

Extreme case formulations in Cypriot Greek

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Abstract

This article is concerned with Extreme Case Formulations (ECFs) (Edwards, 2000; Pomerantz, 1986) in spontaneous Cypriot Greek conversations.¹ This study confirms the occurrence of ECFs in complaints as identified by Edwards (2000) Pomerantz (1986), but goes one step further to analyse the sequential and interaction work accomplished with ECFs in reporting “opposition-type stories” (Schegloff, 1984) and in complaining about a non-present party’s misbehaviour. Opposition-type stories report the oppositional conversation of the teller with a third non-present party (id.). Interestingly, in the conversational extracts examined in this study, the conversation reported is culminated with the opponent’s reported extreme claim (ECF) occupying the last turn. The occurrence of an ECF at that marked place, that is, at the punchline of the telling, is associated with issues of affiliation and stance since it is placed exactly before the recipient’s slot upon story completion, which is a regular place for the occurrence of evaluation (Schegloff, 1984).

1 Introduction

¹ Cyprus is an independent island republic in the Eastern Mediterranean. Data from the 2001 census of population showed that on 1st October 2001 the total population of the Cyprus Republic was 689,565 composed of 89.7% Greek Cypriots, 0.2% Armenian, 0.5% Maronites, 0.04% Cypriots of European origin called “Latins” and 0.05% Turkish Cypriots; 0.1% did not declare their ethnic religious group (Census of Population 2001); the remainder being foreigners from Europe and Asia. The Greek speech community in Cyprus is defined as diglossic. Diglossia in Cyprus refers to the simultaneous use of the dialect (Cypriot Greek dialect, CD) and the demotic Greek (Modern Greek, MG).

This article reports some of the findings of a study of *extreme case formulations* (ECFs) (Edwards, 2000; Pomerantz, 1986) in spontaneous conversations exclusively conducted in Cypriot Greek.

In a seminal article, Pomerantz (1986) drew attention to the conversational uses of *extreme case formulations* (ECFs). Edwards (2000: 347-8) explains that ECFs are “descriptions or assessments that deploy extreme expressions such as every, all, none, best, least, as good as it gets, always, perfectly, brand new, and absolutely”. Pomerantz (1986: 219-220) summarizes the three main uses of ECFs, mainly used in complaints, in the following way:

- (1) to assert the strongest case in anticipation of non-sympathetic hearings,
- (2) to propose the cause of a phenomenon,
- (3) to speak for the rightness (wrongness) of a practice.

Pomerantz’s (1986) three uses of ECFs are basically oppositional and argumentative, occurring in environments where descriptions and assessments are being strengthened or resisted. As Edwards (2000) showed this applies to his counselling data (1995) too, where wife and husband produce and defend opposed versions of facts. In this data a lot of ECFs follow the same sequential pattern of “ECF-challenge-softener”. Although Pomerantz (1986) did not pursue post-ECF talk, she noted the challenge after an ECF.

However, as Edwards notes (2000: 360), ECFs can also occur in affiliative sequences as “upgrades and displays of affiliation being done, of agreement being full and so on” –as in Pomerantz’s (1984) demonstration of how

upgraded “second assessments” display agreement. ECFs make excellent upgrades (id.). Added to this role, ECFs might be treated by participants as “indexing the speaker’s stance or attitude”, what Edwards calls “investments” (op.cit.: 363-4). As Edwards explains (id.) denying or insisting on something in an extreme way can highlight the action of denying or insisting, as a kind of stance or attitude (cf. Edwards & Potter, 1992; Potter 1996). Finally, Edwards (2000: 365) draws attention to the “nonliteral or metaphoric uses of ECFs” used in actions of exaggerating, teasing, ironizing, emphasizing, joking etc.

