked clear beginnings and endings. This created a long, loose time frame of interaction where the ‘openings’ observed in the conversations could - I argued - have been ‘re-entries’ into a long form of interaction that is not officially ended at any time. This results in a situation where the boundaries between what can be understood as a conversational opening and a conversational re-entry become blurred: it becomes a ‘in-between’ or ‘hybrid’ space which is neither an opening (as it enters straight in to the main focus on the interaction) nor a re-entry (due to a potentially extended time lag). This creates a temporal issue for thinking about interaction in the sense that these kind of conversations are continuously ‘open’; ready to be dropped in and out of whenever

the user feels the need to. There is thus no recognisable temporal structure to the interaction, as in no beginning, middle, or end.

A second temporal issue relating to hybridity also emerges from this data. This is related to the orders of communication and whether multiple conversations take a successive or simultaneous form. In Chapter Six, I argued that existing understandings of successive and simultaneous actions (referencing that of Mondada, 2014) do not work for the context under study in this thesis. According to Mondada's interpretation of these orders, which she applies to a face to face context, simultaneous orders can only occur when resources of the two activities are *complimentary* e.g. using voices alongside the physical action of using hands. On Facebook, however, engaging in multiple conversations requires the *same* technological resources e.g. the same mouse and keyboard. Thus, applying Mondada's understanding to this data would mean that multicomunication on Facebook was indeed a form of successive order. The problem, though, is that my examples have shown significant communicative overlap between conversations. Due to multiple activities on Facebook using the same resources, what is observed is not 'technically' simultaneous, but there is a more complex and overlapping nature to the communications than simply moving from one interaction to the next in a successive way. Thus, what is observed is something that is *between* the temporal orders of successive and simultaneous, presenting a further way in which the hybrid nature of Facebook comes through within this data set.

Up until this point, I have highlighted two different hybrid spaces that have emerged through engaging in analysis with this data. The next is again an issue related to the temporal workings of interaction online. This time, though, the issue is not regarding the *order* of communication, but rather the *speed*. The speed between turns in interaction is often referred to as either asynchronous (slower in nature) or synchronous (faster in nature). What became apparent within my analysis, however, was how some time gaps between turns took a faster, more synchronous, form of a few seconds and other time gaps took a slower, more asynchronous, form of several minutes. This brings me back to the notion of participants existing within a long, loose time frame. Not only do participants exist in this kind of frame through dropping in and

out of interactions that never open nor never close, the temporal speed in which they engage in such interactions is also dropped in and out of and casually played with at the hands of the user. This loose time frame of interaction, in some ways resembles the kind of time frame apparent in letter writing communication. Here, each 'letter' is, in effect, a 'turn' of conversation where varying gaps of time can occur between individual 'letters' (or 'turns') such as a few days (more synchronous) or a few weeks (more asynchronous). There are, though, of course elements of the kind of interaction observed on Facebook that are closer to forms of face to face interaction rather than letter writing: the speeds of interaction can, for instance, be of an almost synchronous nature of just a few seconds. What is seen here, then, is a further hybrid, or 'in-between' context of interaction that resembles features of one of the oldest forms of communication (sending letters) as well as more recent form of communication (such as instant messaging chat).

Overall, I have suggested that there are three different ways that the temporal nature of Facebook takes on a hybrid nature. Three 'in-between' hybrid spaces have been identified in which the boundaries between openings/re-entries, succession/simultaneity and synchronous/asynchronous movements are shown to be blurred. This discussion therefore has implications for how we can now understand these kinds of temporal concepts in the context of online interaction with 'time' perhaps emerging to be a difficult concept to pin down in relation to understanding conversations on platforms like Facebook.

The analysis I have presented does not just highlight hybridity issues in relation to the temporal structures of online interaction, but has also revealed evidence of 'in-betweenness' in relation to the *construction* of interactions. What I am particularly interested in in respect of this is the extent to which interactions are 'pre-planned' online. Interactions that tend to be of a pre-planned nature have been referred to as "scripted" (Hutchby, 2005, pg.1), including talking instances that are, in a face to face context, reading aloud from a text or recalling memorised lines (ibid). Talk that involves less planning has been referred to as "fresh talk" (Goffman, 1981, pg?): talk that unfolds in real time in an unscripted fashion, during which interactants are

required to respond “to one another’s talk in the course of its production” (Hutchby, 2005, pg.1). Hutchby (2005) has explored these ideas in relation to talk on and within broadcast media, noting that a lot of television talk (for instance) is of a scripted nature (including news bulletins, documentaries and dramas), but that there are also instances of ‘fresh talk’ in broadcast texts (such as phone ins, interviews and talk shows).

In the context of Facebook, you could initially argue that the majority of interactions on this platform, and indeed those presented within this thesis, are instances of ‘fresh talk’ in the sense that they are informal, casual interactions in which speakers (or typers) have to respond to the actions of their interactional partners in the course of production. Pre-planning is a difficult task in this context due to users not being able to predict what form the interaction will take. Instances of this kind of ‘fresh talk’ can be found within examples of data explored within this analysis, particularly in cases that are more synchronous in nature. When I say synchronous I am of course referring to the speed in which interactional turns are being shared between participants, but, here, I am also interested in the speed by which messages are constructed by participants. Many examples of data, such as examples 12 and 14a within Chapter Six, feature short turns by participants that only take a few seconds to construct before they are sent. This maintains a close likeness to face to face ‘fresh talk’ in the sense that talk is free flowing with little time for speakers to ‘pre-plan’ their responses.

There are, however, examples of a completely different nature also apparent within my analysis. In my discussion of pre-post editing, I noted how a rather elaborate editing process had been revealed by the data captured. This process involved several minutes of work and multiple edits with participants making large deletions and moving around to different points within the message to edit out, alter or add in elements to the turn (see extract one, Chapter 5 for an example of this). What I find myself questioning here is the extent to which it is possible to understand this form of interaction as ‘fresh’ and unscripted talk. Of course, there is still an element of individuals responding to their interactants in the course of production; thus it is not

really comparable to broadcasting examples given by Hutchby such as news bulletins. However, there is still extensive planning and preparation that goes into the talk compared to the shorter extracts referred to earlier and, most definitely, compared to that of a face to face interactive environment. In fact, within my discussion of this example, I introduced the analogy of participants being their own directors within the 'rehearsal' stage of their interactions, working to edit their own performances. The metaphors of directors, stages and edits, then, actually have much closer relations to the notion of scripts than they do free flowing, real time talk. This type of construction on Facebook may thus be regarded as more scripted than it is 'fresh'.

