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Title: Graphicons as a vehicle for eliciting negative emotions in multimedial workplace interaction

Year: 2023

Version: Published version

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Please cite the original version:

Salomaa, E., & Lehtinen, E. (2023). Graphicons as a vehicle for eliciting negative emotions in multimedial workplace interaction. In A. Koivisto, H. Vepsäläinen, & M. T. Virtanen (Eds.), *Conversation analytic perspectives to digital interaction : practices, resources, and affordances* (pp. 173-207). Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura. *Studia Fennica Linguistica*, 22. <https://oa.finlit.fi/site/books/e/10.21435/sflin.22/>

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Graphicons as a vehicle for eliciting negative emotions in multimedial workplace interaction

Abstract

This chapter examines a case of multimedial interaction in the workplace by studying the parallel use of two digital platforms in accomplishing an organisational task. In our study, we analyse a case in which the participants of a video-mediated workshop draw on images or animated GIFs (i.e. *graphicons*) in managing emotion discourse. The activity of reflecting on work-related emotions is conducted across two media, that is, partly on a text-based digital platform, partly during the workshop on the video-conferencing platform. Using conversation analysis, we analyse both how assignments featuring graphicons are commented in the chat function of the platform and how the participants elaborate their comments orally. The study shows, first, that graphicons may be used in an organisational context as part of initiative actions that encourage employees to display their negative emotions. Second, we show how graphicons may be used in managing and maintaining organisational emotional orders, that is, expectations with regard to displaying emotions in a given organisation. Finally, our research contributes to digital conversation analysis through showing how sequentiality is constructed and oriented to across different media in workplace interaction.

1 Introduction

In this chapter, we investigate digital practices in a workplace context.¹ As Orlikowski and Scott (2016) note, digital work cannot be separated from

non-digital work in the 21st-century workplace. Rather, digital practices are ubiquitous. Moreover, digital practices form part of complex organisational activities in which different modalities and media, including both digital media and more traditional forms of communication, such as paper documents and face-to-face interaction, are closely intertwined (Boczkowski & Orlikowski 2004). In this chapter, we analyse a case of multimedial interaction in the workplace by studying the parallel use of two digital platforms in accomplishing an organisational task.

We approach our data by applying conversation analysis. Thus, as well as illuminating the role of digital practices in the workplace, our study has a methodological goal of demonstrating how conversation analysis can be used to analyse multimedial interaction. We focus primarily on sequentiality across different media. Sequentiality has been a major concern in conversation analytic studies of digital interaction. As Giles et al. (2015) point out, the norms governing sequentiality may be different in digital vs. everyday spoken conversation. For example, Skovholt and Svennevig (2013), in their study of workplace emails, found that non-response to initiatives, such as opening posts in a discussion forum is often treated as unproblematic. Further, as pointed out in the early stage of CMC research by Herring (1999) and Garcia and Jacobs (1999), a sequential structure may be 'disrupted' such that the first pair parts and second pair parts of adjacency pairs are not adjacent. Many of these differences between digital and face-to-face interaction have to do with the asynchronous character of text-based digital interaction: users interacting with each other need not be in the same space at the same time. Thus, the task of conversation analysis, with regard to sequentiality, is to uncover what 'nextness' means in different kinds of digital contexts (Meredith 2019). Research has shown (e.g., Berglund 2009) that participants in digital interaction have found ways of constructing coherence across asynchronously produced sequences.

When we move from the analysis of interaction in a single digital platform to looking at multimedial interaction, further complexities with regard to the 'nextness' of activities arise. There may be two kinds of nextness that are intertwined: the nextness of activities within one media and nextness across different media. These activities may also be accomplished through various modes. Thus far, little conversation analytic research of such practices has been reported (Meredith 2019). Reeves and Brown (2016) and Oloff (2019) examined how social media use is embedded in everyday face-to-face activities, and Reeves et al. (2017), in their work on game studies, considered how interaction inside a game can be combined with the study of players' interaction with each other and with spectators in the face-to-face context.

Here we approach multimediality in the workplace by analysing a case where a specific workplace activity is accomplished with the help of multiple media. Our data are drawn from a workplace context in which members of an organisational team meet in a series of workshops that are arranged with the help of a digital platform. The purpose of the workshops is to enable the team members to plan and co-ordinate their activities and support each other throughout a long-range project. Thus, an important aspect of the workshop is to offer opportunities for stopping and reflecting on the current

stage of the project. In this study, we focus on a practice where, as part of a video-mediated workshop, the team members utilise images or GIFs (i.e., *graphicons*; see Herring & Dainas 2017) in reflecting on their feelings about the project. The activity is conducted via both media, i.e., the text-based digital platform and the video-conferencing platform. The workshop facilitator posts the graphicons on the platform, and the participants choose those that best reflect their own situation and use them in discussing their feelings, first in writing the platform's chat function and then through video-mediated talk-in-interaction during the workshop. We address the following research questions:

1. How are graphicons used to organise emotion discourse?
2. How do the participants use the affordances of different media to display their emotional stances?
3. How is emotion discourse sequentially organised across the different media?

The results enable us to contribute to three different discussions. First, we show how graphicons as a specific kind of digital resource can be utilised in the workplace and how their use is intertwined with the institutional order of workplaces. Second, we show how a multimedial activity is actually interactionally accomplished in a workplace and, accordingly, reflect on the interactional affordances of different workplace media. Third, we offer insights on how multimedial activities can be approached through conversation analysis.

In the next section, we first introduce our key term of multimediality. Next, we review earlier studies on graphicons and on the management of emotions and affect in the workplace context. Finally, we describe our data and methodology and present our empirical analysis of the data.

2 Background

2.1 MULTIMEDIALITY

Here we are interested in situations in which people use multiple digital media in combination in order to accomplish their work and interact with their co-workers. We refer to the use of these kinds of media combinations as multimedial activity. Below, we briefly introduce the idea of multimediality and related concepts.

Technical development has prompted discussion on the intertwined nature of contemporary media forms across a broad variety of disciplines, from art and literary research to cultural studies (Bateman 2017). These fields have addressed the phenomenon with concepts referring to media interrelationships in general, such as *intermediality* (Elleström 2014) and *media convergence* (Jenkins 2008), and more specifically to transformations across media, such as *transmediality* (e.g. Ryan & Thon 2014; Elleström 2014), and *remediation* (Bolter & Grusin 2000). These concepts all emphasise

the fact that communication or media products in the present era of digital media are not distributed solely through a single medium, but through various media, such as both newsprint and online media (see Bateman 2017) – or, as in our case, through different digital platforms.

Here, instead of any of the above terms, we use the broader concept of *multimediality* to describe the use of, and interrelations and transformations between, multiple media. At the same time, this concept allows us to bridge the gap between media studies and linguistics. According to Bateman (2017), while media studies have tended to ignore the role of language, linguistics and multimodal studies have tended to focus exclusively on language or modes, ignoring the role of the medium itself. In this chapter, we draw in particular on Kress and van Leeuwen's (2001) work on multimodality and multimediality and treat multimediality as a necessary counterpart of the concept of multimodality. In talking about multimediality, our aim is to distinguish between media and modes, while also emphasising the integral relationship that subsists between them. While modes can be seen as ways or systems for conveying meanings, such as talk, writing, or gesture, the concept of medium refers to material resources for meaning making, such as paper or digital platforms (*ibid.*). We also concur with Arminen et al. (2016) that interaction is always mediated. Thus, the concept of medium refers not only to technologies but also, for example, to the human body as a medium for talk and gestures. Different media offer different affordances (Hutchby 2001; Meredith 2017), that is, different opportunities for action, as well as different constraints. In addition to the technical interface of the medium, modes are an important aspect of affordances: for example, technological media such as Facebook, Instagram, or Teams differ in the modes or combinations of modes (e.g., talk, writing, moving or still images) they afford and prioritise. Reciprocally, as Bateman (2017) notes, semiotic modes are not “free” but are always contextually anchored in a medium.

