Article

Sequential organization of text messages and mobile phone calls in interconnected communication sequences

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Abstract

This article investigates how text messages and mobile phone calls interrelate as parts of continuous communication sequences. Based on the recorded mobile communication of 14-year-olds in Denmark and a conversation-analytic approach, the article will show that after a text message in a continuous communication sequence, four different types of conversation may follow: the answer (after a text message demanding a reply), the reminder (in case of a missing text message), the resumption of conversation (after a closed text message exchange) and the confirmation (after a text message with a request for/promise of a call). In itself, the change from text message to conversation requires no interactional efforts from the participants. However, changes of mode are related to the different communicative possibilities the text message and the phone call offer: text messages and calls have distinct formal qualities that govern their uses, and participants in a given sequence move between the two modes, exploiting the potential of each as they ascribe meaning to the written and spoken media.

Introduction

Texting and calling are the original modes of communication available to people using mobile phones, and they remain among the most common. Talking on the phone differs in obvious ways from text messaging: text messages are written whereas calls are spoken;

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and tone of voice, pitch, pauses and breathing are key tools aiding listening and understanding in a telephone call (Hopper, 1992), but the writer of a text message must convey meaning without these. Unlike a telephone call, however, texting offers the choice of meeting outside real time. Parties to a text message exchange are not co-present, whereas on the telephone, participants are audibly so, though they are physically distant. This asynchronous communication (Frehner, 2008) does not require on-the-spot responses: messages may be replied to within minutes or hours, while in spoken interaction, there is a standard maximum silence of approximately one second (Jefferson, 1973).

Hitherto, research on logged text messages and recorded mobile phone calls has studied the two modes separately. Research on text messages has focused on their discursive and linguistic features (Frehner, 2008; Gibbon and Kul, 2010; Hård af Segerstad, 2005; Ling and Baron, 2007) and their sequential organization (Hutchby and Tanna, 2008; Laursen, 2005; Spagnolli and Gamberini, 2007). Research on mobile phone calls, meanwhile, has focused on call opening and its similarities and differences with empirical features of call opening characteristics of landline telephone calls (Arminen and Leinonen, 2006; Hutchby and Barnett, 2005).

Only a few interview-based studies have investigated both text messaging and mobile phone calls, focusing on the informants' choice of mode. According to Grinter and Eldridge (2001), teenagers choose text messaging because it is faster and cheaper than making a call, the length of which they cannot always control, and because it is more convenient than a call, which cannot take place anywhere and at any time. According to Fortunati, teenagers prefer a call when they talk to their parents, but text messages when they communicate with their friends. When they call friends, it is to explain or clarify something, or if they have a lot to say. They choose text messages to save time and money, and to be private, expressing what they would not dare say face to face (Fortunati, 2001).

This article investigates change of mode rather than choice of mode: how logged text messages and recorded mobile phone calls interrelate as parts of a continuous communication sequence. Using a conversation-analytic approach, we will examine in closer detail the sequence of text messages and calls. We will see how, in practice, participants manage the changes of mode and construct a coherent sequence from text messages and conversation. The interconnected communication sequences are established and maintained through the joint efforts of the participants, and organize their relations.

Data

The primary data of this article consist of recordings of the mobile communication (text messages and mobile phone calls) of six 14-year-olds over a period of six weeks, during which each person was recorded for one week. The six young people are friends and belong to the same year at a school in Copenhagen. They all use their mobile phones daily for text communication and calls. The recordings were made in co-operation with TDC Mobil, the leading Danish telecommunications company, and with the consent of both the participants and their parents. Sixty-six people are represented in the data in 519 text messages, 284 conversations, 135 calls to answering machines and 98 call attempts. However, the focus of the article is on the mobile communication between 31 young people, consisting of 481 text messages, 173 calls, 72 calls to answering machines and

43 call attempts. In addition, the article makes use of ethnographic observations dating from the time of the recordings.

A striking observation is that the young friends use their mobile phones to communicate over time in continuing, interconnected communication sequences. Their text messages and calls are very often linked to other text messages and calls: 100 (out of 173) calls are parts of series of calls, and 24 calls are preceded by a text message; another 24 calls are followed by a text message. Consequently, the calls and the text messages cannot be dealt with as isolated units of analysis. This article is limited to examining the sequence of interactions containing a text message preceding a call (24 cases). The analysis will pay particular focus to the mobile phone openings because of their significance for the construction of continuous communication sequences. In the openings, the participants demonstrate mutual orientation, and refer to their latest shared communication.