The interaction observed in this study can thus be understood as hybrid in its nature. This has been demonstrated through an understanding that participants are engaged in a form of communication that is something in-between face to face and letter writing communication. Also, emerging from the data, there is a form of hybridity in relation to the construction of Facebook messages, particularly in relation to the extent in which messages are pre-planned. I have argued that Facebook talk can occur in both scripted and unscripted (so more 'fresh') manners, with users being able to utilise the affordance of editability to 'prepare' their responses to differing extents. It should be noted, however, that even the most scripted examples highlighted within this data set are not quite as 'pre-planned' as news bulletins, perhaps showing a further 'in-between' aspect of communication within online environments: a space that is neither completely 'fresh' nor completely planned.

The numerous strands of discussion that I have marked out in relation to the hybridity of Facebook context (both the pre-planning of talk as well as the temporal frame of interaction online) demonstrate the problematic nature of simple dichotomies in understanding this context. The boundaries between what could be understood as an opening of an interaction or what could be understood as simply re-entering an interaction have, through this data, been shown to be becoming blurred as well as the boundaries between synchronous/asynchronous and successive/simultaneous interaction becoming increasingly problematic. This suggests that when it comes to researching online interaction researchers need to turn to a

more hybrid way of thinking in order to conceptualise and understand the hybrid nature of the platform itself. What is needed is a way of thinking that “rejects simple dichotomies” and nudges us “away from ‘either/or’ patterns of thought and towards ‘not only, but also’ patterns of thought” (Chadwick, 2017, pg. 5). This discussion has also brought to the forefront the potential difficulty in applying temporal concepts such as synchronous, asynchronous and succession to the online interactive world, highlighting the need to think beyond these boundaries in future research.

Multiplicity and selectivity

From the discussion above, it can be seen how hybridity can occur at very micro levels within Facebook interaction. It is not, for instance, something that just occurs in relation to the overlap of public and private channels of communication available on the site or the varying modes of communication ranging from the typed to the visual. What has been demonstrated through this data is how overlaps exist within the very micro *details* of our interactions with boundaries being blurred in relation to the extent our interactions are planned or pre-planned, simultaneous or sequential, or synchronous/asynchronous. My analysis, though, has not just revealed the micro level of hybridity within online communication, but also the micro levels of multiplicity and selection within the Facebook environment.

Through the use of screen capture technology, I have been able to capture the movements of users as they navigate their way through the Facebook environment: an environment filled with multiple interactional choices ranging from what to write, what medium to write it on and who to write it to. My analysis has shown processes of selection in relation to what users include, or exclude, in their Facebook messages as well as the choices participants make in relation to where to place their attention (see discussion on response patterns in Chapter Six). Participants, for example, make selections in terms to word choices and structure which ultimately works to construct a certain self, or ‘face’, within interactions. They also choose which interactional norms and practices to include or exclude, for example, choosing to exclude openings and closings of interaction. In terms of attention, participant’s processes of selecting what

to orient their attention towards and away from have been revealed, for instance, how participants divert their attention away from a primary task to instead select and attend to a summons. In fact, at times, I interpreted these processes of selection on Facebook as presenting users with challenges. In extract 21b, Chapter Six, for example, my participant moved their hovering cursor between two different activities, perhaps displaying signs of hesitation toward which activity to attend to, or select, first.

These ‘choices’ that participants make in relation to where to place their attention and what to include in their messages have, then, revealed the micro extent to which selection can occur within the online media environment. Although such selections are most micro in nature, my analysis has shown how they are consequential for important interactional processes such as the management of ‘face’ in talk as well as other complex activities presented to us by the affordances of the technologies. Of course, I am not the only one to note the importance on multiplicity and selection within our media environments and, as introduced in the opening chapter of this work, it is a broader scholarly concern of online communication practices. With our media world becoming multiple in so many ways, users now have an unprecedented amount of selections to make between platforms, devices and activities meaning the process of media selection is an increasingly important concern within media scholarship.

Nick Couldry is one scholar who has recently engaged with such issues in his research on the media manifold (2016). In his research, Couldry has been interested in questions around how we orientate towards and away from particular contents, an area of research he has claimed to be lacking claiming how media communication research has not “opened up in detail the practices through which people select from media” (2016, p. 27). He points out how as our media environment has expanded from what he notes was a “mere world” to a “virtual universe” and how the need to understand how we select from the vast array of media and information available to us has become “ever more essential” (ibid). Yet, despite this, questions of selection have been “deeply neglected” in media research, with a frame that examines our practices of orientating towards and away from particular contents missing from scholarly

conversation (ibid, pg. 28).

This thesis, then, has contributed to this concern by demonstrating how users are orientating towards and away from certain aspects of their Facebook interactions. However, it has taken a rather different approach to that of Couldry. Rather than opening up the detail of how media users ‘select’ from the multiple choice of platforms, devices and activities (so multiplicity on a much broader level) I have instead revealed the detail of how people make selections from a much more micro perspective; a perspective that focuses on the interactive selections made within the boundaries of *one* platform (Facebook) and *one* activity (typed interaction). Taking such a perspective on multiplicity has revealed that even our micro media choices and selections are consequential; consequential in terms of how we present selves, what conversations we engage with and how we maintain interactional order within our online communications. In fact, although both these ‘broader’ issues of hybridity and multiplicity are of a ‘macro’ communicative stance, my analysis has demonstrated how both occur within the very ‘micro’ levels of interaction online, illustrating the importance of taking a micro analytic perspective in such a broad and ever growing ‘virtual universe’.

The discussion in this chapter has reflected on how my two analytical chapters have commented on the main theoretical bases of this project: affordances and interactional order. In both the methodological and broader reflection discussions, however, I have explored themes and issues that have emerged out the analytic process itself. Methodologically, I found the analytical process to have implications on how researchers could consider their position in researching the ‘pre-post’ space as well as the importance of maintaining a level of reflexivity in relation to potentially shifting online research subjects. In terms of broader communication issues, I have demonstrated how the data collected in this work provides a unique ‘micro’ insight into the overlapping boundaries and selection details of our online interactions. In the next and final chapter of this thesis, I intend to bring together the theoretical, methodological and empirical contributions this thesis has made as well as providing a reflection on the limitations of this project.

