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The discursive construction of mobile chronotopes in mobile-phone messaging

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ABSTRACT

This article draws on data from an ethnographic project to explore the ways in which migrant micro-entrepreneurs exploit mobile messaging apps to co-construct mobile chronotopes: dynamic configurations of time and space negotiated by geographically separated participants, who draw on different contexts and frames of understanding. Analysis of mobile messages by two couples—Chinese butchers in Birmingham and Polish shop-owners in London—informed by interview and interactional data collected at work and home, suggests they discursively negotiate and exploit multiple chronotopic layers, creating complex intersections between virtual and physical spaces in everyday interactions. We focus on the role that multilingual and multimodal semiotic resources play in co-constructing mobile chronotopes. In particular, we explore critical junctures at which communicative expectations are challenged, rendering mobile chronotope negotiation visible. Our concept of the mobile chronotope has implications for both the theorisation of mobile phone communication and understanding how chronotopes function in contemporary transnational migrant discourse. (Chronotope, migrant entrepreneur, mobile messaging, transnational migration)*

INTRODUCTION

Mobile communication technologies play a key role in facilitating and shaping contemporary experiences of transnational migration, enabling migrants to maintain close ties back home while managing local social and economic networks. This article explores the ways in which migrant micro-entrepreneurs exploit mobile-phone messaging apps to discursively construct and negotiate relevant chronotopes at the intersection of personal and professional communication. Putting forward the concept of the mobile chronotope, we detail how the migrants draw on different contexts—their physical settings, immediate concerns, and shared cultural histories—in managing relationships through mobile messaging and how they establish and negotiate emerging communicative norms.

As a point of departure, we take the premise that meaning-making is a nonlinear complex process in which a range of factors need to be considered in the creation

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and interpretation of discursive work (Blommaert 2015, 2017). We adopt a chronotopic view of communication according to which meaning can be made only within specific spatiotemporal contexts (Agha 2007), which are themselves shaped by interactants' individual historical and momentary agency within given participation frameworks (Blommaert 2015). As such, meanings are time-bound, unstable, and subject to reinterpretation in inherently fluid contexts (Blommaert 2018). From this standpoint, we explore the nature of contextual influences in the chronotopic understanding of translocal mobile messaging between migrant entrepreneurs and their families and social networks. We identify instances where interactants discursively construct time-spaces at different small and large scales (cf. Carr & Lempert 2016; Gal 2016; Catedral 2018) within mobile-phone messaging interactions (such as those via WhatsApp, SMS, WeChat, and Viber). These include multiple relatively large-scale cultural chronotopes alongside small-scale chronotopes of everyday 'normalcy' (Blommaert 2017; Karimzad 2018). In the process, we introduce the notion of *mobile chronotope* to account for the spatiotemporal communicative norms which exist at the intersection of the multiple communicative contexts brought along into mobile messaging interactions by remotely located participants. We also detail how the mobile phone and linguistic choices in mobile exchanges facilitate a transgression of individual frames within mobile exchanges resulting in intra-interactional mobile chronotope adjustment.

Our study draws on data from a large ethnographic project investigating how people communicate in contemporary multilingual cities across the UK. The analysis is based on a sample of mobile messaging by two couples—Chinese butchers in Birmingham and Polish shop owners in London—informed by interview and interactional data collected at work and home. While this study focuses on communication in mobile networks centred around UK-based micro-entrepreneurs and their families, our analysis is potentially applicable across a wide range of communicative landscapes.

THE CHRONOTOPIC ORGANISATION OF SOCIAL INTERACTION

Since its introduction in Bakhtin's (1981) work, the term *chronotope* has been applied to a range of contexts and data, with scholars interpreting its features differently and foregrounding selected aspects in their argumentation and analysis. In this article, we adopt an understanding of chronotopes as socially conditioned configurations of time and space, which reflect and determine the historical, biographical, and social relations within a given interactive context. This is a view based on Bakhtin's original work (Bakhtin 1981), and influenced by later Bakhtinian scholarship (Holquist 1990/2002; Morson & Emerson 1990; Beaton 2010; Steinby 2013) and by anthropological and ethnographic research that applies the notion of chronotope to migrant environments (Blommaert, Westinen, & Leppänen 2015; Karimzad 2016; Blommaert & De Fina 2017; Karimzad & Catedral 2018).

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Interactions and social situations are shaped by multiple chronotopes representing different views of the world and different vantage points from which situations are perceived (Morson & Emerson 1990). The modernist chronotope, for example, has been associated with positioning progress against tradition in migrant contexts (Dick 2010; Koven 2013, 2015), while discourses of the ideal life have been found relevant in linking migration to the possibility of being successful in migrant contexts (Karimzad 2016). Chronotopic understandings have also been related to racial discourse (Koven 2013; Rosa 2016) and the phenomenon of context collapse in digital environments (Szabla & Blommaert 2018). As categories of understanding, chronotopes define reality and normalcy within the world or context they are associated with, be it a particular narrative genre or a given social situation, including in online contexts (Chun 2017; Szabla & Blommaert 2018). In Blommaert's (2017:96) words, chronotopes serve to legitimise 'moralized behavioural scripts' that in turn determine the communicative behaviour and speech patterns deemed appropriate in a particular time-space. Chronotopic understanding of a situation is 'never pure' but 'always accomplished in terms of evaluation of what is perceived' (Holquist 1990/2002:152), displaying interactants' stances, which are themselves informed by a range of external factors and condition what is deemed an acceptable communicative behaviour in a given situation. Specific times and places—or what Blommaert (2018) refers to as 'chronotopic contexts'—determine whose and what actions are seen as legitimate and how these actions will be normatively perceived by others. Chronotopes are thus spatiotemporally determined frames, which sanction particular interaction patterns and modes of behaviour. They can be invoked or made relevant in an interaction by participants through the deployment of indexicals, or 'contextualisation cues' (Gumperz 1982), so as to establish a frame by which the subsequent discourse can be evaluated (Blommaert 2015). Our analysis supports the view of chronotopes as neither fixed nor predetermined (Lemke 2000) but as co-constructed by interactants in active, purposeful processes and thus subject to ongoing evaluation, shifts, and alterations.