2.2 GRAPHICONS IN INTERACTION

Emojis, emoticons, images and GIFs are essential elements of digital interaction that we see as modes or sets of modes that can be realised in different media. Although these multimodal sets of resources may differ in their functionalities, they can be grouped under the umbrella term *graphicons* ('graphical icons'), introduced by Herring and Dainas (2017). The crucial role of these resources has been addressed in previous studies in many fields, including digital discourse studies. While early research characterised iconic emoticons as indicating inner emotions, subsequent research has pointed out that smileys, for example, do not convey actual emotions but rather have a variety of pragmatic functions (Dresner & Herring 2010; Markman & Oshima 2007). That is, studies addressing emoticons – and graphicons in a broader sense – have shown that while these devices may be used for 'emotive work' (Riordan 2017), they are also used to, e.g., modify a tone of a message, mitigate face threatening formulations, or demonstrate a stance taken (Skovholt et al. 2014; Tolins & Samermit 2016; Sampietro 2019).

This chapter contributes to the discussion on graphicons-in-interaction from two novel standpoints. First, we examine the use of graphicons in an organisational setting. Second, we apply conversation analysis, an approach that has been little used in studies of graphicons but which enables a focus on participants' orientation to the ongoing interaction.

Previous studies have largely focused on the use of emoticons or emojis, although some linguistic studies have also addressed the newer graphicons, such as images and GIFs² (Tolins & Samermit 2016; Herring & Dainas 2017). These studies have shown that these graphical elements may be used with additional text or without text, that is, as turn constructional units themselves. As stand-alone messages, graphicons are typically used as emotional reactions to prompts or as responses to other user's comments (Herring & Dainas 2017; Tolins & Samermit 2016). In this study, we show how graphicons may also be used as components of initiations for emotional displays instead of as responses per se.

Previous studies have mostly paid attention to the use of graphicons on platforms such as text messages or chat in mundane interaction to the relative neglect of organisational contexts. In their study, Skovholt, Grønning and Kankaanranta (2014) focused on the use and functions of the smiley face emoticon in workplace emails. They found that it was used as a solidarity marker to modify the tone of the message. Similarly, Darics (2010) showed that emoticons in workplace instant messaging may be used as a discursive strategy to implicate politeness. Such findings indicate that graphicons may be essential elements of relational work in workplace interaction and may also have important roles in accomplishing work-related goals.

Although recent discourse-oriented research has analysed the conversational uses of graphicons, understanding of how these may be studied as conversational actions in their own right is lacking. Previous studies have tended to view graphicons comparatively, analysing them in relation to more traditional forms of interaction. In particular, they have been considered either as non-verbal cues similar to response cries or as substitutes for co-speech gestures in face-to-face interaction (e.g., Tolins & Samermit 2016; Darics 2010; Danesi 2016). The most notable problem with this approach is that graphicons are inevitably intentional, and hence not directly comparable with non-verbal elements, which may also be unintentional. Another problem is that turns in text-based interaction are often crucially different from talk-in-interaction, in which interlocutors can monitor the process of turns by speakers (Markman & Oshima 2007; Gibson et al. 2018). Arminen et al. (2016: 296–297) note that researchers analysing digital interaction should not make overly straightforward comparisons with patterns of face-to-face interaction, as taking talk-in-interaction as a normative form of interaction may lead to ignoring participants' sense of a given digital situation. For this reason, it is important to study digital interaction not as a constrained form of face-to-face talk but as a different form of interaction.

By taking a conversation analytic approach to graphicons, we aim to gain an in-depth sequential understanding of multimodal and multimedial online

interaction. The framework of conversation analysis has been previously used in the study of emoticons by Markman and Oshima (2007), who analysed emoticons as turn constructional units that were especially used in closing sequences. Similarly, Gibson et al. (2018) studied the sequential placement of a certain laughter emoji and its functions in interaction. König (2019), in turn, looked at sequences of laughter particles and examined the role of emojis in such sequences. Meredith (2019) notes that the multimodality of newer forms of online interaction may be challenging for CA researchers. One challenge pointed out in previous research is the ambiguous nature of graphicons: while interactionally useful for expressing oneself, people do not always agree about their meaning (see Gibson et al. 2018). The ambiguous relation between graphicons' communicative functions and their potential meaning has often been investigated with the tools of speech act theory, the focus of research being to understand the graphicon sender's intended meaning (e.g., Dresner & Herring 2010; Skovholt et al. 2014). In these studies, graphicons have been found to express the illocutionary force of the message, that is, they are used to facilitate guiding the recipient to interpret the message as it is meant to be interpreted. While these studies provide important insights into the ways people use graphicons as contextualisation cues, by ignoring the socially and sequentially constructed nature of actions, they often fail to explain the role of graphicons in the ongoing conversation (see Markman & Oshima 2007).

As conversation analysts, we are not interested in the intended meanings of graphicons but in the ways participants accomplish various actions through these resources in their social interaction. As Gibson et al. (2018: 92–93) note, these online multimodal elements should be analysed in the same way as CA researchers analyse other patterns in any interaction; that is, by focusing on participants' orientation to the ongoing interaction and the structures they themselves make relevant (see Schegloff 2007).

2.3 EMOTIONS IN WORKPLACE INTERACTION

In this chapter, we focus on a specific organisational situation in which a team is asked to reflect on their feelings about their work. Thus, the situation emphasises the emotional facet of workplace interaction. Whereas organisations were earlier seen exclusively as rational enterprises, there is nowadays wide agreement that emotions play a crucial role in organisations (Fineman 2000: 10–12). Studies of emotions in workplaces have been conducted mainly in disciplines such as psychology or business communication and in large part through interviews (see Kangasharju & Nikko 2009: 101). However, empirical interaction researchers have also become interested in emotions in organisations' daily functioning, particularly in how they are managed during workplace meetings (Kangasharju & Nikko 2009; Samra-Fredericks 2004).

Earlier interaction research on displays of emotion have primarily focused on emotion displays such as laughter and crying, actions that

seem to be closely related to emotions, e.g., complaints, or broader activities like troubles-telling sequences (Peräkylä & Sorjonen 2012). In the organisational context, Kangasharju and Nikko (2009) and Holmes (2006) have studied laughter in workplace meetings. The findings show that laughter in these settings is used for specific purposes, including building rapport and collegiality. Complaints have also been studied in the context of workplace interaction (Ruusuvuori et al. 2019; Vöge 2010). Ruusuvuori et al. (2019) showed that in appraisal interviews manager and employee construct a joint affective stance in order to facilitate entry into complaining. Further, earlier studies have emphasised the multimodal characteristics of emotional displays: emotions may be expressed through verbal, prosodic or nonverbal, i.e., facial or gestural, means (Peräkylä & Sorjonen 2012; Ruusuvuori 2013). In the workplace context, Ruusuvuori et al. (2019) showed how managers and employees in appraisal interviews use, for example, facial expressions to attain a shared affective stance. In the present study, we looked at a broader activity in a workplace context, viz. a workshop assignment aimed at generating participants' reflections on their work-related emotions. We were also interested in how certain actions such as complaints become part of that activity. Moreover, we widened the perspective from the multimodal to the multimedial. That is, we studied how emotions are managed in a multimedial chain of activities, using different digital technologies, as well as different modes of action such as graphics, typing and speech.

In organisational settings, participants' displays of emotions and emotion-relevant activities may be constrained by specific norms. For example, ways of initiating complaints, complaining, and responding to complaints is contingent on the participants' positions as managers and employees or on other organisational hierarchies (Vöge 2010; Ruusuvuori et al. 2019). Fineman (2000: 5) argues that this kind of emotion work is essential as it "helps keep the organisation organised". This is related to what Stevanovic and Peräkylä (2014) call the 'emotional order', i.e., expectations with regard to expressing affect in a given relationship. In the workplace context, it is reasonable to assume that specific organisational constraints exist regarding the 'emotional status' of the employees, that is, how they are expected to express and manage their emotions in their role as members of the workplace community. While Stevanovic and Peräkylä (2014) see the emotional order as an essential context for any interaction, whether or not it includes strong displays of affect, the concept is specifically helpful for looking at sequences of action where emotion management is clearly observable, as is the case in our data. Thus, we are able to show how the participants of the workshop orient to and construct the emotional order of their organisation as part of their multimedial activity, and how digital technologies are part of this process.