Chapter Eight: Conclusion

In the opening chapter of this thesis, I set out an interest in the technological affordances of online interaction on the social networking site Facebook. I expressed an interest in the *opportunities* that such affordances make possible and introduced the two activities of pre-post editing and multicomcommunication that my study takes as its focus. My interest in this thesis has been in how users manage these activities within their interactions, given the interactional possibilities and challenges that they present. My work has also highlighted a broader concern relating to the interactional order of our conversations and the presentation of 'self' online. With pre-post editing and multicomcommunication changing the dynamics and possibilities of interaction, I posed the question of whether an order of interaction and self presentation is maintained within the interactive environment of Facebook. These interests, informed by my engagement with the theoretical work discussed in Chapter 2, led me to the following research questions:

1. **How do users utilise the capability to pre-post edit within their Facebook interactions?**
 - Specifically, how do they utilise this ability in the process of managing 'face'?
2. **How do users manage the capability to multicomcommunicate within their Facebook interactions?**
 - How do they manage the challenge of dividing their attention multiple ways?
 - What interactive strategies do they implement?
3. **How does the use of pre-post editing and multicomcommunication shape the interactional order of our interactions on Facebook?**
 - Is interactional order maintained and orientated to whilst pre-post editing and multicomcommunication take place?

Chapters Three and Four set out my research design and explore some of the methodological and ethical issues raised by my project. Chapters Five and Six then addressed the first of my two research questions; Chapter Five, on pre-post editing,

and Chapter Six, on multicomcommunicating. In Chapter Seven of this thesis, I reflected on issues and themes that emerged through my analysis, focusing on what my analysis has demonstrated about the nature of the interactional order within Facebook communication, thus attending to my third research question.

In this final chapter, I want to conclude my thesis by setting out the key achievements and contributions that my research has made. I will address my thesis' contributions in three distinct sections: the first addresses the theoretical achievements of my work, the second; the methodological contributions, and third considers how this thesis contributes to existing understandings of the nature of online communication. In the final part of the chapter I address the limitations of this project and identify a number of potential future directions for research that this study draws attention to.

Theoretical achievements

In Chapter Two of this thesis, I introduced the notion of 'recontextualisation' (Dowling, 2009; Lapping, 2011). Lapping used this term in her exploration of the challenges of recruiting a scholarly category from one academic discipline and then adapting it to another; or, in her words, the process of adapting concepts to "contrasting contexts" and using them in the "analysis of a new object of study" (2011, pg. 1). I initially drew on this notion of recontextualisation when discussing the concept of 'affordances'. Rather than focusing on the adaption from discipline to discipline I was instead interested in how this concept had been adapted to a new empirical setting e.g. the shift from a natural environment to a technologically mediated environment. Reflecting back on this project, I have found that thinking about how researchers transfer concepts to new settings has been an important part of my work. I have not only adapted the concept of affordances, for example, but also Goffman's 'stage' metaphor (Chapter Five), the notion of Conversation Analysis' 'repair' (Chapter Five) and the defining notions of 'simultaneous' and 'sequential' interaction (explored in Chapter Six). What I want to address in closing, is what my work *contributes* to existing

understandings of these concepts. What is the outcome of the discussion presented in the previous chapters for thinking about these ideas?

Firstly, beginning with the concept of ‘affordance’, I have highlighted how, to date, there has been little critical discussion of how this concept has been adopted and adapted in the context of online interaction. By reviewing examples of research that have drawn on the notion of affordance in the study of online contexts (see Chapter Two), I have signalled the variance that exists in the way that scholars are applying this term. In recognising this variance, I was able to interrogate the term, working to refine the understanding of what the concept of ‘affordance’ means in the context of online interaction. Undergoing such refinement was an important process in order for me to use the concept of affordance with some precision in my work and help me to understand my empirical findings. Through this process of refinement, I re-highlighted the original meaning of the term as encapsulating the ‘relationship’ between features of an environment and organism (e.g. the technological features and activities made possible), rather than as a ‘labelling’ mechanism for either one of the elements of this relationship. The latter deployment of the term can be seen to lose the distinctive contribution of *affordance*; resulting in it becoming synonymous with other terms such as ‘feature’ and ‘activity’. I have argued that a number of scholars that have considered the affordances of online interaction have lost sight of the dialogic/relational dimension of the term – one that is productive for capturing the way that the objective (e.g. technological features) and subjective (e.g. the behaviours that users engage in when using these features) relate to each other.

A second key concept that I have drawn on in my thesis is Goffman’s ‘stages’ e.g. the front and back stages of interaction (see Chapter Five). Like ‘affordances,’ the concept of ‘staging’ has been recontextulised in the study of various empirical contexts and in the work of scholars from different disciplines. Goffman originally applied it to face to face contexts rather than the online interactive environment observed within this thesis. In Chapter 5 I argued that studies that have adapted the idea of stages in the exploration of online settings have - as with the notion of affordance – demonstrated variance in their approach to this concept. However, rather than

interrogating this concept in order to refine its meaning, my work has instead contributed to the understanding of 'stages' by *extending* the concept. I have suggested that the practice of pre-post editing in a site like Facebook cannot be understood through the simple application of the Goffmanian concepts of 'front stage' or 'back stage,' even though what is observed is the 'behind the scenes' nature of Facebook communication (a fact that might instinctively lead us to think of it in these terms). Instead, I have focused attention onto a *third* stage of interaction; a space of interactive work that stands in addition to the 'front' and 'back' stages that were originally put forward by Goffman and have since been recruited by new media scholars. This 'third' stage of online communication is what I have termed the 'rehearsal stage', a space where users can 'practice' and 'prepare' their interactions before sharing them with their audiences. It is in this stage of interaction that users can edit and tweak their performances, altering the actions and turn designs that they put together for their interactive audience.

In addition to discussing Goffman's concept of 'stages' in Chapter Five, I also addressed the applicability of the CA concept of 'repair' to the study of pre-post activity. As I acknowledged, the extent to which the phenomena captured within my data is indeed 'repair' can be questioned. Other scholars interested in pre-post activity have used this term to refer to such activity (see Meredith and Stokoe, 2014). In my discussion of this concept, however, I emphasised the *pre-emptive* nature of the pre-post work that was seen within my data set and questioned the extent to which the more 'reactive' concept of 'repair' was suitable in this context. My discussions around this were closely linked to my understanding of this space of interaction as being a 'rehearsal stage'; a space for practicing our interactions before sending. It was here that I argued that rehearsals do not 'count' in the sense that they are not yet accountable to an audience, and raised important questions around whether something could be 'repaired' or 'fixed' if it was not yet accountable or ready to be judged by an audience. As well as problematizing the applicability of this term to the pre-post space of interaction online, I worked to develop an alternative way of thinking about this activity; an approach that understands this phenomena as one of 'editing'. By understanding this activity as pre-post editing, rather than repair, I have been able

to capture the pre-emptive nature of the work that users do; work that reflects more a process of 'improvement' than it does of 'fixing' as well as capturing the more labour intensive editing style of some of my participants (Mark) that shows us more than simple, quick, 'repairs'.