As part of our theoretical contribution, we identify and define *mobile chronotopes* as socially conditioned configurations of time and space within largely text-based virtual exchanges exemplified here by mobile-phone messaging through apps such as WhatsApp, SMS, WeChat, and Viber. Our focus on this type of social media is motivated by its relative popularity in translocal interactions in the contexts that we investigate and elsewhere. The term *mobile* is not used to imply that other types of chronotopes are static in their nature; like other chronotopes, mobile chronotopes are inherently dynamic (Agha 2007). At the same time, they are potentially persistent due to the affordances of the medium: that is, interactions via mobile messaging can remain unaffected as physical contexts change, allowing users to re-enter existing mobile communicative spaces at different times as well as revisiting earlier moments in the communication. We do not propose that mobile chronotopes depart significantly from chronotopic organisations elsewhere; like other chronotopes, mobile chronotopes are discursively

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co-constructed by participants who draw on different aspects of their communicative contexts, including their biographies, histories, beliefs, and values, as well as the physical spaces in which they are located and their spatiotemporal understandings of the world. Rather, with the concept of the mobile chronotope, we aim to identify and explore the particular configurations of contextual factors that shape chronotopic understandings between remotely located interactants in virtual, largely text-based environments such as mobile messaging.

In particular, the mobile chronotope serves to capture the ways in which individuals negotiate a shared virtual communicative time-space during mobile interactions in which they are physically separated and have access to different physical contexts. This involves a multiplicity of contexts, potential for context collapse, a particular relationship between time and space, and the additional pragmatic work therefore involved in contextualising online utterances. The complexity and co-constructed nature of 'context' in digital and mobile communication has long been recognised. Moores (2004) proposed that, instead of treating technologically mediated communication as devoid of a sense of place (a view represented by Meyrowitz 1985), we should consider it as involving multiple places simultaneously. According to this view, people who communicate through social media are located both in their physical location and in the context created by the electronically mediated exchange in which they take part; in this sense, mobile communication is 'by definition *always* translocal' (Kytölä 2016:375). Similarly, Jones (2004) proposed that interactions involving social media are polyfocal as users simultaneously engage in online and offline activities to which they devote fluctuating levels of attention. A related practice is that of 'multicommunicating' (Reinsch, Turner, & Tinsley 2008), whereby people move between different communicative channels, both online and offline. Suggesting that this kind of multitasking 'makes new media communication different from old ways of communicating', Jones (2009a:16) emphasizes the extent to which tasks 'flow together and affect one another'. More recent studies agree that, rather than hampering social contact, mobile devices enable new ways of interacting, including fluid engagement with both online and offline environments to which interactants can choose to attend in the process of incipient multitasking (Cohen 2015). The concept of mobile chronotope enables us to attend to this complexity and mobility without assuming a distinction between offline and online contexts, or between context and interaction (Blommaert & De Fina 2017), while also acknowledging the fluidity with which interactants handle the multiple time-space arrangements that are unfolding simultaneously across mobile and physical spaces.

TIME AND SPACE RELATIONS IN MOBILE COMMUNICATION

Unlike communication via landlines or desktop computers, where location is fixed and can be assumed by the caller, in mobile communication—communication

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between remotely located interactants who are assumed to be on the move—location is in flux and different for each interactant. As such, it can become the subject of mobile interactions, for example, when people verify each other's location at the beginning of a mobile telephone conversation (Laursen & Szymanski 2013) or check in with friends using a location-sharing application (Frith 2015:62–80). Studies have shown that location is identified through a complex set of descriptors and deictic expressions, with the focus on the here and now and the ephemeral nature of identifying features. The spatial relationship of mobile phone users to landmarks they refer to while describing their location changes as the users move across space (Lyons 2014). This leads interactants to a discursive construction of joint communicative spaces in which interactions take place, often in the form of narrative storyworlds (Lyons 2015). Users experience a deictic shift into this space in response to textual cues based on familiarity with each other and modality conventions. Rather than functioning purely in the offline or online domain, they shift dynamically between these two realms, drawing on layers of relevant spatio-temporal references corresponding to each of these interactive locations. These studies challenge the validity of distinguishing between offline and online contexts when making sense of how individuals communicate and achieve understanding, and suggest instead that the mobile be seen as deeply embedded in wider contexts, with offline and online activities intertwining and mutually supportive. As we show below, mobile devices thus allow for bringing separate realities and expectations from the interactants' offline chronotopic contexts into the same interactive space, resulting in the construction of a mobile chronotope, which blends in these individual aspects.

Although mobile communicative norms are shifting and diversifying, mobile technologies tend to encourage a sense of social and physical closeness, which is both construed by, and expressed within, a private, casual register: creating and created by chronotopic expectations of intimacy and informality (Ito & Okabe 2005). Studies show that mobile phone communication, including frequent 'check-ins' throughout the day (Rainie & Wellman 2012:170), helps people foster intimacy and closeness and manage the potentially negative effects of the limited time that they spend in each other's physical company (Wei & Lo 2006; Christensen 2009; Yu, Huang, & Liu 2017). Because of the portability of mobile phones, mobile communication 'makes all mundane activities shareable' (Arminen 2009:95). Participants in mobile exchanges share the joint time-space of their interactions, rather than focusing on an external time frame, leading to the oft-reported feeling of virtual co-presence or 'connected presence' (Licoppe 2004), also referred to as 'ambient copresence' (Ito & Okabe 2005) or 'perceived proximity' (O'Leary, Wilson, & Metiu 2014). As Ito & Okabe (2005:264) point out, mobile messaging can provide 'a way of maintaining ongoing background awareness of others, and of keeping multiple channels of communication open'. This experience of social proximity and constant availability has been enhanced by ongoing developments in mobile telephony, including an expansion in available

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channels as well as reduced costs and greater semiotic richness (Cui 2016:31; Yu et al. 2017:134). The fact that mobile channels of communication are always potentially open leads to what Schegloff & Sacks (1973) called 'a continuing state of incipient talk', that is, a situation in which a conversation is never closed down but can be revived at any moment. In contexts of transnational migration, this sense of simultaneity can be coupled with a sense of connection to places left behind, along with the relevant histories and values brought along to new physical settings postmigration.

At the same time, although mobile messaging allows for the near-immediacy of feedback characteristic of telephone exchanges, it also affords the delay of written exchanges that are composed and sent at a particular point in time but can be read at the recipient's convenience, even a few hours after message delivery (Darics 2016). As such, mobile messages have the potential to include spatial and temporal elements frozen from the past and—for successful interpretation—require recipients to re-adjust their frame of temporal and spatial reference (Lyons 2014, 2015). As we see below, the inherent flexibility of time-space configurations within mobile communication opens up the possibility of competing and contrasting chronotopic understandings among participants, potentially heightening the need in such contexts for attention to the construction of a shared chronotopic framing.