2 Data and Methodology

The study of ECFs investigated in this work is based on recordings of informal, spontaneous, face-to-face conversations among close friends or relatives. These are exclusively conducted in Cypriot Greek. The conversations transcribed for the present study are part of a collection of recordings that took place between December 1998 and April 2003. They comprise transcriptions of 35 hours of tape-recorded natural interactions produced by young native Cypriot Greek speakers during a variety of gatherings or occasions, e.g. dinner, gathering for coffee in friends’ houses etc. The extracts included in this article comprise transcriptions of approximately 3 hours. The recordings consist of same sex conversations among women.²

The method that is adopted in the analysis of the data is Conversation Analysis (CA), which has its origins in the pioneering work in the sixties by the sociologist Harvey Sacks (1992a, 1992b).

First and foremost, conversation analysis has focused its analytical attention on “recorded, naturally occurring talk-in-interaction” (Hutchby and Wooffitt, 1998: 14). These recordings of actual speech are transcribed using a system which is intended to capture in detail the characteristics “of the sequencing of turns, including gaps, pauses and overlaps; and the

² ECFs were also identified in a set of data collected during 2007 in conversations among young men. The transcription revealed use of ECFs as upgraded assessments and in actions of joking and exaggerating. Interestingly, no use of ECF in complaints was found.

element of speech delivery such as audible breath and laughter, stress, enunciation, intonation and pitch” (Hutchby and Drew, 1995: 182).

The transcription symbols used in this study are based on the transcription conventions developed by Jefferson for the analysis of conversational turns in English conversation (see Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson, 1974) and are adopted in the form presented by Ochs, Schegloff and Thompson (1996) and Clift (1999). The relevant transcription symbols for this study are cited in appendix I.

The phonetic inventory used for reading transcription is based on the International Phonetic Association [IPA] which is adjusted to the Greek language by Nespor (1999) and on the phonetic inventory of Cypriot Greek presented and described by Newton (1972).

3 ECFs in Cypriot Greek

My data of spontaneous Cypriot-Greek conversations confirms Edwards’s (2000) and Pomerantz’s claim (1986) of the use of ECFs in making complaints.

In particular, this study reports a pattern of the sequential and interactional position of ECFs found in the reporting of “opposition-type stories” (Schegloff, 1984) and in complaining about a non-present party’s misbehaviour. In the conversations examined here, complaining is expressed with the narration of two-party opposition-type stories in which the teller is one of the two parties involved. In particular, opposition-type stories are reported using the BCBC format, B being the teller and C his/her opponent. Thus, that BCBC format tracks not only the alternation of the turns but also the alternation of positions. This formula turns out to have C’s position be the one occupying the last turn (Schegloff, 1984). By “reproducing the “original” utterance or utterances, speakers can provide access to the interaction being discussed, enabling the recipient to assess it for himself. Supplying this kind of evidence is important when.....a complaint is made about someone based on what they said” (Holt, 1996: 229).

It seems that the basic feature attributed to opposition type stories is that they are more than any other form of storytelling “recipient

designed” (Sacks, 1971: 453). If this is so, it means that tellers design the storytelling with an orientation to the specific recipients in order to elicit their affiliative siding. In the fragments under study where the teller is one of the opposing parties, it is obviously important for the teller to transmit to her recipients the correctness or appropriateness of her position and the incorrectness or inappropriateness of her opponent’s position. In these extracts the teller invests special effort in constructing the contrast between herself and her opponent in two interrelated ways. Therefore, this is accomplished by narrating an opposition-type story based on the conversation she had with the opponent and by reporting the activities of the opponent parties which proposes the significance of the upcoming reported speech. Each story culminates in a report of the other’s speech. The motivation for the reporting of speech and activities is grounded in considerations of affiliation and stance.