'Repair' was not the only key concept drawn upon in my work that proved to be problematic when I thought about how it related to my data. In Chapter Six, the temporal orders of interactions online became a central focus of my analysis of multicommuting. It was here that I introduced the two temporal orders commonly drawn upon in studies of online interactive work: simultaneous and sequential orders. Previous studies of multiactivity had suggested that simultaneous activity could only occur when the two activities required complimentary resources. If two activities required the same resources, then participants of activity were presented as being forced to engage in a more successive, or sequential, order of multiactivity (see my discussion of Mondada's work (2014) in Chapter Six). What was problematic for me about this idea was that, on Facebook, when users engage in multiple conversations they are indeed using the same resources, as in the same mouse, keyboard or keypad, and thus, according to Mondada's understanding of temporal order, would be regarded as engaged in 'sequential' action. Yet, what I observed in my data was not 'sequential'; participants were not engaging in one interaction, closing, and then moving on to the next. Such interactions were instead overlapped (see the representation of this in Figure One, Chapter Six).

What my work has revealed about the notions of sequentiality and simultaneity is that these ideas, particularly when understood in terms of 'resources', didn't fit the order of interaction witnessed within this study. To deal with this, I again developed an alternative way of approaching the temporal order of interaction by applying the Goffmanian notion of 'strips' (initially developed within Chapter Six). This approach established an overall 'primary framework' of online, Facebook communication. Within this overall framework exists 'slices', or what Goffman has referred to as 'strips'; such 'strips' can be understood as the separate threads of message that occur within a participant's Facebook environment. These strips can be, as demonstrated by

my data, overlapped in time, thus occurring within the primary framework in the same temporal moment. Using this concept in my work helps overcome the problem I uncovered in Mondada's research in which 'technically' the data observed in this study became neither sequential nor simultaneous. It represents an alternative way of understanding the temporal organisation of Facebook messaging that captures the overlapping nature of talk without suggesting that participants are literally typing to two people at once.

Throughout this thesis I have made several theoretical contributions to the understanding of key concepts such as affordance, stages, repair and temporal orders. These achievements have taken the form of refining concepts (for example in my discussion of 'affordances'), as well as extending concepts (for example, through the introduction of the 'rehearsal' stage of interaction). My work has also contributed to existing understandings of key ideas by problematising the application of terms such as repair, sequentiality and simultaneity in the context of interactive activity on Facebook. More than this though, by identifying these issues, I have worked to build alternative approaches to understanding such notions in the online Facebook context; ideas that have the potential to be used in the study of pre-post editing and multicomunication activity in other settings.

Methodological achievements

The methodological achievements that this thesis has made are twofold. Firstly, I have applied the underused data collection method of 'screen capture' to the study of Facebook activity, thus directly confronting and working through a number of methodological challenges that the use of this software presents. Secondly, I have made specific contributions in my consideration of research ethics; these relate to my development of an ethical approach to the application of screen capture in this context and the intervention I have made to existing understandings of the public/private distinction in online research. I will begin by reflecting on the contributions I have made in relation to my use of screen capture.

By using screen capture software, such as liteCam and Movavi, I have been able to access the pre-post ‘behind the screen’ activity of Facebook users. Access to this dimension of the online world sees my work building on the small body of literature that has examined the pre-post, construction, side of online activity (Almuhimedi et al., 2013 and Das and Kramer, 2013). Those studies captured ‘behind the screen’ activity retrospectively; capturing deleted or ‘aborted’ social media posts through API technologies with the posts being accessed for research *after* the time in which they were produced. In this sense, the data that was captured was the last version of the post before it was deleted or ‘abandoned’ by its user. Screen capture, on the other hand, captures online activity in the moment. As I have described, using this technology to capture social media interactions reveals not just the deleted or ‘aborted’ posts of social networking but the actual editing and construction process that goes into all posts that are shared by users. This study has therefore extended the work of Almuhimedi et al. (2013) and Das and Kramer (2013) by capturing interactive details such as the edits made within posts and the cursor movements that take users between their multiple interactions. As I will explore in the next section of this chapter, capturing such detail has been empirically valuable because it reveals the ways that users engage in such activities to manage ‘face’ and the complexities of communicating in such a multiple and hybrid context.

Meredith (2014) is one scholar who has previously used screen capture technology to research interaction on Facebook, and who has thus captured the editing, or what she refers to as ‘repair,’ details of pre-post activity. I have drawn on her work at various points in the design of my project; for example in my sample size and approach to informed consent. However, I have also expanded her application of screen capture in the Facebook context by using it to capture a broader array of social media activity. This includes more ‘public posts’ such as comments, wall posts and status updates, as well as multicomcommunicating activity. I have also deviated from Meredith’s approach in my research design; one example of this is in my recruitment of participants that I already had an existing connection with. In this way my work offers a new approach to screen capture data collection strategies, broadening the methodological frame of reference that those interested in using screen capture to

study of online activity can draw from in the future.

My thesis has also made specific contributions to debates regarding the ethics of online research. As I outlined in Chapter Four of this thesis, I adopted a 'localised' approach to the ethics of my research with my ethical decisions informed by the specific qualities of my research setting. The central argument I made within this chapter was that researchers should not just consider their research setting when considering the ethics of their projects, but also their research methodologies. With new research technologies coming into being – for example API and screen capture software - the ethical landscape of online research has changed. These developing data collection approaches enable researchers to access spaces of online life that have previously remained invisible; spaces that have usually only ever been accessible to the online user themselves.

This change in the ethical landscape is important because it has implications for how researchers understand the public/private distinction in thinking about ethics. In our research practice we give a lot of attention to whether the data we collect is, in the traditional sense, defined as public or private. How we ultimately decide to define our data then has an impact on how we approach ethical decision-making processes such as gaining informed consent. To give a very general example, the more public the data, the less need a researcher tends to see in gaining informed consent. Traditionally, defining the private/public status of data in the literature on online research ethics has often centred on ascertaining the nature of our data as in, is this data publically available? Are there any 'barriers' in place in terms of accessing this space? However, my thesis has highlighted a further layer to this distinction, a hidden layer of privacy that is unveiled by the research methods used. What I argue in this thesis is that we need to give equal attention to considering the interventions that researchers make through their methodological choices and how these have the potential to transform the public/private dimension of the research setting.

Accessing such a hidden layer of privacy clearly impacts on the ethical decisions made within the research. In Chapter Four, I provided a detailed discussion of the

decisions I made in relation to fundamental ethical concepts such as control, sensitivity and consent. Here, I opened discussions around how I had considered my access to 'pre-post' Facebook activity in my approaches to these important issues. This included my decision to recruit existing 'Facebook friends' as my primary participants, to give a large amount of control to recording participants, and my strategy towards obtaining consent from those I refer to as 'secondary participants'; the individuals whom my participants interacted with whilst recording. Although scholars such as Meredith (2014) have also considered ethical approaches to using screen capture on Facebook, the data examined in that work did not capture more 'public' communications such as status updates, comments and posts. Due to this expansion within my own data collection, I have developed an innovative approach to dealing with consensual issues in relation to this wider selection of Facebook data that can be drawn on in future research.