In this article, we demonstrate how mobile chronotopes are co-constructed along the axis of personal and professional relationships, as explicitly or implicitly negotiated by individuals at the centre of given partial communities. We discuss discursive tools employed both to achieve mutual understanding of dominant mobile chronotopes and to put forward alternative framings. We argue that the specific characteristics of each instance of mobile communication depend on the characteristics of chronotopes brought along into the conversation by the interactants and the way in which these separate chronotopes are blended together in the process of chronotope negotiation. The article contributes to the line of inquiry into digital communication that foregrounds the role of the socially positioned individual, rather than technology, in shaping interactions.

DATA AND METHODS

The data for this study was collected as part of a large ethnographic project 'Translation and Translanguaging: Investigating Linguistic and Cultural Transformations in Superdiverse Wards in Four UK Cities'.[1] The AHRC-funded project was carried out across four UK cities (Birmingham, Cardiff, London, Leeds) in four phases: business, heritage, sports, and law. For each phase, each city case study selected one key participant (KP) working in a superdiverse district. The project adopted a 'blended' linguistic ethnography methodology, which assumes the importance of understanding language use as part of individuals' lived experiences across offline and online contexts (Androutsopoulos 2008). The KPs were observed and then audio- and video-recorded at work, before being given audio and video

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recorders to take home with them to record domestic and social interactions. Mobile messaging data was collected as part of this 'home data' collection stage, usually in the form of screenshots of KPs' mobile phones. Rather than transcribing the data, we worked with the original screenshots—albeit in anonymised form and with parallel translations into English where necessary—in order to maintain as much of the original context of the interactions as possible.

This article focuses on the business phase in two of the city case studies, Birmingham and London. We refer to the participants in both case studies as 'migrant micro-entrepreneurs'—that is, people who have migrated and started their own small business. The situations in the two cities differ in interesting ways, and one strength of our ethnographic research lies in revealing similarities in mobile practices across two distinct contexts, suggesting a potential generalisability despite individual circumstances. The KPs in Birmingham were a young couple with small children who ran a butcher's stall in the city centre indoor market. The husband, Koo,[2] was from Fujian in mainland China and his wife, Mee, from Furong in Malaysia; they had both moved to the UK around ten years previously, and met in London before moving to Birmingham. The Birmingham market in which they now worked constituted a collective space where the butchers came into daily contact with people from a wide range of social and ethnic backgrounds, and where it was thus necessary to develop convivial relationships with customers and other traders. Our research in this diverse space documents how meaning was interactionally achieved across linguistic difference (Blackledge, Creese, & Hu 2015). In contrast, the KPs appeared to use their phones to carve out an ethnically homogenous, Chinese-speaking network of support consisting of family, friends, and service providers in both Birmingham and China (see Table 1).

The London dataset was collected from a Polish couple who ran a Polish shop on the high street in Newham, London (see Table 2). The couple had a ten-year-old daughter who was born in the UK and has been attending a primary school in London. Both the wife, Edyta, and husband, Tadeusz, came from a town in the Subcarpathian Voivodeship of south-eastern Poland, where they worked as shopkeeper and police officer, respectively, and moved to the UK around seventeen years before. Their shop was located on a Newham high street and was not conducive to forming convivial relationships with neighbouring units. One key distinction between this case study and the Birmingham one was that while the shop was open to the public, its specialised nature and symbolic marking as a Polish space (Zhu Hua, Li Wei, & Lyons 2015) resulted in a limited number of interactions with people and businesses outside the targeted customer group of Polish and Eastern European people. This in turn led to the prevalence (although not exclusivity) of the Polish language in business transactions and an emphasis on cultural sharedness between the shopkeepers and their customers.

As with the Birmingham data, the London data demonstrates an extensive use of social media to build and maintain a network of support, which spread across

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TABLE 1. *Birmingham dataset.*

Social media type	Number of screenshots	Number of individual messages
WeChat	90	550

London-based Polish friends and friends and family in Poland. The ethnic homogeneity of their networks is evident in the fact that, unlike the mixed messages explored in other studies of text-messaging in multilingual contexts (Lexander 2011), the messages we collected were overwhelmingly written either in Chinese languages (Mandarin or Cantonese) or Polish.

Although it is important not to obscure the varied factors that inform transnational migrants' sense of belonging and relational work (Çağlar 2016), it is necessary to acknowledge the present-day traces of both couples' migratory histories. The two couples maintain ongoing contact with friends and relatives in their home countries by means of mobile technologies as well as attending to local contexts. The increased ease and affordability of international travel and communication has facilitated transnational movement of individuals and families, often in a 'partial' form, where only some members of a family move to a country that offers better economic prospects (Madianou & Miller 2012). This 'partial migration' does not lead to breaking ties with migrants' country of origin, but is often intended as temporary and focused on achieving financial goals. Zontini (2004:1114) points out that modern migration patterns force us to reconsider the notion of family as physically co-located and forming a single household in favour of a family unit being spatially separated as a result of transnational migration. From this perspective, migration is understood as a fluid movement and a relationship between two or more countries. Migrants therefore both build new relationships and cultivate old ones, leading to the creation of an extensive transnational network of family, friends, and business relationships interacting at the intersection of personal and professional contexts. Given these realities, the migrants' experience and understanding of time-space need to be understood in the context of the 'connectivities and continuities' of their relationships, practices, and values (Zhu Hua et al. 2015) rather than as a separation from their home country.

In order to explore the chronotopes within which these two couples organised their mobile interactions, we focus on identifying instances in which the chronotopic arrangements are being explicitly contested and (re)negotiated—what we call instances of *mobile chronotope negotiation*. While the interactants communicate according to shared mobile chronotopes through most of their mobile messaging exchanges, we argue that the process of mobile chronotope construction is best visible at critical junctures where expectations are challenged and chronotopes are reconfigured or contested. These moments are also significant because they highlight the socially constructed nature of the chronotope, an aspect of chronotopic

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TABLE 2. *London dataset.*

Social media type	Number of screenshots	Number of individual messages
SMS	27	125
Viber	14	79
Facebook Messenger	14	64
Twitter	1	2
Email	1	1
Skype	2	8
Facebook	35	31 posts + 156 comments
TOTAL	94	466

organisation that is foregrounded in the emergent and virtual environments of mobile communications. These were then subject to a moment-by-moment discourse analysis that focused on linguistic features including deictics and tense as well as the role played by multimodal resources. Our analysis is informed not only by close reading of the data, but where necessary by our wider understanding of relevant social, cultural, and political contexts, as gleaned through our ethnographic research.

