

CALLING IN: PROSODY AND CONVERSATION IN RADIO-TALK*

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1. Introduction

In the last few years there has been a growing interest on the part of the media (above all the radio, but also more recently TV) in letting the audience take a more active part in the programmes. Rather than considering the audience as a hidden and silent mass of (potential) listeners, especially directors of radio shows have increasingly devised programmes which make a symbolic "step down" to meet people's everyday needs, fantasies and ideologies, turning an imagined mass of anonymous recipients into a more or less vast group of real interlocutors.

The impact of mass-media and the effects they have on people's ideology has been the topic of an impressive amount of research in recent years. It is not long ago that a re-orientation of the relationship between radio/TV and the audience at large has occurred. This re-orientation has significantly affected the ways in which the relationship between mass media and audience is (re)defined. The call-in programme embodies this re-definition and stands for a radically alternative way of conceptualizing the relationship with the public. Radio (or TV, more recently) seems to need the audience in order to validate their institutionally granted status.

One of the consequences of this direct contact with the audience, is that especially the radio has become increasingly flexible, so that it can deal with people's demands on many levels. Following Goffman, it is an

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uncontroversial and observable matter of fact that the mode of "calling in" has become an established social occasion with its own norms, expectations and rhetorics.

Given that radio or TV have become part of people's daily routines, their pervasive presence is usually taken for granted and goes unnoticed. The interest to analyse radio talk is therefore twofold. On the hand, it was felt that the social/conversational features of the relationship between audience and radio could reveal aspects of the radio's underlying philosophy. The second interest is that of reconstructing participants' strategies when they converse, in a particular kind of media talk. The two levels seem to interplay significantly, inasmuch as social meanings in terms of institutionally based communicative resources are partly conveyed through discourse practices.

The theoretical analytic framework which this paper refers to is that of the "contextualization theory" discussed for the first time by Gumperz in 1976. The theory, which has been further elaborated by Gumperz in a book (1982) and in a number of articles (1989; 1991), suggests that in social encounters speakers need to create the context relevant for the interpretation of their conversational activities. The "contextualization cues", which contribute to create indexical meanings in conversation, can be of various types (cfr. Auer 1992). In this paper we will concentrate on how the moderator and callers jointly accomplish the opening and closing of the calls. The analysis will take into account prosodic cues and the sequential organisation (conversation analysis). Our concern is to naturalistically describe the interactional strategies moderator and callers use in order to accomplish the task of starting and closing the calls. In accounting for the interactional work, the general principles of conversational organization are taken into account, along with an attempt to relate these principles to the social roles being performed and (re)enacted by participants at each moment in conversation. The holistic description (and participants' interpretation) of aspects of conversation also allows for a third feature of interaction to emerge, namely the level of prosodic signalling. Here, among the diverse shapes and functions that prosodic cues may have, we want to focus on speech rhythm and as long as an even rhythmic pattern is established, also on tempo. Intonation is taken into account, too, whenever it helps clarify aspects of the interpretive work carried out by participants.

2. The prosodic level: speech rhythm and tempo

The present notion of speech rhythm, and related notions such as tempo and isochrony are in line with those first illustrated by Couper-Kuhlen (1989a; 1989b; 1990), Couper-Kuhlen & Auer (1988). It might be worth recalling the main features upon which the present approach to rhythm is based.

The very idea of speech rhythm rests upon the concept of isochrony, the regular spacing in time of (a subset of) prominent syllables. In order to have speech rhythm, at least three successive evenly spaced prominent syllables are needed: these become rhythmic beats. The intervals of time between the rhythmic beats constitute tempo. When two beats are provided by one speaker and the third by a next speaker, then the transition is said to be rhythmic.

Although Italian is traditionally considered a syllable-timed language, while English and German are usually taken to be stress-timed languages, the same approach to rhythm originally devised for English and German has also proved useful for Italian.

In some languages like Italian or Spanish isochronous utterances tend to have approximately the same number of syllables, while in languages such as English isochrony crucially depends on the rhythmic units or feet, no matter how many syllables they contain. While on the one hand the dichotomy (Pike 1945) is generally accepted (but scholars prefer to speak of a tendency, rather than of pure traits (Bertinetto 1981)), it seems that the difference between stress-timed and syllable-timed languages is only defined in structural terms, this conclusion being based on analysis carried out mainly on the descriptive-typological level, usually with de-contextualized data obtained in laboratory experiments. As soon as one adopts an interactional perspective, working on naturally occurring data, the difference perhaps loses at least part of its relevance.

Notions like "coming in on the beat" or "rhythmic integration" are indeed based on interactionally oriented definitions of speech rhythm, which in turn rest on gestalt-like, quasi-natural synchronized patterns of social action. Accordingly, there seems to be no a priori reason for drawing a line between languages, as far as talk and conversation are concerned. Rather, the distinction seems instead one of degrees: in our data, for example, isochrony is often met by a quasi-even number of syllables,

while in other cases also secondary accents can constitute rhythmic beats at the expense of primary accents, if need be.

However, the aim of this paper is above all to look at rhythm in (a particular kind of) conversation, and describe the contextualizing work speech rhythm does only in relation to additional levels of discourse organization, disregarding for the moment questions of structural description. These are of course important in order to have a clearer picture not only of the function of speech rhythm, but also of its intrinsic nature. The present attempt clearly lacks the latter, and is thus to be considered provisional.

Although a notion of speech rhythm as a gestalt-like auditive pattern could be said to be a pervasive feature of language (conversation) in general, the contextualizing role or communicative import it has, varies according to the conversational loci it is part of. We then start from the assumption that there is no one-to-one relationship between conversation and rhythm, that is between certain activity-types and the role speech rhythm plays at each stage in conversation. For example, Couper-Kulhen (1989a; 1990) has shown that rhythmic patterns in turn transitions cannot be predicted by the type of juncture. Even "loose" junctures, that is transitions in which neither next speaker nor next activity are determined, in many cases were found to be rhythmic, too.

Instead, rhythm was observed to constitute an additional level of signalling, whose ultimate "meaning" depends upon the type of speech activity speakers are engaged in, turning an overall feature of discourse (Erickson & Shultz 1982) into communicative events which steer and guide speakers' and analysts' interpretation; that is, "speech rhythm creates a set of timing options (integrated beats, delayed or late beats, early beats) for coordinating turns within sequences which speakers use to establish a context for the interpretation of their talk" (Couper-Kuhlen, 1990, p. 47). Rhythmic organization is only considered here inasmuch as it helps uncover the details of the communicative processes, as they are carried out in real time by participants.

In their first attempt to come to terms with speech rhythm, and after discussing various attempts which have been made in phonetics to measure rhythmic intervals, Couper-Kuhlen & Auer (1991, p. 5) come to the conclusion that "...as far as interactional rhythm is concerned, the only meaningful notion of isochrony is a perceptual one.", stressing that in this approach perception is more reliable than other kinds of objective measurements.

In line with this principle, one way of locating the beats is to accompany the rhythmic regularity by tapping along with a finger or a small object; this activity is carried out repeatedly, until some one subset of the prominent syllables matches the tapping: these are the rhythmic beats.

3. General description of the programme

An exhaustive description and analysis of the special features of the programme have already been carried out by Frank Muller (1991). Here a brief overview is given in order to describe the strategies through and by which the moderator sets the scene and chooses the callers. The programme which is the object of this study is an example of the ways in which radio provides a "poetic" or "philosophic" reading of people's everyday life experiences. The call-in programme which is the object of this study is taken from the series "Radiodue 3131", of Channel 2 of Italian national radio. Corrado Guerzoni, who is also a poet himself, moderates the programme with quotations from writers and poets. The show is transmitted from 10.30 to 12.00 o'clock a.m. from Monday to Friday, and of course the audience will mainly consist of people who for one reason or another are at home at that time of the day (retired people, housewives etc.). The moderator in the studio proposes a theme for discussion (in this case it is "the past", "il passato"); then callers are invited to call and to report (on) (or give autobiographic narratives), illustrating the meaning the past has had (or still has) in their personal lives. Before inviting callers to do this, however, the moderator is observed to set an appropriate mode against which callers' stories are to be interpreted by means of music and poetry reading (Baudelaire): the details of each caller's past allow for the recognition of features which can be said to echo, if not parallel, literary moods. The task of the moderator is twofold: on the one hand he starts the conversation on the basis of what the caller had said to collaborators in the studio who are in charge of "filtering out" incoming calls. So Guerzoni presents each caller with a formulation which becomes obviously crucial to his management of the show. On the other hand his task is also that of taking out of these stories a universally valid moral, a sort of lesson that anybody listening the radio station should learn. One of the main differences between casual, informal talk and interaction in radio phone-in programmes (but perhaps also in some other institutional settings) regards different topic structures. In the case of a radio programme like the one under consideration, mentionables do not seem to derive from participants' interest in informing each other (as we might expect among friends, acquaintances, relatives and the like); rather, the structure of the

programme is such that participants seem to orient their stories to an overall philosophical framework within which each participant's story is just one among other biographies whose ultimate aim is to collaboratively achieve (together with moderator) an adequate picture (we might even say "understanding") of what the past can mean for, and teach to, all of us.¹ This ultimate "we - can - all - learn - something - from - life" orientation can also admittedly be inferred from the fact that we are dealing with a national radio programme: it is a commonplace to regard national radio or T.V. as officially integrating educational institutions in many respects. In order to see how Guerzoni builds up a positive attitude towards the past, thus encouraging listeners to call in, consider the following extracts:

(1)

(Ga=Gabriella, caller number 10. G=Guerzoni. Whenever the Italian text allows it, translations have been carried out on a word-by-word basis, in order to preserve an iconic impression of similar turn length.)

- 1 G: Quindi,
- 2 Ga: e me ne sono andata
- >3 G: in qualche misura - come dice il poeta
- >4 Montale "chi più m'ama più non mi tocchi"
- 5 nel senso - che questo passato lasciamolo
- 6 intangibile, ecco

- 1 G: then,
- 2 Ga: and I went away
- 3 G: in some sense - as the poet
- 4 Montale used to say " who loves me most,
- 5 touches me not" in the sense -
- 6 that we'd better leave the past untouched,
- 7 put it that way

(2)

(Mi=Mirella, caller number 3)

- 1 Mi: sono molto legata ancora alle mie amiche.
- 2 G: questo (...)

¹ This philosophic, and to a certain extent also pedagogic, background orientation does not entirely prevent the programme from taking on a touch of voyeurism, too.

3 Mi: qualcuna ci scriviamo ancora,
4 G: certo
5 Mi: a natale così a pasqua, sa?
6 G: bene
7 Mi: dottor Guerzoni, io le voglio fare
8 i complimenti per la sua trasmissione. - per
9 tutte le sue trasmissioni, che sono
>10 molto importanti e ci insegnano molto.
11 G: bene

1 Mi: I still feel close to my friends.
2 G: this (...)
3 Mi: and still keep in touch with some of them,
4 G: sure
5 Mi: at christmas or easter, you know?
6 G: well
7 Mi: doctor Guerzoni, I would like to congratulate
8 you on your programme. - on
9 all your programmes, which are very
10 important and teach us a lot.
11 G: good

In both extracts there is an overt reference to the literary-philosophic character of the programme. In (1) G. (the moderator) directly quotes a line from an important italian poet, thus extending to his formulation (lines 5 and 6) the same touch of unforgettable solemnity. In (2), Gabriella explicitly states (lines 9-10) that this kind of show teaches important lessons about life, thus openly showing how enthusiastic she is about the programme, as if she were speaking also on behalf of the other callers (cf. the plural "ci insegnano" in line 10).

Given the perspective of "calling for learning" (the framing of which is typically the moderator's job at the outset of the programme), how any new material is made to fit in is not without consequences for the negotiation of the relevance of each event told in the course of the call. Although a whole life can be a deep enough well to pick out mentionables from, the way this is done is constrained both by the moderator opening up (which, as we shall see, frames subsequent talk) and by the background orientation to the "we-are-all-learning-something-from-you" character of each call, that is by the collaborative work of moderator and caller to allow only for new material which retrospectively fits into the opening activity and which can prospectively be used as a preservable and reportable feature for inviting closing. (Incidentally, the fact that young people do not call in is, of course, no surprise. Perhaps expectations would be somewhat different if young people were to call, theirs being not real stories, but

simply second-hand, impersonal thoughts). The analysis of the moderator's speech activity at the beginning of the calls reveals that he construes a positive picture of the past as a topic for discussion.

4. Three types of openings

The background against which the openings of the calls are to be interpreted is constituted by the moderator's positive presentation of "the past" as a fundamental aspect of human lives, the whole show being precisely construed around this expectation. If we look at the sequential format of some instances of openings, these can be differentiated in three groups. On the basis of the conversational and prosodic analysis, and from the participants' point of view (especially from the presenter's perspective, who has the practical task of keeping up the interest the programme has for the audience, by means of appropriate discourse strategies), we can distinguish between:

- 1) four-turn sequences
- 2) two-turn sequences
- 3) digressions.

in four-turn openings participants have different points of view about the past, to an extent that will become apparent in the analytic discussion below. Although moderators sometimes welcome callers who have diverging opinions on the topic of discussion, still difference in opinions must not be too much marked for reasons of face-threat. Along with sequences of turns, also prosodic means help construe a local context for starting the conversations. Four-turn sequences concern openings in which a "formulation" (cf. Heritage & Watson 1979) is followed by a "confirmation", a "request for explanation" and the "explanation":

Moderator: formulation
 Caller: confirmation
 Moderator: request for explanation
 Caller: explanation.

Two-turn sequences contain a similar presupposition (positive vs. caller's negative vision of the the past), but a different conversational sequence, related perhaps to a "new" strategy on the part of the moderator. Here again prosody helps clarify the nature of pragmatic presuppositions and differences in turn-taking, especially in relation to

the task of softening problems of "face". Two-turn sequences thus concern openings in which the "formulation" is followed by the "confirmation" plus the "explanation" in the caller's same turn:

Moderator: formulation

Caller: confirmation + explanation.

Finally, digressions refer to openings in which the formulation is characteristically deferred to a later locus in the call. The burden of the motives of the moderator's errors (in Goffman's terms) is in this last case almost entirely left to the conversation-analytic part. In the next section, we will discuss the sequential structure of some instances of openings in more detail, and try to relate it to the conversational and prosodic cues (and background expectations) speakers routinely rely on during the social and linguistic process of establishing context-bound reference.

4.1. Four-turn sequences

Before discussing the examples, a few words on the transcription convention are in order. In notation, the isochronous beats are preceded in print by left-hand slashes placed underneath one another. Right-hand slashes are intended to give an iconic impression of slower or faster tempo, when they are placed more to the right or more to the left, as the respective case may be; occasionally cadence is indicated in tenths of a second. The sign ^ indicates a silent beat, that is a pause in conversation which is incorporated into the rhythmic pulse.²

According to this notion of speech rhythm, patterns of evenly spaced rhythmic beats are not uniformly present throughout sequences of interaction. In some cases it is difficult to say to what extent they are absent and to what extent they are simply not relevant in a particular speech activity. Accordingly, when no discernible rhythmic pattern is heard for one of these two reasons, then the fragment of speech is transcribed in continuous lines of print, using the conventions developed by G. Jefferson in conversation analysis. The rhythmic discussion is juxtaposed to the sequential analysis for reasons of convenience only: of course contextualization cues work simultaneously in a holistic fashion (cfr. Auer 1992), which a discussion of this kind can hardly do justice to. The two dimensions of discussion are then artificially kept apart, but

²For more details, see Abercrombie (1971), Couper-Kuhlen / Auer (1988).

they should be considered as intewoven in a dimension of "real time processing" (Erickson, 1984). Rather than looking for systematic correlations between prosody and sequentiality on the one hand, and background knowledge on the other, the main focus of the discussion will focus rather on participants' contextualizing work.