Openings in mobile phone calls

Research on landline telephone openings has identified four sequences: 'summons–answer', 'identification/recognition', 'greeting–greeting' and 'initial inquiries' ('How are you?') (Schegloff, 1968, 1979, 1986). All four sequences are not always present, but they constitute nonetheless the so-called canonical opening. The canonical opening, based on US landline telephone calls, has proved surprisingly robust in studies of telephone openings in other languages, but discrepancies have manifested themselves. For example, in Dutch, Swedish and Danish, unlike in American English, the callee usually identifies himself by name in his first turn (Houtkoop-Steenstra, 1991; Lindstrom, 1994; Rasmussen, 2000).

While research on landline calls has established itself over 40 years, research on mobile phone calls is new, with only three published studies known to the author. According to Weilenmann (2003), self-identification by name is sometimes used in the Swedish mobile opening (as it is on the landline), and sometimes not. In their study comparing mobile openings in English with US landline openings (Schegloff, 1986), Hutchby and Barnett (2005) find the norms of landline telephone conversation persisting in mobile phone talk. Yet Arminen and Leinonen (2006), in their comparison of Finnish mobile and landline openings, find systematic differences between the two. However, both studies highlight the consequences of the caller ID feature on the mobile phone. In Finnish (62 calls), the exchange of self-identification with name typical of landline openings is dropped in about half the cases in favour of a 'greeting opening', in which the callee first greets the caller, and the caller then greets the callee and/or gives the reason for the call. With the British data (20 call openings), Hutchby and Barnett identify a 'pre-voice sample identification', where both parties show an orientation towards identification before the other has said anything. Both studies observe a 'where-are-you sequence', which sometimes may be part of the opening before the reason for the call is presented. Finally, Hutchby and Barnett identify a number of cases where the caller speaks first, unlike in landline calls where the callee answers the summons.

This article's data do not feature the same disappearance of self-identification by name in the callee's first turn that Arminen and Leinonen (2006) found (only 35 out of

173 openings). Neither is there a particular frequent 'greeting opening' (only nine out of 173 openings). While there are quite a few examples of 'pre-voice sample identification', where the callee displays recognition of the caller in his first turn (56 out of 173 openings), openings where the caller speaks first are rare (three out of 173 openings). These figures may indicate certain tendencies, but they cannot substitute analysis (Schegloff, 1993). Also, many of the calls in this article's data are part of continuous communications sequences: that is, the calls follow or are preceded by other calls or text messages. In such cases, the analysis of the call opening must take into account the preceding communication to which it is linked.

Telephone and text in interconnected communication sequences

It has been possible to identify only three studies involving telephone- and text-based material in interconnected communication sequences: instant messaging-landline telephone (Nardi et al., 2000), text documents-landline telephone (O'Hara et al., 2001) and fax-landline telephone (Firth, 1991). All involve working communities. Nardi et al. treat the change of mode from instant messaging to telephone only in passing:

> People talked about switching when they felt that 'interaction' was needed, if the conversation was 'complicated' or if there was a misunderstanding in the IM. On other occasions they felt it was just more efficient to talk than type. (2000: 86)

O'Hara et al. (2001) identify *docucentric interactions* or *telecentric interactions*, depending on which media is in focus. For example, they categorize *note-taking during phone calls* as a telecentric interaction. However, the question of which media are in focus is irrelevant to this article.

Firth's study (1991) is more applicable. He identifies a three-part pattern of action, which manifests itself in written form (fax, telex). Negotiation activity occurs by telephone when the pattern is broken. The phone is best suited to negotiating deals because the parties quickly and efficiently reach a solution that suits both of them. In addition, small talk on the phone can cultivate and strengthen the relationship between the parties, giving them cognitive relief amid intense negotiating activity. Subsequently, the parties confirm in writing the solution they have reached. Firth shows how the participants create coherence in the transition from one medium to another. In the phone call, the previous, written document is given as the reason for the call/first topic, and the participants explicitly refer to the document, for example, *Did you see my telex?* (1991: 99–101). Also, the call meets, in the form of an answer, the next sequential action implied by the previous fax. In the transition from phone to text, the parties explicitly refer to future communication, for example, *I will give you the codes tomorrow* (1991: 108).