ESTABLISHING MOBILE CHRONOTOPES

Our first example shows how Edyta and her friends maintain and negotiate what constitutes for them a mobile chronotope of online 'normalcy', a behavioural script that (as we see below) is also continually negotiated and rewritten. Edyta communicates with close friends in Poland via the messaging app Viber, the choice of medium (as Edyta explained in interview) motivated by their easy access to the mobile internet and by its visual and playful nature. Edyta told us that she keeps in constant communication with her Polish friends to relieve boredom at work and considers the communication to be mundane.

From the analysis of her communicative choices across her mobile interactions, it appeared that Edyta and her friends had, by the time of our research, established a shared mobile chronotope that framed their virtual interactions as intimate, immediate, and informal, with up-to-the-moment relevance in their offline realities (see for example Figure 1). Their mobile interactions, which resemble those of a dispersed modern family and can be seen as creating ambient virtual co-presence (Ito & Okabe 2005), mimic the everyday conversations of people who share an interactional context. The interactants foreground the desire to stay in touch and maintain a state of talk: despite the fact that interactions run over the course of the day or over several days, there is no apparent need for greetings or sign offs; rather, interactants step into and out of conversations without acknowledging it. In other words, enabled by mobile technology, the talk is discursively framed within a local

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E: It's a holiday there what are you up to?

F: I've been cleaning the whole day

E: Ha ha

F: And now we're drinking

F: [visual]

E: [visual]

FIGURE 1. Edyta and friends' mobile chronotope (E: Edyta, F: Fiona).

chronotope of everyday normalcy in order to heighten intimacy and togetherness despite the geographical distance.

As evidenced in Figure 1, the everyday translocal chronotope is invoked by the interactants' choice of semiotic resources. Intimacy and informality are reflected in a choice of register generally associated with conversational messaging (Tagg 2012), the frequent use of stickers (automated images) to preface turns or indicate attitudes to preceding turns, and written representations of paralinguistic features such as laughter (*hi hi* 'ha ha'). In Figure 1, Fiona provides up-to-the-moment updates in her mentions of the mundane activities of cleaning the house, and later drinking. The immediacy of these actions is highlighted by the use of present tenses throughout and temporal markers such as *A teraz* 'and now'; in Figure 2 below, Fiona employs *właśnie* 'just' to construct the immediate past.

Since they have interacted by mobile messaging for an extended period of time, the mobile chronotope associated with these exchanges is well established and effortlessly maintained. Nonetheless, it was evident that the chronotopic framing occasionally needed to be negotiated and enforced. In Figure 2, Fiona updates Edyta that she has just come back from her English class and, having had no reply, sends another message asking where Edyta has gone, both invoking and reaffirming the mobile chronotopic feature of immediacy. The fact that mobile messaging also enables asynchronous interactions means that other chronotopes—within which relationships are constructed as more distant and are played out against a longer time-scale—are possible. To reinforce the intimacy of their

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F: I've just come back from [my] English [class]

F: [visual]

F: Where have you gone???

E: Nowhere we're having dinner and what's up with you ?

E: [visual]

FIGURE 2. Reaffirming the mobile chronotope of immediacy (E: Edyta, F: Fiona).

preferred chronotope, immediate responses are required, even if they do not lead to extended conversations but serve to 'check in' at different points during the day, as documented elsewhere (Christensen 2009).

As these examples illustrate, mobile interactions between Edyta and Fiona, as well as between Edyta and other Poland-based friends and extended family, are characterised by a blurring of geographical distance and orient chronotopically towards immediate concerns. This is not to say that other chronotopes are irrelevant. Studies suggest that interactions are often framed by multiple intersecting chronotopes (Karimzad & Catedral 2018). Similarly, describing interactions as heterochronous, Lemke (2000) argues that social encounters can be accessed and understood on multiple intersecting spatiotemporal scales. References to a wider context of shared cultural background and values are briefly evident within these locally oriented exchanges. For example, in Figure 1 Edyta initiates contact by reference to a Polish national holiday that falls on that day (*U was swieto* 'It's a holiday there') and uses this broader cultural framing as a pretext for asking how Fiona is spending the day. However, the observation that opportunities to engage in more extended conversations about shared cultural values are largely foregone points to the need to acknowledge the multiple ways in which transnational migration

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and identity are experienced (Çağlar 2016), and the role that mobile technologies can play in minimising geographical and social distance.

In contrast to Edyta's translocal exchanges, there is repeated reference to Chinese customs in the Birmingham data, through which the interactants appear to negotiate a mobile chronotope that draws on a (contested) sense of cultural sameness across geographical distance through discursive means. One source of reference to Chinese tradition is communication with Koo's brother Chen who lives in China and has never visited the couple in the UK. The couple conduct regular online voice calls with Koo's mother in Fujian, but had at the time of data collection only recently connected to Chen through the Chinese messaging app WeChat. In subsequent conversations with both butchers, Chen serves as a point of access to a chronotope of traditional Chinese values. In the following exchange conducted through WeChat (Figure 3), Mee updates Chen (her brother-in-law) on their children's progress and well-being.

Mee's turns invoke a chronotope that is grounded in immediate home matters, facilitated by affordances of WeChat such as the possibility for synchronicity, a quick exchange of turns, and the embedding of photos as conversational turns. Her sharing of photos of her children, which happens before and during the extract in Figure 3, serves to entextualise her immediate physical setting—to capture the moment and bring it into the mobile interaction, where it becomes a discursive object that can in turn be negotiated and revised in the ensuing conversation (Jones 2009b). Through the affordances of mobile messaging, the immediacy and intimacy of a family chronotope is rendered achievable despite the vast geographical distance.

The family photos are exploited by Chen as he recontextualises them in the light of traditional Chinese values. As Agha (2007) points out, chronotopes are always enacted through, and sanction, particular participation frameworks. Mee's orientation to a chronotope grounded in her immediate family context positions her brother-in-law not only as an insider (a family member who can be expected to show interest in his nieces and nephews) but as an outsider (through his unfamiliarity with Mee's social reality and his geographical distance from it). Chen's responses, which discursively trigger a shift towards a chronotope that we might see as operating on a higher scale (Blommaert 2015)—that created by traditional Chinese values—serve to reconfigure his participation in the interaction. From the immediate context of Mee's home in Birmingham the focus shifts to widely circulating Chinese discourses surrounding the cultural value of *long eye lines* (*有性格* 'strong character') and the inappropriateness of her chosen baby name ([name]*男孩子名字* '[name] sounds like a boy's name'). Chronotopes can have varying degrees of power (Karimzad & Catedral 2018), and it could be argued that the higher scale chronotope of Chinese values is more powerful—given its wide circulation and ideological support—than the particularities of Mee's family. It is therefore unmarked in this exchange, accessible to both participants, and invoked with certainty as assumed shared knowledge: Chen does not

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M ___ [*MYC's older daughter*] is quite stubborn

M Now she's growing up and has learned how to throw a tantrum, each time she's at it she will scream and slam the door

M She will start crying with us and start beating

C Strong character haha, the little one has long eye lines so she won't have small eyes when she grows up

M They are small

M Little sis is called ___

[visual]

[visual]



M Look, Bro ___ is playing on the ipad

C ___ sounds like a boy's name

C What about her English name?