3 *Data and methods*

The data were gathered in the context of a project promoting a major change in the information system of a Finnish white-collar company. In this project, the company is collaborating with a team that is, in principle, separate from but closely connected to the bigger company, and whose work is to plan and organise training on the use of the new system in the organisation. In this study, we focus on the work of this team, which, interestingly, has semi-subordinate, semi-independent status within the project. Regularly organised workshops form an important part of the team's work. During the Covid-19 situation, these workshops were organised through Microsoft Teams, a business communication platform which, among other functions, enables videoconferencing (for a similar setting, see Virtanen and Niemi, this volume). Throughout the project, another digital platform called Howspace was also used during the team's internal meetings. Howspace is a collaborative platform especially designed for facilitator-led workshops and is promoted as a social media-like environment that engages participants in interacting with each other through its chat function (Howspace 2020). The agenda of every workshop, as well as the different workshop materials and assignments, are published and stored in Howspace. In the project, the progress of the workshops is managed by an internal facilitator. Both Howspace and Teams are seen here as digital media that in combination provide a multimedial environment for accomplishing emotion discourse in the workplace.

This chapter reports on one workshop lasting 117 minutes and comprising seven attendees including the facilitator. One member of our research team was also logged in Teams as an inactive participant. The workshop was recorded by the facilitator, which means we have visual access to her screen only. Thus, we can see what happened both in Howspace and in Teams on the facilitator's screen, but we do not have access to other participants' private actions on their own laptops. The data include a video recording of the virtual workshop as well as screenshots from Howspace. Consent to use the video recordings and material from Howspace was obtained from all participants. To ensure anonymity, all names in the extracts are pseudonyms.

The workshop included two assignments that were given on Howspace and accomplished – either partly or completely – during the workshop. The assignments invited the participants to display their positive and negative feelings in relation to the external project they are involved in. Both assignments consisted of questions accompanied by graphics (either GIFs or images) that participants were expected to address in the chat function of Howspace. The design of the assignments is demonstrated in Figure 1, which shows the first assignment, with the textual instruction and GIFs, on the platform. Below each GIF there is a comment section for the participants' thoughts. After commenting, they discussed the comments orally in Teams. The assignment is analysed in detail in Extract 1a.

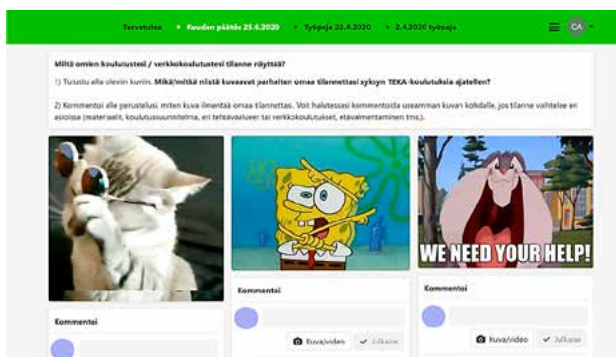


Figure 1. GIF assignment on Howspace⁴

Despite their visible similarities, the assignments were dealt with slightly differently. The assignment with GIFs was given as a pre-assignment, and hence answers had been posted to the platform already before the meeting. In the workshop, the comments were handled mostly by the facilitator who went through them by reading them aloud and adapting them to the organisational context. Sometimes the authors of the posts also elaborated on their texts. In contrast, the second assignment with images was wholly accomplished during the workshop and all the participants were asked in turn to elaborate on their typed messages in the Teams discussion. Therefore, the turn-taking strategies and sequence organisation differed slightly between these two assignments. However, our purpose was not to compare these strategies but rather to show how these sequences through which emotions emerge were negotiated during multimedial interaction.

In analysing the data, we relied on the conversation analytic principle of looking at interaction as a sequentially unfolding social activity. We identified sequential structures on several levels in the data: the structures in the discussions on the Howspace platform, e.g., the graphicons and posts in the chat function as responses to them; the structures in the oral discussions conducted in the virtual workshops; and the sequential structures that extended across the two different media, in particular the assignment introduction and completion of the assignment, first on the platform and then in the workshop.

4 Analysis

The analysis is divided into two parts. First, we show that the multimedial nature of the situation impacts the sequence organisation. In particular, we show how sequentiality is constructed and maintained across the two media. Second, we show in more detail how negative emotions are elicited, designed, and managed in the data. Throughout the analysis, we pay attention to how team members are encouraged to display their current feelings and emotions with the help of graphicons, and how the interaction not only remains on

Howspace but is expanded in the remote workshop interaction, which is enabled by the affordances of Teams. Through screen sharing, the interaction on Howspace is made visibly accessible to everyone taking part in the video conferencing session. In this way it is possible to integrate these two media platforms.

4.1 MULTIMEDIAL CHAIN OF EMOTIVE DISPLAYS

In this section, we show that emotive sequences are constructed through different stages across the various modes and media: First, the assignment is introduced on Howspace accompanied by six GIFs. In the assignment, participants are asked to describe their current work situation by choosing one or more GIFs. Second, the participants type their answers in the text box below the GIF they have chosen. Third, the facilitator reads these posts aloud and elaborates on them and sometimes asks other participants to explain their posts in more detail. In this chain, GIFs are used as components of initiations through which participants' emotion discourse can be elicited. The posts are then taken as responses that align with the emotive state described in the GIF while also connecting the GIF and its affective display to the organisational reality the participants are involved in. Extract 1 demonstrates the multimedial chain of displaying emotions. Extract 1a shows the assignment and the typed response on the digital platform and Extract 1b the oral interaction.

Extract 1a. Assignment in Howspace and Heta's written response

<p>Assignment</p>	<p>Miltä omien koulutustesi / verkkokoulutustesi tilanne näyttää?</p> <p>1) Tutustu alla oleviin kuviin. Mikä/mitkä niistä kuvaavat parhaiten tilannettasi syksyn TEKA-koulutuksia ajatellen?</p> <p>2) Kommentoi alle perustelusi, miten kuva ilmentää omaa tilannettasi. Voit halutessasi kommentoida useamman kuvan kohdalle, jos tilanne vaihtelee eri asioissa (materiaalit, koulutussuunnitelma, eri tehtäväalueet tai verkkokoulutukset, etävalmentaminen tms.)</p>	<p>What is the situation with your face-to-face/online training?</p> <p>1) <i>Familiarize yourself with the images below. Which one/s best represent your situation with regard to the fall TEKA training sessions?</i></p> <p>2) <i>Below, give your reasons why the image represents your situation. You may also comment on several images, if your situation changed in accordance with different elements (materials, training plans, various task topics or online education, distance training, or something similar)</i></p>
		<p><i>Comment</i></p>
<p>Heta's written response</p>	<p>Todennäköisesti tältä tuntuu elokuun alussa :)</p>	<p><i>It'll probably feel like this at the beginning of August :)</i></p>

Extract 1a shows how the assignment is designed to encourage team members to reflect on their work-related emotions and how the dialogue is both multimodally as well as multimedially realised. The assignment comprises two parts. The first is a general typed introduction to the assignment that includes two kinds of first pair parts – both a question (‘what is the situation with your training?’) and two directive instructions (‘Familiarise yourself with the images below’ and ‘Comment below on your reasons’). The second consists of GIFs representing possible emotive states that employees in this particular organisation may feel (‘which one/s best represent your situation?’). Thus, a GIF may be seen here as a visual initiation of an activity where the participants join in a feeling represented by the GIF. Together, these parts form a package of multiple activities, as is common in digital interactions in general (Hutchby & Tanna 2008; see also the introduction of this volume).

Previous research has also shown that graphicons often occur in openings or closings of discussions, where their main purpose is to elicit a response from co-participants (Al Rashdi 2018; Jovanovic & van Leeuwen 2018). Thus, the introduction and the GIFs constitute a package of first pair parts that project the participants' comments as second pair parts in the chat function.

By commenting on the GIF, Heta produces the projected second pair part. First, the comment may be seen as a response to the instruction ('Comment below'), realised by the act of typing in the text box. Second, the written comment aligns with the GIFs multimodal realisation with the announcement ('It'll probably feel like this'), which establishes an explicit link between the GIF and Heta's probable future feelings. In particular, a link between a chosen GIF and the feeling it is interpreted as conveying is made explicit through the use of the expression 'it'll feel like this'. The pattern may be seen as somewhat similar to quotative markers such as *be + like*, which is often used together with graphicons to represent one's affective stance in digital interaction (Tolins & Samermit 2016; Wikström 2014). In her comment, Heta orients to the chosen GIF as part of the packaged instruction by recontextualising the feeling expressed by the GIF in the organisational situation and displaying an orientation towards shared organisational knowledge that gives a meaning to the emotion. Her words 'at the beginning of August' plus a smiley face at the end of the message intertwine the emotive state to a specific upcoming event. The way the comment is phrased implies that the event is familiar to other members of the team: there is no need to explain what happens in August.

