Telephone Answering Machine Messages: Dialogues or Monologues?

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Abstract
The telephone answering machine, an innovation in telecommunications which has only recently become widespread in Switzerland, permits oral communication between two telephone partners distanced in time and space. Since the owner of the machine and the caller do not interact directly, the message left by the caller can be seen to be, strictly speaking, a type of monologue. But as Roulet (1991: 53) notes, certain types of discourse mix characteristics of dialogues and monologues. Telephone answering machine messages are a case in point. The hardware itself sets up a kind of exchange between caller and receiver although, unlike in face-to-face interaction, they are not co-present. The exchange, therefore, is not immediate, but "temporally and spatially stretched"—extended over time and space. This paper examines how this situation is reflected in the actual language used in the messages left on several telephone answering machines in Switzerland (mainly in the German part) by both the receiver and caller. I maintain that, if one takes into account both types of message, then leaving messages on an answerphone can be viewed as a kind of "pseudo-dialogue", although it is often not clear who the addressee is. However, answerphone users vary in how they view answerphone talk as a discourse type, with some treating it as more dialogue-like than others. This dimension of variation is explored in the last part of the paper.

1. Introduction
Recent technological developments have led to a dramatic change in the way we can communicate across distances in space and time. Given the pace of change, it may not be long before discourse partners can have conversations across the world in a "virtual reality" of face-to-face interaction. Is this what we want? The videophone's lack of success in the market suggests that it may not be. Each discourse type brings with it advantages and disadvantages which are differently valued by individuals (e.g. devoted letter-writers compared with "addicted" telephone conversationalists). I see it as the responsibility of social scientists and linguists to monitor these changes in telecommunications and the manner in which people adapt to them, so as to understand better the roles they play in society and language change today, and the roles future developments may play in shaping our
lives and language tomorrow. This paper on telephone answering machine messages (henceforth TAMMs) is intended as a very modest contribution to these rather grand goals.

Messages left on answerphones or telephone answering machines (TAMMs) are fascinating linguistic data since they comprise a form of discourse distinct from any other type. They combine features of different discourse types, including aspects of oral and written language, providing further support for Biber’s (1988, 199) claim that “there is no single, absolute difference between speech and writing”, but rather there are dimensions of variation which serve to distinguish different kinds of language use, such as letters to friends, scientific texts, telephone calls, email messages, and so on. One such dimension (suggested by Gold 1991, but not by Biber) is the extent to which a discourse type can be said to be monologal (involving one speaker) or dialogal (involving two speakers), adopting the terminology of Roulet et al. (1985). If one takes into account both the receivers’ and the callers’ messages, then TAMMs can be viewed as a kind of pseudo-dialogue. This paper explores what forms this pseudo-dialogue can take.

In the following section, the typical patterns for the recorded message (the R-TAMM or receiver’s message) and the message left by the caller (C-TAMM) are described and elucidated with examples recorded on answerphones in various parts of Switzerland. In Appendix 1, the background to the data collected is explained and the spread of answerphones in Switzerland discussed. In Appendix 2, further examples of TAMMs are given together with additional information about their source and the transcription conventions used. While section 2 focuses on the internal structure of TAMMs, the next section looks at the way the nature of the technology imposes a series of steps between the production of the original R-TAMM and the reception of the C-TAMM. Section 4 compares TAMMs with other discourse types according to the spatio-temporal nature of their production and reception. Then the question of the dialogue-status of TAMMs is addressed (section 5). This is followed by a discussion of different styles of C-TAMMs which is related, in section 7, to people’s underlying attitudes to answerphones. Finally, I try to draw the threads of the discussion together in the conclusions and argue that participants’ perceptions of the discourse type and their understanding of what “doing answerphone talk” involves,
play an important part in "activating context" for the subsequent discourse. This applies to other discourse types besides TAMMs. A first step, however, is to explain and exemplify what TAMMs are.

2. TAMMs as Structured Texts

The technological requirements of telephone answering machines set up a kind of temporally stretched dialogue between:

(i) the Receiver, who leaves the first recorded message, the R-TAMM, and who listens to the Caller's message later;

(ii) and the Caller, who listens to the R-TAMM and leaves the next recorded message, the C-TAMM.

These features are illustrated in Figures 1 and 2 (from Dingwall forthcoming), where, for the sake of clarity, the Receiver is portrayed as female (called Rosa) and the Caller as male (presumably familiar to her since he does not explicitly identify himself). The messages shown in the figures have been adapted from my data. In section 3, the macro-structure of TAMMs and the timing of events is discussed in more detail. In this section, the focus is on how TAMMs tend to be structured internally.

Like telephone calls, TAMMs can be seen to have a very basic organisational structure which is especially pronounced because of their mechanically determined beginnings and ends. Conversation analysts, in their turn-taking approach to conversation, have seen the beginnings ("openings" in their terms) and ends ("closings") of telephone calls as exhibiting the most structure (Hopper 1992 provides an extensive overview), and the same applies to TAMMs. Following their system, Figure 3 below shows the typical sequence of turns involved in ringing and leaving a message on an answerphone.

The initial ring of the telephone acts as a summons to the receiver to answer the phone (a summons is a way of getting someone's attention, like

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1 A simple type of answerphone is described here. Recent models where the tape may be interspersed with further prompts from the receiver besides the initial R-TAMM are not discussed. Clearly, though, these latter types, which are still rare in Switzerland, are intended to mimic the dialogical telephone call.
calling someone's name when you see them on the street). The receiver, here in real time the answerphone, responds to the summons by playing the recorded message, e.g.:

(1) Hello. This is Paul and Paula's answering machine. Please leave your name and message after the beep and we'll call you back as soon as possible. Beep.

Figure 1: Recording and Play-back of the Receiver's Message
Often the receiver does not have very much time to leave a message (e.g. 16 seconds), so R-TAMMs tend to be brief. A Swiss German example is:

(2) Hallo, hinderlasch mer e nachricht - ciao.
"Hello, leave me a message - bye."