Consider, in the following extracts, the first four turns needed to open the radio conversation. In particular, formulations as they are described in Heritage and Watson (1979) for everyday conversation will be set off formulations in this instance of radio talk. Readers are also invited to look at the last turn of each caller, in which she gives the explanation of the reason for the call. Differences between accounts in non radio conversation and in radio talk will be discussed in some detail. In these extracts callers depart from the moderator's position, but they are still faced with the task of softening the face threat contained in the difference in point of view, and they do so by using an integrative rhythmic pattern:

(3)

(In the list of thirteen callers, Anna is the seventh. A=Anna; G=Guerzoni. While for Guerzoni the past is very important, Anna "does not love it at all" (in Guerzoni's words). There is a clash in points of view.)

- | | | | | |
|----|----|--|---|-------------------|
| 1 | G: | / Anna | / | |
| 2 | A: | buon= | | |
| 3 | | /=giorno | / | |
| 4 | G: | / se non ho ca= | / | |
| 5 | | /=pito | / | (faster, ca. 0.4) |
| 6 | | / male | / | |
| 7 | | / lei non | / | |
| 8 | | / ama af= | / | |
| 9 | | /=fatto il ri= | / | |
| 10 | | /=torno al pas= | / | (slower, ca. 0.6) |
| 11 | | /=sato | / | |
| 12 | A: | / esatto | / | |
| 13 | G: | / perché? | / | (delayed beat) |
| 14 | A: | la | | |
| 15 | | / vostra trasmis= | / | (ca. appr.0.5) |
| 16 | | /=sione questa mat= | / | |
| 17 | | /=tina mi ha | / | |
| 18 | | / fatto | / | |
| 19 | | <i>pensare ad un atteggiamento che per me è stato</i> | | |
| 20 | | <i>assolutamente istintivo (0.8) il pensare al passato</i> | | |
| 21 | | <i>(0.8) con moderazione mi piace - il ritornare nel</i> | | |
| 22 | | <i>passato mai</i> | | |

G: Anna

A: goodmorning

G: if I am not wrong, you don't like to go back to the past at all

A: exactly
 G: why?
 A: your programme has made me think of an attitude which has been absolutely instinctive for me (0.8) I like to think of the past with moderation (0.8) but never to go back to it.

(4)

(B=Bruna, the second caller. Also Bruna has a negative feeling about the past. Again points of view are different.)

1 G: / bruna / (ca. 0.6)
 2 B: / pronto? /
 3 G: / buongiorno /
 4 B: si
 5 / sente / (early, faster, ca.0.3)
 6 / bene /
 7 / buongiorno /
 8 ^
 9 G: la
 10 / scelta del / (ca. 0.6)
 11 / mantenere /
 12 / vivi il pas= /
 13 /=sato /
 14 / è una /
 15 / scelta / (faster, ca. 0.4)
 16 / di co= /
 17 /=raggio /
 18 B: / si /
 19 ^ /
 20 G: / perché? /
 21 ^ /
 22 B: / bé per= (early, same rhythm)
 23 /=ché io al con= /
 24 /=trario della si= /
 25 /=gnora mi /
 26 / sento /
 27 / più un /
 28 so: (0.4) uhu - ho trantaquattro anni, ma mi sento più
 29 una sopravvissuta. (0.7) che - cioè non c'è questa
 30 spinta: - perché non trovo i ricordi che uniscono il
 31 presente al passato.

G: Bruna
 B: hello?
 G: goodmorning
 B: I can hear you, goodmorning
 G: the choice of keeping the past alive is a choice of courage
 B: yes
 G: why?
 B: well, because unlike the other lady, I feel personally very much a su: (0.4)

huh - I'm thirty-four, but I feel very much a survivor (0.7) that - that is there is no connection because I cannot find the threads linking the present to the past (etc.)

In this programme the moderator (G), after a routine telephone recognition sequence (cf. Schegloff 1979), projects topic talk by a formulation which reports what the callers have already said to collaborators in the studio in charge of answering, the callers being requested to outline beforehand what they wish to talk about. Sequentially, the formulation is followed in extracts (3) and (4) by a confirmation on the part of the callers, on the completion of which G. self-selects with a request for explanation "perché?".

Heritage and Watson (1979) have shown that formulations are highly implicative for subsequent talk, and since they constitute a unique version of the (potential) ways in which stretches of talk have been read, they typically project a decision as next adjacent activity, thereby allowing for an alternative reading of same accountable text by recipients. Given the relevance of the "formulation-decision" adjacency pair, Heritage and Watson have found that confirmations are massively preferred, while accordingly disconfirmations would disrupt the held-in-common presupposition that what was talked about could indeed be used as a common ground for mutual understanding.

In our data, too, confirmations are the preferred options, and this could be explained by the fact that in asymmetric role-relationships like the one between moderator and caller, the former has an implicit right to formulate and see his formulation not challenged by a candidate second.³ However, more important than that is perhaps the fact that these formulations, by the very nature of this instance of radio-talk, occur at the beginning of the conversation, instead of the "middle" or the end, where they would be more likely to occur. Heritage and Watson (p. 147) state that "...formulations constitute members' methods for demonstrating comprehension of sections of talk." This implies that formulating crucially depends upon retrospective consultation of "accountable texts" as they are provided in the activity of conversing. Although it is objectively difficult to say "how much" of mentioned mentionables are needed, or "how long" a stretch of conversation must be in order for formulations to be most likely to be produced, the moderator in this case relies only on what the caller has in turn quickly

³ This seems true especially in this programme, where a literary air plays at the background. Alternative, competing readings of stretches of conversation would in fact threaten the role of the poet which the moderator plays.

formulated to collaborators before s/he comes on the air, and this seems to be the exception to the rule, it being a characteristic of this instance of radio talk. Let's look in more detail at the difference between formulations in everyday conversation and radio talk.

In order to uncover the strategies the moderator and also callers use to overcome the fact that they lack the amount of feedback (feedback produced by stretches of talk already performed, in the give-and-take of verbal and non-verbal communication) speakers normally rely on in producing formulations when they are "at some point" in conversation, it might be useful to ask whether these strategies have something to do with background constraints regarding an interplay between role management and topic organization, if we agree on the fact that G.'s activity projects a sub-topic (that of each caller) within the larger one (that of the programme); or, put differently, that "formulations may be said to "fix" what will have turned out to be a (the) topic" (Heritage & Watson 1979, p. 149).

To begin with, we can say that the talk here is interpreted against a background made up by the simultaneous working of at least two orders of preferences. One of these can be best described inferentially as follows. Given the credibility work that the moderator has done at the beginning (with a poem by Baudelaire and violin music in the background) in order to positively ground the choice of the "past" as something worth talking about (that is, as something worth making a whole programme about), because it somehow helps us to understand the present, callers who instead contradict this background expectation are openly and demonstrably requested to give an explanation. This is arguably what happens in extract (3) and (4), where the "esatto" and "si" (lines 12 and 18 respectively), apart from being sequentially implicative as second confirmations of the pair "formulation/decision", can also be said to work more or less as markers to re-affirm the point and at the same time to challenge the expectation that the past "teaches" us something, and is after all an important part of life.

In (3) and (4) the moderator then counter-moves (lines 13 and 20), producing the second move of a potential (in everyday, non-radio talk) or pseudo (here) conflict-beginning ("pseudo" because, although it has to be appropriately warranted in sequentially implicative terms and in real time, it might be said to have already been implicitly or somewhat surreptitiously made part of the programme as a probable something

which adds "flavour" to the programme⁴) which projects an account as next activity.

Heritage (1990) has shown that in natural conversation members routinely give accounts when they fail to comply with a projected next activity (refusal of an offer etc.). However, there is a difference with this data, which amounts to the difference between "natural" and "institutional" talk. Here the refusal comes at the beginning of the call: the moderator offers not only to talk about a topic, but also to "take sides". in accordance with the presentation he has made of (aspects of) that topic; then callers are free to offer different readings according to their own life experience.

The accounts given by Anna and Bruna respectively for why they disagree with G. show, however, different degrees of relationship between self- and other-attentiveness, although here they are certainly less face-threatening (or at least less decisively fault-implicative; see note 3) than we would expect in "normal" conversation. Take Bruna's account in (4). She orients to the conflict-potential character of her opening, trying to soften it by turning to one of the preceding callers for help (lines 22-25), treating that contribution as an anchorage for her own account (thus symbolically making it more acceptable) and by attributing inability to herself. Instead Anna, in extract (3), shows less other-attentiveness through the hyperbolic statement "ritornare nel passato mai" (lines 19-20), which runs dramatically counter to the presentation constructed by the moderator, although she also prefaces it with an appeal to instinct (thus again making it less face-threatening), turning it into part of the context.⁵

Let's now have a look at the prosodic aspects of the conversational exchanges. As far as the rhythmic pattern is concerned, it looks on the whole quite integrative in both extracts. Following Couper-Kuhlen (1989), we could say that an integrative rhythmic pattern in these fragments is expected on the basis of the type of junctures (in almost all cases, next speaker determined/next activity determined) in turn transitions. More important is perhaps the overall auditive impression of "smoothness" that both participants collaboratively establish. Given a "de facto" disagreement (callers have another "reading" of the meaning

⁴ It is even a cultural commonplace to regard different opinions as to some extent necessary in public formal or informal gatherings of many kinds (think e.g. of television debates, some of which are based precisely on that and simply can not work otherwise), but also in some more private spheres of everyday life.

⁵ Sometimes speakers do resort to inner states of mind when they are faced with the task of repairing or accounting. Following Auer (1992), we can think of it as a "brought about" feature of context.

of the past), synchronizing the moves to match a common rhythmic pattern helps soften the conflict potential of the sequence.

In radio-talk, this has a further implication. Different opinions are usually welcomed in many genres of media-talk (and the job of moderators is precisely that of preventing them from degenerating into open, "uncontrollable" conflict), so that more often than not a preferred option is artfully disguised as a dispreferred one. This is exactly what happens in this show with some callers. The final impression is that both participants "perform the disagreement", acting out a game on the big stage provided by the radio. A deeper prosodic analysis of each of the two fragments is in order.

In (3) a rhythmic structure is established in lines 1, 3 and 4: G and A alternate in providing the necessary three beats. The same pattern is then kept going by G and also by A in line 12. G's "perché" in line 13 comes too late to fit into it. If the pattern is kept going, the next beat on "vostra" matches the tapping. Retrospectively then, the late beat in line 13 is a momentary "wobbling" (Couper-Kuhlen 1990), which does not destroy the rhythmic pace. The moderator "leaves room" for Anna to possibly continue and provide the explanation G is looking for. When Anna does not continue after the "esatto" in line 12, G. needs an additional "perché", upon the completion of which Anna gives her account. Anna's disagreement is nevertheless well disguised under a perfectly tuned rhythmic integration. Her different opinion is then revealed from line 14 onwards. Two shifts in tempo occur. The shift to faster tempo in line 5 does not however establish a significant contrast, for the cadence of what comes immediately before is subject to external, more "technical" factors, the function being that of securing a communicative channel to start the conversation (cf. Couper-Kuhlen 1990; Schegloff 1986).

The shift to a slower tempo in line 10 is somewhat more intriguing. It coincides with G's reference to the topic of the show and with the end of the turn. It is as if G intended to emphasize the topic, to give it more prominence, ultimately to defend the choice of "his" topic. There is a covert expectation that at the end of the turn speakers somehow elicit displays of reciprocity (cf. Heath 1984; 1986). For example when they are about to reach a possible completion point, speakers typically monitor co-participants' gaze. Put in the context of the exchange, switching to a slower tempo can be seen here as an additional rhetorical cue, a way of marking the item object of the programme.

In (4) a common rhythm is established when participants open the conversation. It's G who provides the third decisive beat in line 3. Then an increase in tempo follows in line 5. Bruna confirms that the communicative channel is in fact functioning and that "proper" conversation can take place. She does so by anticipating the beat and doubling the cadence (cf. Auer 1988), bestowing upon the sequence a sense of urgency.

That lines from 4 to 7 are contextualized by Bruna as an "aside" of stage can be shown by the fact that her contribution is neither relevant on the content level (content-oriented conversation begins later), nor on that of the ratification of mutual participation, which has already taken place successfully. Bruna's "si sente bene, buongiorno" is then somehow "out of place", and what is important is that it is Bruna who reflexively cues it so by doubling the cadence.

The line is of course an important part of the context of the interaction(s) in this show, and it would have remained unnoticed as an unproblematic part of their mutual background knowledge related to the physical surroundings or components in which or by which interaction takes place (and of anybody who calls in - it might be added), if only Bruna had not brought it into the foreground as a reportable feature of context by the method of a faster cadence. G. resumes the former pace in line 10, which is kept up to line 15, at which point another switch to a faster tempo occurs. This acceleration takes place at the end of the turn, as if G. intended to foreground the point he was illustrating, again for rhetorical purposes (cfr. the *rallentando* mode in fragment 3 in analogous position): G. seems to use contrasting tempo patterns in rhetorical function. A silent beat is allowed to go by before G comes in on rhythm with his request for explanation: as in extract (3), G delays his turn to let Bruna provide the explanation. Another silent beat intervenes in line 21, but Bruna is early on the next one. As in extract (3), the caller softens the conflict potential of her account by orienting to the same rhythm of the presenter, thus (indirectly) showing solidarity with his position.

4.2. Two-turn sequences

While in the extracts just examined the moderator needs a "perché?" in order to elicit the caller's point, in the following extracts callers confirm the formulation and readily provide the explanation, although they have different point of view, like fragments (3) and (4). On the

basis of the moderator's professional handling of the calls, which makes his opening speech activity (formulation) relevant to the management of the show, what is it that makes the difference in turn-taking? Why are the following exchanges "shorter"? In order to answer to these questions, we will discuss two other dimensions of contextualization processes: intonation, which seems to interact with textual and syntactic cues (these in turn being in a reflexive relation with pragmatic presuppositions), and stress placement. In the following fragments, readers are invited to look, among other aspects, especially at "inutile?" ((5), lines 8-9), and at "patetico" ((6), lines 10-11). In extract (7) the presenter and the caller are on the same wave-length, although the caller has a slight difficulty in presenting her point:

(5)

(F=Fernanda thinks that memories are useless. Fernanda is number 9 in the list of the callers.)