From the literature on mobile phone openings and the literature on telephone and text in interconnected communication sequences, we will now move on to analyse the sequence of text message mobile phone calls. After a text message in a continuous communication sequence, four different types of conversation may follow: the answer (after

a text message demanding a reply), the reminder (in case of a missing text message), the resumption of conversation (after a closed text message exchange) and the confirmation (after a text message with a request for/promise of a call).

The answer (after a text message demanding a reply)

In the dataset, the typical and unmarked reply to a text message is by text message:

(Example 1)[1]

| → | Daniel | Friday 11:30 am | Should we walk together from school today . . . |
| → | Rune | Friday 11:30 am | I have to get home and sleep . . . but you're welcome to come with me |

This sequence can be termed a 'paired sequence' (Schegloff and Sacks, 1973), with Daniel's initiating question as the 'first pair-part' (i.e. first part of pair) and Rune's answer as the second pair-part. The paired sequence refers to a two-part sequence of turns whereby the utterance of a first turn, or pair-part, provides a 'slot' for a second turn, which is precipitated by the form of the first turn. 'Question–answer', 'greeting–greeting', 'offer–acceptance/refusal' are instances of pair types.

In the same way, the answer call follows a text message that makes a reply conditionally relevant:

(Example 2)

		Friday 6:32 pm	Malene calls Sara to ask her to play for her online
	Malene	Friday 7:04 pm	What's going on? Did it work?
	Sara	Friday 7:05 pm	You only got Bows! You'll get crushed! Have to get swords first!
→	Malene	Friday 7:06 pm	Randmaj says that the clan probably has what's-its-name so I don't need swords. Just try!
→		Friday 7:15 pm	*Sara calls Malene*

