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Auli Hakulinen

## The Grammar of Opening Routines

### 1. Introduction

In this paper, I intend to look at one orderly phenomenon, which is not syntactic in the traditional sense: the design of initial turns uttered by speakers when they collaboratively open up a telephone conversation. When I was going through transcripts of phone calls, I found that the opening lines provided me with large amounts of instances of highly conventionalized constructions which were not sentential. I was reminded of the words by the late Harvey Sacks in one of his lectures (Lecture 4, Fall 1967; see Sacks 1992, Vol. 1, 648), where he discussed the relationship between utterances and sentences as "analytic objects", as he put it, within the tradition of linguistic research.

The outcome of Sacks' discussion is that there are different options available for a grammarian who wants to get out of the dilemma of utterances not always consisting of "integral numbers of sentences" in natural speech, but "quite often by part-sentences, or things that are not part-sentences, either", such as *Ok* or *Yes* (ibid.).

Firstly, if one wants retain the sentence as the only unit of study, then natural speech is something that one can forget about. If a sentence is taken as a "normative production", as could well be the case, utterances that cannot be analysed in terms of sentences, could be explained away by referring to "various incapacities, i.e. things that happen at some time to somebody" (ibid., 649). This is more or less the position that generative grammar used to take in regard to the realm of performance, which presumably involved such phenomena as the formation of utterance-tokens.

Alternatively, one could try to find some means to account for the occurrence of those "sentence-parts" that seem to be able to form complete utterances by themselves. This alternative seems to involve the working out of something like discourse rules which would account for the conditions of occurrence of non-sentential utterances. An ingenious alternative proposed by Sacks

sets out by acknowledging that the sentence should be viewed as "one important analytic object", but not the only one. Rather, it is "a special case of some other unit".

Sacks' way of thinking looks as if it might involve a category mistake. He does not keep sentences and utterances apart in the way linguists would prefer, i.e. treating the former as units of language,<sup>1</sup> the latter as units of speech communication. Sacks can be taken to imply that it is possible to discuss sentences and utterances within a common framework, which, of course, for him is that of interaction. I shall return to this point below.

We could compare Sacks' view with the received standpoint as expressed by Lyons (1977). Lyons is equivocal about the usefulness of 'discovery procedures' in semantics and of the possibility of linguists studying utterances:

It is not being denied that some correlations between certain features of utterances and components of actual situations are discovered by external observers; nor indeed that *some utterance-tokens can be grouped, at least tentatively, into utterance-types*, and some actual situations to situation-types. Linguists and anthropologists in the field may start doing this. [Italics: AH] (Lyons 1977: 571.)

Later on Lyons reveals the locus of interest in utterances that a linguist might have:

We have tacitly assumed that within the set of what are pretheoretical-ly identifiable as utterances, in terms of external observational criteria, *there is a subset of particular interest ... — utterance-units — to which such terms as 'statement', 'question' and 'command' are applicable ...* As a simple utterance-unit is one that contains one and only one simple proposition (whatever else it might contain over and above its propositional content), so a simple sentence is one that expresses one and only one simple proposition ... Simple utterance-units, in this sense, are the basic units of language behaviour. (Lyons 1977: 633.)

— Because linguists are interested in propositions, then, the kinds of utterances that do contain a proposition are taken to be *the* basic units of language behaviour.

Lyons does not discuss further the practice of grouping utterance-tokens into utterance-types; it is not until the object of

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<sup>1</sup> I am, of course, aware of the problems caused by different linguistic traditions having different ways of using 'sentence' and 'clause'. Since my main interest is to discuss problems connected with 'utterances', I shall simply take the mainstream term 'sentence' as referring to a syntactic unit.

inquiry is limited to 'simple utterance-units' that we are dealing with syntax. On the other hand Bakhtin (1986), whose thinking comes very close to Sacks', does in fact take up this issue.<sup>2</sup> In his view, utterances are not "completely free combinations of forms of language" (1986: 81); they may be more or less typically composed:

Speech genres organize our speech *in almost the same way as grammatical (syntactical) forms do*. We learn to cast our speech in generic forms and, when hearing other's speech, we guess its genre from the very first words; we predict a certain length ... and a certain compositional structure; we foresee the end; that is, from the very beginning we have a sense of the speech whole ... (ibid., 78-79.)

Whether Bakhtin did, in fact, influence the thinking in conversation analysis has not been proven. Ever since the classical article by Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson (1974), it has been one of the aims of the research within conversation analysis to explicate the "grammar-like" patterning of spoken interaction, both the orderliness between successive turns (e.g. the so called 'adjacency pairs'), and the design and respective positioning of what Sacks et al. called 'unit types', or **turn constructional units** (TCU). These are constructions (sentential, clausal, phrasal, lexical) that, alone or together, form turns in an interaction. Both turns and parts of turns are not viewed as a number of many items of language but as **actions**; in a sense, then, what one is ultimately after is a grammar of (inter)action.