M Haven't decided yet

C Use the word meaning beauty, girl's name

M As little sis was born at home we chose the word meaning 'home', it will sound like a girl's name people can only tell if you write it down in Chinese

FIGURE 3. Chronotopes of family intimacy and Chinese values (M: Mee, C: Chen).

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explain but rather asserts the Chinese beliefs. Mee neither openly accepts nor contests her brother-in-law's recourse to traditional values but she evidently feels the need to explain her choice of baby name within the higher scale chronotopic framing. This suggests that her decision not to follow Chinese baby-naming practices is marked within the immediate chronotope: 就写看起来是啊男孩但说就与以为是这 'it will sound like a girl's name people can only tell if you write it down in Chinese', something that is unlikely to affect a UK-based child in a negative way. The power differential between the competing chronotopes thus shapes the interactional discourse (Karimzad & Catedral 2018), requiring Mee to align her utterance within the higher scale chronotope even as she challenges the associated cultural norms.

The conversation is thus shaped by the interaction between two chronotopes as Mee invokes commonality at a family level and Chen reinforces their shared cultural background. Through the interplay between these two chronotopes, the interactants find a way to negotiate their relationship. Through his recourse to traditional Chinese ideals, Chen discursively constructs a mobile chronotope that sanctions his involvement in—and authority over—Mee's family affairs, and enables him to avoid the more peripheral role assigned to him within Mee's family-oriented chronotopic understandings. Unlike some time-space arrangements, with pre-ordained chronotopic orientations (the office and happy hour discussed by Blommaert & De Fina 2017, for example), mobile messaging facilitates an interplay of Chen's and Mee's distinct orientations in the construction of an agreed chronotope.

BUSINESS-FOCUSED MOBILE CHRONOTOPES

The construction of mobile chronotopes extends beyond the social and personal spheres into the micro-entrepreneurs' business communication. Here there is evidence of negotiation and construction of mobile chronotopes at the intersection of personal and business contacts. Mobile chronotope negotiation is evident in the choice of register, use of particular semiotic resources, and management of interactional turns.

The Chinese butchers had, by the time of our data collection, established long-standing business relations with various restaurants across Chinatown in central Birmingham. Their use of WeChat for organising meat deliveries to these restaurants shows how particular chronotopic arrangements, motivated in this case by shared business purposes and relations, can legitimise a particular behavioural script that differs from that which is evident in the butchers' other uses of the same online space. Specifically, the organisation of their meat deliveries through WeChat takes place within a business-oriented mobile chronotope marked linguistically by a shift from the interpersonal register associated with conversational texting—featuring vague language and social formulae (Tagg 2012)—to a register characterised by precise linguistic choices and lexically dense noun phrases as well as specialist lexis for describing meat cuts (see Figure 4). For example, in a message not analysed in detail in this article, Koo's query to a Chinese restaurant constitutes

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[name of restaurant]

R: [*Butcher name*], Thursday next week send us 80kg beef belly, many thanks

R: [*Butcher name*], it's 9th Thursday that we want the 80kg of beef belly. many thanks

K: Today's Monday do you still want 10 pieces of pork belly I forget hehe

R: Yes. And 2 pieces of beef belly

K: The pork belly will be sent to you in the morning. The beef belly has to wait till the afternoon after the delivery comes, is this ok? Thanks

R: Ok

FIGURE 4. Birmingham business-oriented mobile chronotope (K: Koo, R: restaurant).

a lengthy noun phrase: *是下午上新货以后两点钟给你送* 80 *公斤过去，还是现在给送* 50 *公斤？* '80kg at 2 o'clock this afternoon after the new delivery or 50kg to be delivered now?'.

Furthermore, the messages are structured not as turns in an ongoing communication, but as standalone messages that do not require an immediate response. This emergent practice is enabled by the affordance of asynchronicity made available through mobile messaging. It was adopted by the participants for its convenience: Koo told us in an interview that the advantage of WeChat lay in the fact that his customers and clients could leave messages or meat orders for him to pick up when he had time during his busy day. Such messages often include formulaic openings and closings, with the butcher stall name as salutation and the sign off, *唔該* 'Many thanks'. This structural repetition may have been facilitated by the affordance of cutting, pasting, manipulating, and resending the text of previous messages. When Koo breaks the routine to check an order he has forgotten (see Figure 4), he indexes this shift towards an informal and intimate chronotope with an informal *呵呵* 'hehe', detaching himself from the business-related transactional chronotope. As well as reflexively drawing attention to his mistake, acknowledging his forgetfulness or disorganization on this occasion, his reconfiguration of the chronotopic arrangement here serves to deflect his embarrassment through positioning his interlocutor as complicit, and appealing to them for empathy and solidarity. To the extent that 'hehe' can be seen as signalling a playful frame, it reflects the use of

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humour as an interpersonal strategy noted in virtual teams (Mullany 2004), but nonetheless breaks with the business-oriented chronotope that governs the majority of his communications with the Chinese restaurant owner. The momentary chronotopic shift highlights the fluidity with which Koo manages his online interactions, drawing not only on the affordances of asynchronicity and permanence made available by the technology but also on the more informal and intimate register legitimised by the reconfigured mobile chronotope.



M: Hi E___.Have you got the possibility to arrange normal blue Viagra from Poland ?M

M: Where have you disappeared to? let me know about the tablets because man needs [them]

E: 'man' should have a glass of water instead if he can't!

M: We're familiar with this answer. I thought you had access but if not then ok.

M: When are we going for a drink?

E: No I don't have access what am I a chemist or something? What's up with you?

FIGURE 5. Exchange between Edyta and a customer (E: Edyta, M: Marek).