Further, the caller is usually paying for the call and will not generally be keen on listening to a long message. Nevertheless, some are lengthier, even going so far as to include music, e.g.:

(3) (Music: Beatles song “hello hello”)
*This is a machine which loves to talk to people who love to talk, so talk to the tape and tape your talk – after the tone.*

In the interests of anonymity and security, leaving a telephone number rather than giving a name has become more popular (although a business phone will normally identify the business explicitly):
As examples 1 to 4 above demonstrate, R-TAMMs vary tremendously. However, all show the pattern: discourse type indicator, opening, message, closing, cue. The opening consists of an optional greeting (found in 1 and 2, but only via the music in 3), and optional explicit self-identification as in 1 or via voice probes (i.e. display of voice for identification) as in 2 to 3. The main message usually encourages callers to leave a C-TAMM, possibly instructing them to leave their name and phone number. It is indicated in bold in examples 1 to 4. The marking in 3 and 4 is tentative as the main message also performs the functions of an opening and a closing. A closer look at prosody and pausing might help to decide whether to separate the sections or to treat the main message as multifunctional. In fact, prosody may be crucial in deciding on the function of particular utterances. Patrick Charaudeau remarked at the Colloque that Bonjour said at the beginning of an R-TAMM, which is usually said with falling intonation, is more likely to indicate “There is more to come” than to function as the first part of a Greetings Adjacency Pair. Alternatively, one could see the expression as performing both functions. Since this issue is not critical for the analysis presented, it will not be explored further. Explicit closings are optional. In example 1, the speaker actually says the beep, whereas examples 3 and 4 include no hint of a closing, unless falling intonation can be counted as such.

From the caller’s point of view, it may not be the detailed contents of the R-TAMM as such which are important, but rather the kind of whirring noise before the message is played, which I have called the “discourse type indicator”. This is often enough to tell callers familiar with the answerphone “frame” or “scenario”2 that they are about to hear a recorded message. They may not even listen to key elements of the R-TAMM to check they have the right number, but hang up immediately or start preparing their reply while listening out for the beep which tells them they can now

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2 Brown and Yule (1989: 236ff) provide a useful discussion of these terms. For example, if we have a “scenario” for a restaurant situation, we will expect a waiter or waitress to appear. A “scenario” for answerphones would help us to anticipate the beep which signals that the caller can now record their message.
speak and be recorded. “Hanging up”\textsuperscript{3} can also be considered a form of response to the discourse type indicator, which is more socially acceptable than cutting an acquaintance on the street, but which nevertheless causes answerphone owners considerable annoyance. It may occur at any point in the R-TAMM sequence.

Figure 3: Sequence of Turns/Slots in Calling a Number with an Answerphone\textsuperscript{4}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Turns or slots:</th>
<th>Filled by:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C: SUMMONS</td>
<td>Ring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R: RESPONSE</td>
<td>R-TAMMM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discourse type indicator\textsuperscript{5}</td>
<td>Tape noise (Hang up)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(C:</td>
<td>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Opening)</td>
<td>Hi / Guten Tag / Salut / (music)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Self-identification)</td>
<td>This is Silvia / Da isch d Lena / (Voice Probe)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Message</td>
<td>Please leave your name and phone number and I'll call you back.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Closing)</td>
<td>Thanks; Bye; Tschüss.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CUE</td>
<td>Beep - end of tape noise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C: RESPONSE</td>
<td>C-TAMMM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Hang up)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Opening)</td>
<td>Hello Steve / Oui bonjour/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Self-identification)</td>
<td>Ja / Aeh, ciao Maria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Message</td>
<td>It’s Nancy / Da isch Widmer Daniel/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ca è Rico Pauli/ c'est Marie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Voice Probe)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Could you ring me back some time/</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{3} This brings to mind the joke: “A: What do you call fear of talking to answerphones? B: A hang-up.”

\textsuperscript{4} The figure and following discussion have been revised from Dingwall (forthcoming). The structure and contents of the C-TAMM are described in more detail by Alvarez-Caccamo and Knoblauch (1992) using a conversation analysis approach, and by Roos (1994). The latter uses the Geneva model of discourse to analyse C-TAMMs collected in the French part of Switzerland. Figure 3 differs from these in encompassing the whole R-TAMM - C-TAMM sequence.

\textsuperscript{5} I am grateful to Lorenza Mondada for pointing out at the Colloque in Geneva that this must be treated as a separate slot.
Strictly speaking, the linguistic part of the R-TAMM is framed mechanically by the discourse type indicator and the cue. After the message, the machine’s beep (or similar signal) acts as a cue to the caller that the machine is now ready to record their message. At this point some callers may hang up, since the beep signal is not a summons, unlike the ringing of the phone. A ringing phone cannot be stopped mid-ring except by unplugging the phone or switching on the answerphone, whereas the silence after the answerphone’s beep is easy to ignore. Putting the phone down on an answerphone does not incur much social risk. The decision whether to leave a C-TAMM or not is still seen by most people as a matter of choice, whereas picking up a ringing phone tends to have priority over other activities.

The C-TAMM follows the three-part pattern of the R-TAMM. The opening may optionally contain explicit self-identification and a greeting. In the message, the caller often leaves a request for the receiver to call back plus information about when they can be reached. Closing TAMMs, as telephone calls, is often tricky. Some callers leave out an explicit closing section altogether, whereas others include a preclosing - closing - postscript sequence (for an explanation of “postscript”, see Gold 1991:251). The following examples illustrate the typical structure, beginning with the rather minimalist message shown in Figure 2:

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6 I am grateful to Elizabeth Couper-Kuhlen for suggesting this term.
7 We find it very difficult to ignore a ringing phone, a phenomenon which Hopper (1992) refers to as the “hegemony of the caller”. He claims that the power of the caller has been reduced by the introduction of the answerphone. Time will tell whether leaving a message on a telephone answering machine will become as equally compulsive as picking up a ringing telephone.
Here there is no greeting or naming of the person called and self-identification relies on a voice probe, which, one hopes, is sufficient for the receiver to identify the caller (in this case the husband was calling his wife). The message is a call-back request, and the closing consists of a one syllable leave-taking word, bye. Contrast this with a Swiss German example (Swiss German messages are not, of course, necessarily longer than English ones):

(6) Opening  
Ja da isch Widmer Daniel, tschau Jürg.,  
“Yes, here is Widmer, Daniel. Hi Jürg.”