In the early article, Sacks et al. assumed that speakers orientate to turns and to TCUs mainly as syntactic units. Recently, Ford and Thompson (forthc.) have set out to prove that both syntax, intonation, and pragmatics play a role in regulating the orientation of speakers to turns and their parts.

In what follows, I shall associate myself with the conversation analytic school of thinking. As I said at the outset, some of the turns that I am analysing here do not contain sentences, nor part-sentences in any meaningful sense, either. Since turns are interactional, contextually bound actions, it is my claim that their syntactic description is something that cannot be mapped onto

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<sup>2</sup> As I have not had access to the Russian original, I might be drawing parallels where they do not belong.

proposition-based semantics but presupposes rather a description of the performing of certain types of meaningful acts.

## 2. Where do Discourse Particles Belong?

One area of research that has only recently begun to receive attention in the sentence-based, or proposition-oriented, syntax is the patterning of various kinds of **discourse or utterance particles**. This is due to the written language bias, as well as to the monological bias in the major syntactic traditions. Many discourse particles only occur in spoken language, and they do not necessarily form an integral part of the sentence construction. For example, a turn initial particle (*no, joo* etc.) may form a TCU of its own, and it does not have to be taken as part of the ensuing sentence. Correspondingly, even if a turn-final particle seems to be integrated as part of the sentence it is attached to,<sup>3</sup> it may perform a different function than the sentential TCU.

In her syntactic analysis of Finnish word order, Vilkuna (1989: 143-145), who uses also examples from spoken language, has an account of one type of Finnish discourse particle — one that is integrated in the syntax of a sentence. What in Vilkuna's terminology are called "T dummies" such as the particle *sitä*, in instances like (1 a), play an essential role in the interpretation of certain sentence constructions:

- (1) a. Sitä istuilee joskus.  
       PRT sits sometimes  
       'One sometimes sits'
- b. Tää-llä sitä vaan nuku-taan.  
       here-ADE PRT PRT sleep-PAS  
       'All you do is just sleep.'

According to Vilkuna (*ibid.*, 145), the function of a T dummy is either to secure the neutral word order by preventing verb-initialness as in (1 a), or to make sure that the marked order is interpreted appropriately, as in (1 b). It is interesting that Vilkuna refers to this system as "not thoroughly grammaticized" — thereby

<sup>3</sup> An example of a particle which is used also at the end of a turn would be Finnish *kato* ('look/you see'), originally a verb form, conventionalized to an attention getter or an applier. See Hakulinen & Seppänen (1992).

implicating that the description of the behaviour of the dummies differs from prototypical syntax.

Some constructions that are not sentences but nevertheless function as independent units have been mentioned by Sadock & Zwicky in *Shopen* in their discussion of the syntax of speech acts. The authors state that "the description of a language should make mention of *minor sentence types*" such as greeting phrases, suggestions, "imprecatives", and various kinds of exclamatives (1985: 157.) They also mention the need to account for what they call "sentence fragments", i.e. NPs that do not form part of sentences but function as vocatives or as answers to questions. However, Sadock & Zwicky themselves do not go beyond these loose observations in their chapter.

The following examples of vocatives serve as illustrations of what is meant by "sentence fragments". In conversation analytic terms, they are turns which are composed of non-sentential constructions, one of the obligatory elements being a discourse particle (*kato*, *hei*, *kuule*).

- (2) a. Kato Pekka! 'Well if it isn't Pekka'  
       PRT Name  
       b. Äiti hei! / Äiti kuule! 'Hey/Listen mum.'  
       mother hi/hey mother PRT

Traditionally, the particles were not treated as constituents of an NP; in CA terms we can ask whether we have two TCUs or just one that the turn is composed of (cf. 3.2. below).

A much less discussed syntactic problem of turn construction is posed by particles that may form utterances by themselves, without any sentential, phrasal, or lexical TCU to go with. When they do form turns on their own, they function in certain specific positions in conversation only. The utterances in examples (3) a–c are typically employed as second pair parts in adjacency pairs, whereas utterances of the type in (3) d function as greeting formulae.

- |        |                       |                        |
|--------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| (3) a. | Ai joo niin           | 'Oh I see'             |
|        | oh yes so             |                        |
| b.     | Ai no sitten / *no ai | 'Oh well in that case' |
|        | oh well then          |                        |
| c.     | Niin kai sitten       | 'Alright then I guess' |
|        | so perhaps then       |                        |
| d.     | No hei taas           | 'Well hello again'     |
|        | well hi again         |                        |

The chain of three particles may form one single prosodic unit, and they can be seen as composing one utterance. But this composition does not bear resemblance to sentential structures. Yet, there are clear restrictions on the privileges of occurrence for different particles in the respective positions, and the alternative orders carry different meanings.