Although the typed comments complete the adjacency pair, they are not treated as sufficient in this particular organisational context. Rather, fulfilling the assignment continues during the Teams discussion, when the comments are elaborated. We can say that the sequence continues in a new medium, as exemplified in Extract 1b.

Extract 1b. Oral discussion in Teams around Heta's written comment

01 EVE: *(2.0)

*EVE SCROLLS DOWN

02 ***ja sitte Heta oot kommentoinu *vielä, et voi**

and then Heta you've also commented, how

*EVE MOVES THE CURSOR TO THE COMMENT *EVE MOVES THE CURSOR AWAY

03 **elokuun alussa vielä olla vähän sellanen**

at the beginning of August there might even be sort of

04 **loppuhetken ehkä paniikkik(h)in hhh he he,**

a last minute pani(h)c hhh he he

05 **[t(h)arvii apua,**

[n(h)eeds help

- 06 HET: [.hh n(h)ii hh kaikista muutoksista huolimatta
[.hh y(h)eah hh despite all the changes
- 07 ni täs kohtaa tuntuu et kyl täst suost niinku selvitään,
right now it feels like we'll survive this slog
- 08 mut niinku (.) mie niinku varustaudun jo tähä että,
but uhm (.) I'm like preparing for this already,
- 09 ehkä sit elokuun alus alkaa t(h)untuu s(h)iltä että,
maybe at the start of August it will begin to f(h)eel l(h)ike,
- 10 (0.6)
- 11 EVE: nii:.
yea:h.
- 12 HET: kuinka tässä käy.
how will this end.
- 13 (.)
- 14 EVE: jo[o].
yeah.

In the shift from Howspace to the Teams discussion, an important aspect of interaction arises regarding how the comment – and thus the emotion – is taken up and discussed in the situation. The meeting's facilitator (Eveliina) has a major role in managing the discussion as she manipulates the screen sharing. By scrolling on the screen and moving the cursor onto the comment (line 1), Eveliina frames the issue that the participants should attend to (see Reeves et al. 2017). Licoppe and Morel (2018) have shown how in a video-streaming platform streamers may use the practice of “read-aloud and respond”, through which they can deal with the issue of addressivity. In the same way, in Extract 1 Eveliina uses the typed comment as a resource through which she makes clear which post is to be selected and reformulated. She mentions Heta by name, makes an explicit reference to the activity of commenting (‘you’ve also commented’) and repeats part of the comment: ‘at the beginning of August’. Her moving of the cursor not only functions as a pointing gesture that picks up the next relevant on-screen item, but it also invites a response from Heta (see Olbertz-Siitonen & Piirainen-Marsh 2021).

Eveliina does not, however, read out Heta's comment verbatim. Rather, she rephrases it, both acknowledging the event mentioned in Heta's comment and describing Heta's possible future emotion in more detail (lines 2–5). First, with ‘a last-minute panic’ Eveliina shows her understanding of the comment as a reference to an upcoming event in August. Second, by making a more

explicit reference to the textual and visual elements of the selected GIF that implicate panic and need for help, Eveliina shows that she has recognised the feelings that the event may evoke. Her turn may be characterised here as a formulation (Heritage & Watson 1980). The formulation looks sequentially backward in that it exhibits Eveliina's understanding of what Heta has meant with her typed comment, and forward in that it projects a confirmation or a disconfirmation from Heta. With an overlapping 'y(h)eah' (line 6), Heta confirms Eveliina's formulation of her comment, on which she then elaborates.

Thus, our example shows how an interactional sequence can cross the borders of different media. To produce this sequence means that the participants must understand 'nextness' in multiple ways. In the Teams discussion, actions are positioned in temporal succession. In Howspace, the interaction is asynchronous, with the first and second pair parts being produced in a different time and place. However, the affordances of the platform, particularly the chat function that connects initiations and responses, help in constituting sequentiality. In transferring the sequence from Howspace to Teams, more work is needed to make the sequential structure observable, e.g., naming the comment producers and reading out parts of the relevant comments.

4.2 MANAGEMENT OF NEGATIVE EMOTIONS

Previous research on emotions in organisations (e.g., Ashfort & Kreiner 2002) have shown that in the workplace people use various means to regulate socially problematic emotions, such as anxiety or anger. Thus, sequences having to do with negative emotions are particularly illustrative of the emotional order prevailing in a given organisational context, that is, of organisational expectations with respect to the management of emotions. Both assignments in our data include GIFs or images that make such emotions relevant, as already seen in the first extract. In this analysis section, we focus on negative emotions in more detail and show how these are displayed and managed in the data. First, we show how participants make a delicate stepwise entry into negative emotion discourse through graphicons, typed comments and oral discussion. Throughout the entry process, the participants negotiate the emotional order of their organisation by reshaping the emotions described in the graphicons in line with their workplace environment. Second, we analyse how the participants exit from emotion discourse by using a specific interactive strategy that Maynard (2003) has called a 'good news exit'. We argue that the participants in an organisation may have a similar orientation to maintaining a 'benign order of everyday life' (ibid.) as in ordinary news delivery or medical contexts where people tend to intertwine negative information with positive issues (ibid.; Lehtinen 2005).

Entering into emotion discourse

In this section, we show how a stepwise entry to discourse about negative emotions can be accomplished with the help of graphicons. Our data show

that the workshop participants tended to orient to the graphicons in two ways. On the one hand, they are used as a resource that facilitates entering into troubles-telling or complaining without explicitly verbalising the negative emotion. On the other hand, the graphicons on offer are treated as too intense in the sense that although negative emotions are being solicited, they must be downgraded and neutralised.

In the previous section, we used an example from the GIF assignment. In this section, we use the image assignment. As in the GIF assignment, an overall introduction to the assignment and a graphicon are used together as an initiation package followed by the typing of comments in the chat function and oral discussion of these. Instead of GIFs, however, the assignment is complemented with images of sad, mad, and happy faces³ (Extract 2).

Extract 2. Assignment

<p>SAD – MAD – HAPPY</p> <p>Jos mietit omaa TEKA-työsuunnitelmaasi tästä aina foundation-vaiheen käyttöönottoon 29.8.2020.</p> <p>Mikä suunnitelmassasi mietityttää? Mikä suututtaa tai huolettaa? Mistä olet erityisen iloinen?</p> <p>Kirjaa ajatuksiasi kuvien alle.</p>	<p>SAD – MAD – HAPPY</p> <p><i>If you think about your own TEKA work plan from now all the way to the launching of the foundation phase on 29.8.2020, is there:</i></p> <p><i>anything that you feel puzzled about in your plan?</i> <i>anything that makes you angry or worried?</i> <i>anything that you are especially happy about?</i></p> <p><i>Document your thoughts below the images.</i></p>
	

As Extract 2 shows, in addition to images, the assignment includes verbal descriptions of emotions. In this section, we focus on the ‘mad’ face image, which is verbalised in the question ‘anything that makes you feel angry or worried?’. Coupled with the image, this may be understood as designed to elicit descriptions of negative emotions or experiences from the participants. However, the two different verbal formulations of the mad face image allow participants to express their negative emotions in alternative ways. Extract 3 demonstrates how the image facilitates doing complaining as a stepwise process in which a trouble is first implicated in a written comment below an

image of a mad face (Extract 3a) and its source then explicated orally (Extract 3b).

Extract 3a. Noora's written comment in Howspace

	
<p>Mielen päällä on tämän kevät-kesän päivityskierroksen (heikohko) muutostenhallinta eTEKA-matskujen ja koulutusmatskujen välillä... kiinnitetään tähän jatkossa entistä enemmän huomiota. Edit. siis yhdenmukaisuuden osalta!</p>	<p><i>On my mind is the (weak-ish) change management between the eTEKA materials and training materials during the spring-summer updating round... let's pay more attention to this in the future. Edit. meaning in the interests of consistency!</i></p>

In Extract 3a, Noora has made a comment below the image of the mad face. In her comment, she types that she has 'the change management' on her mind. By evaluating change management as 'weak-ish', she implies that she is not happy with the way the issue has been dealt with. However, she does not elaborate on her feelings or the reason why she raises this issue below the mad face image. Instead Noora uses the graphicon in ways that facilitate the display of this negative and thus potentially delicate emotion (see Ashforth & Kreiner 2002) in an appropriate way, by using the graphicon to frame the comments she is about to make as negatively loaded. Thus, Noora does not have to verbalise her emotion in the typed comment but merely physically link her comment to the mad face image. It should be noted that the affordances of both Teams and Howspace play a crucial role in enabling a cautious entry of this kind. The participants in the interaction draw on the screen-sharing affordance through which they can establish shared visual access to the images as well as the comments on Howspace. This can be seen in Extract 3b. Before this extract Noora has expanded on her comments typed below the sad face graphicon. Now she shifts to her comments below the mad face and uses the metaphor of 'jumping' that draws on the shared screen as a physical entity.