(summons)

```
1826   Ma:   hi?
1827   Ps:   (1.0)
1828   Sa:   e: >I had to send off five hundred
1829         warriors to be able to attack<
1830   Ps:   (1.4)
1831   Ma:   ha:d-
1832   Ps:   (0.2)
1833   Ma:   had to ↑what
1834   Ps:   (0.6)
1835   Sa:   five hundred warrio- (.) warriors to Teddy Bear to
1836         be able to attack him
1837   Ps:   (1.0)
1838   Ma:   send them to Teddy Bear how come
1839   Ps:   (1.1)
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1840	Sa:	just to someone 'cause I could not attack him
1841		I was too b<u>i</u>g but I'm st<u>i</u>ll to big .hh I
1842		had to send off almost a:ll your warriors to be able
1843		to a:ttack him but then I'd be– you'd be crushed in
1844		n<u>o</u> time so now I'll ask Teddy Bear to send
1845		the five hundred back
1846	Ps:	(0.7)
1847	Ma:	no-o: don't
[. . .]		

In the conversation, Sara calls Malene in response to her text message: *Randmaj says that the clan probably has what's-its-name so I don't need swords. Just try!* What Sara needs to 'try' is – as is evident in a previous conversation between the two – to attack a player in an online game, on behalf of Malene. In the conversation, Sara replies that though a sword is not required to attack the player, she did have to send off 500 warriors. This reply can also be read as a preliminary response to Malene's previous, and more general, text message: *What's going on? Did it work?*

The opening in the answer conversation can be characterized as minimal. The caller and the callee use hardly any resources to identify and recognize each other, and there is no 'initial inquiry' (Schegloff, 1986). The callee responds *hi*, with ascending intonation, showing awareness towards the caller and her call. On her side, the caller immediately addresses the purpose of the call (though only after a second long break, during which time she is heard tapping on her computer keyboard). The fact that the two parties skip a step-by-step identification and recognition points towards a strong orientation towards a continuing conversion.

The first topic of the conversation is identical to the reason for the call, which also functions as an answer to the question in the previous text message. The format of the answer is determined by its complexity and length, which are greater than would be suited to a text message. The reason for the call is unfolded through turns consisting of multiple turn-construction units and through several rounds. Since the text message sender implies a text message reply, and thus a rather short answer, it could be problematic that the recipient of the text message engages in a longer reply through a call in this way. But the text message recipient seems to be aware in the call of this potential problem, in the way that they first present their answers in a short form, expanding on this only after the recipient has treated the short form as insufficient. In the example, the caller thus initially gives a reply in short form (*I had to send off five hundred warriors to be able to attack*) and this reply is only expanded after the callee's approval and acceptance (*send them to Teddy Bear how come*). The short response can be seen as inadequate, and thus serving to show the callee the necessity of the call.

The change from text message to conversation does not in itself require any interactional efforts from the participants. Through both the opening and the agenda presentation, the parties demonstrate that that they are fully aware of their previous communication as well as of what they are doing here and now. Thereby they display orientation towards the mobile phone as a single medium, while at the same time they claim close relations (Mandelbaum, 2003; Pomerantz and Mandelbaum, 2005).

With the change of mode, the participants exploit the opportunities the new mode affords them. The most important of these are the ability to process the response in a longer and more complex way than a text message would have allowed, and the opportunity to negotiate the form of the answer. Furthermore, it is possible that the call is used to upgrade the importance or the seriousness of the text message. This is not particularly obvious in the example above, which does not clearly show the significance in Sara's and Malene's lives of the specific game. A more obvious example from the data material is found, however, when a girl text messages her best friend to say that her boyfriend has let her down. Rather than answering by text message, the best friend calls the girl. The call seems, in this context, to demonstrate a greater commitment than the text message.

The reminder (in case of a missing text message)

In the dataset, missing replies to text messages will be treated as a 'noticeable absence' (Sacks, 1995), meaning that the sender of the text message will send a reminder and/or the recipient will send an excuse for not replying in good time (Laursen, 2005). Here is such an example:

(Example 3)

	Henrik	Tuesday 9:11 am	HI Dorte could you please tell grete that i'm ill?
→	Dorte	–	–
→	Henrik	Tuesday 10:18 am	HELLO?
	[. . .]	[. . .]	[. . .]

In this example, Henrik is asking his classmate Dorte to let their teacher Grete know that he is ill. After a good hour, he sends her a reminder with his *HELLO?* This reminder takes for granted the fact that Dorte has technically received the first message, and is also 'yelling', with the use of capital letters, that there should have been a response. The capital letters signify impatience and disappointment.

However, reminders for a response are sometimes formulated in and through a call. In the next example, Katrine sends a text message to Karsten, to which he does not reply. The following day, she telephones him:

(Example 4)

	Katrine	Monday 10:01 am	Hi lowsy. . . . I need my money . . . sorry . . . Could you bring it tomorrow and go down to joshi with it? Hugs katrine!
→	Karsten	–	–
→		Tuesday 11:47 am	*Katrine calls Karsten*
	[. . .]	[. . .]	[. . .]

(summons)

559	Kar:	yes hello this is ↑Karsten
560	Ps:	(0.4)
561	Kat:	hi this is Katrine

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562            where are you
563    Ps:     (0.3)
564    Kar:    I'm at my sch<u>oo</u>l
565    Ps:     (0.6)
566    Kat:    could I get my mo:ney s<u>oo</u>n
567    Kar:    SU:RE but I don't have any f<u>u</u>cking <u>A</u>TM card
568    Kar:    and I >also owe my dad a hundred crowns
569    Kar:    or something you're gonna get your fucking
570    Kar:    money the f<u>i</u>rst<
       [. . .]
```

In her text message, Katrine asks Karsten to come down to Joshi the next day with the money he owes her. (Joshi is the grocer's, situated halfway between Katrine's school and Karsten's, and they often meet there with their mutual friends during lunch break, as the field notes illustrate.) Karsten nevertheless fails to reply to the text message, and Katrine phones him.

While the opening sequence in the answer calls was minimal, the opening sequence in the reminder calls can be characterized as maximal: the caller maximizes the opening by employing a self-identification, greetings, passing turns in the call and/or by making an 'initial inquiry' (Schegloff, 1986). In doing so, the caller defers the reason for the call. The most obvious example of postponement of the reason for a call is in the following example:

(Example 5)

(summons)

```
411    Mi:     it's Michael?
412    Ps:     (0.4)
413    Na:     hi, it's Nana?
414    Ps:     (0.7)
415    Mi:     he:y.
416    Ps:     (0.3)
417    Na:     he:y
418    Ps:     (0.3)
419    Na:     how are you?
420    Ps:     (0.6)
421    Mi:     (I'm ok)
       [ . . . ]
```

In the example, the caller, Nana, who previously sent a text message to which she got no reply, postpones presenting her agenda: initially, she responds to Michael's self-identification, delivering her own, whereas she could (as in the aforementioned answer call) have used the opportunity to address her errand. Afterwards, Michael is allowed to have his turn, in a 0.7 break. After Michael's *hey*, Nana has another chance to state her purpose, but instead she replies with a *hey*. This *hey* could have evolved into an addressing of the reason for the call, but Nana chooses to engage a line of questions: *how are you?*