Actually in the conversations examined in this paper the oppositional story has its punchline in the reporting of an ECF attributed to the third non-present party. One thing the recipient can do is to side with one or the other, that is, teller/protagonist or his/her opponent. Usually recipients side with tellers because this is how tellers choose their story recipients (Schegloff, 1984). In the cases here the reported ECF is responded to with a challenge taking the form of rhetorical question, extreme case formulation, idiomatic expression or ironic evaluation. Stories involve extended single turns at talk (Sacks, 1968: 18). The storytelling sequence is composed “of three serially ordered and adjacently placed types of sequences”: “the preface, the telling, and the response sequences” (Sacks, 1974: My main interest is in the punchline and the recipient’s slot upon story completion.

Due to the limit of space, I present only two representative examples of the use ECF in the punchline of opposition-type stories as shown in the extract 1 and 2 that follow.

(1)

(D = Dorina; T = Themis; M = Maria; C = Christiana; L = Litsa; N = Nitsa. All of the women participating in the conversation except

Dorina are teachers working in the same school. Dorina is a psychologist qualified by the Ministry of Education to visit some specific primary schools and check the welfare of children. Now she is narrating the story of a child in one of the schools she visited.)

1. D emenan ipem mu enam moron, ioθetas
2. me? pu kseri to moro ti leksi tuti::?
3. T indam ↑bu jine?
4. D ioθetas me? lei mu, ide stom Mama
5. kati ioθesies ce lipa::,
6. T ioθetas me? ipe su?
7. D ioθetas me? lali mu.
8. M ma pco moro?
9. D ena:: pu to eðernen i mamma tu dame::
10. ospu tʃ espurtisen do:: ðerma::n.
- 11.C ciri’ eleison.
- 12.D eðernen do me ti guta::lan sto iðio
13. simio,
- 14.C ↑a::!
- 15.D me ti gutalan ti ksilini sto iðio simio
16. ospu tʃ ↑eskasen do ðerman.
- 17.C ciri’ eleison.
- 18.L ja onoma tu θeu dilaði (.) jenika etsi
19. aspu=
- 20.D =tilefono ti::s tʃe leo tis, cita:: [etsi,
- 21.C [na su po
22. kati? eyo ðen antexa etsi me etsi
23. aθropus tʃe tora exasa tin psiχremiam
24. mu [(nomizo).
- 25.D [to moron effuskomeno ðame, leo
26. tis, θa se kataρijilo stin astinomia::,
27. frontise mesa se mɲan evðomaða na
28. jinis mana::, aλos θa se kataρijilo stin
29. astinomia::, poso χrono, ise si? lei mu.
30. erotise me tʃe poson χronon im’ eγ(h)o,
31. ise mana? lei mu.
- 32.→ MO::non Otan θa ji::nis mana θa
33. katalavis lei mu.
- 34.C a nne::? pe ti::ç.
- 35.T ðe re efcice tʃe pupan::no.
- 36.L i manes eððernun ta mora tus me tes
37. kutales.
- 38.N an ine na jino san esena pe tis
39. kalittera::,

Translation

1. D a child told me, won’t you adopt me?
2. how does a child know this wo::rd?
3. T ↑what happened?
4. D won’t you adopt me? he told me, he

5. saw something of Mama's³ show about adoptions and stu::ff,
6. T he told you won't you adopt me?
7. D won't you adopt me? he says to me.
8. M what child?
9. D one:: that was being beaten by his
10. mother, here::, till the:: ski::n cracked.
- 11.C Jesus Christ.
- 12.D she hit him with a spoo::n on the same
13. spot,
- 14.C ↑o::!
- 15.D with a wooden spoon on the same spot
16. till the skin cr↑acked.
- 17.C God have mercy.
- 18.L for God's sake, really (.) just like
19. th=
- 20.D =I called he::r up and said loo::k,[right,
- 21.C [let
22. me tell you something, I couldn't stand
23. this sort of people, I am even losing my
24. temper [now.
- 25.D [the child is swollen here, I tell
26. her, I'll report you to the poli::ce. I
27. give you one week and you make sure
28. you be a mothe::r to him, otherwise I'll
29. report you to the police, how old, she
30. says to me, are you? she asked me how
31. old I(h) was, are you a mother? she
32. → says. Q::nly WHEn you become a
33. mother will you understand she says.
- 34.C oh rea::lly? you should tell he::r.
- 35.T she's got a nerve to talk.
- 36.L mothers don't beat their children with
37. wooden spoons.
- 38.N if I am to become like you, tell her,
39. then I'd bette::r,