Message  
Du, ich (äh) sötti wüesse, jetzt uf d’GV, (äh) di zwei Revisore., Da wär ich froh wenn Du mir chünntisch säge, wie de zweitl heisst und Du chünntsch mir aaliüte uf d’Nummere XXX XX XX XX.

“You, I should know, now for the AGM, the two auditors. Here would I be glad if you me could say how the second is called and you could me ring on number XXXX.”

Closing  
Merci vielmol, tschüss  
“Thanks a lot. Bye.”

In this message, self-identification is explicit (the order surname, then first name is more common in Swiss German than in English, but is still unusual in my data). Here the self-identification precedes the greeting (with first name), but the message is opened by what one could call an acknowledging particle, perhaps meaning something like “I heard and understood your message.” According to Hopper (1992, 214), yes is common in English TAMMs too, but only when leaving a message for a stranger. Jürg and Daniel above are not strangers, and the French example of oui below is the opening move of the receiver’s mother. So, in Swiss German and French, the use of the affirmative particle in this context is not restricted to messages for strangers. The main message explains the reason for the call and includes a call-back request which starts with Du. While fairly common in Swiss German, it would be very marked to use you in this way in English, and a functionally more accurate translation might be “listen”. Finally the closing consists of a thanking move (which partly serves to type the call as involving a request) and a leave-taking.
The opening of the next example has no explicit greeting but a rather formal self-identification and an interesting use of *alors*. In fact, each section begins with a feature (connective?) of this kind (*ben* for the message and *alors* for the closing). Here the message is informative, saying where the caller will be at midday. It is unusual in containing no request. In the closing section *alors* could possibly be treated as a form of pre-closing and *je vous embrasse* as a postscript.

(7) Opening Oui alors c'est maman qui téléphone
"Yes well it's mummy who is telephoning"

Message ben je voulais dire bonjour mais je vais diner chez Marie à midi comme ça vous savez que je ne suis pas à la maison à midi
"good I wanted to say hello but I am going to dine at Marie's at midday in that way you know that I am not home at midday"

Closing alors à bientôt à ce soir je vous embrasse au revoir
"well see you till this evening I embrace you goodbye"

Further examples of C-TAMMs are discussed below and collected together in Appendix 2. This section has shown that both R-TAMMs and C-TAMMs follow a similar three-part pattern. In the next section, the temporal sequence of events involved in dealing with answerphones will be considered, taking into account the receiver's role.

3. The R-TAMM - C-TAMM Sequence

The answering machine sets up four distinct time slots:

- $t_0$ the time when the owner of the machine records their original message, the R-TAMM;
- $t_r(x)$ the time when the caller rings the receiver, and listens to the R-TAMM;
- $t_{r+1}$ the time when the caller leaves their message, the C-TAMM;
- $t_{pbx}$ the time when the receiver plays back the caller's message.

The "x" in $t_{pbx}$ indicates that the taped message (the C-TAMM) may, in principle, be played back as often as the receiver wants. The bracketed "x" in $t_r(x)$ shows that the caller may listen to the message more than once, but at more cost (in terms of money and effort) than is involved in replaying the C-TAMM at $t_{pbx}$. The subscript "r" in $t_r(x)$ and $t_{r+1}$ is intended to show that these two time slots are part of the same activity, namely that of the caller ringing the receiver. The turn-taking structure of the
messages used in this activity has been described in Figure 3 in the previous section.

The receiver’s first turn occurs at $t_0$, although it is not heard by the caller until $t_{r(x)}$. There may be a short gap between $t_0$ and $t_{r(x)}$ or a long one involving months (or even years if the receiver neglects to change the message). He or she does not hear the caller’s response until $t_{pbx}$. Here, however, the delay between the recording of the C-TAMM and the replay is unlikely to be more than a day since most answerphone owners check their machines regularly either on site, or if their machine is equipped accordingly, by calling the machine from another phone. If a receiver happens to be near the phone when the caller rings, they may pick up the phone while the caller is leaving their message (some even routinely screen their calls). In this case, once the caller has worked out what is happening (which may take some time), an ordinary telephone conversation ensues. In the normal answerphone situation, listening to the R-TAMM at $t_{r(x)}$ is immediately followed by the caller’s reply at $t_{r+1}$ (unless, that is, they put down the phone and ring up again later). This sequence is shown in the following diagram:
In a face-to-face conversation where turn-taking is functioning smoothly, participant A’s production of an utterance is simultaneous with B’s reception of it, and vice versa. This is also true of telephone conversations. An R-TAMM / C-TAMM sequence stretches turn-taking through time by extending the gaps between the time slots and making production and reception of both the C-TAMM and the R-TAMM temporally quite distinct activities. In this respect, the sequence is similar to that involved in an exchange of letters or email messages, although the timing of the steps is different. The question as to whether this sequence can be considered a dialogue or not is tackled in section 5. First, however, I will take a brief look at TAMMs in relation to other discourse types, focusing on time and space. Other dimensions of comparison between telephone calls, letters and C-TAMMs are discussed in Dingwall (1992).

4. TAMMs compared with other Discourse Types: Dimensions of Time and Space

There are certain technical preconditions which have to be fulfilled before a discourse type can, by definition, take place. I can talk into the telephone as if someone was listening, but unless there is a human receiver at the other end, I cannot be said to be carrying on a telephone conversation. This is one technical sine qua non for the discourse type “telephone conversa-
tion”. If the receiver only pretends to listen (routinely backchanneling with e.g. “yeah, ... yeah ... uh-huh”), a telephone conversation could still be said to take place technically, albeit without, probably, much communicative success. Thus, discourse types, like speech acts, require certain “felicity conditions” (along Austin’s lines) which specify the technical preconditions to be fulfilled in order for a particular discourse type to be said to take place. When we consider actual examples of discourse types, then these felicity conditions provide a rough map outlining the contextual boundary conditions for the performance of the discourse type. For instance, unless a caller is actually having their message recorded on an answerphone, they cannot be said to be realizing the discourse type, leaving a C-TAMM. If they are led to believe by the person receiving the call that they are talking to a machine when this is not, in fact, the case, then the linguistic activity cannot be seen as fulfilling the technical requirements for the discourse type, leaving a C-TAMM. However, which features of the situation participants actually treat as relevant and which they activate as context⁸, will be mutually “achieved” in the course of interaction (even if this interaction takes place without co-presence). For example, a caller might pretend to leave a C-TAMM while knowing perfectly well that they are talking to a live receiver. Such linguistic play is only possible if participants are familiar with the characteristics (including the technical felicity conditions) of the discourse type they are playing with.