1	G: Fer=		
2		/ nanda	/
3	F:	/ pronto buon=	/
4		/=giorno	/ (early)
5	G: i ri=		
6		/=cordi	/ (ca. 0.5)
7		/ sono una /	
8		/ cosa i=	/
9		/=nutile?	/ (late, rising intonation)
10	F: i=		
11		/=nutile	/
12		/ si per=	/ (early beat)
13		/=ché noi siamo	/ (slower, ca.0.6)
14		/ fatti del	/
15		/nostro pas=	/
16		/=sato	/
17		<i>perció anche dei nostri ricordi - e allora:</i>	
18		<i>più che pensare: - eh a rivolgerci indietro</i>	
19		<i>- dobbiamo il presente (...) migliorare (...)</i>	
20		<i>e l'avvenire etc.</i>	

G: Fernanda

F: hello, goodmorning

G: are memories - useless?

F: useless yes because we are made of our past, then
also of our memories - and therefore more than looking
back - we should the present (...) improve (...) and the
future etc.

(6)

(Ga: Gabriella II, caller numer 12. For her memories are pathetic)

1 G: / Gabriella /
 2 Ga: / si buon= /
 3 / =giorno / (ca. 0.5)
 4 / ^ /
 5 G: / dunque /
 6 / anche /
 7 / lei in /
 8 / qualche /
 9 / modo /
 10 (1.3) *tocca l'aspetto - pa=*
 11 / =tetico / (higher pitch)
 12 / del ri= /
 13 / =cordo /
 14 Ga: / esatto / (same rhythm)
 15 / ^ /
 16 / cioè - eh - i ri= /
 17 / =cordi /
 18 *a oggi - ricordare oggi io ho detto prima infatti*
 19 *alla signorina (...) che ho cinquant'anni(...) i*
 20 *ricordi di noi cinquantenni vengono considerati*
 21 *la maggior parte delle volte patetici.*

G: Gabriella

Ga: yes, goodmorning

G: so, you also touch on the pathos-like aspect of memories in some ways

Ga: that's right - that is - eh - the memories up to today -

to remember today in fact I told the lady before (...)

that I am fifty (...) our memories, the memories of

the people who are fifty are most of the times considered sad etc.

(7)

(Gr=Grazia, caller number 6. Contrary to Fernanda and Gabriella II, Grazia has instead profited from her inclination to look at the past.)

1 G: / Grazia /
 2 Gr: / si /
 3 / pronto? / (early)
 4 G: / lei si è /
 5 / sempre rite= / (ca. 0.5)
 6 / =nata fortu= /
 7 / =nata per= /
 8 / =ché /
 9 / ha ricor= /
 10 / =dato /
 11 / tutto dell'in= /
 12 / fanzia /
 13 Gr: / si /
 14 / cioè (0.9) /
 15 *diciamo io: mhm s - anche sentendo le signore*
 16 *che sono intervenute no? mi sono resa conto etc.*

- G: Grazia
Gr: yes hello?
G: you have always considered yourself lucky because
you remember everything of your childhood.
Gr: yes - well (0.9) let's say I: mhm s - also listening
to the ladies who have called, you know? I have realized etc.

In these extracts callers do not wait for G's "perché" as in extracts (3) and (4), but provide the explanation immediately (for Fernanda memories are useless, for Gabriella sad, Grazia has instead a positive feeling). In (5), G couches the formulation under the guise of a (rhetorical) question. G and F do not succeed in establishing a common rhythm, for Fernanda is early in line 4 on the third beat. Instead it is the moderator who manages to set up an even rhythmic structure in line 6. The late and early beats in line 9 and 12 respectively do not significantly affect the rhythmic structure, for the underlying pattern is picked up again by the caller, who in this way indirectly shows solidarity with the presenter's position.

The rising intonation of "inutile" in line 9 and the pause immediately before it - which make it prosodically prominent and stand out from the rest of G's turn (with the consequent focus on it) - both express the presupposition contained in G's question: that Fernanda should explain why she thinks that memories are useless, starting just from the "adjective".

To better appreciate the subtle meaning which is conveyed in this exchange, just imagine what the inferences would have been like if "inutile" (which of course summarizes Fernanda's point, reflecting surprise because of what can be called an "exaggeration" from G's point of view) had been isochronous with preceding beats and if intonation had been flat or had fallen: its status would certainly have appeared less problematic and more generic. The moderator would probably have needed an additional "why" in order to elicit caller's account, given that Fernanda's story again challenges G's point of view (memories are useless vs. memories are important, revealing, necessary etc.). The moderator is then observed to use a different strategy, choosing among the range of possibilities that his role allows him. This strategy, as we have seen, makes use of contextualization cues such as rhythm and intonation.

The discussion also has a syntactic facet, which interplays with G's stylistic choices. For example, the beginning of Fernanda's turn in line 10 ties in with the end of G's, just because the focus of the introductory formulation is arguably on "inutile", so that if we were to account for the

presupposition contained in the question, we would be likely to come up more or less with the gloss "are you really sure that memories are useless?". Hypothetically, if "inutile?" had not been late and spoken with a rising pitch contour, probably the gloss would have merely been the exploring "you say that memories are useless.", and Fernanda would have probably answered with a "yes", followed by a "why?", just like fragments (3) and (4).

In (6) the formulation contains a reference to a preceding caller who had raised the same issue. In his formulation the moderator emphasizes the adjective "patetico" through a higher pitch range; by placing the focus on the adjective, G elicits Gabriella's point of view on the very same topic. The emphasis is such that G's turn can be translated as "Why do you also talk about the pathetic aspect?": in this way the "why" question is already incorporated into the turn.

The moderator and the caller establish a common rhythm at the beginning of the interaction, and keep it collaboratively for all the transcript. In line 5, G hits the pulse after one silent beat, thus coordinating his canonic activity with the initial exchanges. Gabriella comes in on time in line 14 with the confirmation, followed by a silent beat. The pauses and hesitations in line 16 indicate that she is having problems in giving a convincing explanation. However, Gabriella times her "cioè" in such a way as to make it fit into the rhythmic pulse, thus for a moment incorporating the pauses (otherwise potentially threatening her ability "to hold" on to the radio floor) into a fluent discourse pattern. As in (5), Gabriella's ability to hit the pulse of the interaction shows again a fairly strong orientation to a feeling of affiliation with the moderator's point of view, although they have different views on the topic of discussion as it is evident in the accounts they give respectively in lines 12-20 and 16-21.

Given G's background expectation according to which looking back at the past is an important attitude, in extract (7) Grazia meets it perfectly, and that accounts "ex negativo" for the absence of a (potential) request for explanation on the part of the moderator. However, this does not entirely free her from the necessity of giving an account for being able to remember her childhood memories so well, partly because this seems to be - unexpectedly (at least for the moderator) - an exception to the rule built up by preceding callers.

The smooth, integrative rhythm and the even intonation pattern in turn reflexively cue (and quasi-iconically point to) the collaborative stance built up by both participants, on the basis of parallel, "integrative"

mutual expectations and communicative intents. The beat in line 14, as in fragment (6), is again a "sign of fluency": the meaning potential of "cioè" ("that is") is camouflaged by the even pulse and for a moment (or, we should better say, for this practical purpose) loses the function it normally has in discourse (according to textlinguistics) and becomes part of an "adequate", "rational", "clear" etc. talk.

Integrating "cioè" into an even rhythmic unit is one way to start her contribution. Another one is to make an overt reference to the other callers (lines 15 and 16), thus formulating the fact that what she is going to say does not come out of a vacuum, but is instead part of commonsense knowledge. Since her point of view is different from that of the other callers, in this way she makes it more acceptable. The quality of this strategy seems to be the following: prefacing her account with a reference to what previous callers have said allows Grazia to play on a "safer ground", sharing with other callers the responsibility for it: what she is going to say is nicely protected by what has already been accepted as "adequate", or "plausible", or "convincing" etc.

Presuppositions and conversational inferences conveyed through contextualization cues such as rhythm, along with accent placement and intonation, do seem to interact not only sequentially with patterns of conversational organization, but also with syntactic and textual aspects.

4.2.1. *Deviations*

Within the two types of openings that we have considered so far, interesting exceptions to the routine sequential structure were found, which symbolize the difficulty inherent in proposing clear-cut categories. Among "deviating" structures, the following fragments are proposed in a one-by-one close analysis. In fragment (8), Luisa fails to acknowledge presenter's routine formulation with the canonic, ipothetical "si" or "esatto" like the other callers. The pause after "combattiva" leads into moderator's specification of the presupposition contained in his opening formulation. The pauses in lines 11 and 16-17 are particularly relevant for the analysis of this extract. Let's look at it in more details:

(8) (L=Luisa, caller number 5, is not "combative" any more, so the argument touches upon her personal attitudes and abilities)

- 1 G: Lui=
 2 /=isa /
 3 L: / si /
 4 /pronto? / (early)
 5 G: /spesso /
 6 lei ricorda la sua giovinezza e prova disagio
 7 per=
 8 /=ché non è / (ca. 0.5)
 9 / più combat= /
 10 /=tiva /
 11 / ^ /
 12 / cosa vuol /
 13 / dire / (faster, ca. 0.4)
 14 / questo lu= /
 15 /=isa? /
 16 / ^ /
 17 / ^ /
 18 L: / perché: /
 19 allora (1.8) vivevo in un mondo molto più
 20 ovattato, (...) c'è chi - ha combattuto fin da piccolino
 21 (0.7) io dovendo combattere: in età più adulta:
 22 (1.5) eh - faccio molta più fatica etc.

G: Luisa

L: Yes hello?

G: often you recall your youth, and you feel uneasy
 because you are not combative any more (1.0)
 what does that mean, Luisa? (1.2)

L: because at that time (1.8) I used to live in a world
 which was much more comfortable, (...) some -
 have a hard life since they are children, (0.7) but I had
 to battle my way through in a more adult age (1.5) ch -
 it is much harder for me etc.

In extract (8) G's "formulation" is followed by silence (line 11), for Luisa is not ready to provide the expected explanation of her point. Her silence then gives enough ground to G to self-select and reformulate it by a more direct question, which makes explicit what was only a background, implicit expectation in his first formulation.

Extract (8) reveals then the relevance of the second order of preferences that we mentioned earlier (see page 16), which can be recognized in the second part of the following two-fold question: is the moderator's topic projection (initial formulation) directly related to - and thus openly questioning - inner abilities (character traits) on the part of the caller, or is it neutral to them, relying rather upon callers' general (or momentary) evaluative attitudes? In fact, while in the extracts just examined, the moderator's activity seems only to orient to callers' generic states of mind ("non ama affatto il ritorno al passato", "è una scelta di coraggio" etc., respectively extracts (3) and (4)), in extract (8)

he questions Luisa's disposition to be "combattiva", thus openly doubting precisely the ability which, according to her account, would instead be necessary in her life⁶. (Incidentally, the fact that it is after all callers who are in the first place responsible for the way the moderator opens up, can only be treated as a curious aside, it being in principle self-caused. They have already presented themselves in one way or another before coming on the air, and now it is too late to change this impression. The quantity and quality of the face-work they do now is thus directly proportional (or qualitatively related) to the way they have presented their selves already (Goffman 1959)).

The claim is that the sequence initiated by the moderator's activity in (8) is more face-threatening than in the other fragments. The two relatively long pauses in lines 11 and 16-17 could perhaps account for that, along with the moderator's attempt "to repair" the problem through rephrasing with a question (lines 12-15). G's re-formulating activity (which, by being a definite question, also restricts the range of possible answers Luisa can turn to) in lines 12-15 contains at least two newly arrived-at signs of other-attentiveness: G designs his turn in order to more easily elicit a response by Luisa, and to deal with this particular problem.

One cue which reflects this strategy is the use of the final recognitional "Luisa", which establishes an affiliative stance between their points of view; more important is perhaps the symbolic import of the recognitional. The moderator is observed to use the same strategy as when he routinely welcomes the callers at the opening of their calls. In institutional discourse like radio talk, we might say that first names work as "solidarity markers", while the "power" equivalents could by analogy be represented by summons employing "Mrs." or "signora" etc..

⁶ An aspect of Luisa's story perhaps needs to be explained. There is a contradiction between what the moderator implies in his formulation "you are not determined any more", (implying that somehow she used to be) and Luisa's account that she can not be determined *now*, because she had a comfortable childhood and so she is not used to a hard life. One might look for the explanation of the pauses just in this misunderstanding: Luisa is thrown off because she did not mean what the moderator has understood. Whatever the interpretation, there could be a third, reconciling explanation. Aspects of the emotional sphere routinely referred to as (and implying) abilities, competences etc. are inherently difficult to be talked about, so the misunderstanding is perfectly plausible given the complexity of Luisa's argument. But this leads, in turn, to another consideration. Radio callers are expected to take out of their life experiences and present (brilliantly, as the theatrical vein running through the show obliges them to) only the aspects which can be easily transformed into universal, intersubjectively valid features of life, and they are expected to have already been able to do so *before* the call

followed by the surnames. So in this programme the moderator uses first names whenever he wants to (re)create a friendly relationship.

The summons at the opening of the interaction thus reflect a relatively new attitude of the radio: callers should start the conversation feeling as if they are calling their best friend, and one appropriate way of shaping their intention is to establish a close relationship at the very beginning. By using solidarity markers, G. tries to reduce the gap between their assigned roles: the moderator becomes the "friend". By reducing the interpersonal distance related to different roles, underlying expectations regarding the actual enactment of roles are *symbolically* reduced.

Another cue which contextualizes affiliation between the two participants' communicative intents is faster tempo. The simple contrast between two different patterns of speech tempo is perhaps enough to prompt conversational inferences; in this case it contextualize a new attempt at eliciting the institutionally expected caller's explanation. Besides, there is a sense in which repairing is generally performed with a faster cadence (cfr. Couper-kuhlen 1989). In this case the repairable (and repaired) item is not a verbal one (or, we should better say, is not expressed verbally), but silence, because "talk" is at that point the expected option by the moderator and the audience alike. After the reformulation Luisa is still at a loss (lines 16-17), and has problems (see the vowel elongations and pauses) in giving an adequate account.⁷

In spite of the pauses in lines 11, 16 and 17, the overall rhythmic structure is integrative, for silent beats help keep the isochronous pace in this fragment and, along with that, an inferential, context-bound impression of smoothness designed to deal with the local problem. The moderator orients in line 12 to the rhythmic structure already established in his first attempt at formulating, thus disguising the potential face-threat contained in the repetition under an already established rhythmic speech pattern.

Luisa also exploits the possibility of transforming potentially embarrassing pauses into a silent rhythmic pattern. Her difficulties are however only temporarily remedied, for it is difficult to say whether a rhythmic pattern goes on after "perché". Her capability of hitting the beat of the interaction in line 18 is nevertheless remarkable, and one

⁷ Note that she only gives an account very late in her long turn. There is a sense in which the more speakers postpone accounts, the more other-attentiveness and self-defence are simultaneously shown. Both point in turn to a face-threatening status of the sequence.

which remains, whatever reason could be found for her difficulties in providing an immediate answer.