In the London dataset, it was a regular practice for customers to text Edyta in order to check supplies or make preorders. The mobile chronotopes constructed within these exchanges involved variously configured combinations of roles, expectations, and discourses that spanned business interactions in that context as well as the more informal exchanges typical of Edyta's personal mobile communication. The fluidity of these chronotopes and the ways in which they were carefully negotiated is particularly evident in the following example. In Figure 5, one of Edyta's regular customers, Marek, sends Edyta a text-message that is chronotopically framed as an everyday business transaction but that breaks with typical requests in the dataset by asking about the possibility of sourcing Viagra from Poland—a reconfiguration of the expected behavioural script. By asking for a product that indicates an embarrassing problem, Marek puts himself in a vulnerable

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position. This vulnerability, and the expectations of immediacy that most mobile chronotopes sanction (as evident across our data), likely lead him to check his assumption of shared chronotopic understanding when Edyta does not immediately reply. Elsewhere in the data, the business-oriented communicative focus that Marek brings along into the texting exchange is generally affirmed by Edyta, who usually picks up on and operates within the business-oriented chronotope, including instances where queries and requests are phrased in a playful way. This may explain why the lack of response from Edyta on this occasion leaves him in a state of uncertainty as to Edyta's reaction. The data does not indicate the reason for Edyta's ignoring of Marek's message: it could have been the arguably outlandish character of the message and its unexpected request but equally her general busyness at the time the text was received or the need to process and respond later.

Marek then repeats his request, framing it within a more playful chronotope (*daj znac co i jak z tabletkami bo czlowiek potrzebuje* 'let me know about the tablets because man needs them') and thus sanctioning a more informal response. The newly selected mobile chronotope is characterised by a higher level of informality (lack of greetings and the use of verbs in the second person singular), intimacy (personal appeal and an invitation for a drink), and expectation of immediacy (*Gdzie przepadlas? daj znac…* 'Where have you disappeared to? Let me know…'). It aligns with Edyta's preferred mobile chronotope (see Figure 1) and results in a chronotopically aligned response.

Be it as a result of this playful chronotope or a change in external factors that led to her original lack of response, Edyta texts back this time. Her response is designed to fit the expectations of this new, more intimate chronotope, as she plays on Marek's use of *czlowiek* 'man' by alluding to a well-known Polish joke about using a glass of water as a contraceptive method, activating a chronotope of shared Polish cultural knowledge, which would not have been accessible outside the Polish community. Marek correctly reads her response as negative, acknowledges the joke, and promptly changes the subject. He does this by drawing on the social practices made relevant by his more playful framing of the conversation; that is, he enquires about their future social plans, indexing their existing social relationship, the business transaction seemingly forgotten. Although Marek's precise motives and aims are unknown, he appears to shift from a business-oriented mobile chronotope to a more socially oriented one (one that is likely sanctioned both by the mobile space and the participants' wider ongoing relationship) in order to save face. Both parties play down the resulting power imbalance by resorting to humour as a mitigating strategy. The mobile chronotope that emerges from this interpersonal positioning shifts from the local context of a service request to the more global cultural context and then to that of a social get-together. The second chronotopic shift in this exchange indexes their more informal relationship and appears to create a situation in which Edyta feels enabled to challenge the identity that Marek has chronotopically assigned her. It is only at this point that she directly challenges his attempt to exploit their normal behavioural script by declaring *Nie nie mam dostepu a co to ja*

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chemik czy co? 'No I don't have access what am I a chemist or something?'. Their interaction is thus accomplished through repeated chronotopic shifts with which they negotiate their complex relationship.

Interestingly, the chronotope shift in Figure 5 is performed by the sender with no verbal influence from the other interactant. It is triggered by an unexpected communicative delay on Edyta's part, which is related to the standard mobile expectation of immediacy in communication, and constitutes a chronotopic self-adjustment following a perceived misjudgement when adopting an earlier business-oriented chronotope. In other cases, explored below, chronotopic adjustment emerges as a result of a power play between participants.

NEGOTIATION OF POWER IN MOBILE CHRONOTOPES

This section demonstrates deviations from the features of established mobile chronotopes in the data, where chronotopic expectations are challenged and mobile chronotopes negotiated, a process evident in our analysis of critical junctures in mobile chronotope establishment and adjustment.

As mentioned above, certain chronotopes are more powerful than others, depending on the dominance of the ideological forces behind them (Karimzad & Catedral 2018), and this is often evident because powerful chronotopes are more widely accessible and thus unmarked and unelaborated (Blommaert 2015). However, the digitization of communication has led to an extension of what is possible and acceptable in interactions with figures of authority and among individuals of differing social standing (Fakhruroji 2015), with the potential for challenging the higher scale chronotopes established through a wider offline history of traditions. It is evident in the Polish dataset that institutionally granted power serves to invoke particular chronotopes, which are then negotiated based on interactants' social standing, the nature of their relationship, and mobile messaging conventions.

The Church has traditionally provided Polish people, including Polish diasporas, with an officially sanctioned chronotope to live by (Petre & Southam 2006) that explicitly requires respectful behaviours during mass and in interactions with the clergy—including ritualised body movements and language use—into which Catholics are socialised from childhood. Following early prewar immigration to the UK and later postaccession of Poland to the EU, there appeared religious centres run by and for Polish people (e.g. Our Lady Mother of the Church in Ealing, London) to which Polish migrants could turn for spiritual support (Petre & Southam 2006). This is unsurprising, taking into account the role of the Church in Polish culture (Hirschman 2004; cf. Porter-Szűcs 2011). These religious centres reinforced ties with Polish Catholic values as well as making available guidance for appropriate communication between parishioners and the clergy. What could be referred to as a chronotope of Polish migrant religious normalcy is informed by the more general Catholic religious normalcy (norms of behaviour followed in Catholic

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religious contexts in Poland). Its linguistic features include, on top of content-related limitations, appropriate greetings (*Szczęść Boże* 'God Bless') and forms of address (e.g. Father + verbs in third person singular) (Ignaciuk-Pakmur 2012).

Apart from spiritual support, some Polish migrants rely on Polish priests in the UK to provide proof that their children attend mass in order to secure a place in desirable Catholic schools. Wanting her daughter to go to a Catholic secondary school, Edyta texted her parish priest to arrange a meeting (see Figure 6). Although Edyta would not normally text clergy (this was the only instance of such contact in our dataset), on this occasion, she was motivated by her determination to obtain the necessary paperwork for her daughter's school application in a limited time frame. Edyta's message can be interpreted as functioning within the chronotope of intimacy and informality with which she was accustomed to interacting through mobile messaging (her chronotope of online normalcy). Focusing on arranging a suitable time for a meeting, rather than on indicating her social position in the ongoing interaction, she started her text message with a casual *Witam* 'Hello', which positions her interlocutor as an equal within an informal participation framework.