Extract 3b. Oral discussion in Teams around Noora's written comment

- 01 NOO: **mutta joo no sit mä hyppään tonne**
so anyway now I'll jump over to the
- 02 **määd-osastolle niin (0.8) lai- (.) tää (.) mun on**
mad section and (0.8) I place- (.) this (.) I need to
- 03 **niinku avat(h)tava t(h)eille ettei jää väärää**
like expl(h)ain to y(h)ou to avoid
- 04 **käsityksiä koska tää on siis nytten (0.4) öö**
misconceptions because this is like (0.4) um
- 05 **eilisen (0.6) eilisen pohdintoja kun laitoin tohon**
yesterday's (0.6) yesterday's thoughts when I jotted down
- 06 **että mielen päällä on tän (0.8) tän päivityskierroksen**
that I'm preoccupied by this (0.8) this change management
- 07 **tää muutostenhallinta niin,**
during this updating round
- ((lines omitted))
- 08 NOO: **istuttiin kuitenkin tunteja**
we nonetheless sat for hours
- 09 **alas (.) eri asiantuntijoiden kanssa ja**
(.) with various experts and
- 10 **hinkattiin sanamuodot kuntoon ja, .hh muistan**
polished the correct terms and, .hh I remember
- 11 **[silloin jo sanoneeni asiantuntijalle että, (.) että**
saying already back then to the expert to, (.) to
- 12 EVE: [°mm°
- 13 **@muutat↑han nämä samat muutokset sitten (.) sin- (.)**
@plea↑se make the same changes then (.) to (.)
- 14 **sinne sinun omaan (.) koulutusmateriaaliisi (0.6) [ja**
to your own (.) training materials (0.6) and
- 15 EVE: **[kyllä.**
[yes.
- 16 NOO: **näi- (.) näin ei s(h)itten ollut k(h)äynyt eli nyt**
thi (.) this had i(h)ndeed not h(h)appened so now

- 17 EVE: **mt**
- 18 NOO: **n[yt kun sain**
[now when I received
- 19 EVE: **[oh dear.**
- 20 NOO: **tämän uuden materiaalin ni siellä oli**
this new material it had
- 21 **ne samat (0.3) samat jutut mitä hinkattiin silloin**
all the same (0.3) same things we had polished up back
- 22 **aikasemmin, (.) ja nyt sitten (0.8) öö minulle**
then, (.) and now like (0.8) um the feedback
- 23 **kohdistettiin palaute että (.) toi- toiselta asiantuntijalta**
was targeted to me (.) by anoth- another expert
- 24 **että, (.) että täällä e-teka-kurssilla @ei kyllä nyt**
how (.) how here in the e-teka course @they're really not
- 25 **näy ne (.) sovitut muutokset mitkä viimeksi**
seeing the agreed upon changes we made
- 26 **tehtiin@, (.) niin (0.6) otin siitä itse vähän**
last time@, (.) so (0-6) I was a bit miffed about that
- 27 **nokkiini koska koin että se oli sitten**
because I felt that it was
- 28 **asiantuntijan (.) oma**
solely (.) the expert's
- 29 **(0.8)**
- 30 EVE: **kyllä.**
yes.
- 31 NOO: **oma virhe siinä kohti ettei ollut itse sit**
mistake right there to not have gone and
- 32 **käyⁿy muuttamassa niitä mitä sovittiin**
changed the things we'd agreed upon
- 33 **että, (.) se jäi tuossa vähän harmittamaan ja,**
so, (.) that's what soured my mood somewhat and,

In Extract 3b, after entering into the negative emotion discourse in her comment aided by the graphicon, Noora reformulates her emotion in her oral explanation – this time designing her turn explicitly as a complaint. As Heinemann and Traverso (2009) point out, complaining as an action entails both expressing a negative emotion about something and attributing a moral responsibility to someone for causing that negative emotion. The “someone” may be a person or a collective entity, such as an organisation. In Günthner’s (1997) terminology, Noora’s contribution can be seen as a complaint story, a narrative that focuses on the morally problematic activities of the antagonist towards the teller of the story. In this case, the antagonist is a person from the bigger project, and thus external to the team.

In lines 1–2, Noora first describes her movement in the multimedial space with the verb ‘jump over’. Then, in lines 2–4 she makes a metacomment about her typed comment that reframes it as insufficient on its own: it needs to be elaborated and explained orally. She then narrates her complaint story (see Günthner 1997) in some detail. Lines 8–14 may be characterised as a pre-sequence in which Noora moves from her typed announcement to further elaboration while at the same time prefiguring her complaint. She describes earlier activities relevant to her complaint and, through animating her own earlier talk (lines 13–14), formulates what she understands as the normative standards for organisational work, asking implicitly the other participants to share these norms. In her response on line 15, Eveliina expresses her agreement with these norms. By saying ‘this had indeed not happened’ (line 16) Noora then reveals the problem, and Eveliina’s affiliative response *oh dear* (in English, line 19) shows that she has recognised this normative transgression. In lines 22–26, Noora continues narrating her complaint and presents herself as the recipient of negative feedback by an expert through reconstructed dialogue (see Günthner 1997). In doing this, she slightly changes her tone of voice, thereby marking the feedback as a quotation from the expert. Both the expert’s transgression and Noora’s own reactions to it – ‘I was a bit miffed about that’ (line 26–27) and ‘that’s what soured my mood somewhat’ (line 33) – are overtly reported, as has been claimed is characteristic of third-party complaints in ordinary interaction (Drew 1998), although this conflicts with Vöge’s (2010) finding that such explicit formulations of transgressions do not occur in business meetings. It should, however, be noted that although these emotions are overtly reported, they are also mitigated (‘a bit’, ‘somewhat’), which shows the participant’s orientation to expressing complaints in a professional manner.

Thus, despite the fact that expressions of negative emotions are encouraged, participants often seem to demonstrate caution in accomplishing complaints or troubles-talk (see also Ruusuvauro et al. 2019). That is, emotions displayed in caricatured graphicons seem to be considered too intense or otherwise undesirable and thus often need reshaping to fit into the organisational situation. In Extract 3, this is evident in Noora’s written comment, which does not contain negatively loaded words such as ‘angry’ but chooses a more neutral expression ‘on my mind’ instead. The following extract provides a more detailed instance in which emotion is neutralised step-by-step. Because the facilitator was sharing her screen, we had access to the typing process,

which is transcribed below (Extract 4a) following the method introduced by Meredith and Stokoe (2014) in their study of repair in chat interaction. The writing process was, in principle, also accessible to the other participants. However, lacking access to what they were doing in their remote locations, we do not know whether they were watching what was happening on the screen. They were probably engaged on writing their own comments on Howspace. The transcription includes information that enables readers to see how the message is constructed. The writing symbol (Δ) indicates the beginning and end of the construction of the message and deletions made by the writer are presented by strikethrough of the words or letters. The completed comment is displayed in Extract 4b and is followed by the oral explanation (Extract 4c).