In the following transcript, the moderator uses yet a different strategy in lines 18-21. The simultaneous use of prosodic cues (quality of the onset, pitch movement, tempo) enables the moderator to create expectations about the story that Gabriella is going to tell. In (9), the first part of the moderator's activity of opening the discussion is an assertion which reports what the caller has said about her inclination to "forget" the past. The first part (lines 6-17) is then contrasted with the last part of his turn (cfr. the adversative particle "ma"), through a syntactic device which consists of a temporal juxtaposition of "what happened for many years" vs. "what happened next". The question in lines 19-21 then does precisely the job of eliciting what is ultimately the reason for Gabriella's call. Her contribution matches the background presupposition (Gabriella eventually finds herself looking at the past, see her account in lines 30-31), so that the moderator is faced with the task of avoiding making Gabriella's story too much in line with his initial presentation of the show. As we said earlier (see note 4, p. 16), the moderator is continuously, surreptitiously hoping that in some ways callers will depart from his perspective in order to have a "lively" debate. When they do not, he has to find an ad hoc strategy, one which will preserve the unexpectedness, surprise etc. necessary for the show. Let's see how he deals with a "shorter" sequence:

(9)

(Ga = Gabriella; G = Guerzoni)

1	G:	Ga	
2		/ briella	/
3	Ga:	/ si	/ (ca. 0.5)
4		/ pronto	/
5		/ ^	
6	G:	per	
7		/ tanti	/
8		/ anni	/
9		/ lei non ha	/
10		/ mai sen=	/
11		/=tito	/
12		/ il bi=	/
13		/=sogno	/
14		/ di ricor=	/
15		/=dare	/
16		/ il pas=	/
17		/=sato	/
18		ma poi (0.5) che	(higher onset, rising int.)
19		/ cosa	(faster, ca.0.3)
20		/ è suc=	/

21 / =cesso? /
 22 Ga: / eh ma /
 23 / poi: / (slower, ca. 0.5, same
 24 / natural= / pitch movement)
 25 / =mente /
 26 / quando si co= /
 27 / =mincia a diven= /
 28 / =tare piú /
 29 / vecchi /
 30 c'è anche piú tempo e (...) mi sono (...)
 31 affezionata ai ricordi di un tempo etc.

G: Gabriella

Ga: yes, hello

G: for so many years you didn't need to recall the
past - but then (0.5) what happened?

Ga: eh but then: of course when you start getting
older there is more time and (...) I am affectionately
attached to old memories etc.

Apart from the lexical and syntactic cues, in lines 18 to 21 there are other signs which contribute to building up this new feature of context, among which are the higher pitch onset on "ma", the rising intonation of "poi", preceded by a pause in line 18, and the tempo. The rising intonation signals that his turn is not completed and that something is expected to follow next, thus iconically pointing to an overall symbolic meaning which might be referred to as "incompleteness". The higher pitch onset on "ma" the (height of which is also carried onto "poi") creates a contrast with what has come before, too, while the pause contributes to create expectations as to what it is going to come. What that "next" is going to be is precisely the story that Gabriella is going to tell, so the story reflexively gains through G's contextualizing work the status of an expected, possibly interesting event. The faster tempo decisively concurs to set the sequence off from the preceding talk.

Moreover, the contextualizing work of the moderator in lines 18-21 pays off: in starting her answer, Gabriella verbatim repeats "ma poi" in lines 22-23 on a slightly lower pitch range, but with the same intonation movement as G's in line 18. So the work of the moderator has at least the practical effect of suggesting to Gabriella a good way of starting her explanation. This "suggestion" does not only concern lexical and syntactic choices. More important is perhaps that collaboration and cooperation in discourse (at least within the framework of radio talk) can also be signalled through prosodic means, that is paralinguistic signs can help achieve mutual understanding in the process of routinely exchanging meanings in stretches of talk. Contextualization cues are in many cases concurrent, or redundant (cf. Auer 1990). The moderator for example

uses a higher pitch onset, delays the beat on "ma", stresses "poi" with a rising pitch contour. The rhetorical effect G strives for includes also faster tempo, for the cadence in these lines is almost halved. Gabriella instead uses rhythm integration as an additional cue, that is the first beat of her turn component is isochronous with the preceding beats in G's turn on "è" and *successo*". In this way she signals her cooperation in this instance of question-answer sequence. Rhythmic integration shows then a feeling of unproblematic solidarity with the presenter position (perhaps too unproblematic, from his point of view). We are faced then with two tempo patterns.: a faster tempo in lines 18-21 used in a rhetoric way by the moderator to contextualize "liveliness" in the show, and a slower tempo for G's assertion and Gabriella's account in lines 23-29. However, the exact semiotic impact it has can perhaps be better appreciated if we compare it with the tempo pattern in extract (10). In this extract the way the moderator opens the discussion looks on the surface quite like extract (9). In both cases G uses a direct question, preceded by a pause and containing "cosa". But notice that the presupposition contained in G's activity in (10) is different from that in extract (9). In extract (10) the question does not elicit information on any particular aspect of Paolo's life, that is, the (sub)topic is not determined. In (9) instead G clearly elicits from Gabriella the explanation of a particular (perhaps) unknown "incident" in her life. In fact G can ask "*che cosa è successo?*" only if he knows that something has really happened. But even if nothing has happened (and this we don't know), that is even if Gabriella had not said to collaborators anything relevant about her life except the fact that she did not feel the need to think of her past, still G would be behaving as if suddenly something had happened, construing the expectation through some kind of contextualizing work, and among the means he uses are rhythm and intonation:

(10)

(Paolo=P is the only man in the show)

1	G:	Paolo	
2	P:	/ sono	/
3		/ qua al te=	/ (ca. 0.4)
4		/=lefono	/
5	G:	/ ecco allora	/ (late, slower)
6		/ paolo	/
7		/ lei riflet=	/
8		/=tendo sul pas=	/
9		/=sato	/ (slower, new rhythm
10		/ ^	/ ca. 0.7)
11		/ a che	/
12		/ cosa ar=	/

piece of pure speculative improvisation on the topic. Ways of creating this sort of context-bound meanings include - among other things - rhythm, tempo and intonation.

4.3. Digressions

So far the way the calls get started follows the canonic structure: after salutations, the moderator introduces the topic, formulating "in so many words" what the caller had presented as her/his reason for calling. In the following extracts, the way participants open the conversation is somewhat different, because the moderator for one reason or another postpones the question awaited by callers. In the analysis we will look at the cues in the conversation which account for the different opening structure.

After the formulation, in the following extract (11) G. inquires in lines 25-28 why Mirella has ended up in Naples, disregarding for the moment his routine activity of eliciting the explanation of the caller's point, as has happened with the majority of the callers. Instead of coming in line 18 with a "perché" for example, or something to give Mirella the chance to present her point, in his question G orients to a particular aspect of Mirella's life story, being intrigued precisely by the reason(s) for the emigration. This sudden shift in the activity-type arguably runs counter to the expectations of the caller. In fact, the whole analysis in (11) will show that from her point of view, it is objectively not as necessary to know "why" she has left Piedmont, the fact that somehow she is "now" in Naples is important:

(11)

(M=Mirella is caller n. 3. She calls from Naples, but she was born in Casale Monferrato in the north of Italy near Turin)

- | | | | | |
|---|----|--------------|---|-----------|
| 1 | G: | Mirella | | |
| 2 | M | si, pronto | | |
| 3 | G: | / Mirella da | / | |
| 4 | | / Napoli | / | (ca. 0.7) |
| 5 | M: | / si | / | |
| 6 | | / ^ | / | |
| 7 | G: | lei ri | | |
| 8 | | / corda con | / | |

9 / tanta / (slightly faster, 0.6) 1
 0 / nostalg= /
 11 /=gia il /
 12 / suo pa= /
 13 /=ese Ca= /
 14 /=sale /
 15 / Monfer= /
 16 /=rato /
 17 M: / si / (early)
 18 G: / che è in Pie= /
 19 /=monte / (faster, ca. 0.3)
 20 / no? /
 21 M: / è in Pie= /
 22 /=monte / (slower)
 23 / si /
 24 /si (early) /
 25 G: e lei come mai da Casale Monferrato è fi=
 26 / nita a /
 27 M: AH (high pitch)
 28 G: / Napoli / (falling intonation)
 29 M: ma
 30 / son finita a /
 31 / Napoli per= / (ca. 0.5, same rhythm)
 32 /=ché mio ma= /
 33 /=rito la= /
 34 /=vora in un co= /
 35 /=mando /
 36 / internazio= /
 37 /=nale /
 38 / via /
 39 G: / si /
 40 M: / ecco e /
 41 / quindi:
 42 (1.6) ho dovuto: - (0.8) venir qua (1.0) son
 43 dovuta venir qua
 44 G: ecco ma questo: -
 45 M: ecco
 46 G: questo abbando=
 47 /=nare il /
 48 / proprio pa= / (ca. 0.5)
 49 / =ese? /
 50 M: /AH (early, high pitch)
 51 (1.0) guardi è una cosa che (1.0) n - non
 52 le so spiegare - ehm - quando si è giovani
 53 (0.8) e si accetta volentieri si fa tutto -
 54 assolutamente non mi pesava (...) ma man
 55 mano che passa il tempo, sento una nostalgia
 56 struggente della mia città.
 G: Mirella
 M: yes hello
 G: Mirella from Naples
 M: yes
 G: you remember with much nostalgia your town, Casale Monferrato
 M: yes

- G: which is in Piedmont, isn't it?
 M: it's in Piedmont, yes yes
 G: and how is it that from Casale Monferrato you ended up in Naples?
 M: well I ended up in Naples, because my husband works in an international headquarters, put it that way.
 G: yes
 M: you see, and therefore (1.6) I had to - I had to come here (1.0) I had to come here.
 G: well, but what about leaving one's home town?
 M: ha! look it's something which (0.9) I c - cannot explain ehm - when you are young (0.8) you accept it willingly you do everything - it did not weigh on me at all (...) but as time passes, then I feel deep nostalgia for my home town.

G's question in line 25 orients to the observable fact that people more often than not go from the south of Italy to the north, rather than the other way round, as in the case of Mirella. Two cues pointing to this orientation more than, say, to the distance (which would instead be unmarked) between the two places, are the prosodic emphasis on "Naples" and the stylistic-lexical choice of "è finita" vs. a more neutral, less marked, hypothetical "si è trasferita". From Mirella's point of view, however, G. need not have asked the question; had he not done so, the interest of the call would not have diminished in any important way, for the institutionalized topic is not to explain personal contingencies, but rather to give one's personal version of a shared attitude to life. She seems thrown off (cf. the "ah" in line 10) by G's inquiry and not particularly interested in expanding on this private aspect of her life.

Mirella's desire to close the sub-topic is shown by her "via" (line 12). This particle can express many modalities in Italian. In this case it points to the fact that she considers the explanation to be closed at that point. G. comes in with an affirmative token in line 13, which gives the turn back to Mirella, requiring a better explanation, or more details or an elaboration of her account. But she does not add anything relevant; the reformulations and recyclings in lines 42-43, while showing that she is having problems in formulating an adequate answer, at the same time reflexively indicate that she did not intend to expand on the topic. At this point, G "rescues" her with an elicitation of the so long awaited reason for the call (cfr. the high-pitched "ah" in line 50), to which Mirella finally provides an account.

A collaborative rhythmic pattern is only established in lines 3-5, for in the first attempt at ratification of mutual participation the stress on "pronto" comes too early to constitute an isochronous pattern. Subsequently in the repeated summons (lines 3 and 4), the first two beats are provided by the moderator, who this time adds where the

caller comes from, and the caller provides the third decisive beat by a confirmation token in line 5. The moderator allows a silent beat to go by before he times the first stress of his formulation to be isochronous with preceding talk. The cadence of his formulation in lines 7-16 is slightly faster: this impression of pressure is subsequently confirmed by Mirella's early beat in line 17 and by the double cadence in G's (rhetorical) question in lines 18-20.

The relationship between the rhetorical status of the question and the double cadence is reflexive, for the faster tempo contextualizes precisely that it is not "really" a question requiring information, but a strategy to preface the real question in lines 25-28, where we observe that this time the tempo slows down, again creating a new context. If we wished to expand and generalize on this, we might say that the moderator uses a slower cadence just because his question is a "real" question, that is one which elicits some kind of information from the caller. If this is true, then the *rallentando* rhythmic pattern might precisely contextualize "clarity" in the speech, or "best conditions for reciprocity", as opposed for example to the question in lines 18-20, that is a question to which first speaker already "knows" the answer.

In delivering her explanation Mirella times the first beat on "son" in such a way as to be isochronous with the last of G's turn in lines 26-28. Her orientation is then to a smooth interaction. This is shown also by the verbatim repetition of "finita a Napoli" in lines 30-31. Repetitions occur very often in everyday conversation in different contexts. Their rhetorical import may vary considerably, too, according to the particular meaning they convey in different activities and genres (cf. Mizzau 1982). When repetitions occur between turns, they may do the job of re-focusing on an already given item, thus making it noticeable. On the other hand, repetitions may iconically express second speaker's affiliation. Here perhaps the notion of preference might again substantially help, along with the consideration of rights and obligations attached to the enactment of role performances.

In this case Mirella is faced with the task of engaging in a dispreferred activity, that is to explain something which is not directly related to what was expected of her. On the other hand, by "echoing" G's words, she acknowledges G's point of view, thus presenting it as reasonable, adequate, pertinent etc. after all, that is, in spite of the fact that from her point of view G need not have asked the question. Given the moderator's rights, Mirella has to put up with the unexpected (sub)topic suddenly introduced in the conversation, and one way to show her

reluctant agreement to it (that is, one way to recognize G's right to "moderate" as the agreed-upon rule) is to repeat his words.

Mirella's invitation to consider the sequence only as a short "time out" from routine practice is nicely shown by the "via" already discussed. By repeating "finita a Napoli", Mirella is then confirming the problematic status of the question, and reflexively proposing a solution for it. The solution comes with the explanation. Once this is given, the problem is solved and an invitation to pass to known, less problematic, routine practices is indirectly formulated.

The intonation pattern of the repetition follows a movement which is the mirror image of the first formulation, metaphorically resembling the diverging interests of the participants. To what extent this might be generalized, and to what extent it is instead simply one case, remains for the moment unclear. Of course the intonation patterns are different - one might argue - simply because questions and answers naturally have different intonation tails. But apart from these very general categories, we have to look also at the activities carried out by questions (and answers), and these have context-bound meanings, which depend for their interpretation upon shared expectations and communicative constraints on discourse.