It is as yet an open issue to what extent this order possibly corresponds to the order in which a participant in conversation performs or undergoes certain mental operations with respect to the turn of the previous speaker. These operations include phenomena like recognizing the co-conversationalist as a participant, expressing changes in one's local state of knowledge, displaying socially shared cognition, treating the ongoing sequence as not yet finished, or displaying authority over the local state of knowledge.<sup>4</sup> — What we are ultimately after here, is an understanding of the syntactic build-up to which we could anchor the description of indexical, reflexive linguistic activity.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Some of the Finnish discourse particles — notably *joo* and *niin* — through which these mental operations are made evident to participants in conversation will be discussed in Sorjonen (in preparation).

<sup>5</sup> In ethnomethodology, the terms 'indexicality' and 'reflexivity' are used in a way which differs from the usage which is customary in linguistics (cf. Heritage 1984). The founder of ethnomethodology, Harold Garfinkel, adopted a rather wide notion of indexicality. For him, indexicals not only include pronouns and other deictic elements but the *sense* of any lexical item is indexical, i.e. it is interpretable only in the context where it is being used. This is a natural consequence of the view that all meaningful language use (both its production and interpretation) is context-bound.

The meaning of 'reflexivity' is also tied to the use aspect of language: with each instance of her or his participation, any speaker is reflexively redefining the scene, and thus the context, by anything that s/he does or says. According to this way of looking at utterances in sequence, each utterance is not only shaped by the ongoing context but it is seen as a contribution to it, as something that reshapes the context.

### 3. The Speech Genre of Opening a Phone Call<sup>6</sup>

#### 3.1. The First Routinized Adjacency Pairs

The phenomenon that I am taking up here in more detail is one which is connected both to the behaviour of discourse particles and to the issue of non-sentential syntax. I shall be looking at the syntax of the opening line of the caller in particular, the line where the "work of recognition" gets done.<sup>7</sup>

Before discussing the caller's first line, however, I shall present three typical examples of Finnish opening routines. My analysis will focus on the third lines in these excerpts. In conversation analytical terms, the caller's first turn is the first pair part of the second adjacency pair in the opening sequence. The first one is the SUMMONS — ANSWER pair, which consists of lines 1 — 2, ie. the ring of the phone + the first line of the person who lifts the receiver). The second adjacency pair consists of the reciprocal actions of IDENTIFICATION + GREETING.

As we can see, multiple activities may be expressed within one turn. For example, by mentioning her or his name (lines 2 in each example), the recipient both gives an answer to the summons and identifies her- or himself.

- (4)  
 1 RING  
 2 Sirkka: Sirkka Kotolaineh  
           Name    Last Name

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Bakhtin's (1987:79) characterization of 'primary genres': "A large number of genres that are widespread in everyday life are so standard that the speaker's individual speech will be manifested only in its choice of a particular genre, and, perhaps, in its expressive intonation. *Such, for example, are the various everyday genres of greetings, farewells, congratulations, all kinds of wishes, information about health, business, and so forth*". I think that the term nicely underlines the regulated, normative-like nature of this heavily context-bound set of exchanges of turns.

<sup>7</sup> The data consists of ca 320 instances of openings in Finnish telephone conversations taped in 1987–1991. These were not collected with sociolinguistic variation in mind, thus the data does not form a representative sample of all the present-day customs used in Finnish telephone conversations.



- 3 Pertti: <Pe:rtti huomen-ta>.  
Name morning-PAR
- 4 Sirkka: H:uomen-ta.  
m:orning-PAR
- 5 Pertti: Mihi+s aikaan mennä-än Helvi-lle.  
what+PRT time go-PAS Helvi-ALL  
'What time are we going to Helvi's.'
- (5)
- 1 RING
- 2 Leena: Leena Jokilaakso?,  
Name Last Name
- 3 Raija: No: Raija Välimaa tää-llä terveh[dys].  
well: Name Last Name here-ADE greetings
- 4 Leena: [No terve  
well: hello
- 5 terve.  
hello
- 6 Raija: No: mitä kuuluu+pi.= 'How are you.'  
well: what is-heard+PRT
- 7 Leena: =N:o mitä+s tä-ssä [viete-tää  
w:ell what+PRT here-INE [spend-PAS
- 8 rauhallista lauantai+ilta-a.  
peaceful-PAR saturday+evening-PAR  
'Well just having a peaceful Saturday evening.'
- (6)
- 1 RING
- 2 Eeva : Eeva Turpeinen  
Name Last Name
- 3 Bosse: öö Bosse tää-llä hei.  
um Name here-ADE hi.
- 4 Eeva : No he:i.  
↑well hi:.
- 5→ Bosse: Häiritse-n+kö:.  
disturb-SG1+PRT
- 6 Eeva : Et toki,  
neg-SG2 indeed
- 7 Bosse: Kuule< mul on yks junailu+asia miele-ssä  
listen I-ADE is one operator+thing mind-INE  
'Listen I have a plan in mind.'