Extract 4a. Transcript of Eveliina's typing process in Howspace

- 01 **EVE:** Δ Ei nyt suututua ~~va~~ a., i ~~,-,i~~ , mutta
I'm not angray ay y., i ~~,-,i~~ , but
- 02 **mietityttää koa a vasti, kuinka hankeen**
it reay y lly puzzles me, how the projet's
- 03 **hankeen osaaminen menee perille. (2.0) Kouluui**
projet's expertise is understood. The trainiio
- 04 **ri tukset yksi asia ja ne varmasti menevät**
to ngs one thing and they will surely go
- 05 **hyvin. Mutta miten muut t tuki hankkeelta**
well. But how is the others' s support from the project
- 06 **käyttöönottoon sujuu ja (11.0) Ei nyt suututa mutta**
to the deployment faring and I'm not angry but
- 07 **mutta mietityttää kovasti, kuinka**
it really puzzles me, how
- 08 **hankkeen osaaminen menee perille. Koulutukset**
the project's expertise is understood. The trainings
- 09 **yksi asia ja ne varmasti menevät hyvin.**
one thing and they will surely go fine.
- 10 **Mutta miten muut tuki hankkeelta**
But how is the others s support from the project
- 11 **käyttöönottoon sujuu ja**
to the deployment
- 12 **Huolettaa hiukan hiukan se, miten hanke (1.0)**
I'm slightly slightly worried about how the project
- 13 **suunnittelee tukimallin koulutusten lisäksi**
plans the support model to supplement the training
- 14 **eli missä usein kysytyt kysymykset, missä**
meaning where are the frequently asked questions,
- 15 **saa aoya oya pua, milloin tukiklinikat jne.**
where one can get heko ko lp, when support clinics etc.
- 16 **Ettei tei tä osaaminen vahvistuu myös koulutukse**
Not to not strengthen expertise after

17 ~~k~~se sten jälkeen. (6.0) Tuntuu hiukan siltä, että
a trai the training as well. Feels a bit like
 18 hanke kuvittelee, että kun ei perusteta
the project imagines that when they don't establish
 19 tukikav Tuntuu hiukan siltä, että hanke kuvittelee,
a support chal Feels a bit like the project thinks
 20 että kun ei perusteta tukikav
that when they don't establish a support chal

Extract 4b. Eveliina's completed comment in Howspace

<p>Huolettaa se, miten hanke suunnittelee tukimallin koulutusten lisäksi eli missä usein kysytyt kysymykset, missä saa apua, milloin tukiklinikat jne. Että osaaminen vahvistuu myös koulutusten jälkeen.</p>	<p><i>I'm worried about how the project plans the support model to supplement the training, meaning where are the frequently asked questions, where one can get help, when support clinics etc. To strengthen expertise after the training as well.</i></p>
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In the construction of her comment (Extract 4a), Eveliina first refers to the mad face graphicon and one of the verbal descriptions of it ('anything that makes you angry?') by negating it ('I'm not angry'). This negation is followed by a conjunction 'but' (line 1), which signals a divergent position and thus mitigates the strong emotion of anger displayed in the graphicon. However, later in the typing process, she deletes this formulation and edits it first with 'I'm slightly worried' and finally 'I'm worried' (line 12). It is worth noting that before editing the comment, Eveliina stops typing for several seconds (line 6). It seems that during this pause she reads the wording of the assignment, from which she then picks out the expression 'worried' in her message. The emotion is further downgraded in the oral elaboration (Extract 4c), in which she again reformulates the message.

Extract 4c. Eveliina's oral elaboration of her written comment

01 EVE: ja (1.0) itseeni .mh huolet- huoles<tuttaa> (.) tai ei
and (1.0) for my part .mh what worri- wor<ries> (.) or doesn't
 02 nyt (.) huolestuta mutta mie- mietityttää ehkä
really (.) worry but puz- puzzles me perhaps
 03 eniten toi että miten toi hanke .hhhh nyt sitten
the most is how the project .hhhh now makes

- 04 **tosta muusta tukimallista (0.6) mt saa sellasen**
 that other support scheme (0.6) such
- 05 **et ku me (.) me sitä osaamista .hhh osaamisen kartuttamista**
 that as we (.) we are starting .hhh are starting the cultivation of expertise
- 06 **käynnistellään niissä koulutuksissa niin, (.) kaikkihan nyt**
 in the trainings it's like, (.) everybody
- 07 **tietenki tietää että se koulutus on vain yks osa (.)**
 obviously knows that the training is just one part (.)
- 08 **osa sitä osaamisen kasvattamista että, .hh**
 part of the accumulation of expertise so, .hh
- 09 **ymmärtäähän hanke sitten sen muun tukimallin (.)**
 hopefully the project then (0.3) understands to plan
- 10 **ää tätä käyttöönottoo varten sitten (0.3) riittävän (.)**
 the uhm deployment of the other support scheme (.)
- 11 **laajasti suunnitella että,**
 on a sufficient (.) scale so that,

In lines 1–2, Eveliina moves to negative emotion discourse first with ‘for my part what – worries’. At this point she produces what Couper-Kuhlen and Thompson (2005) have called a ‘concessive repair’, which consists of first making a concession, ‘or doesn’t really worry’, and then following it with a revised version of the statement ‘but puzzles’. As Couper-Kuhlen and Thompson (2005) note, such concessions work on a scale: a more extreme version of a statement is replaced by a more moderate one. In our case, by changing the verb from *huolestuttaa* ‘worry’ to *mietityttää* ‘puzzle’, Eveliina transforms the nature of the emotion from intense to more neutral.

This neutralisation also has to do with the nature of Eveliina’s action as a potential complaint. During the process of writing her comment (Extract 4a), she starts with her feeling about what the project – meaning the people separate from their team – ‘imagines’ at the moment (line 18). This sentence seems to be leading towards a description of a transgression by the ‘project’. However, she deletes this emerging sentence. In the final Howspace comment (Extract 4b), as well as in the oral elaboration of the comment (Extract 4c), the trouble is presented merely as a concern about the future actions of the personified project, while the reason for her concern is left implicit. Thus, her action is not a clear complaint, since it lacks a clear indication of a transgression. Her insistence on not being ‘mad’ but just

'puzzled' or 'worried' also points in the same direction: being mad usually entails a person or other object that one is mad at, while being puzzled or worried does not necessarily require a person or object of the feeling. The work of neutralising the emotion can be understood in relation to Eveliina's role in the team vis-à-vis the project. As a project leader and an important link between the project and the team, she needs to balance between these two groups. By downgrading the emotion, she repositions herself to inhabit that role.

The extract demonstrates how the process of neutralising emotions is accomplished in practice. The mad face image as a caricatured graphical element encourages participants to display delicate emotions through exaggeration while at the same time it represents an emotional state that is too extreme in the organisational context. Seargeant (2019) has also shown in his semiotic analysis of emojis that the emotions displayed by their stylised elements are exaggerated. Our data show that while graphicons can serve people in organisations as a means of expressing negative emotions, instead of increasing one's negative statements, they must be worked on to manage the more delicate display of emotions deemed appropriate in the organisational context.

Exiting from emotion discourse

As Jefferson (1988) has shown in her study of troubles-talk, speakers attending troubles-telling use closing-implicative elements in order to move away from such talk. In situations where people are delivering bad news or talking about their troubles, they often make a transition from such orientations to ordinary talk with sequences that render the trouble somehow brighter (Jefferson 1988; Maynard 2003). Maynard (2003: 177–182) has called this strategy of shifting from trouble talk into other topics or activities a 'good news exit'. In our data, the participants used this strategy as a recurrent practice to achieve an exit from negative emotion discourse. They especially used it during their spoken explanations of their comments in Teams but, in some cases, also in Howspace. Extract 5 shows how the discussion in Teams continues after Noora's complaint (Extract 3) and how Noora finally moves away from troubles-talk through a good news exit.

Extract 5. Oral discussion in Teams

- 01 EVE: **ja tässä nyt ei selvästi,=se ei oo tietenkää**
and this here clearly hadn't=it had not
- 02 **oo ollut sun vastuulla ja, .hh ja (.) ja (.) ja**
been you responsibility of course and, .hh and (.) and (.) and
- 03 **(.) ikävä että se (.) siit on tullu niin ku sulle palautetta,**
(.) a shame it (.) led to like you receiving feedback,

- 04 **.hh #e- e-# että asiantuntija ei oo sitte ite**
.hh #th- th-# the expert did not do
- 05 **hoitanu hommaansa. (.) toi on tosi harmillista**
their job. (.) that is truly a shame
- 06 **koska nyt sitte (0.6) mt sä oot vähän niin ku**
because now (0.6) mt you're kind of caught
- 07 **välikädessä siinä sitte (.) et et mitkä muutokset sä**
in a crossfire there (.) like like what changes will you
- 08 **nyt sit sinne e-tekaan viet. (.) n- ne nykyiset vai**
make to e-teka now. (.) th- the currrent ones or
- 09 **ne vanhat.**
the old ones.
- 10 **(1.0)**
- 11 NOO: **juu|ri näin. (.) mutta (.) mutta us|kon että**
ex|actly. (.) but (.) but I be|lieve that
- 12 **tuostakin päästään koska saatiin sit taas ne**
we will clear that up as well because we got the
- 13 **(1.0) #ne# yksityiskohdat (.) tietoomme ja (.) ne**
#the# details (.) down and (.) the changes
- 14 **vielä sinne muutetaan °että°.**
will be made °so that°.
- 15 EVE: **.hh joo eli (.) feli Noora rupee olee tässä valikoimahallinnan**
.hh yeah meaning (.) fmeaning Noora is becoming a selection management
- 16 **as(h)iant(h)untija että j(h)os kaipaatte apuvalmentajaa ni,**
ex(h)pert so in c(h)ase you need an assistant coach well,
- 17 NOO: £<kyllä>£.
£<yes>£.