By employing the self-identification, giving greetings, entering into a line of questions, and/or providing the callee with the possibility of taking or continuing the turn, the caller reduces the potential for conflict in a situation in which she must explicitly press for answers. Furthermore, she provides the callee with a (final) opportunity to respond to the unanswered text message. On this occasion, the line of questioning creates a perfect chance for the callee to respond to the original text message: In example 4, Katrine's *where are you* gives Karsten the opportunity to explain why he is not where Katrine asked him to be in her text message. She calls him at the exact time she asked him to appear in front of the grocer's (*could you bring it tomorrow and go down to joshi with it?*). In a similar way, Nana's question *how are you?* in example 5 gives Michael the opportunity to answer Nana's original text message question: *How's your love life?* However, the two questions are not repetitions of the text message questions, but rather are shaped in the form of questions routinely used in telephone openings: *Where are you?*, as a question about interactional availability (Arminen and Leinonen, 2006; Schegloff and Sacks, 1973) and *How are you?* as an 'initial inquiry' (Schegloff, 1986). The recipient is thus left with the possibility either of answering by routine or of answering the question posed in original text message.

The opening sequence of the reminder call is also characterized by the 'neutral' attitude of the caller, being neither too accommodating nor too hostile: she expresses identification and recognition in an unmarked way, without closeness or distance; she plays out a step-by-step process of identification and recognition (while close relationships usually use as few resources as possible to identification and recognition – see Schegloff, 1979); she mirrors her recipient in her responses (self-identification–self-identification, greeting–greeting, question–answer); and she postpones (via greeting sequence, initial inquiry and pauses) presenting the reason for the call. This neutrality, along with the postponement of the reason for the call, gives the caller a chance to find out how the other relates to her calls and to his failure to reply by text message. At the same time, she declines to display how she relates to the fact that she did not get an answer in the first place, thus resetting the relationship and letting the callee take the first step towards possibly redefining it.

While the caller gives the callee several chances to answer the initial text message, the callee chooses, in both examples, to pass these up: he treats the questions as routine, ignoring the opportunity of anticipating the caller's agenda. Examples of the callee anticipating the caller's reason for a call appear particularly in conversations that are part of a series (Laursen, 2006). Since reminder calls have the same element of continuous communication as serial calls, the fact that this does not occur in either situation is remarkable.

In the shift from text message to conversation, the caller exploits the opportunity to construct his message as a non-reminder. A text message exchange is based on a dialogic principle, where participants are taking turns sending and receiving messages, so if a text message is not responded to, the following text message by the same sender will unavoidably be perceived as a reminder (Laursen, 2005). A call can thus be a way to avoid sending a text message, and the participants may similarly exploit the change of mode to show a non-orientation to the former text message. At the same time, the caller seems to

use the change of mode to check the temperature of the relationship, without addressing this explicitly. Breaths, pauses, voice tone and the presence of both parties make it difficult to hide in the same way that one may behind a text message, and in this way the caller is able to establish a good sense of the status of the relationship. The extended opening sequence, leaving room for the caller and the callee to get a feeling of the atmosphere through procrastination, postponement and avoidance, seems ideal for this purpose. Finally, the change of mode allows for an immediate response. The immediate response seems to be a particular concern for callers whose call appears to have been triggered by a change of situation/circumstance that (re)actualizes a response from the recipient. In her text message, Katrine asks Karsten to meet her the next day at a certain time and certain place. She does not receive a reply but shows up anyway. When it is clear Karsten is not coming, she gives him a call.

The resumption of conversation (after a closed text message exchange)

Unlike the previous two sections, this section examines calls following a (temporarily) closed text message sequence. I will call this type of call a resumption call. In these cases, the text message preceding the call does not make a reply conditionally relevant. Instead, the text message forms a second pair-part (for example by means of a response). If they fail to take any new initiatives, second pair-parts in text messages can close the exchange (Laursen, 2006, 2010). In these cases, the closed exchange is followed up by a call that addresses the text message exchange:

(Example 6)

	Daniel	Friday 11:26 am	Should we walk together from school today . . .
	Rune	Friday 11:30 am	I have to go home and sleep . . . but you can come if you like. . . .
	Daniel	Friday 11:31 am	That's a deal . . . When do you get off?
→	Rune	Friday 11:35 am	In an hour . . . we are on our way to joshi . . .
→		Friday 1:03 pm	*Rune calls Daniel*

(summons)
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1607   Da:    yes
1608   Ps:    (0.8)
1609   Ru:    e:h are you coming down to the school now?
1610   Ps:    (0.9)
1611   Da:    yeah (.) where do we meet
[. . .]
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(Example 7)

	[. . .]	[. . .]	[. . .]
	Katrine	Monday 11:05 am	Heyson. . . . Can we meet a quarter to four at vanløse st. Then I can go home first? Write back . . .!