However, the informal chronotope of Edyta's everyday mobile messaging is rejected by the priest who works to reassert a chronotope governed by the communicative norms and values of the Catholic Church—what we might describe as a chronotope embedded in offline relations and institutions. The priest finds Edyta's greeting inappropriate because, as evident in his response, it falls outside the accepted register in communication with the clergy, norms established largely through nondigital forms of correspondence. He reasserts his position of power by making a critical comment (*coz to za pozdrowienie* 'what kind of greeting is that'). He also explicitly invokes the relevant communicative norms associated with the chronotope of Catholic values through questioning the family's Catholic practices and parish membership (*jesli jestescie praktykujacymi katolikami, zapisanymi do Naszej wspolnoty…* 'if you are practising Catholics and members of Our community…'), and including the appropriate religious greeting for his preferred chronotope, *Szczesc Boze* 'God Bless'. He also signs his message with his role (*ks* for *ksiądz* 'priest/father') and first name, an act that reinforces his position in the chronotope. The priest's emphatic reply constructs Edyta's message as a perceived threat to the established communicative norms in the context of communication with Catholic clergy and—by extension—to the chronotope of Polish Catholic values. Mobile messaging is in some ways incidental to this threat, but it provides a communicative space free from the physical trappings of the Catholic chronotope—the church, rituals, physical presence of the priest—in which participants must work discursively to maintain the chronotope. In this instance, rather than focus on arranging an appropriate time for a meeting, the priest does discursive work to explicitly reaffirm the threatened values and reassert his preferred chronotope. The priest expects mobile messaging to follow the rules accepted in the offline religious chronotope. For Edyta, by contrast, the use of mobile messaging appears to remove the need to follow the established religious register. The interaction thus

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FrG: 'Witam' what kind of greeting is that. Dear Ms E__ if you are practising Catholics and members of Our community, come tomorrow after the Holy Mass to the office. God bless fr G___

E: 'Witam' is a polite expression. I wanted [it] short and to the point. Please forgive a simple woman this horrific mistake she has made. We are all only human. Thank you for the information see you after the Holy Mass in 'the office'.

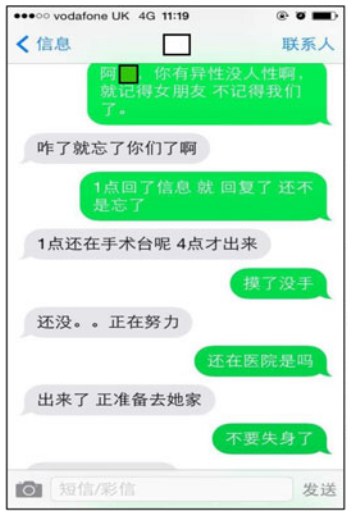
FIGURE 6. Interactions between Edyta (E) and a Catholic priest (FrG).

moves from Edyta's intended focus on the coordination of local activities to the higher-level chronotope of cultural and religious norms.

Interestingly, following the mobile reprimand from the parish priest, Edyta demonstrates resistance to being drawn into the priest's preferred chronotope. She challenges it through the use of irony in her response: *Prosze o wybaczenie prostej kobiecie tego strasznego bledu jaki popelnila* 'Please forgive a simple woman this horrific mistake she has made'. She also explicitly devalues the power difference between herself and the priest by appealing to him that *Wszyscy jestesmy tylko ludzmi* 'We are all only human', followed by a brief reference to the matter of immediate concern—the meeting she set out to arrange. Having had her expectations challenged, Edyta acknowledges the traditional values and formal register of the Catholic chronotope, but at the same time is reluctant to adopt them, evident in her mock-formality. In carrying out what she initially construed as a transactional function by mobile messaging, Edyta must first negotiate a complex mobile chronotope, which ultimately sanctions neither of the interactants' preferred behavioural scripts.

In the Birmingham data, an example of the negotiation of power relations through mobile chronotopic shifts can be found in messages sent between Koo, the butcher, and Gan, a young Chinese man who was working on the stall while studying. The power relations between the two were complex. On the one hand, Gan was better educated, more literate, and came from a more affluent background than Koo; on the other, Koo was Gan's boss and so enjoyed institutionally granted power as well as a higher level of relevant expertise. From a more immediate viewpoint, Gan had just injured himself at work, heightening Koo's concerns for his

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K: Gan, you forget all about us when you have your girlfriend around

G: How come I forget you?

K: I sent you a message at 1pm, after your message, but get nothing from you since then. Doesn't this prove that you've forgotten us?

G: I was on the operating table at 1pm. I only just came out at 4pm

K: Have you touched her hand?

G: Not yet ... on my way

K: Still in hospital?

G: Just come out, getting to ready to go to hers

K: Don't lose your virginity

FIGURE 7. Extending the workplace chronotope through mobile messaging (K: Koo, G: Gan).

employee's well-being and temporarily shifting the balance of power towards Gan. Figure 7 illustrates the complex and shifting way in which the two interlocutors chronotopically manage their multi-layered relationship in the pursuit of various communicative purposes.

The exchange is interesting for the way in which Koo draws discursively on multiple chronotopes throughout the mobile exchange. First, Koo orients towards the mobile chronotopic expectation of immediacy and proximity which, given the fact that Koo is not physically located in the hospital, is facilitated by the mobile phone and legitimised by conventional norms. As with Edyta and Fiona's exchange in Figure 2, expectations regarding the immediacy of the interaction are negotiated, as Koo pushes for a reply (*不记得我们了* 'you forget all about us'), suggesting that he is drawing on the communicative expectations around mobile messaging that also guided Edyta's interactions, including maintaining a continuing state of incipient talk. By drawing on this mobile chronotope of 'normalcy'—the normal expectation that one will receive a prompt reply to one's message, as we saw with Edyta and Fiona's exchange—Koo evidently feels able to bypass any competing norms that might govern one's behaviour regarding such situations in order to reassure himself regarding his concerns for his employee's well-being.

However, the conversation is also grounded in a wider marketplace chronotope, both in the sense of sanctioning the sexist banter that Koo employs in his messages—and which resembles that which we observed as an everyday practice in the market where their stall is located (Blackledge, Creese, & Hu 2015)—and by legitimising and requiring particular power relations between the boss (Koo) and his employee (Gan). On a practical level, Koo's teasing may serve to cover

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up social awkwardness as he hides his genuine concern behind a parallel discourse of sexual banter. At the same time, however, Koo works to assert his position as Gan's employer, assuming his employee's constant availability, and transgressing traditional boundaries between work and personal space. Koo both leads the conversation and sets the tone of the exchange, and Gan either accommodates or deflects Koo's teasing, resulting in a fluid alteration between a number of relevant personal and professional chronotopic framings.