One precondition for most, if not all, discourse types is that a certain degree of interaction must be possible. Here, although a great deal more could obviously be said, I will just sketch one aspect of this, namely, the extent to which producers and receivers of linguistic texts need to share a common spatio-temporal space for the discourse type to count as taking place. The following table attempts an initial sorting out of some discourse types along these lines.

This table is rather rough and ready since notions of shared time and place are relative. The videophone, for example, can be seen to allow sighted participants more potential to interact as if they were co-present than the non-visual telephone, since they can see immediate images of each

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⁸ Here, I am assuming a view of context along the lines of that described in the introduction to Watson and Seiler 1992.
other (or at least each others' faces). Sending and receiving semaphore signals can only be carried out if the receiver can see the signaller, but they do not have to be within earshot of each other. Interestingly, it is very hard to come up with examples for discourse types where coding and reception occur in the same place, but at different times. Linguistically, the message on the door (*Back in an hour.*) is more interesting than reading a novel in the study where the author wrote it, although this is not to deny the latter's experiential value, especially if this is the narrative setting.

Where producers and receivers are not co-present, one may need to distinguish 'coding time' from 'receiving time'. In letters in English, the convention is to write along the lines of *I am writing this today so you will receive it tomorrow*, whereas in other languages it is more like *I wrote this yesterday so that you will receive it today*. According to Comrie (1985, 16), adopting the time-frame of the person you are writing to (as in *I wrote this yesterday*) was the polite convention in Roman letter-writing. Are there other languages with a similar convention? In the TAMMs I have studied, the R-TAMM is projected forward to the receiving time of the message, $tr(x)$, as in Roman letter writing. In a C-TAMM, on the other hand, the caller is "egocentric" and the receiver at $t_{pb}$ has to reconstruct the time the caller was referring to in order to understand the message (e.g. *I'll call you this evening - is this evening "today" or "yesterday" when the receiver hears it?). Lack of co-presence of the discourse partners means that either the producer or receiver has to do extra work in producing or interpreting a text from the point of view of the other's deictic centre. This affects the use of deictic features of language, such as present or past tense. Further, since they are not co-present, addressees cannot confirm that they have understood (by backchannelling) or clear up misunderstandings while the text is being produced by referring, if necessary, to a mutually available context. This aspect is usually what is understood when one says the parti-

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9 "For letters and similar communications, some cultures have developed rules as to which deictic centre, the speaker's or the hearer's, should be used, but these do not impinge upon the grammar of the language. Thus Roman society, presumably for reasons of politeness, recommended use of the recipient's deictic centre, so that Cicero could write to Atticus "cum mihi dixisset Caecilium puerum se Romam mittere, haec scriptis rapitum" since Caecilius has told (literally: had told) me that he is sending a servant-boy to Rome, I write (literally: wrote) this in a hurry, although it was apparently not unusual to lapse into the speaker's deictic centre in the middle of the letter." (Comrie 1985: 16)
Participants cannot interact directly. But to what extent can participants be said to interact directly when they are face-to-face? The answer to this question seems to depend on the extent they can be said to share (and attend to) an understanding of the ongoing context during text production.

TABLE 1: Comparison of different discourse types according to whether the text producer(s) and receiver(s) share a common spatiotemporal location (where time is shown on the horizontal axis and place on the vertical)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shared Time?</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shared Place?</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>Oral: Face-to-face</td>
<td>Oral: Kru intermediary (see Egnei this volume)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Written: Exchange of notes in e.g. a lecture</td>
<td>Written: Graffiti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Writing on blackboard, etc.</td>
<td>Note on an office-pad pinned to an office door</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sign: Use of signing language</td>
<td>Reading a novel where written</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sign:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td>Oral: Telephone calls</td>
<td>Oral: TAMM’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Live radio and TV shows viewed by home audience</td>
<td>Pre-recorded radio/TV shows and videos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Written: Email (potentially)</td>
<td>Taped “letters”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sign: Signing via videophone</td>
<td>Written:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>?Drum language</td>
<td>Fax</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>?Semaphore</td>
<td>Telegram, Telex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Letters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Written literature, documents, advertisements, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sign: Videos/TV show with people signing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A context cannot be treated as something shared just because participants are interacting at the same time and place. Rather context is something which participants have to activate even in the face-to-face situation. Thus the table only shows the extent to which spatiotemporal locations must be shared in a technical sense for different discourse types to be used communicatively. It does not have much to say about how interactants will perceive and activate context on occasions of actual language use. I suspect that Chafe’s (1992) notions of “immediacy and displacement in conscious-
ness and language" will be relevant in helping to sort out some of these issues, as well as the work of ethnomethodologists\textsuperscript{10} and relevance theorists\textsuperscript{11} on how discourse partners continually create and recreate context in understanding texts. In section 7, another feature of context, namely participants’ orientation towards the discourse type is described.

5. TAMMs = Dialogues?

Returning to the sketch of the R-TAMM - C-TAMM sequence in Figure 4, the central part at $t_r$ and $t_{r+1}$ (labelled “pseudo-dialogue”) mimics that of a telephone conversation in that the C-TAMM comes directly after the R-TAMM. Further, as I have argued in Dingwall (forthcoming), the receiver chooses the time frame of the caller (the receiving time) rather than using the coding time of the message, $t_0$, as the centre or “origo” for deictic features such as tense, i.e. they put themselves time deictically into the shoes of the caller. This adds to the feeling that one is actually interacting with someone when leaving a C-TAMM. Thus, the R-TAMM - C-TAMM sequence can be seen as a form of extended turn-taking. Although each message is, on its own, a monologue (monologal in Roulet et al’s 1985 terms), it only makes sense to record an R-TAMM if one anticipates a C-TAMM, i.e. a response, at some point. Further, a C-TAMM which includes a request to call back or a specific request for information, as in (6), sets up the expectation of a further turn where the receiver can provide a response to the request, for example, by telephoning the caller.