In the following extract the caller's report comes somewhat "later" than usual, too. In (12) G., instead of sticking to his routine, prefaces it by reporting (line 8-13) - and commenting on (lines 16-26) - what Roberta has said about her difficulties in getting through to studio, thus making reference to a feature of the situation (the line, a *conditio sine qua non* of their talk) whose "hidden" presence (or whose potentially "en passant" reference on the part of Roberta) is only now retrospectively treated as a reportable feature of the situation and thus turned into something noticeable. Although G's comment might at first give the impression of being somewhat out-of-place, since it tells what is already "obvious" on purely referential grounds (being then a potential "error" (Goffman 1981)), a closer inspection of the whole sequence will show that it is perfectly easy to account for. Prosodically, the whole fragment is interesting, for the "deviant" traits are contextualized by prosodic signs all through the sequence. Readers are invited to look, among other things, especially at lines 43-45, where Roberta increases the tempo when she orients to one of the rules of the show: in this way tempo works as an ethnomethod by which members make sense of the context they continuously re-create:

(12)

(R=Roberta is caller n. 4. She is very emotional)

1 G: Ro=
 2 / =berta / (ca. 0.9)
 3 R: / pronto /
 4 G: / dunque Ro= /
 5 / =berta / (faster)
 6 R: / sono /
 7 / qui / (early)
 8 G: / lei /
 9 / oggi è riu= /
 10 / =scita /
 11 a prendere final=
 12 / mente la / (faster, ca. 0.6)
 13 / linea / (level intonation)
 14 B: / certo / (same pitch onset,
 15 / ^ / same movement)
 16 e normal=
 17 / =mente /
 18 / trova occu= /
 19 / =pato per= /
 20 / =ché he /
 21 / he /
 22 B: / si /
 23 G: / c'è un argo= /
 24 / mento e le /
 25 / persóne /
 26 / chiamano /
 27 / ^ /
 28 / bene /
 29 però dice, io
 30 / sono / (ca. 0.4)
 31 / così emozio= /
 32 / =nata /
 33 che non
 34 / so /
 35 / quasi che / (slightly faster, 0.3)
 36 / cosa /
 37 / dire /
 38 R: / huh /
 39 G: / è vero? /
 40 / ^ /
 41 R: / huh - /
 42 / si e /
 43 / questo l'ho /
 44 / detto in= / (slower, ca. 0.5)
 45 / =fatti non vo= /
 46 / =levo ne= / (faster, 0.4)
 47 / =anche /
 48 / essere /
 49 G: / hum /
 50 in=

51 / =ter /
 52 ^ /
 53 in=
 54 / =terpel= /
 55 / =lata /
 56 G: / ecco /
 57 R: / però ascol= /
 58 / tando (same rhythm)
 59 tutte (syncopated beat)
 60 / queste si= /
 61 / gnore /
 62 G: / si /
 63 R: in
 64 / ogni /
 65 / una / (slower)
 66 / trovo una /
 67 / parte di /
 68 / me /

G: Roberta

R: hello?

G: so, Roberta

R: I am here

G: today you have managed to get on the line finally=

R: =certainly=

G: =and usually you find it engaged, because eh,=

R: =yes

G: there is a topic - and so people call in (0.7) well but you say I am so emotional that I almost don't know what to say.

R: huh

G: is that true?

R: uhu - yes and in fact I said so, I didn't even want them to=

G: =uhm

R: =to ask=

G: =I see=

R: =but listening to all the ladies=

G: =yes

R: in each of them I find a part of myself (etc.)

The impression is that G.'s reference to problems of getting through (lines 8-13), rather than being random, is in fact very much recipient-designed in that it serves the purpose of making his next activity less face threatening for Roberta, who has said that she does not know "what to say", as is later reported by the moderator in lines 29-37. Of course the call, as a pre-condition, implies knowing what one wants to talk about; conversely, beginning the interaction without precisely knowing what to say can have disruptive effects on the subsequent development of conversation. G.'s delay of his potential face-threatening formulation (which does not come until lines 29-37 in the transcript) does then precisely the job of smoothing over her problems, making Roberta's self-presentation more acceptable. But it is also worth looking at how she eventually gets around the embarrassing moment.

After G's formulation, R. gives an ambiguous "uhm" in line 11. This, by its simply being neither a "si" nor a "no", at least points to, if not reinforces, the actual problematic status of the sequence. G. further minimizes the problem by coming in with "è vero?" in line 39, which sounds like "it can't really be that you don't know what to say", giving the caller the chance to disclaim her point. Subsequently Roberta acknowledges her emotional state in lines 42-45, and then gives an account which makes reference to - and articulates - the some implicit personal matter ("I didn't even want them to ask", in lines 45-50). Her account - which indirectly points to the taken-for-granted assumption concerning the routine practices upon which the programme is ultimately based, through momentarily invoking a suspension of the rule (her reasons are so private - one can argue - that collaborators in the studio should make an exception for her in their routine activity) - finally does justice to her inability to be as ready in formulating the reason for the call as other callers. The readiness with which G. provides backchanneling work in lines 49-56-62 (see also the turn-taking latching) shows affiliation to her point of view in order to overcome the incident as soon as possible, cueing it as harmless.

Roberta's final step out of the problematic beginning of her call is given in lines 57-68: once again she relies upon an implicit, shared understanding of the fundamental similarity of life experiences ("listening to all the ladies, in each of them I find a part of myself"). In other words, given Roberta's inability to readily give a definite, or adequate, or plausible etc. reason for her call (it being the rule upon which the whole programme ultimately rests) one (exemplary) way to solve her problem and to go on with the call is to say that she has as many reasons as the number of callers who have called before her, thus making retrospective reference - and ultimately profiting from - the temporal, caller-by-caller scanded character of the programme.

Although a great deal of what is communicated in this extract has been shown to take place more on a content or segmental level, nevertheless it might be worth considering some emergent patterns of prosodic signalling.

As with Mirella, the moderator re-summons the caller, requiring a further confirmation of mutual availability, and in performing this he accelerates the cadence. Roberta picks up the faster tempo and anticipates the beat in line 7. In this way she helps strengthen the impression of "being together" on the line, while simultaneously foregrounding precisely the deictic "qui", which symbolizes her physical

presence as a recipient. The cadence accelerates again in the last part of G's turn, where he uses the line problem as a buffer topic, or prologue, to his formulation of the (this time missing) caller's point. Bruna confirms G's assertion in line 14 with an isochronous "certo". This confirmation token also follows the same intonational movement of G's "linea" (line 13), thus further reinforcing the meaning of "togetherness" first symbolized with a faster tempo. Isochrony of speech tempo and imitation of the melodic intonational movement concur in this case - through a short though perfectly tuned musical duet - to signal complicity in presuppositions.

The tempo pattern remains even throughout G's remark in lines 16 to 26, then it accelerates when he begins to report her speech (lines 30-32), and it becomes even faster when the moderator comes to the caller's point (lines 34-37). Given the potentially embarrassing content of Roberta's presentation, speeding up precisely on this report can be seen as the moderator's attempt to "hide" the point, to cue it as an "en passant" remark: it could be conceptualized as the opposite of "clarity" or "best conditions of reciprocity" as in the case of Mirella (p. 35). Roberta picks up the rhythm in line 38 and also in line 41 (after an isochronous pause). She is then observed to first slow down (lines 43-44), and then speed up again when she says that she "did not even want them to ask" (lines 45-55), that is when she reports her attempt to "break the rule" (one of the rules) of the show. It seems that the faster tempo reflexively cues her orientation to "this is a rule", and that any attempt at breaching it should be accounted for. The account is also accompanied by prosodic signalling, which contextualizes this background orientation.

The cadence remains at a constant rate of 0.4 sec. up to line 64, where it slows down again. In the lines from 63 to 68, Roberta gives the first part of her account. In slowing the cadence she again cues it as her own way to state why she did not know what to say, precisely because - one might argue - reasons for calling have already been "exhausted" by previous callers. So in constructing a clearer discourse pattern through a slower cadence, she is presenting her case in such a way as not to look after all dramatically negative, by resorting to an underlying held-in-common universe of experiences.

5. The context "close the call"

So far we have analyzed how the moderator opens the conversation with a formulation which summarizes what the caller will be talking about, usually an aspect (a (sub)topic) of the broader topic "past". The work of the moderator in this show is that of inviting talk, directing and upgrading it to what he expects the final teaching moral will be at the end, building both upon the reason for the call and on inferences throughout the interaction. If there is such an orientation, a background or overall restriction on the structural organization of topic talk, which defines the relevance of topical contributions, nevertheless participants are free to fit in retrospective evaluations, explanations, new details, all deferred simply because long-term memory can be at a loss when talking about a whole life's past. If this is the case, how then do participants know when to close the conversation? Close analysis of the calls reveals a preference for closing being invited and (if we take invitations to be proper preliminary steps towards closing) initiated by moderator, who also has to limit the talking space to allow for other callers to call in, too (thus adding prestige to the show, but we might even say that this "makes" the programme); he also has to do so with extreme tact, "face" being a supposedly strongly oriented-to concern for the moderator in front of a nation-wide audience (although lack of it can be noticed in late calls: when the time allowed for the programme is running out, the moderator can be observed to rush, disregarding matters of politeness and tact otherwise relevant throughout the programme).

To see why this is so we can begin by mentioning some constraints which might account for the preference of closing sections being initiated by moderator and having the sequential format of a formulation: 1) given the relevance of a single topic throughout the programme, and although participants arguably orient to the particular character of the show, which might be labelled "philosophic", the sequential implicativeness is such that elaborations, corrections, evaluations, afterthoughts can in principle be unbounded, so that no empirical, sequential assurance is given as to when transition relevance is lifted. The status of the moderator's formulation as closing implicative is thereby warranted by the fact that: 2) it retrospectively makes the opening relevant, in the sense that it makes a symbolic pair with the formulation with which the moderator has projected topical talk at the opening of the call. Given the task he takes to open the conversation, he takes also that of finding an appropriate locus for a closing. The central possibility for closing thus entails that, given the moderator's projecting topic-setting activity at the beginning of the call, an elaboration of it follows, which ultimately leads to a conclusion/formulation. This, in turn, functions as a closing invitation; at that point, if a ratification token

follows from caller, then thanks and farewell come and actual closing occur. In order to give a brief preliminary overview of how the calls are brought to an end by the joint work of the moderator and callers, we will examine a few transcripts documenting first the central format, and then two alternatives:

(13)

- 1 M: c'erano palazzi belli, palazzi brutti, palazzi piu' vecchi
2 (1.0)
3 (...)
4 G: bene - ecco mi pare quindi Mariuccia che per lei il passato
5 diciamo cosi', e' una sorta di terreno fertile.
6 M: fertile
7 G: sul quale costruisce una pianta - che ragionatamente e'
8 collegata alle sue radici.
9 M: certo
10 (0.6)
11 certo
12 G: grazie tante Mariuccia, eh
13 M: grazie.

M: there were nice buildings, ugly buildings, older buildings (1.0) (...)

G: well - it seems to me then Mariuccia that the past for you so to say, is a sort of fertile ground.

M: fertile

G: on which you build a plant - which is reasonably tied up to its roots M: certainly (0.6) certainly

G: thanks very much Mariuccia, eh

M: thanks

In extract (13) the moderator invites closing by bounding topic. He bounds topic by proposing a formulation of the talk thus far, which places features of the caller's contribution into a philosophic framework. Heritage and Watson (1979) have shown that formulation occur routinely in conversation, at points when participants need to show their understanding of preceding sections of talk. Formulations are the outcome of members' continuous monitoring co-participants talk, and a "proof" that a stretch of talk has been put across and thus has become relevant for participants' communicative intents. When they engage in formulations, participants may want to show their readiness to close a topic, so that when it is a "last topic", formulations help close a whole conversation. In the case of the radio talk at hand only one topic runs through every conversation, so that the formulation must incorporate features and details of what the caller has been saying about the topic

chosen by the moderator. Having the moderator close the conversation in this way is an institutionally built-in characteristic of the show, a "default assignement". Seen from the perspective of mundane conversation, the moderator's formulation thus takes on features of the "last event" in the conversation and serves the purpose of bounding the emergence of further topical talk. Mariuccia ratifies the formulation in line 9, the moderator overlaps the caller's reiterated "certo" with a pre-closer "bene", followed by thanks (reciprocated by the caller).

This prototypical case of closing in radio conversation is significantly different from the one in mundane conversation described by Schegloff and Sacks (1973). Schegloff and Sacks talk of a "sectional design", during which participants make their intent to close the call mutually available

- 1 topic-bounding turn (either by A or B)
- 2 A: okay
- 3 B: okay
- 4 A: bye bye
- 5 B: bye

The first turn by A (pre-closer, line 2) projects the relevance of a potential closing section being activated. The following turn signals that the participants are ready to move into the closing proper (turns 4 and 5). During this phase, speakers may insert forgotten material and so be able to re-open the conversation, without having this insertion be sanctioned by participants. Equal rights on the level of everyone's role may perhaps explain the occurrence of paired pre-closing and closing formulas. When participants carry different rights and obligations along with their roles (in this case the moderator symbolizes the institution and callers legitimize it, by precisely addressing it in one of its programmes), the sectional design can consist of a topic bounding turn (formulation), a ratification and then paired farewells:

- 1: Moderator: topic-bounding turn (formulation)
- 2: Caller: ratification
- 3 Moderator: closing turn (thanks +farewell)
- 4 Caller: closing turn (return thanks)⁸

⁸ This last turn does not appear to be indispensable in the closing section, because line can occasionally be interrupted just before the completion of the adjacency pair. Rules of turn-taking seems to be suspended for final salutations in radio-talk, or at least they seem to work differently. Just like the initial part of the closing section is different from non-radio conversations, so there seems to be an analogous relationship between conversational orchestration and role management also for the last exchange. The occasional lack of second pair parts

The formulation, then, can not be simply heard as a potential topic-bounding turn, but as it was suggested it is intrinsic to the moderator's role and to the radio as an institution. In this way it has to be properly received by callers as the closing.

At this point, we might speculate on why the formulation works as an oriented-to feature of the type of conversation at hand. Perhaps we can say that it breaks with the talk up to that point on many levels. The contextualizing status of the summary as a device for inviting closing in this programme is warranted, among other things, by the moderator's style switching: it is a feature of the show that the closing typically takes the form of an artfully constructed aphorism which, relying upon rhetorical devices such as metaphors and similes, echoes literary means, turning to underlying (philosophical) concerns about the meaning of aspects (here, "past") of life. It is the programme which projects this. Everybody familiar with the programme knows that at that particular time of the day s/he will get a piece of literature; this aspect of the show reflexively makes all the more enjoyable the fact that it is callers who also contribute to it with their stories. All in all, the rhetorics of the show, while preserving features which are still characteristic of radio programmes in general, are also a fine example of everyday, lay philosophy.

This seems to have a further, crucial consequence on the sequential level, namely for the organization of topic talk in the occasion. It appears that when the moderator switches from narrative to evaluative talk employing literary devices, it is difficult for callers to fit in new material. The moderator then is observed to be proposing a shift in "footing" (Goffman 1981), heavily relying upon his established role. What the new footing does is to narrow down (in some cases, which constitute the central possibility, as we have seen up to a point beyond which there is no way out) the possibilities of fitting in new elaborations by its being, so to say, the last, "authoritative" word. (There are occasions also in informal talk in which a witticism or an aphorism routinely closes the topic by reference to generally and intersubjectively held values and beliefs, although participants are given a last chance to re-open the conversation. Here, however, things are quite different: roles are institutionally stiff, participants are not friends - at least not when they begin the conversation - topic is agreed on at the outset and

from callers precisely indicates the suspension of the rule. The first pair part does not project the relevance of the second pair part and then that of the closing, but simply is the closing. Of course the moderator has the title to disregard callers' returns in virtue of his role in the show.

is structurally unchangeable, even compliments for the programme is something noticeable, and must be properly warranted, being a deviation from the routine call).