Evident in this exchange is how mobile chronotopes can involve the expansion of existing workplace conventions and power relations into the personal space of an employee, requiring the participant with the least power within the participation framework of the workplace to assume a subservient position despite the other (more equalising or informal) chronotopes that might be invoked by mobile messaging. As Blommaert & De Fina (2017) note, the boss is always the boss, even when the staff are having drinks after work and other chronotopic framings are being simultaneously invoked. The affordances of mobile messaging—its portability and its reconfiguration of time-space arrangements—mean that employees can be forced to engage with the chronotopic organisation of the workplace at any time and while simultaneously managing offline situations. This is evident in the way the interactants move fluidly between online and offline chronotopes in Figure 7 (and their wider exchange), as when Gan messages Koo from the institutional context of the hospital with its own schedule and regulations: *1点还在手术台呢 4点才出来* 'I was on the operating table at 1pm. I only just came out at 4pm'. The potentially negative consequences of this for employee well-being have been widely reported (Reinsch et al. 2008; Maier & Deluliis 2015), but framing the problem as one of chronotopic imposition enables us to explore more holistically the shifts in behaviour, roles, relations, discourses, and codes of conduct triggered by an out-of-hours mobile message from one's boss.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The concept of the mobile chronotope has enabled us to explore complex translocal mobile messaging exchanges from a holistic point of view that relates behaviours, roles, and discourses within mobile interactions to wider contextual framings and time-space arrangements. Our analysis highlights how chronotope construction in mobile messaging exchanges is shaped by the flexible relationship between time and space afforded by mobile messaging and the embedding of mobile communication within multiple and shifting physical contexts. As we have shown, mobile messaging facilitates a complex relationship to time and space and allows its users to engage in dynamic (re)configurations and shifts in communicative expectations during interactions. This inherent flexibility opens up the possibility of the co-existence of competing chronotopic understandings within a single mobile messaging interaction.

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The existence of, and explicit juggling between, multiple chronotopes was evident in both datasets. Users often negotiated and followed locally emergent social and communicative conventions facilitated by the mobile channel. Edyta, for example, communicated with her friends according to their well-established mobile chronotope of everyday normalcy characterised by intimacy, immediacy, and informality, which nonetheless maintained fluidity and allowed for turn-by-turn renegotiation and re-evaluation. In contrast, in the Birmingham dataset, Koo and his customers drew on the potential of mobile messaging for message permanence and asynchronicity to establish a business-oriented mobile chronotope that responded to the realities and demands of their working lives. In some cases, however, interactants' chronotopic assumptions and preferences clashed, as with Edyta's extension of a chronotope of intimacy and informality into her mobile interactions with the priest. As seen in the exchange between Edyta and the priest, users also brought along to mobile messaging offline chronotopes that were likely active in their immediate physical contexts (such as traditional Chinese values, the Polish Catholic Church, or the marketplace). These were often less relevant to the social realities of their interlocutors and sometimes contrasted with the chronotopic understandings that their interlocutors simultaneously brought along. For example, from her home in Birmingham, Mee framed her transnational exchange with her brother-in-law as one primarily grounded in family-focused intimacy—enabled, given the geographical distance, by the affordances of mobile messaging—and seemed less immediately concerned with wider Chinese traditions. In contrast, Chen used the shared photos to reinforce their joint cultural background, sanctioning his position of authority over Mee's family decisions and rejecting the more peripheral position of a translocal family member preferred by Mee. In terms of furthering our understanding of mobile communication, the concept of the mobile chronotope allows us to account for the spatiotemporal communicative norms negotiated at the intersection of multiple interweaving chronotopic contexts through which participants process and make sense of their online social encounters. It helps us understand how the varied communicative norms and behavioural scripts associated with mobile messaging emerge from different processes of mobile chronotope negotiation: complex interplays between the multiple chronotopic understandings brought into a mobile exchange.

Although chronotope clashes are apparent in offline interactions, much of the chronotopic negotiation detailed in this article stems from the medium-specific lack of co-presence or a common contextual base at the time of messaging, which requires participants to discursively co-construct shared communicative spaces (Lyons 2014). This was particularly evident when interactants acted to explicitly adjust or reinforce their preferred chronotopic framings. At times, agreement in these negotiations was reached within a few turns, as was the case in Edyta's business-related interactions with customers and in Koo's conversations with his employee. On other occasions, however, interactants continued to engage in extended discursive work on chronotopically relevant indexicals to

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repeatedly reassert their preferred chronotopes and reaffirm what they perceived as threatened values, as in the case of Edyta's communication with the priest and Mee's exchanges with Chen. Evident at specific critical junctures, mobile chronotope negotiation required the interactants to mobilise a complex set of communicative behaviours involving managing multiple contexts, medium affordances, and interactional norms. This is not to say that explicit chronotopic negotiation is unique to mobile contexts, and in fact our observations prompt reflections as to whether other conditions of late modernity, such as mobility and diversity, may similarly encourage chronotopic reflexivity in migrant contexts (cf. Coupland 2009:45; Karimzad 2018). Rather, we point to the potentially enhanced possibility for (re)configuring the chronotopic nature of social interaction in virtual, largely disembodied spaces where co-presence must be constructed through semiotic actions.

Mobile chronotopes are both similar and different from chronotopes constructed in other communicative contexts. Each mobile chronotope is influenced by the normative behaviour—the moralised behaviour scripts—accepted in the particular medium and the lack of immediate access to communicative partners' physical situations. The medium affordances of mobile messaging facilitate a transgression of individual frames within exchanges resulting in intra-interactional mobile chronotope adjustment. At the same time, mobile chronotopes do not fully depend on the technology, but also on the social profiles and communicative goals of interactants. They share with other chronotopes the fact that what gets foregrounded depends on the historical, biographical, and social relations of interactants involved in an exchange. Like other chronotopes, they are fluid and subject to alterations and re-evaluations and exploited as communicative resources in achieving social goals. This study of mobile chronotopes thus bears implications for our more general understanding of the ways in which chronotopes function in everyday twenty-first century transnational migrant discourse.

NOTES

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[1]AHRC Translation and Translanguaging: Investigating Linguistic and Cultural Transformations in Superdiverse Wards in Four UK Cities (AH/L007096/1). Angela Creese (PI), with CIs Mike Baynham, Adrian Blackledge, Frances Rock, Lisa Goodson, Li Wei, James Simpson, Caroline Tagg, and Zhu Hua. Project website: https://tlang.org.uk/.

[2]All names have been changed.

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