As conversation analysts have noted, an adjacency pair such as a greeting/greeting or a request/response has a first part and a second part, and the uttering of the first part gives rise to the expectation that the addressee will produce the second part. As the name suggests, the second part should be adjacent to the first, that is, it should follow on immediately. This is not the case in an R-TAMM - C-TAMM - response sequence since other stretches of talk, e.g. openings and closings, intervene. However, at a macro-level, an R-TAMM can be seen as performing the function of a re-

\textsuperscript{10} See e.g. the articles collected in Watson and Seiler (1992).

\textsuperscript{11} Sperber and Wilson (1986) was the work which launched "relevance theory".

quest: “please leave a message”, and a C-TAMM typically includes, as part of the response to this request, a further request: “please call me back”. This “macro-structure” can be seen as a 3-part sequence:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(1)</th>
<th>R's request</th>
<th>“Please leave a message”</th>
<th>R-TAMM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>C's Response / C's Request</td>
<td>“Please call me back”</td>
<td>C-TAMM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>R's Response</td>
<td>Call back</td>
<td>R phones C, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When the caller rings, the C-TAMM (2) is normally uttered immediately after the R-TAMM has been played (1), mimicking a dialogue. In comparison, it often takes some time for R to call back or respond (3) in some way, if at all, to the C-TAMM. Given this gap and my lack of data on (3), R's potential response will be ignored in this discussion. So too will the fact that the very act of calling is a message from the caller to the receiver: “I want (or need) to talk to you”. Here the focus will be on the R-TAMM - C-TAMM sequence without consideration of its wider linguistic context, although a case study of two individuals, both with answerphones, who frequently call each other, would undoubtedly be a linguistically fruitful exercise. Where does that leave us with the R-TAMM - C-TAMM sequence? Is it a dialogue or not?

The Geneva model would undoubtedly treat an individual C-TAMM and/or R-TAMM text as monologal and not dialogal (i.e. involving one speaker not two), and as monologique not dialogique (i.e. the texts are structured as interventions and not échanges). Roos (1994, 22), in her study of C-TAMMs, maintains that:

Les messages de mon corpus sont forcément monologaux, puisque dans la situation d'énonciation le locuteur est seul. J'ai émis l'hypothèse que les corps des messages sont monologaux et également monologiques, c'est-à-dire constitués, au niveau maximal de l'analyse, d'une seule intervention. Mais à des degrés inférieurs de l'analyse, certains composants comportent des traces dialogiques (structure d'échange simulée).

I think she comes to this conclusion because she focuses on C-TAMMs alone and does not look at them as part of a larger structure involving at least an R-TAMM - C-TAMM sequence. But is this sequence a dialogue? Yes and no. Yes, because the sequence involves an overarching

---

12 I am not aware of any published research on this, but Catherine Kerbrat-Orecchioni reported at Geneva that she has a student working on this topic.
dialogue structure with two participants: a receiver (represented by the recorded message) and a caller oriented towards a common time ($t_F$). No, because the receiver cannot immediately respond to the C-TAMM by backchanneling (saying “uhuh”, “yes”, etc. to show that they are listening) or interrupting to ask for clarification (see also Luzzati (this volume) who stresses that error and uncertainty are characteristic of dialogues). The reason for this is that the receiver is not really co-present, unlike the receiver in a telephone conversation who can interact directly with the caller. Callers seem to vary in the extent to which they orient themselves towards an overarching dialogue structure. Some tend to talk as if they were really having a telephone conversation, whereas others treat the C-TAMM as a kind of letter. This is the subject of the following section.

6. Telephone Conversation versus Letter Modes in leaving TAMMs

In distinguishing these two modes, I am clearly talking about a matter of degree. I have yet to come across a C-TAMM which sounds like a letter read aloud (framed by “Dear Paula ... Yours sincerely Paul”), and the distinction seems to be clearest in the closing sections of TAMMs. The extract from a long message below, however, opens like a telephone conversation, but has a definite letter-like quality to the closing:

(8) Hello Mrs Johnson, This is Mr. Walker of ... if I may I’ll phone back tonight at eight or I don’t know when you will have finished teaching and also I believe you wanted to order or receive some books, looking forward to speaking to you later on this evening. ,
John Walker

The caller “signs off” the message by using his full name as in a letter, and precedes it with a modification of the typical letter phrase looking forward to hearing from you.

Contrast this with the extracts from the next very long example:

(9) (laugh) Hi Paula, this is Susan, I just wanted to remind you about the AGM talk, ... Anyway if you’d feel like doing it just let me know, and so that I can tell everybody, OK, thanks a lot Paulas, bye

Here the closing is similar to that in a telephone conversation with a pre-closing OK and thanking using the receiver’s (and not the caller’s) name.
Those who adopt the telephone conversation mode (i.e. a more dialogue-like style) compensate for the lack of a co-present addressee through special use of prosody and pausing as described in Gold (1991) and Alvarez-Caccamo & Knoblauch (1992). The pauses tend to come at points where the absent discourse partner could have a turn. This raises the question as to who the caller is actually addressing in a C-TAMM.

**a. Who is the Caller talking to?**

Looking at R-TAMMs first, a curious finding is the way many answerphone owners identify with the machine when they record their message:

1. This is Paul and Paula's machine.
2. This is a machine which ...

At the time of initial utterance, $t_0$, it does not really make sense for the speaker to identify with a machine (imagine a similar statement in a face-to-face situation). What seems to be happening is that the receiver is projecting forward to the time when the message will be replayed to a caller at $t_r$. This is reinforced by the use of the present tense. Callers vary as to whether they see themselves as speaking to a machine or to the person whose voice is recorded in the R-TAMM. Rather than treating the deictic centre of their utterance as being located at $t_0$, they shift it to a future $t_r$ ($=t_{r1}, t_{r2}, \ldots, t_{rx}$), i.e. all the times when the recording is played at unknown moments in the future.

The following C-TAMM (atypical in actually being a dialogue) shows a caller very conscious of “the machine”. Speaker A, a young woman, possibly a secretary, was trying to ring the owner of the machine and was so disconcerted to hear an R-TAMM that she discussed the situation with a colleague, B:
A. Es isch de Automat, De Automat hat gredt. “It's the machine. The machine spoke.”