Before going to the specifics of the callers' first turn, I shall briefly describe some of the cultural peculiarities of Finnish opening routines. Answering the phone normally involves self-identification on the part of the recipient or answerer of the call (lines 2). Similarly, the caller typically identifies her- or himself, quite frequently even in calls between intimates or relatives. On the other hand, the caller does not address the recipient by name (see, however, the discussion of example (15) in section 3.5.).

A further cultural peculiarity can be detected in what comes after the identification sequence. In his classical papers on

opening routines, Schegloff (1972, 1979, 1986) showed how after identification, an exchange of how-are-you sequences will follow in an American call. In my Finnish data, which consists of ca 320 phone calls, a how-are-you sequence, as illustrated here by example (5), lines 6-9, occurs in only 10 % of the examples. In only one of the calls is there a reciprocal how-are-you sequence.<sup>8</sup> This fact means that the sequence is much less routinized in Finnish than it is in American phone calls. Rather than occurring as a routinized reciprocal formula, it seems to be a device employed by the caller in order to find out if the time is suitable for the ensuing call – the same function as when the caller directly enquires about the possible disturbance caused by the call (see example (6), line 5). Consequently, the third adjacency pair in the opening routines could be called a CLEARING SEQUENCE.

The orderliness in the opening routines seems to involve grammar-like conventionalization, and not only within a turn, i.e. as regards the design of the TCUs in the caller's first line, but also sequentially: between parts in an adjacency pair, and among successive adjacency pairs.

### 3.2. The Minimal Choices of the Caller

In American calls, according to Schegloff (1979), the caller typically utters just a greeting, possibly also addresses the recipient by name. In Finnish calls, the recognition of the caller is done much less often on the basis of her or his "voice sample" alone.<sup>9</sup> Minimally, the caller has three alternatives: either naming her- or himself, performing a greeting, or doing both. The minimal alternatives are not the most common ones in the sample

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<sup>8</sup> A similar finding is presented on Swedish openings by Lindström (forthcoming): out of 100 calls, only 14 had a how-are-you sequence, 3 of them reciprocal.

<sup>9</sup> This also seems to be the case in Swedish (Lindström, forthcoming) and in Dutch calls (Houtkoop-Steenstra 1991).

but I take them up at this point simply to illustrate the choices that are available for the callers to identify themselves.

There is a four-way paradigm for presenting one's name corresponding to a scale of intimacy (cf. 7 a-d). The paradigm of choices in the greeting item enable further distinctions to be made, but this complexity is left out of the present discussion.

CALLER'S FIRST TURN:			
ID. -NAME	+	GREETING	
(NP)	+	(PRT)	
(7)			
a. Anja		hei	'(This is) Annie hi'
Pertti		huomenta	'Pertti morning'
b. Raitio-n Leena		moi	'Raitio's Lena hi'
2Name-GEN 1Name		hi	
c. Helena Rasi		hei	'Helena Rasi hi'
d. Hannu Grön Lahdesta		hei	'HG from Lahti, hi'
e. Jussi Kämäräinen		päivää	'JK good day'

The alternatives in (7) a will be discussed shortly in more detail. Examples (7) b and (7) c are from calls made by acquaintances to the recipient (possibly belonging to the category of "recognitionals" as labelled by Schegloff 1979). The further difference between these two is that the speaker of (7) b displays a less formal relationship to her recipient than the speaker of (7) c. The more intimate recognitional (7) b, the construction *Family name-GEN + first name* can only be used by a caller who has already identified the recipient: it is not a choice that is available for the receiver of the call as s/he cannot be sure in advance of the identity of the caller. The speaker of (7) d assists the possible recognition by adding a locative post-modifier to his name; the utterer of the turn in (7) e does not expect his recipient to recognize him.

The format NP + PRT is, then, one conventionalized alternative in the paradigm of the caller's opening line. In this format, two activities have merged into one utterance which is syntactically, although not always prosodically, identical to certain answers (cf. examples in 8) and more importantly, to phrases used in face-to-face encounters as attention-getting devices (cf. examples 9 a and b; the latter = 2 b).