During my study I did, inevitably, hit challenges in the process of applying my ethical approaches in the field. One of my key decisions was to gain informed consent from all secondary participants that were captured on the messenger function of Facebook. This was because, in the more traditional sense, these interactions are 'private'; available only to the selected individuals. Due to the fact that my primary participants often did not know who they were going to interact with when recording, I required my primary participants to ask for consent from the individuals they spoke to on messenger. This included asking secondary participants to complete an online consent form. What happened in some cases, however, was that primary participants asked for permission to record (sending relevant project details out to secondary participant that I had created) but the actual online consent forms were not completed. Under the advice of my Departmental Ethics Officer, I therefore decided to get these consent surveys completed retrospectively, with primary participants re-sending the form out to those they had recorded.

This resulted in an increase in the number of consent forms that I received back from secondary participants. Yet it also created problems in two senses. Firstly, although primary participants reassured me that they had gained permission before

recording I had no evidence of this. Secondly, due to the need to gain consent retrospectively in some cases, I had a large amount of data that had been captured, and allegedly consented to, that I could not use for analysis⁵. These challenges were a result of my decision to give primary participants significant control within the data collection process (an approach that was adopted to deal with the sensitivities of accessing the pre-post stage of interaction online, as I discussed in Chapter Four). Whilst this had benefits in terms of protecting my primary participants' privacy, it did become problematic in relation to accessing secondary participants and ensuring that consent procedures were kept to. Although this work has designed an ethical template that future research might draw upon, it has therefore also highlighted some problems and complexities associated with the approach I have taken, particularly in relation to participant control and consent. By highlighting these complexities, I hope that future research can take such issues on board as scholars develop the ethical strategies adopted within this work.

Empirical achievements

Having highlighted the theoretical and methodological contributions of this work, in this section I intend to turn my attention to what my analysis tells us about the nature of online interaction. I will begin by first addressing the contributions made in relation to pre-post editing followed by what my study offers for understanding online multicomunication.

My exploration of how users utilise the pre-post editing space within their Facebook interactions has extended existing research through my specific focus on how this activity is drawn on in processes of managing 'face' and 'self'. This not only contributed to empirical work on pre-post edits and repairs, but also extended our current understandings of how 'face' is managed and orientated to in these online spaces by addressing the *construction* side of such a process as well as the two way-protective and defensive- nature of Facework, a perspective not adopted in many recent studies (see my discussion of this in Chapter Two).

⁵ This un-useable data was not included in my tally of the amount of data I collected. I excluded this from this figure to give a more realistic representation of the size of my data sample.

One significant contribution that this research has made in revealing processes of pre-post editing is in simply demonstrating the extent that such activity can occur. In previous research, such as that of Meredith and Stokoe (2014), quicker, more instantaneous edits were observed. My data also contains such edits, and they can of course be seen as consequential to interaction. However, extensive editing practices - such as those demonstrated by my primary participant Mark - have not been captured to date. Whilst this data is both fascinating and revealing to examine in relation to the processes of interactional order and face work, as I will go on to discuss below, there is perhaps scope for further research here. This relates to how social media users tell and construct their 'stories' and 'narratives' online through the use of extensive pre-post editing processes; processes that resemble the editing of a script. As I explored in Chapter Five, this suggests the analogy of Facebook users being their own 'editor' as much as the author of their online utterances.

Within the concluding discussion in Chapter Five I described how my data revealed how this pre-post space was utilised by participants in both stages of the turn design process: the selection of action and the action design. This occurred, for example, in the editing and changing of 'the action' performed, as well as the interactive design of such an action. By editing their messages pre-post, users were shown to construct a more morally acceptable version of self to share with their interlocutors. The findings of this analysis directly connect to the concern expressed in my third research question regarding how activities such as pre-post editing affect users ability to present self. It reveals that users are actually able to more effectively manage their self-presentations through the use of such a pre-post space. In fact, I have argued that more of what Goffman referred to as 'memorable events' could now occur within our online interactions due to our ability to 'perfect'⁶ and re-work our messages in this space.

These sorts of findings make an intervention into ongoing debates relating to the quality of our online interactions. As introduced in the opening chapter of this

⁶ I refer to 'perfection' in terms of the work put into the construction of the interactions, not in relation to how they are perceived or understood by secondary participants

research, Sherry Turkle has suggested that we are now communicating in ever more 'reductive' ways (2011); framing this in negative terms. Whilst I have not obtained an understanding of how Facebook users view the quality of their own online interactions, I *have* observed the communicative strategies that are engaged in within this space. By doing so I would make the assertion that within the data collected in this study, there is no evidence that the quality of interaction, or self presentation or face management, is threatened or in decline; if anything, it can be regarded as more 'perfected' and more 'memorable' than before. By accessing the pre-post stage of interaction, this thesis has revealed the amount of interactive work that goes in to our online interactions and the richness of these moves. Thus, the 'product' of communication that is ultimately shared – that which Turkle is concerned about becoming reduced - is, in many ways, just the 'tip' of the interactive work that occurs within the online space.

The second focus of my analysis was on the activity of multicommunicating. To date, multicommunicating has not been the focus of any study interested in pre-post work. This project has thus made an important contribution by revealing the interactive detail involved in this practice, such as the cursor movements between interactions, and making this sort of empirical data available for the first time. Through the data collected, I have been able to contribute to the growing body of research that has applied Goffman's interactional concepts to the social media context by exploring how multicomcommunication, or what Goffman referred to as 'multi-focused gatherings', are organised online. Although little of the work that has drawn on Goffman has looked at 'multiness' in this way, there has been, more broadly, an interest in multiactivity emerging in recent research (see Haddington et al., 2014). Such scholarship has focused on different activities that occur within different spaces simultaneously. This thesis has contributed to such a field by examining how the same activity (conversation) can occur simultaneously in the same space (that of Facebook).

In my analysis of multicomcommunication, I revealed numerous strategies by which my participants managed the challenge of engaging in multiple, simultaneous conversations. The overwhelming contribution here was the finding that participants

worked to simplify their interactions when engaged in multicomcommunicating practice by ‘cutting out’ and ‘reducing’ their interactions in different ways (see full discussion in concluding remarks of Chapter Six). Importantly, though, such simplifications did not result in interaction becoming less complex, with participants displaying sensitivity to the context of their interactions within numerous examples of data. Participants were shown, for example, to orient towards who they were interacting with as well as to the nature of the interaction itself.