→	Rune	Monday 11:06 am	Yes yes . . . honey . . .
→		Monday 3:22 pm	*Rune calls Katrine*
	[. . .]	[. . .]	[. . .]

(summons)

51	Ka:	>hallo thi:s< is Katrine
52	Ps:	(0.5)
53	Ru:	it's Rune
54	Ps:	(0.6)
55	Ka:	hi::
56	Ps:	(0.3)
57	Ru:	where are you now
58	Ps:	(0.6)
59	Ka:	I am at home
60	Ps:	(0.7)
61	Ru:	>you: do know we will meet at Værløse station in half
62		an hour e:h in a quarter ↑right<
63	Ps:	(0.4)
64	Ka:	e::h >right right<

[. . .]

The calls follow an otherwise closed text message exchange, and in the opening sequence the caller and the callee have the opportunity to construe the call as continued interaction or as a new interaction. The opening sequences in these calls play out in two ways: either the participants do minimal identification and recognition, thus showing high orientation to the reason for the call, and the caller addresses the reason for the call in his first turn (example 6), or the opening plays out in the standard way, with mutual identification and recognition, and the caller addresses the reason for the call in his second turn (example 7).

In both cases, the connection between the call and the previous text message exchange seem obvious: in example 6, Rune calls at precisely 1:03 pm, which is when he agreed to meet Daniel in their previous text message exchange (Rune calls in his lunch break and says 'in an hour', which can be understood as a lesson later); and in example 7, Rune calls 15 minutes before he agreed in his text message to meet Katrine at the station. Even though the connection to the previous text message exchange seems obvious because of the meeting agreement, the opening in the resumption call is not always treated as continued interaction. The two different opening sequences perhaps match the ambiguity inherent in the previous communication. The text message exchange is treated as closed, but it included a later appointment, and it is at the approximate time of the appointment that the call takes place. Against this background, it can be a gamble for either side to treat the call as continued interaction, the risk being that the other party may have a lower orientation towards continued interaction. Only when the reason for the call is voiced can the call finally be treated as a continuation or a non-continuing interaction.

The reason given for the call refers to the former text message exchange and to the appointment in an indirect way, showing an orientation towards a (possible) change of appointment: *are you coming down to the school now?* and *where are you now.* By referring

indirectly to the former text message exchange and to the meeting agreement, the caller invokes a close relationship to the callee because he shows a high orientation towards their continuing business, and presupposes that the other can make the link with ease. At the same time, in showing an orientation towards a (possible) change of appointment, the caller invokes a close relationship with room for flexibility, which is confirmed by the callee.

In itself, the change from text message to conversation requires no interactional efforts from the participants. Even in cases where the openings of the conversation display a sequence of identification and recognition, the interactional performances seem connected neither to the change of mode nor to any non-orientation towards the other party. Instead, the participants seem to orient towards the mentioned ambiguity in the previous communication.

Unlike a text message, a call creates an opportunity to address the meeting time and place in an interactive way, through turn transitions that allow room for the callee's perspective. The caller also gives the conversation an air of urgency as he calls shortly before, or at the time of, his meeting with the caller. Unlike the text message, a call allows instant communication.

The confirmation (after a text message with a request for/promise of a call)

In the previous sections, the text message exchanges themselves did not require a change of mode. This section, however, deals with text messages containing a request or a promise of a later call. These calls fulfil the promise or accept the request, and I will call them confirmation calls.

In this example, the sender of the text message promises a later call: *I will talk to Katrine and call you later*. And indeed he does:

(Example 8)

	Daniel	Sunday 2:16 pm	Is it okay if I and Katrine come by when we are finished at church? We are at nativity play . . .
	Rune	Sunday 2:17 pm	I need to do tons of homework so i am probably not much fun to be around
→	Daniel	Sunday 2:18 pm	I will talk to Katrine and call you later . . . Then we might come by . . .
→		Sunday 2:37 pm	*Daniel calls Rune*
	[. . .]	[. . .]	[. . .]