In extract 1 above the complaining proceeds as follows: the teller is reporting the complainable behavior of her opponent through reporting her transgressions (1: 9-10, 12-13, 15-16) and then continues with the reporting of the oppositional exchange (1: 20, 25-33) between her and her opponent which follows the BCBC format. The oppositional exchange culminates in a piece of formulaic-sounding wisdom proffered by the mother (1: 32-33: "only when you become a mother will you understand") which is hearable as an "extra-ordinary" claim (Pomerantz, 1986) framed as such based on the use of the ECF "only" followed with the idiomatic expression "when you become a mother will you understand". According to

³ Mamas is a Cypriot journalist.

Torode, "an extreme case is designed to close an argument. As such it is vulnerable to attempts at refutation" (1996: 10). Thus, the placement of that extraordinary claim at the climax of the story should be seen in relation to motivations of eliciting affiliation. In other words the teller offers to the recipient an extreme claim in order to elicit a refutation of that claim. The reporting of the opponent's words effected by intonation, as it is shown in the stress in voice and the louder tone, serves to detach the teller from commitment with these words. In 1: 34 the recipient challenges the mother's exaggerative claim with a rhetorical question "oh rea::lly?". In agreement with Schegloff's claim, the suggested response gets heard as a slot in the oppositional conversation reported by the teller because it comes off "as a proposed piece" of the teller's argument (1984: 46-47). The shift of footing (Goffman, 1979) from the mother's reported extreme claim to the rhetorical question frames (Goffman, 1974) the evaluation as irony.

The following extract also serves to illustrate the point shown with extract 1 about the occurrence of ECF at the climax of an oppositional story.

(2)

(C = Christiana; M = Maria; A = Angelina; P = Petra. Lina is a non-present party whom the participants usually criticize. Lina, Christiana, and Panos (C's ex-boyfriend) were in the same class as BA students. The following year Lina and Panos continued with masters' degrees. Panos found a job. Lina has just finished her master's and she is very proud of it. This annoys the girls very much. Now she is looking for a job.)

1. C Aku:: tʃ' i LIna-- tʃe proxtes pu milusame
2. [ja ta epanɛlmata:: ti mu lali emena::?
3. P [ma ti allo ()
4. C e eyo, lei mu, an epcanna kampan
5. eftakofan pu p- mallon enna pcani o
6. Panos lei mu::, mpts lei mu::
7. M bravo.
8. C enna mini tʃame pu ine? leo tis re, a
9. ðden ton eʃaristi:: tʃe vri kati allon
10. enna fii:: leo ti::s. lei mu:: ma
11. sovaromilas? pcani toso misθo tʃ
12. enna fii? [leo tis jati na mini,
- 13.P [e ma'n dʒ' en da lefta to

14. pan.
 15.C a δden ton efcharisti i duLa pu kamni? =
 16.P =ma oi mono ja tfinon ja ullon toj
 17. gosmon.
 18.C nne a δden ton efcharisti enna fi:i tfe
 19. laLI:: mu::: e lei mu emenan ammu
 20. e diusasin eftakofes lires tfe na mu
 21. → lalusan fkalle kko::py Ulli mera, θa ta
 22. fkalla::
 23. (2)
 24.A e >to ma :ster pu efi e ja na fka::lli
 25. → kko::pi Ulli me::ra<?
 26.M .hhh χm χm χm χm.
 27.A jοθο polla kurazmeni.