Again, the contribution of such findings to ongoing debates regarding the quality of online interaction is important to acknowledge. As noted, Turkle (2011) has argued that Internet users “flatten out what we say to each other in new reductive genres of abbreviation” (pg. 280). This study has shown how users of online platforms do, in some ways, ‘reduce’ and ‘flatten out’ their interactions online. However, I have argued that this is done in order to *manage* the complex task (and potential pressures) of multicomcommunicating. Despite such reductions the research has therefore demonstrated the significant levels of complexity that occur in our interactions when it comes to orientating towards the context of our online communications.

In a similar vein, this thesis has also demonstrated how the simplifications made by participants do not necessarily mean that interactional order is threatened or not orientated to within research. As I highlighted in my reflections in Chapter Seven, traditional face to face norms of interaction may indeed be altered, but this thesis has revealed how such changes are not oriented to as problematic to order and are indeed ‘naturalised’ within conversations. Such findings tell us that initial concerns that the activity of multicomcommunicating would *threaten* order are perhaps unfounded. They also suggest that the shape and nature of such order is oriented to in different ways within this online setting. In addition to developing understandings of the management of multicomcommunication online, my analysis also has had implications in terms of how we can understand the temporal organisation of our online interactions. Throughout my work, I have found the fixity of temporal concepts to be unsatisfactory. As I discussed in Chapter Seven, defining terminology such as synchronous and asynchronous are attended to in a very hybrid way with the boundaries between these two forms of

interaction becoming increasingly blurred. In addition, understandings of opening and re-entering interaction have become problematised through my analysis, with other temporal concepts such as sequentiality and simultaneity also becoming problematic. To deal with such temporal confusion, I have developed an approach to Facebook interactions that draws on Goffman's concept of 'strips'; a notion that – as I described in the first part of this chapter - helps to manoeuvre around the difficulty that concepts such as sequentiality and simultaneity bring to the form of interaction observed in this project.

I have also contributed to understandings of temporality in online interaction by noting an alternative way of referring to and understanding the unique temporal structure seen in my work. I have argued that my data displays a casual and relaxed temporal frame of interaction; a frame which I have referred to as a *drop in, drop out* approach to interaction. This frame is continually open; one that participants can casually engage and disengage in with little, or no, disruption to the interactional order of activity. This casual approach to temporal organisation is defined by the lack of beginnings or endings to conversations, as well as the ways that participants' responses to messages include varying interactional gaps (varying from seconds to minutes long). Such a frame of interaction, then, involves participants dropping 'in and out' of synchronicity as well as 'in and out' of engagement with encounters online. It is this relaxed approach to temporal organisation that led me to argue that the form of communication evident in my data takes a hybrid form; an in-between form of interaction that sits between synchronous face to face interaction and letter writing - a form of interaction in which participants are engaged in a long, loose interaction.

The analysis presented in this thesis has enabled me to attend to the three research questions that I set out at the start of this project. However, the unique data set that my project generated has enabled me to make further contributions; interventions into broader ongoing debates relating to the quality of our online communications, as well as developing alternative approaches to understanding the temporal organisation of Facebook interactions. Yet despite the array of theoretical, methodological and empirical contributions that my work has made, there are of

course limitations to what I have done and what I am able to claim from this research. It is to these limitations that I now turn.

Limitations and future directions of research

In any research, it is essential to recognise the limitations of what your project has done. Here, I highlight this thesis' limitations in three ways addressing the limits of screen capture data collection, of having a small sample size and of reducing my focus to typed interaction. I will begin discussions by addressing the limits of screen capture research.

Utilising screen capture as a data collection method has enabled me to make many important contributions and, most importantly, address the three research questions I set out at the beginning of this project. Despite that, as reflected on in Chapter Seven, screen capture is itself a technology and although being able to afford me the possibility of accessing the pre-post space of interaction it has constraints in relation to the claims I can make from this research. Specifically, I have been unable to make claims on the motivations behind my participant's actions or the reasons why they have engaged, or not engaged, in the interactive practices that they have. For me, with a specific interest in the online data itself along with the adoption of a discursive analytical perspective, such a restriction has not prevented me from addressing my research questions. However, a potential future direction of study would be to conduct a mixed methods approach to research that combined the use of screen capture with a further method that accessed the 'accounts' of the users themselves. Of course, there would still be methodological questions around the extent to which interviews, for example, would be able to access the true motivations of behaviours, but it would most definitely provide a rich data set in which researchers could begin to understand this different perspective of 'behind the screen' life.

Although using screen-capture data is a particularly innovative method in this field, there are a number of challenges when attempting to use screen-capture for collecting data from mobile/cell phones, leading to my primary participants recording

from their laptop devices. More than half a billion people now access Facebook *solely* on their mobiles (Tech Crunch, 2015), suggesting that it is important to be able to collect such data from mobile platforms. In fact, one of the challenges I faced in the recruitment of participants was that prospective participants could not take part in the research as they simply did no longer own a laptop, using Facebook only on tablet or smart phone devices.

There are few screen-capture programmes which can collect data from mobile phones, and these often require them to be plugged into a laptop, thus maintaining the same issues as highlighted above. While there are some applications (for example Display Recorder, Screen Recorder and Shou) that can record a mobile screen without being connected to a laptop, most operating systems do not allow such applications to run. This is because, if malicious, an app could theoretically continue recording even after the user thinks it is off. A further issue is that if participants are recording their mobile phone screens, there is more chance that sensitive information (such as passwords) could be compromised because of the visibility of the keyboard on-screen. However, Brown et al., (2014), have developed a software application of their own to collect screen-capture data from mobile phones. Their application does not provide a continuous recording like liteCam but instead takes four images of a mobile screen per second. This limits the exact timing of some recorded actions, which for analytic methods such as conversation analysis, can pose challenges. However, with technology developing at such a fast pace a suitable, more ethically viable, mobile screen capture software is likely to present itself, opening a further direction of research for the future.

With the limitations of screen capture addressed, I now turn my attention back to the sample size of my project, originally outlined in Chapter Three of this thesis. With the recruitment of four primary participants and the collection of six and half hours of video data I acknowledge that the sample size of this project is indeed small. Despite this, however, with such a micro approach adopted toward data analysis I was still able to effectively answer the research questions set. A significant aim of this project was also to make important contributions conceptually as well as

methodologically, something the small data sample has not prevented me from achieving in this work. Of course, my aim was never to generalise the findings of this project or indeed claim them to be representative of all internet platforms and users. What has instead been achieved is a micro glimpse into some of the interactive detail and practices that occur within a certain online environment; a micro glimpse that has delivered important perspectives and posed important questions around how we as researchers could understand interaction in this online space.