(summons)

2484	Ru:	hallo?
2485	Ps:	(0.5)
2486	Da:	£hi: Rune£
2487	Ps:	(0.6)
2488	Ru:	h- hi
2489	Ps:	(0.6)
2490	Da:	hi (.) we a:: are on the way hh h<u>eh</u>e<u>h</u> (.) .hhh £so we

2491   will pass by h£
[. . .]

In the example, the callee answers the call with a 'Hello'. The caller greets and assumes that the callee can recognize him from his voice: £*hi: Rune*£. The callee returns the greeting, shows recognition, and gives the turn back to the caller (ll. 2488–2489). This creates an 'anchor position' (Schegloff, 1986) where the reason for the call can be presented – and it will be (ll. 2490–2491). In this way, the opening presents itself as canonical, with the caller presenting his reason for calling after mutual identification and recognition have been achieved. The extra *hi*, the micro-pause, the laughter and smile present in his voice as he gives the reason for the call (l. 2490) can probably be attributed to the fact that Daniel has not quite done what he said he would do in his text message. In it, he said he would talk to Katrine about coming, and now they are actually on their way (l. 2490).

It is possible for the caller to present the reason for calling in his first turn after a text message implying continued communication (compare the answer call). However, the caller does not do this in all confirmation calls, for reasons we can only speculate about. But if the caller had presented his reason for calling already in his first turn, he would have implied that the callee was doing nothing but waiting for his call. Instead, by playing out the opening as a standard opening (without skipping mutual recognition and greeting), the caller demonstrates equality in the relationship.

If the sender of a text message wishes to get a response by phone, he will typically make this wish explicit by writing: 'Call me'.

(Example 9)

	Katrine	Sunday 12:34 am	Now Unika is sold. . . . Sniff . . .! See you tomorrow . . .! Kisses Katrine!
	Maja	Sunday 12:36 am	What! To who? Have they recieved her??
→	Katrine	Sunday 12:39 am	Some of nete og ibs friends . . . It is okai but a little sad . . . Are you at home? So call me!
→		Sunday 12:40 am	*Maja calls Katrine*

(summons)

```
3447   Ka:    hallo
3448   Ps:    (0.3)
3449   Maj:   hi:?
3450   Ps:    (.)
3451   Ka:    hold on I need to open the door ↑right
3452   Ps:    (0.5)
3453   Maj:   °*yea:h*°
3454   Ps:    (3.1)
3455   Ka: →  I was just entering the hall hh .hhh (s[o) it is some
3456   Maj:                                        [( )
3457   Ka:    of my- it is net- it is e- it is the best we o- it
3458          could be. (.) .hhh
```
[. . .]

In the confirmation call after a text message with a call request, the reason for the call is treated as belonging to the callee. The callee, who requested the call, answers with a channel opener, *hallo*, and the caller greets with *hi:?* The caller's *hi:?* can be understood as a self-identification, a greeting, and a 'here-you-go'. Katrine, the callee, treats it also as a turn transition. She holds her turn (ll. 3451–3455) and continues the topic of the text message exchange. The caller and the callee thus make minimal identification and recognition: the caller says a sort of 'here-you-go' with his first turn, after which the callee presents her reason for the call/continues the topic of the text message exchange. This opening normalizes the call, and the fact that the caller has called on behalf of the callee. Thus, the participants invoke a relationship in which one party can do the other a service without making a big deal of it.

As noted earlier, the change from text message to conversation does not in itself require any interactional efforts from the participants. That is to say, the interactional work done by the participants seems unconnected to the shift of mode.

The shift of mode from text message to conversation is used to produce complex reasons for calling, that is, reasons for calls containing multi-unit turns or reasons for calls that, predictably, will lead to multiple turns back and forth. Example 8 involves negotiation: in the text message exchange, Rune has been reluctant to meet Daniel, and Daniel's initiative to change mode can been seen as an attempt to engage Rune in a conversation. In example 9, Katrine constructs a multi-unit turn in her story about the sale of her dog. One can therefore say that the call mode and the text message mode are being exhibited respectively as appropriate and inappropriate for complex matters.