B. Also sie isch nicht daheim im moment.
“So she is not at home at the moment.”

A. Ja (...) vo vorne aafaa.
“yes (...) start at the beginning.”

Here, A. treats the machine as actually speaking (De Automat hat gredt.). Most callers do not go this far, but often show signs of being unclear as to who they are addressing.

In example 11, the caller oscillates between addressing her mother directly (Well hello mum ) as if she were on the other end of the phone, and being aware of the fact that she is not talking to a person (you're not there ) but rather to a machine which is recording her voice:

(11) Well hello mum, I'm calling and you're not there and that stupid answering machine is there „ oh well , it's almost about twenty to one over here so I guess it's approximately twenty to eight over there „ oh well , just calling to say hello but I guess I have to say goodbye now because time costs and you're not there „ bye , I love you

This C-TAMM is interesting in that the caller is obviously very aware of differences in time and place between her and the receiver (she was in the USA while her mother was in Switzerland), perhaps brought on by being a long way from home and feeling homesick.

A similar oscillation occurs in example 12:

(12) Are you there? Boy that's the best machine I've ever heard , (laugh) hello Paula it's Jane, I'm just calling you to find out if you've uh , thought about the problem page , do you think you could give me a ring back?

Here the caller questions whether the receiver is listening, then comments on “the machine”, before going on to address the receiver directly as in a telephone conversation.

Where a couple (say, Mary and Simon) share an answerphone but only one speaks the R-TAMM, callers vary as to how they leave a message for the one whose voice is not on the recorded message. Some speak to the voice (let's say Simon's) on the R-TAMM as in:
While others ignore Simon and address Mary directly. The former seem to be playing along with the idea that they are really having a dialogue with Simon, whereas the latter treat the answerphone as a kind of anonymous postbox for messages for both Simon and Mary. The first group appear to consider talking to answerphones as a kind of telephone conversation, and may pay more attention to the R-TAMM than the second group. If this is the case, then only the second group are likely to be fairly immune to what is said in the R-TAMM (a qualification of the claim made in section 2 that callers hardly listen to the contents of an R-TAMM).

The idea of an anonymous postbox may be reinforced by the type of R-TAMM used, as in (4): *You have reached number XXX XXX, please leave a message.* Here, the R-TAMM adopts the perspective of the future caller completely, and tells them what has just happened to them (note the use of the present perfect) in cryptic form, but without providing any potentially false information (“we are not at home”) or identifying with the machine. At the time when the message was originally recorded, the caller had not, of course, reached the number. Nor had the referent of *you*, which is normally the addressee(s) in face-to-face interaction, become apparent, but such non-specific referential uses of *you* are familiar in written texts (“Dear reader .. you”) and in the language used on radio and television to address the anonymous listeners or viewers.

**b. Who is the receiver talking to?**

The leaver of the R-TAMM faces the problem as to who they are addressing because they do not usually know who will be calling them and listening to their message. For speakers of languages with Tu/Vous forms such as French and German, this poses a dilemma: should they use *vous* or *Sie* and risk appearing cold to a friend who calls, or should they pick a *tu /Du* form and possibly offend a stranger or non-intimate colleague? Example 2 adopts the latter approach (*Hinderlasch mer ...*), whereas 14. uses the *Sie* form:
Guete Tag. De Paul und d Paula chönd Ine im Momint leider nöd persönlich antworte.
"Good day. Paul and Paula cannot unfortunately answer you (vous-form) personally at the moment."

In Nachricht drum nach em Piepton - merci fürs Aalüte.
"Your (vous-form) message therefore after the peep tone - thank you for ringing."

Example 15 avoids using either Du or Sie, thus side-stepping the problem altogether (a useful tactic well-mastered by many Swiss),:

S'isch niemer dihei, aber en hufe ziit zum nach em pfiff ton e nachricht hinterlaa
"There's no one at home, but heaps of time to leave a message after the beep."

In English, the choice of first name only (similar to the Tu-form), first name and surname or just surname (Vous-form), as well as the greeting, if any used (Hello/Hi), may also be exploited in marking social relationships. The person recording the R-TAMM can even employ non-linguistic devices, such as the song in example 3, to provide themselves with a special kind of social identity. And the level of directness adopted in requesting callers to leave a message (e.g. Leave a message after the beep vs. We'd be pleased if you left us a message) will also be indicative of how they view their relationship with potential callers.

It is possible that the form of the R-TAMM and the manner in which the receiver "comes across" will influence the caller in adopting a telephone conversation or a letter mode. Research reported in Stadelmann and Hengartner (1994, 90), however, suggests that the way the R-TAMM is phrased (friendly, technical, etc.) does not affect the number of callers prepared to leave a message (i.e. the number who actually hang up). Nevertheless, it may still have some effect on their style. What is probably more important, however, is how they view talking to answerphones, and whether they are prepared to pretend to be talking to someone when they are really addressing a recording machine. Those callers who are very conscious of answerphones as machines will tend to treat them as postboxes and adopt a letter mode approach, particularly if the reason for their call is instrumental (e.g. to pass on information) rather than social, and if the R-TAMM is impersonal and lays emphasis on the mechanical side of answerphones (This is Paula's answering machine) and not on personal aspects. Those callers who relate directly to the voice on the R-TAMM will
tend to use a telephone conversation style, particularly if the reason for their call is mainly social and the R-TAMM appears to encourage this type of message.

7. Attitudes to TAMMs

In the previous section, I identified two TAMM styles: the telephone conversation and the letter modes. A further position some speakers adopt is to refuse to leave messages on an answerphone. One informant told me that, if he tried to call someone and met an answerphone, he would hang up and send a written note because then he could be certain that his message had arrived. Figure 5 expresses these different understandings of TAMMs on a continuum and lists some of the variables which may influence how a caller treats the discourse type.