If we are right in saying that aspects of the sequential organization of topical talk are here a central concern for participants in properly warranting closing sections, there are certainly other cues which participants use to signal that they are in the closing section. In coordinating the lifting of transition relevance, temporal and rhythmic aspects of interaction can also be oriented-to signalling devices or contextualization cues, along with stress placement and intonation. We might for example expect that a "good" closing will also be rhythmically timed and well integrated or that a shift in style will also be accompanied simultaneously by a shift in tempo etc. In the next section, some closings will be re-visited by looking also at some prosodic features, which participants may rely on in constructing the appropriate context which reflect the subsequent steps leading to the closing section.

6. Conversational and prosodic organization

We begin a sequential and prosodic investigation of some instances of closing by looking at cases which are prototypical of the way the moderator closes (or at least attempts to close) these telephone conversations:

6.1. Similes, metaphors and verses

The two extracts which follow document how closings are preferentially initiated by the moderator by means of a formulation (respectively lines 8 and 10). G. builds up an overall coherent interpretive pattern by retrospectively making relevant both the callers' reason for the call and evidences gathered in the course of the interaction. The formulation gives the gist of preceding talk in terms of what can be learnt if one just bothers to look back at his/her past⁹, even if it is only for a few minutes. In these two examples, the moderator uses (among other things) the simile as a rhetoric means to formulate callers' Mariuccia and Luisa contributions and thus to invite the closing of the calls. Both similes - introduced respectively by "sorta" ("kind", line 13) and "come" ("as" or "like", line 14) on the textual level - are

⁹ The "past" as a topic for the discussion is of course an artful choice, which draws on a well established mode for poets and writers.

metaphors (if we consider the "poetic" level), which are in turn based on a well-established archetype in literature: the tree as a (the) metaphor of growth or progress or faith, both in its pre-mature form ("seme" "seed", frag.(3)), and that of a full-grown plant ("pianta", both "tree" and "plant", frag. (2)). Although in both extracts the moderator draws on the same literary archetype, however the way the two formulations are contextualized in terms of their sequential ordering and prosodic rendering differs in many ways. The aim of the conversational analysis in this paper (with a little help from the prosodic aspects of interaction(s)) - we recall - is not so much that of showing regularities between conversational and/or prosodic cues and certain activity types, but instead to show which rhetorical means conversationalists rely on to carry out communicative tasks which are expected as role specific. Let's see how the two extracts differs:

Fragment (14)

(Mariuccia is telling about her childhood in Rome)

1	M.	c'erano palazzi		
2		/ belli palazzi	/	
3		/ brutti pa=	/	(cad. appr. 0.7)
4		/=lazzi piú	/	
5		/ vecchi	/	
6		/ ^	/	
7		/ (...)	/	
8	G.	/ bene - èccomi	/	
9		/ pare quindi ma=	/	
10		/=riuccia che per	/	
11		/ lei	/	
12		il passato diciamo cosí, è una		
13		/ sorta di	/	
14		/ terreno	/	(faster, ca. 0.6)
15		/ fertile	/	
16	M.	/ fertile	/	
17	G.	/ sul quale	/	
18		/ ^ costru=	/	(same rhythm)
19		/=isce una	/	
20		/ pianta	/	
21		/ * che	/	
22		/ ragionata=	/	
23		/=mente	/	
24		/ è colle=	/	
25		/=gata alle	/	(faster, ca. 0.4)
26		/ sue ra=	/	
27		/=dici	/	
28	M.	/ certo	/	(slightly late)
29		/ * (0.6)	/	
30		/ certo	/	

31 G. / grazie /
 32 / tante ma= /
 33 /=riuccia eh /
 34 M. / grazie /

M. there were polished buildings, ugly buildings, older buildings (1.0) (...)
 G. well - it seems to me then Mariuccia that for you the past is a sort
 of ground so to say fertile
 M. fertile
 G. on which you build a plant which is reasonably tied up to its roots
 M. certainly (0.6) certainly
 G. thanks very much, Mariuccia eh
 M. thanks

(15)

(L=Luisa is on line; Guerzoni propose a reading of her story)

1 G. quando si ritorna c'è una sorta di - estraneità
 2 tra noi e il passato - però in qualche modo questo
 3 passato - è la nostra radice - è la condi=
 4 / zione dalla /
 5 / quale - / (ca, 0.6)
 6 / siamo ve= /
 7 / nuti /
 8 / no? / (faster, 0.4)
 9 L. / si /
 10 G. /quindi / (slower)
 11 / non an= /
 12 /drebbe /
 13 forse non bisognerebbe chiudersi in esso ma-
 14 coglierne il senso più riposto positivo
 14 / come - /
 15 / seme per il fu= /
 16 / turo? /
 17 L. / si /
 18 G. / bene / (late)
 19 / grazie / (faster, ca. 0.3)
 20 / tante lu= /
 21 / =isa /
 22 L. / prego / (slightly late)

G. when one comes back there is a sort of strangeness between the past and us
 - but in a sense this past - is our root - it is the condition we come from, isn't it?
 L. yes, it is.
 G. therefore one should not lock herself in it but - pick up the most
 inner positive sense as a seed for the future?
 L. yes.
 G. well many thanks, Luisa.
 L. you are welcome.

In transcript (14), G. starts off with a simile in line 8 (past=fertile ground) to which Mariuccia provides a backchannel "echo effect" in line 16 (note that here M. ratifies the fact that it is the adjective which has more symbolic import); G. expands on a metaphor ("plant" standing for "the present" and "roots" again for "the past") followed by two agreement tokens and by actual closing. A three-part list structure from line 1 to line 5 signals that Mariuccia has completed her turn (cfr. Jefferson 1990), or that a topic has been exhausted (Covelli/Murray 1980). In the literature (cfr. also Muller 1990), list structures have shown to be rhetorically effective ways to accomplish summaries or give the punch line in activities like story-telling etc. That Mariuccia has completed her story and relinquished the turn is shown by the pause in line 6.

The moderator's two markers ("bene", "ecco") show his orientation to treat Mariuccia's list structure as in fact inviting a closing of the topic. The two markers which precede the topic bounding activity are quite regularly produced by the moderator in the course of the show as a means 1) to acknowledge reciprocity at a point in which speakers signal that the current topic is in fact being exhausted and that it has to be treated as a "last topic" ("bene"), and 2) to display readiness to formulate this orientation in so-many-words, it being (if so) the next appropriate step in the space opened up by Mariuccia's list structure ("ecco").

Rhetorically, the moderator exploits the potentialities offered by a simile, comparing the past to a fertile ground (lines 12-14). The caller shows to accept it by echoing "fertile" in line 16, upon which G. elaborates and completes the metaphor (a tree is not only what we have sight of, but also its roots). The caller again ratifies the formulation in line 28 with "certo", the recycled version of which in line 30 overlaps G.'s thanks in the closing section proper.

The prosodic organization of the whole fragment shows an orientation to a smooth interaction: the rhythmic pattern is integrative and both participants coordinate their moves in accomplishing the closing. The list structure is rhythmically scandad: a silent beat intervenes between Mariuccia's turn (line 1) and G.'s formulation, that is, the transition between the context in which Mariuccia explains her point of view on the topic and the context of the closing section is integrative: along with lists and markers, rhythm works as an additional contextualization cue to signal co-participants' mutually integrative communicative intents relevant in the accomplishment of the interactional task at hand (cfr. Auer 1988).

The tempo pattern shows here a significant variation: the cadence becomes increasingly shorter as co-participants approach the closing section. From line 25 onwards the cadence is (almost) halved, and it is kept to 0.4 until the end of the call. There seems to be a reflexive relationship between the faster cadence and the task both participants take in appropriately accomplishing the closing of the conversation. In particular the cadence begins to accelerate when G. completes his metaphor (line 25-27). Furthermore, the meaning of "completeness" is also conveyed by the intonation pattern: when G. is in the middle of his metaphor (line 15, for example) the intonation raises (cfr. also the level intonation of Mariuccia's echo-like repetition "fertile" in line 16), when instead he completes the metaphor, the intonation typically falls. Both features (faster tempo and falling intonation) concur to create the context in which Mariuccia has to understand the metaphor: just as a closing invitation.

In fragment (15) the moderator still uses the simile as a rhetorical device (the positive aspect of the past is like a seed), and the same metaphor (the past should provide good expectations for the future, just as a seed creates expectations about the plant that will grow out of it), but yet a different strategy on the level of prosody and sequentiality. G.'s closing activity takes the form of two rhetorical questions (see for example the marker "no?" in his first question), both followed by expected affirmative tokens in the shape of two minimal response in lines 9 and 17: these in turn work as a pass for G. to thank the caller and to actually close the call. (The rhetorical status of the questions is reflexively linked to the kind of social relationship that participants bear to each other: a hypothetical marker of dissent instead of the positive ratification in line 9 and 17 would have appeared as a dispreferred activity, certainly a marked one). The minimal response is taken by G. as a pass to get to the main point of his metaphor, again under the guise of a rhetorical question. (It seems that once G. has tried successfully the strategy of the question the first time, he has reason to believe that the second time the same strategy will work just as well, that is, he makes a retrospective use of a particular contextualization cue).

The rhythmic organization of this fragment of conversation is on the whole integrative, except for the two late beats of G.'s "bene" in line 18 and Luisa's "prego" in line 22. "Bene" (which recurs in asymmetric role relationships) marks the boundary between a chunk of discourse in which a participant tells a story, or gives a report of some occurrence, or an account etc., and another in which a co-participant displays appreciation, or dissent or anything, or simply shows that he has

interpreted the talk thus far through a formulation. It is no surprise then that these markers, which include also "quindi", "ecco", "diciamo così" etc., are produced late with respect to the rhythmic pattern, because they foreshadow an upcoming resuming activity, for the production of which the moderator might need a fraction of second to think of the appropriate formulation. This cue is again tied to, and shows its dependence on, the particular kind of social relationship which holds between the moderator and the caller.

If we look at the tempo, we notice that the moderator speeds up at the end of his first rhetorical question, but slows the pace of the interaction again after Mariuccia's "sì" in line 9 when he says "quindi non andrebbe forse non bisognerebbe" etc. The acceleration serves the purpose of eliciting M.'s ratification at that particular point in interaction when a ratification of the formulation can be heard as a pass to close the call. The *ritardando* might signal that G. is now fully in the context of closing the call: the fact that G. has interpreted M.'s first "sì" as a ratification of his strategy is shown by the fact that the cadence does not change when he says "come seme per il futuro?", for a rising intonation is enough to cue his question as rhetorical. The beginning of the context to which "come seme per il futuro" belongs starts already in line 10, so maintaining the same cadence signals the context of closing invitation that G. has enacted. When M. displays that the closing invitation has been in fact accepted through the ratification token "sì", the closing section with thanks and related routine formulas can now come: the moderator enacts the appropriate context for it by halving the cadence.

In the following fragments, G. uses a "pure" metaphor and a verse from the Nobel prize Italian Poet Eugenio Montale. In fragment (16), G. starts his topic bounding formulation with a genuine metaphor in line 9 (preserving the past by cautiously unfolding it evokes a quality of ants, that of storing and preserving food), acknowledged by Anna in line 14. The symbolic import of the metaphor is made inferentially even more effective by a (partly) unexpected reversing of it: the moderator uses the metaphor ("una formichina del passato") as a pre-announcement for an improvised verse to follow ("una cicala che sperde tutto in una nottata di grande vocio"). In semiotic terms we can say that the reference to "formica" and "cicala" is perfectly plausible (although it is difficult to say to what extent it can also be "poetic"; but this is less important than the fact that it is here pragmatically accepted for all practical purposes) (cf. Eco 1984)¹⁰. At this point, Anna ratifies the metaphor (line 23) providing the final pass for closing:

¹⁰ This is of course true only to the extent that La Fontaine fables have succeeded in providing culturally accepted symbols.

Fragment (16)

(A=Anna is on line)

1 A. lo riscopro (il marito) nel suo passato che a
 2 / poco a /
 3 / poco /
 4 / lui mi rac= / (ca. appr.0.5)
 5 /=conta e la /
 6 / stessa /
 7 / cosa faccio /
 8 / io /
 9 G. in=
 10 /=somma /
 11 / una formi= /
 12 /=china del /
 13 / passato /
 14 A. /(si /
 15 G. /(non una ci= /
 16 /=cala che /
 17 / sperde /
 18 / tutto in / (slower, new rhythm)
 19 / una not= /
 20 /=tata di /
 21 / grande vo= /
 22 /=cio / (falling intonation)
 23 A. / d'accordo /
 24 G. / grazie a / (slightly faster)
 25 / lei /
 26 / anna /

A: I discover him (the husband) in his past that little by little
 he tells me and I do the same.

G: all in all a ant of the past,

A: yes

G: not a cricket that wastes it all in a night of unresting chant.

A: I agree

G: thanks you Anna

While the overall rhythmic pattern shows no interruption in the distribution of turns, thus pointing to a collaborative stance built up by the moderator and caller, interestingly enough the tempo pattern in the moderator's "verse" is easily recognizable as highlighting the activity of inviting closing: G. slows down and signals that he is now in the context of (has enacted the role of) the closing part. In a more orthodox pragmatic vein, we could say that while "formichina del passato" is treated as given information (although re-interpreted), what G. says about the cricket is from his point of view in fact new, and in need of being appropriately contextualized. The falling intonation of "grande vocío" definitely concurs to cue G.'s activity as inviting closing.

While in fragment (16) the moderator gives his own poetic performance, in fragment (17) he reports a verse of a well-known Italian poet, thus appealing to an authority to make his routine activity of topic bounding more forceful. G. begins his formulation in lines 1-8; Gabriella subsequently ratifies it with "si è vero, è vero" / "yes it is true, it is true" in lines 9-12. G.'s appreciative marker and thanks are overlapped by the beginning of Gabriella's assertion from line 14 to line 17 which is a re-formulation of G.'s point. The reason of this overlap might be found in a reinterpretation of one's rights and duties: Gabriella takes on for a moment G.'s role in formulating (cfr. the resuming character of "sempre" and "tutto" in line 15) the gist of the call:

(17)

(Ga=Gabriella II is on line, she has just been telling a story)

1	G:	<i>in qualche misura come dice</i>	/
2		<i>il poeta Montale "chi piú m'ama, piú non</i>	
3		<i>mi tocchi" nel senso che - questo pas=</i>	
4		<i>/ sato la=</i>	/
5		<i>/=sciamolo</i>	/ (ca. appr. 0.5)
6		<i>/ intan=</i>	/
7		<i>/=gibile</i>	/ (rising intonation)
8		<i>/ ecco</i>	/ (falling intonation)
9	Ga.	<i>e</i>	
10		<i>/ si è</i>	/
11		<i>/ vero è</i>	/
12		<i>/ vero</i>	/
13	G.	<i>/ bene</i>	/ (delayed beat)
14		<i>/(grazie tante/</i>	(faster)
15	Ga:	<i>(è sempre meglio lasciare tutto</i>	
16	G.	<i>eh</i>	
17	Ga.	<i>nel ricordo</i>	(falling intonation)
18	G.	<i>/ bene</i>	/
19		<i>/ grazie</i>	/ (faster)
20		<i>/ tante</i>	/
21		<i>/(gabriella</i>	/
22	Ga.	<i>/(arrivederci</i>	/

G. at any rate as the poet Montale puts it "who loves me most he touches me not", in the sense that we'd better leave this past untouched, put it this way.