First, Eveliina continues underlining the negative emotions reported by Noora in her complaint (see Extract 3). She produces an empathic response to Noora's turn by showing that she has recognised the expert's transgression, thereby co-constructing a moral stance towards this kind of inappropriate behaviour. By saying 'it had not been your responsibility of course' (lines 1–2) and 'the expert did not do their job' (lines 4–5), Eveliina justifies Noora's complaint and negative feelings by drawing on the organisational duties that are relevant with regard to the complainable event. Eveliina also orients to Noora's emotions with affective assessments such as 'that is truly a shame' (line 5), thus displaying her view that Noora has made her complaint within the acceptable organisational boundaries pertaining to the expression of negative feelings.

In line 11, Noora closes the sequence with 'exactly' and starts a new activity with 'but I believe we will clear that up'. The utterance particle 'but' is used here to mark both the transition and contrast to the prior turn (VISK § 801), implying a discursive reorientation. We could say that Noora produces a 'statement of hopefulness' (Maynard 2003) in which she moves her orientation away from emotion discourse to problem-solving. This practice of recasting the trouble in a more positive form may be seen as an 'optimistic projection' (Jefferson 1988; Maynard 2003) and is one way of producing a good news exit. Maynard (2003: 182–184) suggests that underlying this kind of interaction is an orientation towards a benign order, that is, a specific interactional order that needs to be achieved in order to build solidarity among the interlocutants. Eveliina's reaction (lines 15–16) to the good news exit aligns with Noora's new interactional trajectory.

As Lehtinen (2005) points out, while the orientation towards a benign order is common in many institutional contexts, it may have different functions. Our data suggest a tendency to withdraw from trouble talk in order to display oneself as a competent employee able to perform one's duties efficiently and thereby uphold the organisation's norms and social order. Whereas Extract 5 demonstrated how a change in orientation was reached only after processing the complaint in the oral discussion, Extract 6 below shows how participants may display optimistic projection already in their written comment (Extract 6a). The comment is written below the mad face image. The oral explanation is shown as Extract 6b.

Extract 6a. Tiia's written comment in Howspace

<p>Työparini siirtää toistuvasti sovittuja suunnittelupalavereja muiden palaverien tieltä, toivottavasti saan häneltä kuitenkin tarvittavan ajan. Pitää hyödyntää ne hetket tarkalleen, kun saan hänet linjan päähän :)</p>	<p><i>My colleague continuously postpones scheduled draft meetings in favor of other meetings, hopefully I can get sufficient time from her. I have to make the most of such moments meticulously, when I finally get hold of her :)</i></p>
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Extract 6b. Oral discussion in Teams around Tiia's comment

- 01 TII: **ja tota: hh no sitte (0.6) mt tosiaan (.) mikä tässä nyt**
and well: hh so then (0.6) mt what (.) really worries me
- 02 **sitten (.) vähän huolestuttaa, .hh, suunnitelmassanikin**
(.) slightly here, .hh in my plans too,
- 03 **niin, (.) et mun työpari (.) Tea ni (0.5) se (.)**
(.) is that my colleague (.) Tea well (0.5) she (.)
- 04 **vähän toistuvasti siirtää (.) meiän sovittuja (.)**
kind of repeatedly postpones (.) our scheduled (.)
- 05 **tapaamisia muiden palaverien (.) alta pois? .hh**
meetings to make room for (.) other meetings? .hh
- 06 **että (.) et selkeesti (.) me ehkä hänen kanssaan (.) vä[↑]hän**
so (.) so pretty clearly (.) the two of us (.) prioritise
- 07 **priorisoidaan eri tavalla näitä (.) tekemisiä,=ja**
these (.) tasks some[↑]what differently=and
- 08 **hänen työpöytänsä totta kai näyttää erilaiselta**
her desk of course looks different from
- 09 **kun mun työpöytäni, .hh niin tota (.) mietti[↑]nyt**
my desk so .hh so um (.) just be[↑]en thinking
- 10 **vaan et täytyy ite varmistaa sitte (.) sillee että**
that I have to make sure to (.) like
- 11 **tekee tosi tarkan suunnitelman siitä et mitä**
make super accurate plans about what
- 12 **mä häneltä oikeesti niin ku tarvitsen jotta**
I like really need from her so
- 13 **sitten ne ajat kun mä saan hänet fn(h)iin sanotusti**
that during those times I fn(h)o to speak
- 14 **käyttööni niinf mä pystyn sit käyttää niin ku**
have her at my disposal I can then
- 15 **tehokkaasti hyödyksi, .hhh mutta se (.) se aina välillä**
use the time efficiently, .hhh but what (.) what annoys me

- 16 **vähän harmittaa kun on i[te suunnitellu**
from time to time is when you have planned
- 18 EVE: **[toi on kyllä**
[that is really
- 19 TII: **työpäivänsä (.) tietyllä (.) tavalla ja ajatellu**
your work day (.)in a specific (.) way and thought
- 20 **että sit mä saan näitä eteenpäin ja, (.)**
that you can progress these things and, (.)
- ((lines omitted))
- 21 EVE: **toi on tosi harmillinen juttu ja, (.) toivottavasti**
that is a real shame and, (.) hopefully
- 22 **nyt saat Tiia tota eteenpäin to- (.) tän viikon osalta. (.)**
Tiia you can make progress this Thu- (.) this week. (.)
- 23 **.hh [et se varmasti auttaa]**
.hh it will surely help
- 24 TII: **[joo ja kyl mä sitte]**
[yeah and of course I will then
- 25 EVE: **jos sä suunnittelet sen (.) tosi tarkkaan että fm(h)itä**
if you plan it (.) really carefully about fwh(h)at
- 26 **sä haluatf siltä (.) sitte saada.**
you wantf them to do (.) for you.
- 27 **(0.3)**
- 28 TII: **joo: ja jos rupee näyttää siltä että aika loppuu**
yea:h and if it starts to look like time is running out
- 29 **kesken ni totta kai otan niinku .hh järeämmät aseet käyttöön.**
then of course I will like resort to .hh tougher measures.

In her mad face comment (Extract 6a), Tiia makes an implicit complaint about a colleague who is part of the larger project but outside the team. Again, the complaint emerges in the interaction between the image, its caption (the question) and the written comment. The fact that Tiia's co-worker repeatedly postpones their scheduled appointments is recast in a form that emphasises Tiia's active role in solving the problem rather than her making an explicit complaint about her colleague's inappropriate conduct. The end of the comment, especially, shows that Tiia orients to the problem as one that is solvable. She also softens her critique at the end of the comment by adding the smiley face emoticon (see Skovholt et al. 2014). In the oral discussion (Extract 6b), although designing her turn more explicitly as a complaint, Tiia also moves quickly towards solving the problem. In particular, the emotion of annoyance is expressed more overtly ('it annoys me from time to time', lines 15–16) than in the written comment. However, in lines 6–9, she mitigates the seriousness of the transgression through searching for possible explanations for her co-worker's behaviour.

In line 21, Eveliina produces a complaint-relevant response, 'that is a real shame', which acknowledges the feeling expressed by Tiia. This affiliative response is followed by a hopeful projection (see Maynard 2003: 181–182), 'hopefully you can make progress', which subtly shifts the focus from the negative feeling towards problem solving. Tiia agrees with this projection (lines 24 and 28), and states that she will, if necessary, resort to more effective ways to obtain the necessary information from her co-worker. In exiting the emotion discourse, Tiia thus constructs herself as a solution-oriented employee who does not dwell on her negative feelings.