Figure 5: Possible Caller Attitudes to TAMMs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discourse Type</th>
<th>Talking to</th>
<th>Style</th>
<th>Attitude influenced by:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pseudo-dialogue</td>
<td>Person</td>
<td>Telephone Conversation (e.g. varied intonation, pauses at TRPs, kissing noises etc., questions and answers, requests, telephone closings)</td>
<td>Reason for call: interactive / social</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monologue</td>
<td>Machine</td>
<td>Letter / Memo (flat intonation, &quot;read aloud&quot; pauses, no &quot;noises&quot; or direct questions, but statements and requests, letter closings)</td>
<td>Relationship with receiver: friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— — No Discourse</td>
<td>No-one</td>
<td>Hang-up</td>
<td>Experience: frequent user of TAMM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— — — Machine No Discourse</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>R-TAMM: chatty style (Tu-form)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— — — — No-one</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The figure suggests that, besides having a basic attitude to C-TAMMs ranging from seeing them as pseudo-dialogues to seeing them as not a possible form of discourse, callers' attitudes may be affected by other factors. A caller might, for example, see C-TAMMs as pseudo-dialogues, but adopt a more letter-like style on leaving a message on a stranger's ans-
werphone, especially if the reason for the call is mainly informative and if the R-TAMM is very formal. In practice, callers are probably not consistent in adopting one or other style, and thus many appear to oscillate within one message between treating the answerphone as a discourse partner or treating it as a machine. Even the "hang-up" caller may call back with a brief message after initially hanging up. Thus a person's underlying attitude or orientation is open to influence and the individual may shift positions along the continuum if, say, they wish to contact the receiver very urgently.

8. Conclusions
What happens when a caller calls a number with an answerphone? First the caller has to identify the discourse type: is it a telephone call or a TAMM? Here, mechanical noises, such as the sound of the tape, play at least as an important a role as the R-TAMM itself (see section 2). Having decided they are listening to an answerphone, the caller can activate their background knowledge about TAMMs, including the technical "felicity conditions" described in section 4, and the linguistic choices which the discourse type circumscribes. Their attitudes towards the discourse type (sections 6 and 7) will also come into play. In Guy Aston's terms (see this volume), this enables the callers to project a "trajectory" for what follows, which will be influenced by their "alignment" to the trajectory and their overall attitude to the discourse type, "answerphone talk".

To return to the original question addressed in this article, is a TAMM a monologue or a dialogue, on the surface the answer must clearly be a monologue. However, it seems that this distinction is similar to that between oral and written language: to say that a text is oral, or that it is a dialogue, will not help us to predict the kinds of language used in the text. Rather, it makes more sense to try to describe the "technical" features of a discourse type and the clusterings of linguistic patterns which are associated with it. With TAMMs, my claim is that there are at least two styles: a telephone conversation style, which shows some dialogical features, and a letter style, which is more monological in nature. These reflect speakers' individual orientations to the discourse type (see Figure 5). It seems to be participants' perceptions of the discourse type, in the sense of their knowledge and attitudes (see the discussion of "activating context" in section 4),
which influence how they say what they want to say in TAMMs, i.e. which style they adopt. So far, I have only touched on some of the linguistic features of the different styles. Further research is needed to characterise these styles more fully.

References


COMRIE B. (1985), Tense, Cambridge,CUP.


APPENDIX I

Telephone Answering Machines in Switzerland and the Data in this Paper

According to Stadelmann and Hengartner (1994: 88), a kind of prototype telephone answering machine (called an “Ipsophon”) was launched by a Zürich machine tool company in 1946. During the succeeding three decades, telephone answering machines or answerphones gradually became more widespread in the business sector, e.g. used by doctors and small businesses. It was not until the late eighties, however, that they really began to become popular in private homes as well. By this time they had already become quite established in the USA, as Dubin (1987), who monitored their spread and increasing acceptance over ten years, describes. By 1987 she found there was no longer such reluctance to leave TAMMs (fewer callers just hung up the phone), and put this down to people having had time to become accustomed to having their phone calls answered by a recorded message. In addition, improvements in technology meant that callers usually had longer than thirty seconds for their message, unlike earlier machines which cut message leavers off rather quickly.

When I began to collect TAMMs in the German part of Switzerland in 1989 and conducted a mini survey among students and colleagues on attitudes to this form of communication (see Dingwall 1992), I found, as Stadelmann and Hengartner (1994: 89) also report, that there was still considerable dislike of telephone answering machines among many of those I interviewed. Several reported regularly hanging up on being greeted by an answerphone. This suggests that the USA was almost a decade ahead in terms of widespread acceptance of answerphones, and some of the first in private homes in Switzerland were actually imported from the USA. Times have changed, however, and informal interviews over the past few years suggest that many people have now accepted the answerphone with attitudes ranging from it’s a necessary evil to it can be a useful tool to it’s great fun. The latter tends to be the attitude of young singles keen on technology who treat the answerphone as an opportunity to play social games and compete to produce the funniest recorded message. Today, it seems, ans-

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13 Some, for example, referred to the strangeness of the “talking to a machine”, or “the fear of leaving a permanent silly message”, or “the lack of encouraging noises” or “the unnaturalness of talking in monologue” (see Dingwall 1992, 92 for a more extensive list).

14 This difference may not just be due to different marketing of answerphones in the two countries, but could also have something to do with the maxim “I communicate, therefore I am.” having had an earlier impact in the USA than in other countries.

15 Dingwall (forthcoming) gives some examples. One especially cryptic message is:
Answerphones are common in the private homes of single young professionals or students, professional couples, part-timers, etc., but are not to be found so frequently in the homes of families with small children or retired people. This means that callers have had time to adapt to the new technology and to establish a 'frame' or 'scenario' for dealing with TAMMs.

The TAMM data I will be referring to here includes messages I have collected in Switzerland over the past five years from seven different machines in private homes in the German part of Switzerland. I also use examples collected by students and colleagues (see the Appendix and Bibliography for details)16. Further, several studies and commentaries on TAMMs have been published recently (e.g. Alvarez-Caccamo & Knoblauch 1992, Dingwall 1992, Dubin 1987, Gold 1991, Miller 1994, Naumann 1994, Roos 1994, Rosen 1994), mostly with transcriptions of messages appended. Roughly half of my data is in English since, apart from one single Swiss, the owners of the machines were either English native speakers living on their own, or English/Swiss German speaking families. The rest is in Swiss German or High German. Eva Roos' (1994) Licence Memoire focuses on messages in French, and Derungs paper (1993) includes Romansh TAMMs.

Since prosody is only touched on in this paper, my transcriptions do not include a finer level of detail than that of marking pauses and hesitations. Where the data comes from elsewhere, I have taken the transcriptions provided and, occasionally, simplified them. For the sake of maintaining informants' anonymity, names and telephone numbers have been changed.