- (8)
- a. A : Kuka sen teki? 'Who did it?'  
 B : Liisa kai. 'Lisa maybe.'
- b. A : Olik se lasine joutsen. 'Was it a glass swan?'  
 B : Joutsen joo. 'It was yes.'  
 swan yeah
- (9)
- a. Ossi perkele. 'Damn if it isn't Ossi'  
 Name devil
- b. Äiti hei/kuule. 'Hey/Listen mum.'

Thus the interpretation of the construction-final particle as either a greeting or an appealer depends on the speech genre. The construction itself, i.e. NP + PRT, is not restricted to only one context or one speech genre and it has different functions in different contexts.

### 3.3. The Full Repertoire

The opening turn of the caller is thus one which does not always have a sentence form. But the fullest alternative<sup>10</sup> that is available to the caller includes a sentence form as a prototypical alternative. The elements from which the caller can construct the turn are listed below schematically; the alternatives include an initial particle, a greeting formula or particle, the name of the caller, and a locative proadverb (i.e. pronominal adverb).

#### FULL REPERTOIRE FOR CALLER:

PRT (GREET.) (LOCAT. + V) ID.-NAME (LOCAT.) GREET.

From these elements, variants other than those described in 3.2. can be formed. The greeting particle may be placed at the beginning of the turn, or at the end; the locative proadverb (*täällä* or *tässä* '(at) here') may occur either before or after the caller's name, and in each of the syntagmatic slots, there are several paradigmatic choices. Since the variation among the alternatives

<sup>10</sup> "Fullest" here refers to the elements that are somehow functional, i.e. are concerned with self-identifying and greeting. This does not, of course, mean that any other elements, including bizarre additions, had no place to go: we cannot predict where they would go. (Cf. however, the examples in (14)).

in these slots would require a quantitative analysis with a sampling which is sensitive to social groups and strata, it must remain outside the scope of the present discussion.

In the schematic representation above, the two essential items in the line are marked in boldface: one of them must be chosen in order for the line to be acceptable. Most of the combinations of the obligatory and the optional elements are possible; as so often is the case, the unacceptable ones prove to be revealing. Let us look at the simplified examples in (10).

- (10) a. No    **tää-llä**    on Mikko hei.  
           PRT    here-ADE is Name    hi
- b. No    Mikko **tä-ssä**    hei.  
           PRT    Name    here-INE    hi.
- c. \*Mikko on **täällä** hei.  
           'Mikko is here hi.'
- d. \*Minä olen Mikko Nieminen päivää.  
           'I am M.N. good day.'

The syntactically maximal turn is (10) a: it is composed of an existential sentence and an initial particle. The copula is very rarely left out: there are only three examples without the copula in my database.

An alternative to this type is a nexus-like construction where the locative adverb occurs after the name; this is exemplified by (10) b. In this variant, however, the finite copula does not occur. In other words, the starred sentence (10) c, with the copula verb, could not be used by the caller for self-identifying. Instead, it could be used as a report on someone's presence. A functional distinction has, then, developed between a sentence-formatted utterance, and a verbless construction; again, we could relate the difference between them to two different primary speech genres.

### 3.4. From Marking Location to Signifying Intimacy

Next, I will proceed to comment on the two locative pronominal adverbs *tässä* and *täällä* 'here' which, on the face of it, seem to be in free variation in the caller's turn. They have both been formed from the demonstrative pronoun stem *tä-* (cf. *tä-mä* 'this'), one with an inessive case (*ssA*), the other with an adessive

case (IIA). The difference in their meanings has customarily (cf. Itkonen 1983) been characterised as follows: *tässä* is something within the reach of the speaker (meaning literally 'in this'); as a pre-modifier it agrees with the head in case (*tä-ssä huonee-ssa* 'in this room'), whereas *täällä* is used in referring to the whole sphere of attention of the speaker (e.g. *täällä Suomessa* 'here in Finland'). In phone calls, these two adverbs are preferred instead of the demonstrative pronoun *this* (of the type 'This is Auli'). (There are only 6 occurrences of *tämä* in the data). This fact could be taken as yet one proof of the tendency in Finnish to avoid sentence-initial subjects in non-agentive constructions (cf. Hakulinen 1987).

As can be seen from the schema, the locative pronominal adverb is not an obligatory element. In the database, it occurred in roughly 2/3 of the calls. The adverb occurs only slightly more frequently before the name than after it. But why the variation? The adessive case form (*täällä*) is the normative variant, one which has been recommended by authorities, possibly right from the time when the telephone was first introduced to Finland. As of now, of the instances of *täällä*, 73 % occur at the beginning of the turn whereas only 33 % of the usages of *tässä* occur initially. In the majority of instances, turns with an initial *täällä* have full name as the form of identification. This is to be expected, if *täällä* is the recommended variant. So, over a period of time, a tendency towards a division of labour is developing between the two variants.