Discussion

The four types of openings may all be described based on Schegloff's canonical opening. For example, the answer call opening resembles his example of 'maximum caller pre-emption' (1986: 142–4), whereby the caller presents the reason for the call in his first turn. However, the opening in which all four sequences are used (reminder call) does not reflect a routine where nothing special is going on (Schegloff, 1986). Rather, the resumption call, with the reason for the call in the caller's second turn, seems more routine, since neither party displays an orientation towards the previous text message exchange before the reason for the call is presented. If the opening with only three sequences is the routine opening in the data, this may be attributed to the fact that the participants are in contact several times a day, making a how-are-you sequence irrelevant. But it is also possible that the how-are-you sequence is just routinely omitted, as in Sweden (Lindstrom, 1994).

If we compare the results with Firth's analysis of faxes/telexes after landline calls (1991), the participants in both studies manage the change of mode by reassigning (part of) the previous communication to the subsequent communication. But in this article's data, the link across the change of mode is not always a paired sequence: the answer call, the reminder call and the confirmation call are sorts of second pair-parts, but the resumption call is not. Firth also fails to examine in closer detail the relationship between the two modes – for him, the fax is always an *elaboration* (1991: 85). Finally, in Firth's telephone call the reference to the previous communication is always explicitly made, for example, *Did you see my telex?* (1991: 99–101). In contrast, the young participants

create coherence without being explicit. They do not do any interactional work to reopen the communication. Instead, they demonstrate that they are fully aware of their previous communication, as well as of what they are doing here and now. Through a temporal proximity to the previous communication and various forms of 'tying techniques' (Sacks, 1995), they take for granted that the recipient can establish the link back. This suggests that it is characteristic of the young participants in the data that the change of mode does not in itself require interactional work. If this is true, it may be attributed to the fact that the text message via mobile phone and the mobile phone call can be seen as being more closely related than the fax and the landline phone. But more crucially, the young participants are in continuous contact daily, and are therefore continually oriented towards one another and what they are doing. Against this background, the callee can anticipate the caller's potential reason for calls, and the caller can assume that the callee is oriented to what the call may be about. The change of mode is no barrier. Even if the previous exchange has been closed (the resumption call), and even if the opening is expanded (the reminder call), the parties show orientation towards the most recent communication across the media of conversation and text message.

The continued interaction and vigilant orientation towards each other demonstrates close relationships. The relationships are based on equality and commitment (the answer call), responsive negotiation and mutual update (the resumption call), and the honouring of arrangements, promises and requests (the confirmation call). However, the relationship and the closeness are under constant review and can be threatened and changed (the reminder call). This can lead to significant drama if one party demonstratively shows a non-orientation towards the other (the reminder call).

Conclusion

In existing studies of mobile communication, there are no studies of text messages and mobile calls in interconnected communication sequences, based on either interviews or recorded communication. The present study shows that text messages and mobile phone calls often become intertwined to such a degree that they are unintelligible if taken out of sequence. It also shows that text messages and mobile phone calls that are parts of coherent communication sequences are organized into a limited number of relations.

Existing studies involving text messaging and calls investigate the forms separately and/or compare them. This study shows that the choice of one form over another can be studied in the change from one form to the other. In and through that transition, the participants are displaying to each other (and us) the factors that have determined their choice of mode. Thus, the young participants are co-creators of the meaning of text message and conversational media through their communicative actions. A recurring feature of all four call types is that conversation is the chosen medium for the presentation of important, non-deferrable matters: conversation is assigned the affordance of 'immediate interaction' made possible by the synchronicity of the medium. Furthermore, conversation is used for complex matters such as negotiations, in which case the conversational medium's potential for 'simultaneous mutual exchange' is exploited. The conversation is also assigned the affordance of 'non-text message interaction' (as is the case when the conversation is used for circumvention of the dialogic text message exchange) as well as

an affordance that might be termed 'more valuable than a text message', in cases when a call is used to deal with important matters. Lastly, the participants make use of the call for sensitive affairs, for example, for the expression of comfort, compassion, sympathetic insight and for checking and working on the state of the relationship. In such cases the call seems to be assigned the affordance of 'intimacy', supported by the technological possibility for being in oral mode and present at the same time.

Note

1. Typing and spelling errors, abbreviations and fluctuation in the use of capitals and lower-case lettering have been reproduced in the translation from Danish. The number of characters utilized varies between the original messages and their translations. Names and places have been changed in order to secure the anonymity of the persons involved.

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