Ga. yes it is true it is true

G. well thanks very much

Ga. it is always better to leave everything

G. eh

Ga. in the memory

G. well thanks so much Gabriella

Ga. Bye

G. sets up a rhythmic structure in lines 4-8. (the poet's verse also sounds well-scanded), Gabriella's affirmative turn ("e si è vero è vero"/yes it's true it's true") is well integrated into the pulse, and so is G.'s pre-closer "bene" in line 13. Rhythm breaks down when Gabriella overlaps G's thanks for the sake of reformulating in other words G.'s comment on Montale's verse. This unexpected elaboration, given when G. is in the closing section and ready to pass on to the next caller, dissolves rhythm and causes problems to participants. G gives a "eh", Ga. pauses a short while just before "nel ricordo". A new rhythmic structure is established during the leave-taking phase. The elaboration and the subsequent rhythmic disintegration do not seem to be random, either. In his attempt at commenting on the verse, G. foregrounds "intangibile" by a rising/falling intonation and by a higher pitch, and this enables him to "explain" the sense of the verse quotation. While from G.'s point of view the foregrounding was to serve as the explanation of (or comment on) a closing-implicative turn (the verse quotation), the same contextualization strategy sounded to Ga's as an assessment in need of confirmation and/or elaboration.

As in the other fragments discussed so far (except fragment (3)), the moderator seems to make use of falling intonation as a(n) (additional) cue to build up the context "close the call". In this case the intonation falls on "ecco", but he uses also at least two other cues: 1) "ecco" ("put it this way" or "that's it!") is a modality marker which reinforces the assertion (it contextualizes the effort to find the appropriate expression); 2) the rising intonation on "intangibile" topicalizes and foregrounds the adjective (incidentally, the very fact of driving the focus on "intangibile" might be the reason of the sequential misplacement: Gabriella's reformulation might have been triggered by G.'s assertion-comment of the poetic verse).

4. Elaborations/continuations

In this section we will look at examples in which the callers disregard the invitation to close the call, although the moderator uses rhetorical means comparable to those just examined (similes, metaphors etc.). The relevant questions that we will try to answer in the course of the discussion are: if on a purely stylistic level the activities do not show a significant variation, what is it that makes their status different? Why these strategies do not work in achieving closing? In extract (18) an (19) callers disregard G.'s closing invitation and go on with an elaboration of the call (lines 7 and 20/47 respectively). Note that a restriction is at

work here on a temporal level, which might account for the interpretation of G.'s activity as in fact inviting closing. This restriction can be better formulated in the form of the following maxim: "Given the potential large number of callers, if an agreement is to be reached to appropriately close the conversation, try to reach it on the first available occasion".

Grazia expands in extract (18), although G. has come in with a metaphor/formulation ("marosi" stands for "difficulties"). After monitoring Grazia's argument for an appropriate locus to bound topical talk, G. invites closing by a formulation which summarizes her point (lines 1-6). The formulation is couched under the guise of a metaphor: "i marosi della vita" standing for (more or less) "the difficulties of life". Grazia disregards G.'s attempt and elaborates a part of his turn (cfr. the repetition of "se stessi", preceded by a marker of dissent "non solo" in line 3).

(18)

(Gr=Grazia is on line, around the end of the call)

- | | | | |
|----|-----|---|-----------------------------|
| 1 | G. | <i>quindi - diciamo così - una forte identità per non</i> | |
| 2 | | <i>/ perdere se</i> | <i>/</i> |
| 3 | | <i>/ stessi</i> | <i>/ (ca. 0.7)</i> |
| 4 | | <i>/ nei ma=</i> | <i>/</i> |
| 5 | | <i>/=rosi della</i> | <i>/</i> |
| 6 | | <i>/ vita</i> | <i>/ (level intonation)</i> |
| 7 | Gr. | <i>e non</i> | |
| 8 | | <i>/ solo se</i> | <i>/</i> |
| 9 | | <i>/ stessi</i> | <i>/</i> |
| 10 | | <i>ma ricordare in continuazione non perdi</i> | |
| 11 | | <i>neanche gli altri etc.</i> | |

G. so a strong identity not to lose oneself in the tempest of life

Gr. and not only oneself but remembering continuously one
does not lose the others neither etc.

Although G. uses what on a lexical-stylistic basis can be identified as a metaphor, nevertheless this is not enough to prompt the closing. Unlike the cases discussed so far, this time the intonation is held level on "vita", and this might explain the continuation on the part of the caller.

This pattern is even more evident in fragment (19), where a locus of potential topic bounding occurs in line 1, when G. says "ma vuole un passato dentro di lei" "but you want a past in yourself". Upon ratification/agreement, G. could have quickly gone into the closing section; instead, he expands on a simile in line 3. Two other junctures are candidate for closing. In lines 4-5, for example, a "poetic" noun

phrase three-part list structure provides the cue as to the formulating activity carried out by G. (focolare lento/brucia dentro/dà vita fuori). Finally in line 13 G. reaches a recognizable point of completion in the description of the properties of this "riposta identità" (lines 10-13): once again Anna does not pick up the cue and continues in line 14:

(19)

(Guerzoni is now talking to A=Anna, around the end of the call, trying to "read" her story)

- 1 G: ma vuole un passato dentro di lei
 2 A: sono d'accordo
 3 G: come una specie di calor vitale, di - di
 4 focolare lento che brucia dentro
 5 e che dà vita fuori (level intonation)
 6 A: certo, un qualcosa di mio in ogni caso
 7 G: certo è importante (...) questa (...) identità,
 8 no?
 9 A: sì
 10 G: che salva(guarda dalle intemperie) (level intonation)
 11 A: (sì
 12 G: e che non è contaminata da
 13 sguardi indiscreti (level intonation)
 14 A: sì etc.

- G. but you want a past in yourself
 A. I agree
 G. as a sort of vital heat of - slow fire which burns inside but gives life on the outside
 A. certainly something which is mine in any case
 G. certainly but it's important (...) this (...) identity, isn't it?
 A. yes
 G. which saves one
 A. (yes
 G. (from the tempests
 A. yes
 G. and is not contaminated by indiscreet looks
 A. yes etc.

In all the three transitions the intonation is level (lines 5, 10 and 13), to contextualize incompleteness. This "continuation" pattern is not random, either. G. and A. seem to be somewhat competing over the roles to be enacted and performed. For example Anna's "sono d'accordo" (line 2) is a ratification which is instead typical of G.; or in line 6 Anna gives a specification which shows her competence in the subject; cf. also the two "certo" given by both interlocutors in lines 6 and 7. Another prosodic pattern for continuation can be observed in the following transcripts. In (20) and (21) we observe a rising/falling intonation pattern in the last beat of G.'s formulation, respectively in lines 7 and 20. Although G.

makes use of (indirect) similes, this only strategy is not enough to secure a closing: in both transcripts callers repeat G.'s last item preceded by a ratification token, and then elaborate on the (sub)topic introduced by the very item.

In (20) the rising/falling intonation on "ospitale" triggers the focus on this item, so that this prosodic strategy "wins" over the more stylistic one (cfr. the simile "come se lei avesse" "as though you had" as a formulating/closing strategy in line 1):

(20)

(M=Mirella is telling how she sometimes feels lonely in Naples)

- | | | | |
|----|----|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1 | G. | <i>quindi è come se lei avesse un</i> | |
| 2 | | <i>/ pó di malinco=</i> | <i>/</i> |
| 3 | | <i>/ nia in una</i> | <i>/ (ca. about 0.7)</i> |
| 4 | | <i>/ terra stra=</i> | <i>/</i> |
| 5 | | <i>/=niera per</i> | <i>/</i> |
| 6 | | <i>/ quanto</i> | <i>/ (faster)</i> |
| 7 | | <i>/ ospitale</i> | <i>/ (rising/falling intonation)</i> |
| 8 | M. | <i>/ si per</i> | <i>/ (early)</i> |
| 9 | | <i>/ quanto ospi=</i> | <i>/ (same rhythm)</i> |
| 10 | | <i>/=tale ri=</i> | <i>/ (rising/falling intonation)</i> |
| 11 | | <i>/=peto</i> | |
| 12 | | <i>perché</i> | <i>/</i> |

G. then it is as though you had some melancholy in a stranger
land not matter how hospitable it is

M. yes no matter how hospitable I say because etc.

The faster tempo at the end of G.'s turn can function as a co-occurrent contextualization cue as in other extracts discussed so far, but again what definitely guides interpretation is the intonation pattern.

In (21) a similar conversational pattern occurs. G. starts his canonic activity in line 1 using "quindi" ("then") as a formulation marker. Mariuccia repeats "la presenza" and "di un passato" in lines 3/4 and 10/11 respectively. The moderator goes on with confronting the past and the present. Finally, M. continues, expanding on "rincuora" ("soothes"):

(21)

(Gabriella is on line, Guerzoni gives a lengthy formulation her story)

- | | | | |
|---|----|-----------------------|----------|
| 1 | G. | <i>quindi la pre=</i> | |
| 2 | | <i>/=senza</i> | <i>/</i> |
| 3 | M. | <i>/ la pre=</i> | <i>/</i> |
| 4 | | <i>/=senza</i> | <i>/</i> |
| 5 | G. | <i>co</i> | |
| 6 | | <i>/ stante di</i> | <i>/</i> |

7 / un pas= /
 8 /=sato /
 9 M. di
 10 / un pas= /
 11 /=sato /
 12 G. / eh - /
 13 / l'evolu= /
 14 /=zione /
 15 *che dal quel passato si è determinata per venire*
 16 *ad oggi - è in fondo una*
 17 / specie di raf=/
 18 / fronto /
 19 / che rin= (faster)
 20 /=cuora (rising/falling intonation)
 21 M. / certo rin= /
 22 /=cuora senz'=/
 23 /=altro /
 24 *perché: (0.6) io ri - rimango sempre etc.*

G. so the presence

M. the presence

G. the costant presence of a past

M. of a past

G. and the evolution that has occurred from that past to come to
 today is in the heart of hearts a parallel that soothes

M. certainly no boubt it soothes, because I re - remain always etc.

The rhythmic pattern is on the whole integrative: the repetitions are well integrated into the rhythmic pulse. The cadence accelerates when G. comes at the end of his formulation, just like fragment (20). The rising/falling pitch movement (as opposed to falling or rising only) on "rincuora" might be viewed as concurring to cue his formulation as in need of elaboration on the part of the caller, as though the moderator wanted the caller to expand on the very "rincuora".

There is however an aspect of the discussion which perhaps needs to be further elaborated. The status of G.'s topic bounding activities is questionable in the last two fragments, for although they contain a resuming device like "quindi", his activities can also be heard as assertions in need of ratification/dissent (or whatever elaboration might be made relevant at that point). In (20) G.'s attempt at generalizing from Mirella's story for example might have been interpreted as referring to her personal experience in a "stranger land", instead to a universal aspect of life that anybody can experience. In (21) again "rincuora" might have been taken by Mariuccia as referred to her: "soothes you", instead of a more general, neutral, universal pattern glossable as "soothes all". If this is the case, intonation interacts in important ways

with more sequential aspects of conversation in conveying context-bound interpretations.

The following two fragments document a yet different pattern in closing attempt. The moderator is now in a hurry, but the caller does not pick up his cues.

In (22) Mariella reaches a point of possible completion of her story (cfr. "così" in line 3/4). G. allows two silent beats to elapse before coming in with the pre-closer "bene"; Mariella unexpectedly elaborates her story with an assessment ("sono ricordi bellissimi, dottor Guerzoni"), that she could have produced before the pause. G. ratifies the assessment with the delayed token "certo" and goes on now to resume Mirella's contribution (cfr. "potremmo riassumere" in line 16). But the caller reciprocates with a reiterated qualifier/quantifier "molto" which triggers the third attempt by G. to bound the topic. The "va be he" in lines 23/25 and M.'s "e - e" in line 26 in overlap index (and to a certain extent symbolize) the different contexts that the two participants are in: G. is clearly in the context of "close the call", while Mariella is still in the teller's role:

Fragment (22)

(Mirella on the phone around the end of the call)

- | | | | |
|----|-------|---|-------------------------------|
| 1 | M. | <i>e contavo le porte delle case perché non si</i> | |
| 2 | | <i>vedeva - le contavo e arri=</i> | |
| 3 | | <i>/=vavo co=</i> | <i>/</i> |
| 4 | | <i>/=sì al ne=</i> | <i>/ (ca. 0.5)</i> |
| 5 | | <i>/=gozio</i> | <i>/</i> |
| 6 | | <i>/ ^</i> | <i>/</i> |
| 7 | | <i>/ ^</i> | <i>/</i> |
| 8 | G. | <i>/ bene</i> | <i>/ (late beat)</i> |
| 9 | M. | <i>e</i> | |
| 10 | | <i>/ questo</i> | <i>/</i> |
| 11 | | <i>/ mi</i> | <i>/</i> |
| 12 | | <i>sono ricordi bellissimi do -</i> | |
| 13 | | <i>/ dottor guer=</i> | <i>/</i> |
| 14 | | <i>/=zoni</i> | <i>/</i> |
| 15 | G. | <i>/ certo</i> | <i>/ (late beat)</i> |
| 16 | | <i>quindi mi pare Mirella che potremmo riassumere</i> | |
| 17 | | <i>la sua telefonata nel</i> | |
| 18 | | <i>/ segno</i> | <i>/</i> |
| 19 | | <i>/ della nostal=</i> | <i>/</i> |
| 20 | | <i>/=gia</i> | <i>/ (falling intonation)</i> |
| 21 | M. | <i>/ molto</i> | <i>/ (early beat)</i> |
| 22 | | <i>/ molto</i> | <i>/</i> |
| 23 | G. va | | |
| 24 | | <i>/ be</i> | <i>/ (late)</i> |
| 25 | | <i>/ (he</i> | <i>/</i> |
| 26 | M: | <i>(e - e sono molto legata</i> | |
| 27 | | <i>ancora alle mie amiche etc.</i> | |

- M. and I used to count the doors of the houses because I couldn't
see - I would count them and I would get to the shop. (1.1)
- G. well
- M. and this I (0.6) these are beautiful memories doctor Guerzoni
- G. certainly it seems to me then Mariuccia that we could summarize
your call in the sign of nostalgia
- M. very much very much
- G. okay he
- M. and - e: I am very affectionate to my friends etc.

Prosodic features in the fragment of conversation can tell us that in spite of quite different communicative intents, the conversational management is perfectly timed, except for the somewhat delayed "certo" in line 15 and M.'s "molto, molto" in lines 21/22. Although "certo" is here a positive ratification of a preceding assessment, however in the context of this instance of radio-talk, it takes on a particular meaning, in that we notice that the moderator sometimes delays these small tokens when they serve boundary work (index closing, see fragments (14), (15), (22), for example). In this particular case, "certo" can function as a pre-pre-closer. Mariella's anticipation in line 21/22 contextualizes that she is not ready yet in closing the call, for she treats G.'s "segno della nostalgia" again not as his signature to the whole of the story, but essentially as referring to her personal contingency. The anticipation momentarily disrupts the rhythmic structure, which is then resumed collaboratively at the older pace.