Our analysis thus shows that, in exiting emotion discourse, participants orient to an organisational emotional order that foregrounds a solution-centred approach to negative emotions experienced at work. That is, while it is acceptable for the employees to feel bad, and even complain about (absent) co-workers, they are nevertheless expected to be professional with regard to their feelings and display an orientation towards solving the work-related problems that cause them negative emotions. In this respect, even though solution-centeredness can be already displayed on the digital platform, oral discussion seems to be particularly important. Thus, extending the sequence across media seems to contribute towards resolving emotion-laden issues.

5 Conclusions

In this study, we examined workshop activities involving graphicons from a conversation analytic perspective. Specifically, we analysed how the participants in a multimedially organised workshop drew on a given set of graphicons when managing emotion discourse. The findings contribute to several areas in the field of digital interaction and discourse studies. First, they contribute to the rapidly expanding research on graphicons. Some prior studies have addressed the multimodal nature of sequences (Jovanovic & van Leeuwen 2018) and the sequential placement of graphicons in interaction

(Markman & Oshima 2007; Gibson et al. 2018; König 2019). Our findings show that graphicons may be used in an organisational workshop context as part of initiative actions that are responded to in a comment section on a digital platform. That is, instead of being affective responses they are used to elicit employees' emotion displays. Moreover, in contrast to prior studies that have tended to focus on the use of graphicons in one specific medium, our study sheds light on their deployment in a more complex setting where people are operating in several media and modalities at the same time. We show how responding to task initiations that include graphicons extends from the digital platform on which they are posted to video-mediated talk-in-interaction.

Second, our results provide deeper insights into expressing and managing emotions in workplaces. Whereas prior research studied different multimodal characteristics of emotional displays, such as facial expressions and prosody (see Ruusuvaori 2013; Peräkylä & Sorjonen 2012), our study demonstrates that GIFs and images can also be used to manage emotion discourse in online workplace interaction. In addition to some of the multimodal characteristics of emotional displays, our study shows how emotions can be elicited and constructed across different media. Our findings also further understanding of how organisational emotional orders are interactionally managed through showing how the organisational roles, duties and knowledge of workshop participants informed how they expressed and talked about negative emotions. The findings suggest that while they were expected to express negative emotions regarding their work, such displays were constrained by specific organisational norms. In this respect, graphicons are interesting in that they often represent rather strong, stereotypical emotions. In our study, while the use of graphicons created a supportive environment for the members of the team to express their negative feelings, the exaggerated nature of the emotions depicted in the images was oriented to as too extreme for the organisational context, and participants needed to moderate the emotion in line with their role in the organisation. Thus, our study suggests that analysing the use of digital media and such modes as graphicons may be revealing about the emotional order of an organisation.

Third, we contribute to the ongoing discussion on applying conversation analysis to digital data, in particular through our analysis of a multimedial activity. Our results show that, in such activity, sequential structures exist at various levels. On the one hand, each media has structures specific to it. For example, we found that the chat comments under the graphicons formed a second pair part to the task assignments featuring the graphicons, and in the Teams discussion we found, for example, complaint-response pairs. On the other hand, however, some sequential structures extend across media. This was seen in our study in two ways. First, comments induced by the graphicons extended across the two media. That is, the Howspace comments were elaborated in the Teams discussion. Thus, actions such as complaints were processed in both Howspace and Teams. Second, the assignment introduction, consisting of both the graphicons themselves and the instruction on how they should be commented on, formed an overarching

multimedial sequence. All the discussion in both Howspace and Teams can be seen as a response to the assignment introduction.

It must be noted, however, that the digital practices we have described are not wholly new. As Herring (2013) has noted, although novel practices sometimes emerge in the new media context, some of these practices are 'familiar' from other contexts, and sometimes old practices are 'reconfigured' in new media contexts. Similarly, Orlikowski (2000) has discussed how adopting new technologies in the workplace context may lead to what she calls 'application', a situation where new technologies are used to conduct old practices in a slightly new way, alongside the adoption of genuinely new practices. Reflective assignments in workplaces have previously been studied in face-to-face contexts. For example, Nielsen's (2012) study of a brainstorming session showed that such activities can also be multimedial. In that study, participants wrote down their individual ideas on coloured cards (first medium). The cards were then placed on a second medium, a board, and then discussed in a third medium, the participants' voices, in talk-in-interaction (for a similar assignment, see Nissi & Pälli 2020). The graphicon assignment reported in our study contained familiar elements, but at the same time the affordances of the new digital media make it possible to reconfigure the way they were used. While space constraints do not allow for a comparison with earlier practices here, we can list some features of the technologies used in our data that seem to be consequential. The digital platform (Howspace) easily affords the embedding of graphicons, including moving-image GIFs. The graphicons and comments on the platform can easily be accessed by all participants before, during and after the workshop. The application for video-mediated meetings (Teams), in turn, affords screen-sharing and hence also the sharing of graphicons and comments during meetings. Thus, new kinds of multimedial practices are afforded by the new digital tools.

Multimediality also has an effect on how orientation to nextness is achieved. If we think about nextness within a given media, its accomplishment is constrained by the affordances of that media. For example, whereas in the oral Teams discussion the first and second pair parts appeared adjacently, in Howspace nextness was accomplished through the platform's chat function. Achieving nextness across the two media, however, requires more effort. For example, in elaborating on their Howspace comments, participants have to refer explicitly to their comments. The affordances of Teams can also be used, particularly the screen-sharing affordance. This enables the facilitator sharing the screen to scroll to the appropriate place on the Howspace platform and highlight relevant parts of the comments. This intermedial nextness does not produce clear adjacency pairs, as the assignment introduction and the graphicons in Howspace do not project specific kinds of contributions during the workshop. In a more diffuse way, however, some kinds of relevant next actions are projectable through knowledge of the kind of activity in question: in reflective assignments, individual contributions are customarily followed by a joint discussion about them (see, e.g., Nielsen 2012). This is supported by the fact that the assignment is part of the workshop program, and the participants can thus expect their contributions on the platform to form a basis for discussion during the workshop.

We also showed how access to the participants' computer screens can be helpful in the analysis, as it opens a window on processes of repair during the comment writing phase, allowing us to show how the writer calibrated her contribution in relation to the emotional order of the organisation already during the writing process. However, digital writing of this kind raises some methodological considerations. For example, conversation analysts are usually interested in participants' publicly observable orientations; however, digital contexts differ from face-to-face contexts in what can be observed and by whom. In most cases, digital writing cannot be seen by the other participants, who thus cannot orient to it (see Meredith and Stokoe 2014). The situation is different if the writer's screen is shared in some way, but even then there are differences in how public other participants' orientations to the writing are. In a case like ours, where the participants were in remote locations and participated solely through the audio channel, only their potential verbal responses to the writing are observable to the other participants. This contrasts with the situation in a face-to-face context, where the embodied orientations of the participants, e.g., gaze, are also observable. Thus, the affordances of the technologies, and the participants' choices in utilising these affordances, are highly relevant with regard to how digital activities can and should be analysed.

Our study thus offers an example of how conversation analysis can be used to analyse workplace practices in the 21st century, in contexts where participants need to navigate in a network of different media, and where digital media are intertwined both with each other and more traditional media. In particular, we have shown how an orientation to sequentiality that can extend across different media is an important resource for participants in such complex contexts. Unlike most conversation analytic studies of digital interaction, which have concentrated on interaction in one medium at a time (see, Meredith 2019), our study points to the potential of conversation analysis as a tool for tackling complex multimedial activities.

NOTES

- 1 This work was supported by the Academy of Finland (project number 322733). We would like to thank the reviewers for their constructive comments on our chapter.
- 2 GIFs (graphical interchange formats) are animated images that typically draw on popular culture. They may also include text.
- 3 The image for 'sad' is not a stereotypical sad image. It is a 'grimacing' face that usually conveys, e.g., awkwardness. There is no simple answer to why such an image has been chosen, and since our focus is on the 'mad' image, we will not attempt to answer it here. Suffice it to say that while using a popular 'sad mad gläd' retrospective technique, the facilitator seems to orient to it as not entirely suited to this particular situation. This can be seen, for example, in her choice of image for 'sad' and in her use of the word *mietityttä* 'puzzled' instead of 'sad' in the verbal assignment.
- 4 In Figure 1, as well as our extracts, the animated GIFs are represented as screenshots. In our analysis, the fact that the image is moving is not relevant, as this feature is not oriented to by the participants and because our purpose is not to compare the different types of graphicons.

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