Type (10) a, the existential sentence format, is iconic to a face-to-face encounter. The recipient first hears a voice sample when receiving the locative proadverb (just as s/he first sights the visual appearance of the recipient in a face-to-face encounter), then s/he will hear the name, as s/he does when someone presents themselves to her or him, and finally s/he receives the greeting. The existential format is here employed as it were as a substitute for the visual perception of the scene. I suggest that, because of this, its interpretation would be roughly, 'The voice that you are hearing belongs to Mikko'.

The meaning of the lexeme *täällä* is indexical in the sense that it serves as the voice sample; its meaning includes 'ego', 'the current speaker' ('the one who is speaking here'). The feature of proximity is what is essential to the pronominal adverb in this connection, the sense of location being of lesser importance.

I would like to argue that the locative adverb *tässä*, when it follows the name, has perhaps even more clearly lost its locative and pronominal character than *täällä* has. It is more frequent in casual calls, and in the construction (10) b, a non-sentential one, the adverb is on the verge of being re-analysed as a particle. Thus, the construction would be similar to those in examples (2) b and (9): NP + particle; see also examples (15) c–d in section 3.5.

With respect to some other dialogue particles, e.g. *nyt* (from *nyt* 'now'), I have noticed that one of the motivations for the use seems to be metrical: the adding of syllables to an utterance. This could well be the case with *tässä*, or a monosyllabic *täs* to which it sometimes gets shortened. Utterances like *Anja hei*, which were discussed above, are possible, but they are in fact much less common than those which do have *tässä* placed between the NP and the greeting particle. The feature of proximity is preserved (you cannot say *Mikko to-ssa hei*, with a distal locative adverb which has been formed from the pronoun *tu* 'that'). However, the locative meaning of *täs* is fading away to give room to other interpretations: the choice of the inessive case instead of the adessive marks the talk as not being formal. A conversation analyst would say that the choice of inessive is doing the intimacy work.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> There are different speaker profiles. For those speakers who use three variants (*täällä on N.N.*, *N. tässä* and *tässä on N.*, the pattern is of the kind indicated. However, some speakers only use *tässä* (in both positions), others only *täällä*. This might be a case of sociolinguistic variation.

### 3.5. Where to Place One's Hello

It is more common for callers to end their first turn with a greeting than to begin it with one. In only 1/4 of the data is the greeting at the beginning. If the caller does, in fact, choose to initiate the turn with a greeting, there are two variants for the turn:

GREETING + LOCATIVE + NAME, or:  
GREETING + NAME + LOCATIVE

The utterance-initial greeting is a marked alternative, which presupposes special conditions for use. The placement of the greeting term, then, is not to be seen as an instance of free word order.

When the greeting item does open the turn, there is no iconicity for the recipient with respect to the face-to-face situation. Before being greeted, the recipient has had no voice sample to recognize the caller from. This turn design can be compared with the American callers' custom of uttering no more than a greeting, where the callers assume they can be identified by their manner of greeting. In Finnish, the name which follows the greeting particle bears a kind of appositional relationship to it. Mentioning one's name as caller is highly favoured in the culture — so much so that even family members may identify themselves to each other, as in (11) (where the callers are mother (a), and close friends (b–d), as indicated by the choice of greeting item, and by the use of nicknames in self-identification).

- (11) a. *Nohei*      *täss-on äiti*, 'Hello it's mother here.'  
       b. *No tsau*    *tääll-on Lissu*  
       c. *No moi*     *tääll-on Maitsu*  
       d. *No terve* *tääll-on Leena*

In section 3.2., the format NP + PRT was discussed as a possible opening turn. Note that the opposite order is not possible; this is illustrated by the starred example (12) a. This construction, as one prosodic unit, could only be used by someone addressing a greeting to 'Pena'. To avoid the abruptness of starting off the initial utterance with the greeting, adults resort



to a compromise: in the sample, they never start their turn directly with the greeting word, but the greeting is preceded by an initial particle *no*, as indicated in 12 b (see also 11 above).

(12) a. \*No moi Pena.

b. No hei Titta ↑täällä, 'PRT hello Name here'  
No moi >Pena täällä<.

2/3 of the calls in the whole sample begin with an initial particle; only in 10 of these is there some particle other than *no*. Elsewhere in conversation, the particle *no* marks off a topical transition, or a topical shift within a longer stretch of talk, e.g. a narrative. When *no* starts a turn which is designed as a second pair part, it projects the dispreferred nature of the turn (Raevaara 1989).

Obviously, within the opening routines of phone calls, *no* cannot have the same functions as it has when it occurs in the middle of a narrative, or further on in conversation. On the whole, *no* is used more frequently by callers in the openings of casual calls. In a sense, then, it is also doing intimacy work. This claim is corroborated by the observation that the recipient's most common reaction to a caller's first turn that includes *tässä* will also begin with *no* (*nohei*, *no terve*, etc.). If *no* turns out to be obligatory before the initial greeting, it could even be viewed as a minimal pre-beginning.