In the Appendix where examples of TAMMs from my data are given, the background information to the TAMMs includes the caller's and receiver's gender, their native language (where possible), and the kind of relationship between the caller and the receiver. Many of the messages were left for friends, but some receivers run one-person

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I'm not at home. You know what to do.

Answerphones have also been a favourite topic of cartoonists and comic strip writers (e.g. Hopper 1992: 200), and Roos (1994) includes the following (fictious?) example:

Vous parlez à un répondeur. Si vous raccrochez sans rien dire, vous aurez perdu 60 centimes.

16 My heartfelt thanks to those who allowed me to intrude on their private lives by letting me transcribe their recorded messages and to the students for collaborating.
businesses partly from their homes (translation, language teaching), so the TAMMs include some business ones, which are marked accordingly.

Clearly, the TAMMs studied form a rather ad hoc collection, with no inclusion of messages left in non-Indo-European languages and with no calls made to large firms. This has been the pattern of most data collection on TAMMs to date (although the London-Lund corpus includes some messages collected on a university department phone in the sixties). While this gap is unfortunate, it means that there is still plenty of scope for further research on TAMMs. Assuming that one can easily obtain recordings of messages, collecting TAMMs in a variety of languages can be much quicker and less laborious than recording conversations, thus providing a rich, albeit contextually restricted, resource for cross-linguistic comparison.  

APPENDIX 2
Examples Of Telephone Answering Machine Messages

Transcription Conventions

In 1, the transcription systems used by the students have been followed. In my data, short pauses are marked “,” and longer pauses “.”. Numbers in brackets indicate examples cited in the body of the paper. “(...)” marks an unclear bit of text. “?” shows rising intonation typically used with questions.

R-TAMMs

1. From Eric Altorfer (1994)

   (1) Hello. This is Paul and Paula’s answering machine. Please leave your name and message after the beep and we’ll call you back as soon as possible. Beep.

   (2) Hallo, hinderlasch mer e nachricht - ciao.
   "Hello, leave me a message - bye."

   (3) (Music: Beatles song “hello hello”) 
   This is a machine which loves to talk to people who love to talk, so talk to the tape and tape your talk – after the tone.

17 Since America is probably the world leader in terms of numbers of TAMMs produced, and given the status of American culture and the American way of life, it is possible that American styles of TAMMs will have a strong influence on the forms used in TAMMs in other languages. In Roos’ (1994) French TAMMs, several messages closed with “bye”, rather than “au revoir”, “salut”, “à bientôt” or “ciao”. Was the English used because TAMMs follow an English model, or was it an example of the special Swiss sport of playing with languages?
(14) Guete Tag. De Paul und d Paula chûnd Ine im Momänt leider nòd personlichantworte. Iri Nachricht drum nachem Piepton - merci fürs Aalüte. “Good day. (The) Paul and Paula cannot at the moment answer you personally -Your message after the beep. Thank you for ringing.”

(15) ’Sisch niemer dihei, aber en hufe zii zum nach em pieftton e nachricht hinterlas. (There’s no one at home, but heaps of time to leave a message after the beep.)

2. My data: Receiver is a multilingual (Russian, Swiss German, ...) family of three living near Zürich

(4) You have reached number XXX XXX. Please leave a message.

C-TAMMs

1. From Eva Roos (1994)

(7) Oui alors c’est maman qui téléphone ben je voulais dire bonjour mais je vais dîner chez Marie à midi comme ça vous savez que je ne suis pas à la maison à midi alors à bientôt à ce soir e vous embrase au revoir “Yes well it’s mummy who is telephoning - good I wanted to say hello but I am going to dîne at Marie’s at midday like this you know that I am not home at midday - well see you - till this evening I embrace you goodbye”

2. From Daniela Derungs (in Romansh)

Aeh, ciao Maria, co è Rico Minelli. Tu i stuess veir unbedingt të chgl vot deir ena risposta. Te stüisses telefonar x-zacura tar la nossa numera co XXXXX pervia dil program dalla festa da diplom . Ciao. “Ah hi Maria, here’s Rico Minelli - You, I really (German) must see you, that means have an answer from you - You should ring our number XXXXXXX sometime about the programme for the Diploma party.” (Extract in Figure 3)

3. My data: Caller is Swiss German calling his British wife

(5) It’s me, how are you .. can you give me a ring .. bye

Caller is Swiss German calling a Swiss German colleague (an English teacher)

(6) Ja da isch Widmer Daniel, Tschau Jürg., Du, ich (åh) sötti wüsse, jetzt uf d’GV., (åh) di zwei Revisore., da wär ich froh wenn Du mir chûntisch säge wie de zweiti heissst und Du chûntisch mir aalüste uf d’Nummere XXX XX XX. Merci vielmol, Tschüss “Ja, here’s Widmer, Daniel. Tschau Jürg. You, I should know now, for the AGM, the two auditors. I’d be glad if you could tell me what the
second is called and you could ring me on number XXXX. Thanks a lot. Bye.”

Caller is a British representative of a publisher, known to the receiver, an American in Zürich.

(8) Hello Mrs Johnson. This is Mr. Walker of ...if I may I'll phone back tonight at eight or I don't know when you will have finished teaching and also I believe you wanted to order or receive some books, looking forward to speaking to you later on this evening. . John Walker

Caller is a n American calling a British colleague (they belong to the same association.)

(9) (laugh) Hi Paula, this is Susan ,, I just wanted to remind you about the AGM talk, ... Anyway if you'd feel like doing it just let me know, and so that I can tell everybody, OK., thanks a lot Paula, bye

Caller (A) is a Swiss German woman making a business call to a British woman. (B) is a female colleague of A's.

(10) A. Es isch de Automat... de Automat hat gredt. "It's the machine. The machine spoke." B. Also sie isch niet daheim im moment. "So she is not at home at the moment." A. Ja (...) vo vorn aafaa. "ja ... start at the beginning."

Caller is a young American (brought up in Switzerland) calling her American mother in Switzerland

(11) Well hello mum, I'm calling and you're not there and that stupid answering machine is there ,,oh well , it's almost about twenty to one over here so I guess it's approximately twenty to eight over there ,, oh well , just calling to say hello but I guess I have to say goodbye now because time costs and you're not there ,, bye , I love you