Finally, throughout this work I have maintained a focus specifically on the typed interactions of participants such as their Facebook messages, posts, comments and status updates. Such a focus has allowed me to explore this thesis' central concerns around how Facebook users manage the challenges of the online environment within their interactions. However, I certainly acknowledge that interactions take a much broader and varied form in these online platforms ranging from pictures, to audio, to links, to 'likes'. As well as these multiple modes, participants will often be using multiple platforms at once such as, for example, Facebook along with Twitter and Whatsapp. Androutsopoulos (2015) has recently argued that we are perhaps entering into a 'third wave' of digital research and we now need to extend our empirical arenas to 'go multi everything'. He called for data collection to develop multi-site (studying how users interact with different platforms simultaneously), multi-medium (studying users simultaneously engaging with different media) and multi-mode (studying users simultaneously using different forms of communication in one medium) approaches to research in order to capture the current digital climate and I certainly agree that such areas of study should be an important focus for future research.

In fact, the data collected in this study revealed processes of users selecting 'emojis', interacting with videos and engaging in 'liking'; data that would be valuable to analyse in the future projects. However, just because other modes exist in these online spaces does not mean that the empirical value of the more 'simple' 'typed' interaction ceases, as demonstrated by the empirical contributions made within this project. Thus, this project sees value in future research that does indeed explore these multiple modes, perhaps using screen capture to understand the pre-post activity that lies

behind them, but simultaneously calls for researches to not neglect the micro interactive detail still found within our typed communications on online platforms such as Facebook.

Concluding remarks

Overall this project calls for researchers to acknowledge the value in micro interactive data in relation to broader communicative issues such as hybridity and multiplicity and calls for future research to apply similar techniques in order to further understand these issues in the online context. I also want to highlight the overall complexity revealed in the interactions observed in this thesis; with interactional order being attended to in unique manners. Such findings have led me to argue that the quality of our interactions is not under threat. Yes, in ways our conversations are indeed more 'simple' as a response to the challenges presented in the online context, but layers of complex interactive work remain.

Finally, I would like to conclude this thesis by re-highlighting the empirical value in the pre-post space of online interaction through reflecting on the activity of pre-post editing. To do this, I return to the work of Hutchby (2001b) discussed in the earlier chapters of this thesis. Hutchby, although recognising the importance of the impacts of technological affordances such as editing, has questioned the extent to which researching pre-post activity such as editing is "key". For instance, he states:

...while participants may indeed 'change their mind' about (i.e. self repair) the form their next turn will take in the course of its production, what every other participant on the channel has access to in their attempts to make sense of what is going on is precisely, and only, the turns themselves as they appear in the public discourse arena (2001b, pg.183).

What Hutchby is referring to here is the fact that it is only the user who is doing the typing and producing the turn that can see the pre-post edits (or self-repairs as they are referred to here) or, for a matter of fact, even know that they occurred. The user's interactional partner/s do not have access to such information, thus they only see the finished, published turn that is eventually sent. Interestingly, Hutchby argues that

because of this fact, the “key thing” is to “look at how they repair (...) potentially problematic events in the course of their mutually available (and publicly accessible) exchange of turns” (2001b, pg.183).

What my thesis has revealed, though, is that by discounting the interactional work that occurs pre-post, a whole alternative stage of interaction - that of the rehearsal stage - is left unexplored. My project has demonstrated that significant interactional work occurs in the rehearsal stage of interaction. I would argue that although this is not available to any interactional partner, this ‘stage’ of interactive work is worth studying and understanding. This is due to the ways in which it is utilised to design interactions in ways that protect, defend and present self in more polished, perfected and ‘memorable’ ways; as well as to further understand the organisation of multicommuting online. Goffman once noted that “the places where practicing occurs are a wonder to behold” (Goffman, 1974, pg.61). The pre-post space observed in this work, then, is perhaps not a ‘wonder’ in terms of collaborative interactional work between two or more individuals, but it is indeed a ‘wonder’ in terms of interactional design and organisation.

Appendices

Appendix A: initial message sent to my Facebook network

Hi everyone,

As you may or may not be aware, I am currently doing a PhD in Media and Communication at the University of Leicester. My topic area of research is interaction on social media- particularly written mediated communication on, funnily enough, Facebook.

Textually mediated communication e.g. texts, emails, instant message, social networking sites and so on have become an increasing focus when it comes to research on interaction with not only the academic world taking an interest but the general media too. For example, take a look at this BBC article from last summer: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-28089246>

It claims we have reached the rather odd position of us having more mediated, digital, conversations than 'real' face to face ones and this is why I want to research this area. Digital conversations are becoming equally, and if not more, common than face to face interactions and yet we know significantly less about how we interact in the online world. I am particularly interested in the work that we do in our everyday conversations with friends, specifically how we use our talk to shape our selves and identities and the way in which we wish to be perceived by others. Again, there is little research in this area, particularly when it comes to talk and interaction between existing friends and peers on social networking sites like Facebook.

But obviously, like any research project, I need participants (yep, unfortunately when you do a PhD you can't get away with just making your data up!).

Therefore, as you have probably now guessed, I am calling out to any one who may be interested in coming forward and participating in this research project.

I am only looking for a small number of people who are interested in participating in this study that plans to observe social interactions on Facebook. The criteria being that you are a regular and active Facebook user that uses most of the interactive functions Facebook provides e.g. messenger, status updates, comments. This means I actually need you to be writing stuff on these things, not just stalking and lurking (although a little of that is fine too!!) I also need you to be a travelable distance from me (so live in or travel frequently to the east midlands area). And the last criteria is that you mostly use Facebook in English (as much as I would like, I am not sure I will have the time to learn a different language during the next year too!)

I won't go ahead and bore you with all the details of what is involved at the moment, but if you are interested and want to know more, than please email me: hd111@le.ac.uk or message me back in a private message on here and I can reveal more ☺

If you have read this far then, thanks! And I hope to hear from some of you soon.