In (13), there is an unusual occurrence of two names in line 3: this is a case where the caller both addresses the recipient by name and identifies herself by name.

(13)

1 RING

2 Miina: Miina Siltanen

3→ Liisa: Miina tää-ll+on Liisa ↓he:i:  
Name here-ADE+is Id-Name hi.

4 Miina: ↑Heih

The design is rare in the database: it is mainly used by adults to children, something that is also the case in Finnish face-to-face encounters. Children and pets are frequently addressed by name, adults very seldom (Vuorela 1989).

Under certain circumstances, the greeting can be missing:

- (14) a. No El:vi Rimpinen tää-lä. Justiin isä-lle  
 PRT 1Name 2Name here-ADE just dad-ALL  
 sano-i-n ett+ei sie-ltä vasta-ta nyk+kään  
 said-SG1 that+not there-ABL answer-PAS now+PRT  
 'This is Elvi Rimpinen. Just said to father that  
 there is again no answer.'
- b. A : - - -  
 C : Tää-ll on Jari. En+hän mä vaan herättäny  
 here-ADE is Name not-SG1+PRT I PRT wake-PCP2  
 'This is Jari. I hope I didn't wake you up?'
- c. No Mikko täällä taas.  
 'PRT it's Mikko here again'
- d. N:o M:arjatta taas tässä.
- e. No taas Katriina.

If greetings are missing in the callers' first line, there is a motivation to it: either there is some problem with the opening of the call, as in instances in (14) a and b. In (14) a, a mother-to-daughter call, the phone has been ringing too many times for the liking of the mother. In (14) b, the answerer A has lifted the receiver without saying anything, and the caller C proceeds right on to enquire for a reason for her doing so.

On the other hand, the greeting particle is understandably missing if the caller is calling back for some reason, having just talked with the recipient earlier. This is illustrated by examples (14) c-d. In (14) d, we find the adverb *taas* occupying the place of the greeting as presented in our schema; but looking at the other two examples, we see that the adverb has two other possible positions — between the name and the locative adverb, or between the initial particle and the name.

### 3.6. Ensio, the Deviant Case

To prove that the combination of options that are made in the initial turns is oriented to by the participants, let us briefly look at a deviant case. A striking feature of the turn-taking system which is observed in conversation is the fact that, on the whole,

transition between turns happens smoothly: in general, there are no long pauses and little overlap between them.

Routine sequences — such as the openings of telephone conversations — could be expected to run particularly smoothly. The turns are expected to be short, and their basic structure is highly predictable, as we have seen. From this smoothness, example (15) is a clear exception.<sup>12</sup> There are pauses, breathings, and overlapping talk in sequences that in principle should not lead to problems in processing. Obviously, there is some trouble from the very outset, either due to a failure of identification/greeting, or of recognition. The lack of smoothness in the early sequences of the call seems to get the participants off the rail, so that it takes them 27 lines and 19 turns to get past the opening routines and before the caller is ready to bring up the reason for the call.

In particular, what we might note is that it is after the caller's first turn (line 3) that the hesitation begins. As there is a slight delay after the caller's self-identification, a possible indication that the recipient was oriented to a fuller turn, the caller recompletes his turn by adding his last name. Simultaneously with this solution comes the greeting of the recipient. (See Appendix, for a free English translation).

- (15)
- 01 RING
- 02 Leena: Leena Hirvelä, =hh=  
Name Last Name
- 03 Ensio: mt No tää-ll on Ensio .hhhh  
PRT here-ADE is Name
- 04 (0.2)
- 05 Ensio: [Valtanen.-hhhh=  
[Last Name
- 06 Leena: [No hei:.  
[PRT hi:.
- 07 Leena: =Soita-t sä sie-ltä,  
call-SG2 you it-ABL
- 08 Ensio: Mä soitan tää-ltä:, hh e lahde-n taka-a.  
I call-SG1 here-ABL gulf-GEN behind-PAR
- 09 Leena: Joo:.  
PRT

<sup>12</sup> Cf. the free translation of "Ensio" in the Appendix.