Extract (23) which follows can be said to represent an "extreme case", in that the moderator's and caller's interests visibly diverge. G.'s first attempt to give a formulation of his own ("terra amata, terra avita") is overlapped by Mirella's delayed (and, from the moderator's point of view, unexpected) specification of the vague and indefinite "cosa" in line 5. The unexpected character of the turn in line 14 can be accounted for, too. G.'s delay of his routine activity of inviting closing arguably orients to the level intonation of the last part of Mirella's turn in line 5, as though she had not finished what she wanted to say. The pauses in lines 6/8/10 and the two fillers in lines 7 and 9, better described as turn-taking passes¹¹ all in all give enough ground to G. to infer that time is ripe for him to close the call (or, put differently, that for his practical purposes a sufficient span of time has elapsed which indicates that M.'s right to continue is momentarily suspended or naturally expired). G. recycles in line 18, but again the second part of his metaphor is interrupted by Mirella. It is not until line 13 in the sequence that he

¹¹ See Couper-Kuhlen (1989a) for a notion of "silent bat" as a turn taking pass in prosody

manages to complete his formulation, again overlapped by Mirella (who points to the problematic character of her overlapping, by echoing "terra amata" and thus showing other-attentiveness), although his attempt was already and irreversibly doomed to failure:

(23)

(Mirella again. G tries to close the already lengthy call)

- 1 M. *mi metto gli occhiali perché sono talmente*
 2 *emozionata ad incontrare qualcuno - che conosco da*
 3 *(0.8) sempre insomma (0.8) eh: che non so mi*
 4 *prende proprio una cosa* (level intonation)
 5 (1.5)
 6 G. *uhm* /
 7 (1.3)
 8 M. *eh*
 9 (1.5)
 10 G. *in=*
 11 */=somma* /
 12 */ ter(ra amata/*
 13 M. */ (próprio un'agitazióne - non lo (late beat)*
 14 */ so* /
 15 */ ^* /
 16 */ ^* /
 17 G. */ terra a=* /
 18 */=mata* /
 19 */ terra* /
 20 */ ^*
 21 M. *(e próprio sí*
 22 G. */ ter(ra víta /*
 23 M. *térra amata -*
 24 *e mi dispiace anche etc.*

M. I put on my glasses because I am so emotional to meet - somebody - whom I know since (0.6) always you know (0.8) eh: that I don't know I feel something (0.7)

G. *uhm* (0.8)

M. *eh:* (0.7)

G. all in all b(eloved land

M. (actually a sort of unrestness I don't know (1.0)

G. beloved land.

M. (indeed yes

G. lif(e land

M. beloved land - and I feel sorry too etc.

When G. tries to close the call, M. interrupts him, accelerating the cadence in line 14, but destroying for a while the rhythmic pattern. It is G. who re-establish the old one in lines 17-19, but M. interrupts him

again with two anisochronous stresses on "proprio" and "si". G's subsequent stress on "terra", although late with respect to M.'s one on "si", still is integrative with respect to the old main pattern. Once again, Mirella overlaps G. in line 23 completely disregarding the rhythm, which instead G. was striving for.

Diverging communicative intents seem in this case to reflect different, incompatible contextualization cues characteristic of this kind of role relationship. The rhythmic pattern is one of these cues that signal what participants are doing at each stage in conversation. The diverging contexts that participants enact ultimately result in rhythmic anisochrony.

5. Evaluative markers and role-plays

In this section we will be more closely concerned with another type of non-prototypical closing, looking at the relationship between role assignments and prosodic contextualization cues. Closing is achieved, but the moderator has to signal his right to put an end to the call.

Incumbent social relationships can be made relevant in the course of an interaction, and it is usually possible to detect the ways in which speakers' orient to the roles they carry with them by using appropriate contextualization cues. Some examples of this dimension of context have already been discussed in section 4. Now we will come back to "achieved" closings, and look at aspects of its accomplishment through role-constrained interactive work. We have already seen that the moderator routinely uses markers like "bene", "insomma", "quindi" etc. to signal appreciation of caller's stories as foreword to his closing-implicative formulation. This formulation was shown to be the routine way to invite the closing of the calls. In some cases, however, it is the callers who bound the topic, but still G. who ratifies the turn, if the closing is to come about at all. Callers' closing-implicative turns gain their status only upon G.'s ratification/acceptance.

In the following fragments the callers provide a conclusive formulation which is treated by G. as closing-implicative with his two somewhat delayed evaluative markers "bene" (extracts (24) (25) and (26) and "ho capito" (extract (26)). Readers are also invited to look at the new cadence in the 'thanks' sequence in each fragment. In particular in (25) and (26) the cadence increase, in (24) it decreases, creating a contrast with what has come before.

In (24) Grazia signals that she is ready to close with a conclusive assertion "ma per me non è così" in lines 3-6. Notice that she allows a

small pause to go (line 3), so that her assertion stands out from surrounding talk, and this gives to it an air of conclusiveness. This impression is also heightened by the fact that she rhythmically scans "per me non è così".

(24)

(Gr=Grazia has a positive feeling about the past)

1	Gr.	<i>un mio amico mi diceva ma è un peso</i>	(1.0)
2		<i>portarsi dietro tutto questo è un grosso</i>	
3		<i>peso - ma per</i>	
4		/ me non	/
5		/ è	/ (ca. 0.3)
6		/ così	/ (rising/falling inton.)
7		/ ^	/
8	G.	/ bene	/
9		/ ^	/
10		/ grazie	/ (slower, ca. 0.4)
11		/ tante	/
12		/ Grazia	/
13		/ grazie a	/ (late)
14		/ lei buon=	/
15		/=giorno	/

Gr. a friend of mine used to say but it is a weight (1.0) dragging all this behind (0.5) is a heavy weight - but for me it is not so (0.8)

G. well (0.8) thanks so much Grazia

Gr. thank you bye

The rising/falling intonation in line 6 could have been interpreted by G. as a topicalizing device, as a way to bring the focus on "così" (as it happens often in conversation; for this discussion, see fragment (20), (21)). However G. treats the assertion as a sign of leaving the studio line, and thus shows to be orienting more on the closing-implicativeness of lexical-semantic content, than on the prosodic packaging of Grazia's turn component (recall that the moderator has the practical task to bound the talking space in favour of other callers waiting on the list, so that the argument is plausible from a purely pragmatic perspective).

In extract (25) G. starts his formulation in line 1 with "quindi", but Gabriella expands on it until she formulates a conclusive point in lines 12-14 "non credo servano agli altri".

(25)

(Gabriella II)

- 1 G. *quindi in qualche modo lei non li comunica*
 2 *per preservarli*
 3 Ga. *eh: diciamo che i ricordi per me*
 4 *sono miei e mi sono serviti a*
 5 *crescere (...) però non s - non*
 6 */ credo /*
 7 */ servano agli / (faster)*
 8 */ altri /*
 9 */ ^ /*
 10 G. */ bene /*
 11 */ grazie /*
 12 */ tante / (very fast, new rhythm)*
 13 */ eh Ga= /*
 14 */=briella /*

G then in some ways you don't talk about them in order to keep them
 Ga. well let's say that the memories are mine and they have helped
 me become adult (...) but I don't think they can be helpful to others (0.9)
 G. well thanks so much eh Gabriella

Again here the assertion is made salient by a rhythmic scansion and by a pause immediately before it (line 5). The falling intonation is the final cue which tells the moderator how Gabriella intends her assertion to be understood. After a silent beat the moderator performs the closing section by accelerating the cadence (already fast) even more, perhaps showing indirectly that he is fully in the same context as the caller, or that the cues do not have an ambiguous status this time.

In (26) Bruna makes a final statement of her own, summarizing her argument by reference to universally shared features of the *humana conditio* (cfr. "di tutti" in line 1). Two other cues which indicate that Bruna is completing her argument and thus moving into the closing section is the use of the hyperbolic "umanissime" in line 1 and the use of the impersonal "si" in line 2, which together with "di tutti", signal that the speaker, by means of various "ad hoc" generalizations, has come to (invites) a conclusion:

(Fragment 26)

(B=Bruna tends to remove aspects of her past)

- 1 B. *queste zone anche: - che sono uma=*
 2 *nissime che*
 3 */ sono di / (ca. 0.5)*
 4 */ tutti /*
 5 */ di - di /*
 6 */ ombre /*
 7 *di - si*
 8 */ tende a ri= /*
 9 */ muoverle /*
 10 G. */ ho capito / (late)*

11	/	^	/	
12	/	bene	/	
13	/	grazie infi=	/	(early)
14	/	nite	/	(faster, ca. 0.4)
15	/	Bruna èh	/	
16	B.	/	prego	/
17	/	grazie a	/	(faster, rushes)
18	/	lei	/	
19	/	buongiorno	/	

B. these spots which are also very much human which belong to everybody of - of shadows of - one tends to remove them (0.6)

G. I see (0.6) well thanks a lot Brun a eh

B. you are welcome thanks to you bye

The invitation to close the call is treated as such by G., who nevertheless orients to the role he typically assumes in the show: his "ho capito" followed by a pause in line 11 arguably has a stronger role directive function than, say, a hypothetical "certo" or "si", which are instead the unmarked reciprocity tokens in mundane, non radio conversation. With "ho capito", G. shows the asymmetric relationship between the two participants: he has the right to judge the adequateness of Brun a's point. (To see this point, just imagine the dispreferred status that the negative version of it "*non* ho capito" would have in this occasion). A silent beat intervenes before the moderator moves quickly into the closing section, backgrounding "bene" by the faster cadence ("ho capito" replaces it functionally). Again it seems that the moderator rushes into the closing proper as soon as there is no ambiguity as to the relevant context enacted. The pause before "ho capito" is the locus where the caller could have continued: it the caller's silence. When she does not, he gives a ratification followed by a silent beat: in this way participants negotiate (jointly contextualize) the closing to come about. As in fragment (25), the sign which tells us that the participants are in the same context is the faster cadence of the moderator (lines 14-16), followed by an even faster pace by Brun a in lines 17-20.

The contextualizing work that participants do in relation to a task in conversation may concern the display of aspects of the social relationships which holds in particular communicative encounters. In (27) Roberta reaches a possible completion point when she says "le vostre voci (...) mi tirano su" (lines 1-4). Instead of treating it as indexing closing invitation, G. elaborates the topic with another assertion (lines 5-6), upon which Roberta reformulates, adding a marker of quantity ("moltissimo") in line 8. G. at this point ratifies the closing-implicative character of R.'s reformulation, reciprocating with an assessment ("ma questo è una cosa molto importante"), adding to R's

point. Seen as a task for the moderator, the sequence can instead be viewed as a negotiation of role-sensitive meanings:

(27)

(R=Roberta has a difficult relationship with her past)

1	R.	<i>anche sentire le vostre voci che sono vicino a</i>	
2		<i>/ noi mi /</i>	
3		<i>/ tirano</i>	<i>/</i>
4		<i>/ su</i>	<i>/ (ca. 0.4)</i>
5	G.	<i>/ da con=</i>	<i>/</i>
6		<i>/=forto</i>	<i>/</i>
7	R.	<i>mi confortano</i>	
8		<i>moltissimo</i>	
9	G.	<i>certo ma questo è una</i>	
10		<i>/ cosa</i>	<i>/</i>
11		<i>/ molto</i>	<i>/</i>
12		<i>/ impor=</i>	<i>/ (ca. 0.4)</i>
13		<i>/=tante</i>	<i>/</i>
14		<i>/ grazie</i>	<i>/</i>
15		<i>/ tante</i>	<i>/ (slightly slower, new rhythm)</i>
16		<i>/ Roberta</i>	<i>/</i>

R. also listening to your voices that are close to us they cheer me up

G. they comfort you

R. they comfort me very much

G. certainly but this is very important thanks so much Roberta

Upon "mi confortano moltissimo", G. could have ratified this formulation (an indexical sign for closing is the hyperbolic quantifier "moltissimo"), and gone into the closing section only with thanks. G's re-assertion ("questo è una cosa molto importante") instead orients to his role in two ways. First, the sequentiality. He does not allow a counter assertion by R. (he goes quickly to thanks, indexing his turn as the last in this chain). Secondly, the faster cadence cues it as a closing already, with no return into talk. He is already on the context of closing when he anticipates the beat in line 10. Finally the even faster cadence in line 15-17 makes his last assertion stand out from the closing section proper.

This subtle role-play in negotiating closing can perhaps be better observed in transcript (28). Here again it is the caller F. who proposes a final statement. The closing implicativeness of the assertion is conveyed through the reference to some characteristics which are fundamentally and intersubjectively similar ("tutti quanti noi" "everyone of us" in line 1) and by the "allora" in lines 5-6 as a resuming device:

(28)

13-14), who is in turn ready to provide a positive ratification of her formulation by reciprocating the same marker "bene". The actual closing can then only take place when roles are openly and unambiguously re-established.

The work participants do in this case to smooth over the problems created by a sudden emergence of role-constrained situational parameters is well coordinated, as long as rhythmic integration is concerned. The only cue pointing to the problematic character of this exchange is the late beat in line 12, which might index something like "surprise" in noticing that Fernanda uses his own style in her formulation (she could in fact have been contented with the first version of her assertion in lines 4-7). After G. says "va bene, Fernanda", she goes into the closing section at a very fast cadence, which signals the unambiguous status of the context "close the call" after the re-establishment of mutual social relationships. Notice also that in her second recycled assertion, F. orients again to G.'s role by delivering "serve" in a rising intonation, as though to ask "confirmation" to the expert.

9. Conclusions

In this paper instances of openings and closings in a popular Italian radio call-in programme were analysed, particularly looking at how the moderator and the callers jointly build up the relevant contexts through interactive, contextualizing work. The analysis of some examples of openings has shown that starting the calls in some cases requires a fair amount of interactive work, especially on the level of self-presentation and face-work. The moderator can use different strategies, these being accountable if one considers the background assumption which lies at the basis of the moderator's activity of presenting the topic for discussion. Also he is observed to enact different social personae, sometimes abandoning the routine structure and the institutionalized topic set at the beginning of the show, for the sake of getting into more intimate (or personal, or private) talk with the callers. Besides, these "errors" have motives generated from the conversation, and which can be seen as expandable materials based on common-sense knowledge. This is sometimes also the explicit reference-point of some callers' accounts when they present their reasons for calling.

The moderator routinely invites closing through formulations which have to work as "last events" in the call. The context "close the call" has to be brought about collaboratively, if other callers are to come on the air at all. The vocal devices which participants use to signal the opening and closing of the call (even when it is *not* reached) may concern also the non-referential level of linguistic description. Prosody in terms of rhythm, tempo and intonation play a role in this radio telephone closings, at least as much as stylistic choices in terms of paradigms of lexical range do. Rhythmic isochrony and anysochrony were shown to be important contextualization cues, at least as much as the use of tempo by the moderator, in order to create inferences and contrasts. These build up a reflexive relationship between the activity type and the signalling level.

Finally, the interactive work done by participants in these radio conversations is accompanied by fine-grained, non-referential prosodic cues. When they guide participants' interpretation at any given time in discourse, these cues contextualize language. Among the contextualization cues, speech rhythm, speech tempo and intonation were shown to be relevant in creating the context in which talk as a performed social activity is interpreted.

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