Appendix B: Template message for primary participants to send to their Facebook networks:

“Hi everyone! I just want to let you all know that for the next few weeks I am taking part in a research project for my friend’s (tag me if you like) PhD project. The research involves me recording some of my interactions on Facebook meaning that your comments to me could also be recorded and used as part of the research. If you DO NOT want your comments to be part of the recordings and research you can of course opt out. Please message me or contact Hannah Ditchfield directly (hd111@le.ac.uk) to make this known. I can’t put all the information into this one status but if you want to know more about the project’s aims, the data collection process, or your options for ‘opting out’ please contact me or Hannah and we can send you a more detailed information sheet. Just to add, the data collected as part of this project is of course confidential and will be anonymised ☺ Thank you!! Xxx “

Appendix C: full version of extract one, Chapter Five, with edits

Poppy:

1 Hey Mark, aw that's okay I thought it was perfectly fine but you know what I'm like everything confuses
2 me haha! How ru? I'm missing your face ☺ iv got half marathon a wk sun, the survival of the fittest 2
3 wks later then that same day travelling to Manchester ready to go to Amercia next day, so pretty quiet
4 this end haha! Saw you went on hol ☺ looks like you had a fab time!! How's the job & life & stuff? Hope
5 to cu very soon xx

Mark:

5 Haha ~~it's fine~~ (E1) welcome to my world Poppy. I'm confused everyday. Ye I'm really good thanks. After
6 about 8 months of stress finally got things sorted and got another ~~that~~ (E3) *(E4) property. Whooooo!
7 ~~It's not in the flashiest of arears and there does seem to be more mobility scooters than cars but I'm~~
8 ~~still happy~~ ☺ (E5) *(E6) I haven't told Katie yet as I promised her I would stop after this one (E11) but
9 I've just started to sneekily push forwards to try and *(E7) *(E8) get one more before the market picks up
10 again *(E2) (...) (E9) or I go *(E10) (E12) Just busy, busy as usual. Had a nice holiday in Spain though and
11 please (E35) * (E36) ~~D(E24) *(E25) (E37) * (E38) don't tell Katie though I think she worries seeing as I~~
12 ~~can only just about co-ordinate~~ (E26) as she worries about my coordination when (E27) * (E28)
13 ~~changing gears in~~ (E18) driving (E19) * (E20) a car (E39) *(E40) (E16) * (E17) ~~I might~~ (E29) (E23) but I
14 *(E30) randomly (E41) *(E42) woke up one morning and randomly (E43) * (E44) decided (E31) ended
15 up taking up (E32) I wanted to have some (E33) *(E34) helicopter (E45) * (E46) flying a helicopter so
16 I've started taking (E47) * (E48) lessons. Why I don't know... Watch this space. (E49) * (E50) ~~Don't tell~~
17 ~~Katie though I think she worries seeing as I can only just about co-ordinate~~ ~~changing gears in~~ (E18)
18 ~~driving~~ (E19) * ~~(E20) a car~~ (E16) * (E17) ~~I might~~ (E23) ~~die~~ (E21) *(E22)) (E14) * (E15) // (E51)

19 * (E52) Wow a half marathon? I was looking through your Facebook and you look like your on fire with
20 all your training and stuff. Massive well done, glad I could be a small part of that. * (E13) (...) (E53) ☺
21 And just think at least you'll look in tip tops (E54) have the bikini body ready for America.

22 ~~Ye apart from that everything good.~~ (E61) * (E62) Right I'm determined to sort something out because
23 ~~it's been far too long.~~ (E63) * (E64) I've got a few days free coming up midweek in the weekdays next
24 week and week after (E66) (E65) are you around in town Tuesday (E56) * (E57) 22nd * (E55) (...) (E58)
25 for a sneaky pint (E59) drink and a catch up? Xx * (E60)

- E1: instant deletion
- E2: moves cursor to make E3
- E3: Word swap
- E4: moves cursor to make E5
- E5: addition of words
- E6: moves cursor to make E7
- E7: addition of words
- E8: moves cursor to make E9
- E9: starts back with continuing the length of the message
- E10: moves cursor to make E11
- E11: addition of words
- E12: deletion of previous 4 and a half lines
- E13: moves cursor to make E14
- E14: addition of words
- E15: moves cursor to make E16
- E16: addition of words
- E17: moves cursor to make E18
- E18: addition of words
- E19: word deletion
- E20: moves cursor to make E21
- E21: word deletion
- E22: moves cursor to make edit 23
- E23: Pastes words into another location within message

- E24: deletion of bracket and letter case swap
- E25: moves cursor to make edit E26
- E26: deletion of words
- E27: addition of words
- E28: moves cursor to make E29
- E29: deletion of words and bracket
- E30: moves cursor to make E31
- E31: addition of words
- E32: deletion of words
- E33: addition of words
- E34: moves cursor to E35
- E35: word swap
- E36: moves cursor to make E37
- E37: adds in bracket
- E38: moves cursor to make E39
- E39: adds in bracket
- E40: moves cursor to make E41
- E41: word deletion
- E42: moves cursor to make E43
- E43: addition of word
- E44: moves cursor to make E45
- E45: deletion of words
- E46: moves cursor to make E47
- E47: deletion of 'ing' and addition of words
- E48: moves cursor to make E49
- E49: addition of words
- E50: moves cursor to make E51
- E51: 'enters' words down to create new paragraph
- E52: moves cursor to make E53
- E53: starts back with continuing the length of the message
- E54: instant deletion
- E55: moves cursor to make E56
- E56: addition of word
- E57: moves cursor to make edit E58
- E58: starts back with continuing the length of the message
- E59: instant deletion
- E60: moves cursor to make E61
- E61: deletion of words
- E62: moves cursor to make E63
- E63: addition of words
- E64: moves cursor to make E65
- E65: addition of words
- E66: instant deletion of words

Appendix D: full version of extract two, Chapter Five, with edits

John:

1 Can I have plenty of notice for the stag do adn stuff just so I can make sure I'm organised with work and
2 such like

3 I take it Joe is best man right?

Mark:

4 Yes of course you can. Literally don't ~~know~~ (E1) even know what date the wedding is. Thought proposing
5 would take some of the pressure off of me but it's just been going mad ever since. It was really hard
6 trying to decide who would be best man for this as I've been blessed to have you, Mike, Joe, and Richard
7 as really close contenders. ~~Ultimately I've known Joe the longest so thought it was only fair to~~ (E2)
8 However, I would still like to have you as my right hand man if that's ok? xx

- E1: word deletion
- E2: deletion of words

Appendix E: transcription key

Key:

- ~~Strikethrough~~: user makes a deletion
- *: marks the point where a user stopped typing and moved cursor to another part of the message to make an edit
- Underline: marks where a user has gone back into message to add content
- (...): marks where the user has returned to the current end of message to continue construction
- Zigzag line: marks where the word has been deleted once prior to the whole sentence/section being deleted
- Double underline: marks where the user has added new words into an already 'new' section (second layer of addition)
- **Bold with double underline**: the third layer of addition
- *Italics*: marks where the user has copied and pasted the content to another location within the message
- ~~*Italics strikethrough*~~: marks where the re-structured content once was

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