- 10 Ensio: .hhh °Joo°. Kuule tuota< (.)  
 PRT listen-IMP PRT
- 11 Ni mi-tä [s'le kuulu-u.]  
 PRT what-PAR you-ALL is-heard  
 [ ]
- 12 Leena: [.hhhh ]
- 13 Leena: .mth No::=hhh Tä-ssä on justii yksi  
 PRT here-INE is just one
- 14 p- (.) potilas käy-mä-ssä että jos  
 patient visit-INF3-INE so if
- 15 puhu-taal l-  
 talk-PAS b-
- 16 lyhye-hk[ö-sti.hh .hh hh  
 brief-DIM-ADV
- 17 Ensio: [Eh heh ESe on mun+ki  
 it is my+also
- 18 edu-n mukais-taf.  
 advantage-GEN compatible-PAR
- 19 Leena: fNii:.hh [.hhhh ] [Mut hyvä-ä] kuulu-u  
 PRT but good-PAR is-heard
- 20 Ensio: [Tota (.)] [(tä-nne) ]  
 PRT here-LAT
- 21 Leena: noin yleise-sti otta-e-n  
 thus general-ADV take-INF2-INS
- 22 Ensio: >M'-tä<  
 what-PAR
- 23 Leena: mt >Että hyvä-ä vo-isi [sano-a  
 that good-PAR can-CONSG3 [say-INF1
- 24 Ensio: [ >Joo.<  
 PRT
- 25 Leena: kuulu-va-n.=  
 be-heard-PCP1-GEN
- 26 Ensio: =.mh Ja tää-llä paista-a aurinko.  
 and here-ADE shine-SG3 sun
- 27 Leena: Oho,  
 PRT
- 28 Ensio: Tuota::m (.) ää >kuule mä  
 PRT listen I
- 29 hae-n:=hh pientä apu+raha-a oo- -  
 search-SG1 small-PAR help+money-PAR

In lines 3–5, the caller, Ensio, has produced a turn which is syntactically well-formed but pragmatically misplaced. The recipient, Leena, is evidently oriented to the prototypical line of a distant caller, projected by the format (with *täällä*) and possibly, by the name. The self-repair of the caller (line 5) reveals that he has decided that he cannot be expected to be recognized by his first name: he is not a frequent caller. In other words, the behaviour of both speakers shows that Ensio does not belong to the category of callers that we had in (14): Ensio is obviously not someone who is calling back, nor is there any

trouble in the two first lines of the call. Consequently, he is using a syntactic alternative which is in conflict with the strangeness of the name. The turn, while syntactically well-formed, is pragmatically unacceptable.

One could claim that the faux pas in the opening line caused the whole routine section to go out of balance. Usually, the breaking of a norm will be interpreted against the expected normality. If there is anything out of the ordinary at the beginning of a call, the recipient may be prepared for something out of the ordinary in the call itself — as it happens, this call turns out to be one where the caller asks for a favour.

#### 4. Conclusion

In this paper, I have discussed some of the salient features of the opening routines of Finnish telephone conversations. In particular, I have taken a closer look at the syntactic choices available in the caller's first turn, and the meanings that the choices have. I hope to have shown that it is not typical of routinized forms of talk to be "largely desyntacticized", to quote the expression used by Emanuel Schegloff (1972: 112). On the contrary, it is in the routines where we find syntax to be both highly restricted and very regular. Its task is to serve as a flexible tool for an array of informative acts and processes which as a rule have projections over large stretches of the ensuing talk. It is possible that what Schegloff had in mind is that some of the syntax in these routines is non-sentential in a way that would make it pointless to describe the utterances in terms of underlying full sentences or the like.

In the course of my discussion, I have been able to point out the essential role of many particles in the syntax of opening routines. However, it is still very unclear to me what the grammatical description of turns and TCUs is ultimately going to look like.

## Appendix

- 01 RING  
 02 Leena: Leena Hirvelä, .hh  
 03 Ensio: .tch PRT this'z Ensio .hhhh  
 04 (0.2)  
 05 Ensio: [Valtanen. ]=hhhh=  
 06 Leena: [PRT hello:.]  
 07 Leena: =Are you calling from over there.  
 08 Ensio: I'm calling from here:,hh er across the  
 gulf.  
 09 Leena: Yeah.  
 10 Ensio: .hhh °Yeah.° Listen erm< (.)  
 11 So how [are you.  
 12 Leena: [.hhhh  
 13 Leena: We::ll.hh There's just one p-  
 14 (.) patient seeing me here so if  
 15 we'd talk b-  
 16 briefi[shly.hh .hh hh  
 17 Ensio: [Eh heh fIt's also in my  
 18 interestsf  
 19 Leena: fYea:h.hh [.hhh ] [But I'm fine  
 20 Ensio: [Erm ] [(here  
 21 Leena: sort of broadly speaking.  
 22 Ensio: >what?<  
 23 Leena: .tch >I mean you could [say  
 24 Ensio: [ >Yeah.<  
 25 Leena: that things are okay:.  
 26 Ensio: .tch And the sun is shining here.  
 27 Leena: Yeah?  
 28 Ensio: Well::(m) (.) uh >listen I'm  
 29 gonna apply:hh for a small grant-uh  
 - - - -

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