Translation

1. C Liste::n, also Lina-- the other day too
 2. that we were talking [about jo::bs, you know what she said to me::?
 3. P [what else ()
 4. M exa::ctly.
 5. C well, I, she tells me, if I was paid some
 6. seven hundred pounds as- which is
 7. probably what Panos gets she says to
 8. me::, mpts she says will he stay put? I say
 9. if it doesn't plea::se him and he finds
 10. something else, he will qui::t I said. she
 11. says to me are you serious? he gets such
 12. a salary and he'll quit? [I say, why should he stay on,
 13.P [but money isn't
 14. everything.
 15.C what if he doesn't like his job?=
 16.P =and this is not just for him, it goes for
 17. everybody.
 18.C yes, if he doesn't like it, he'll quit and
 19. she sAY::s to me::, well she says if
 20. they gave me seven hundred pounds
 21. → and told me make photocopies All
 22. da::y, I wou::ld.
 23. (2)
 24.A well >what did she get a ma::ster's for,
 25. → to ma::ke co::pies All day::?<
 26.M hm hm hm hm
 27.A I feel so tired.

In extract (2) the teller announces that the complaint is about something the other (Lina) said to her (2: 1-2) and starts reporting the other's words (2: 5-7), but restarts by reporting the "opposition" type story from an earlier point (2: 7-12).

This inserted oppositional story is hearable as background information essential for the recipients' appreciation of the punchline. The punchline, that is, the opponent's words that she started reporting in 2: 5-7, but were left unreported, are repeated and completed in 2: 16-18. In this story the teller presents the oppositional conversation in a BCBC format where B is the teller and C the opponent, that is, Lina. The opponent is reported as making the questions and the teller as responding to them. The reported questions are presented as aggressive and challenging of the responses given by the teller (2: 9-10, "are you serious? he gets such a salary and he'll quit?"). With the reported assessment of 2: 19-22, Lina is presented as expressing her overt disapproval of Panos's claims which are also adapted by Christiana. This is achieved with her reported exaggerated claim that even if she was asked to do copying she would do it for the money. This becomes even more extreme because it is accompanied with an "extreme case formulation" ("all day"). This is a strong criticism of the teller and her friend's beliefs. Christiana is complaining about her making such a strong criticism of their beliefs. The mimicked exaggeration in reproducing the opponent's words effected with stretch and emphasis clearly detaches the teller from their inside meaning.

The reported claim is responded to with a rhetorical question by one of the recipients (2: 24-25). This question is hearable as a slot in the oppositional conversation reported by the teller because it comes off as a piece of the complainant's argument. With that she challenges the opponent's claim by bringing it into question. The repetition of the extreme case formulation "all day" is employed to challenge the extreme claim of the opponent. This question is framed as an ironic challenge based on the impossibility of what is being asked "well >what did she get a master's for, to make copies all day?<" reinforced with the "extreme case" "all day?". This question serves as an ironic challenge on another level too, that of the shared knowledge that Lina is very proud of having a master's degree so her claim is not true. Hence, with this question the recipient claims disbelief of the opponent's assessment. In addition, this question serves as an "impossible description" (Torode, 1996).

As was mentioned above ECFs do not only occur in reporting and responding to opposition-type stories, but also in complaining about a non-present party's misbehavior in general. Extract 3 that follows is a representative example of that case.

(3)

(C = Christiana; M = Maria; A = Angelina; P = Petra; E = Eleana. Before the following conversation Christiana was narrating the previous night in the club a young guy was flirting with her, but she was ignoring him. The conversation is about that guy and Andie, a non-present party)

1. C ((to E)) θima::SE::! [to
2. M [hu
3. C sinδromo tis Andi::ς!
4. M ti sinδromon efi?
5. C → opcos mas mila pai tje pcani ton tje
6. mila ↑tu::!
7. E o::,
8. C pu tfin din-- en di θimase tfin din imera
9. pu rt- tfin da peθca ta:: [i fili tis i
10. Lemefani::?
11. A [mem mu to
12. ksanapi::s re Xristiana::.
13. C tiz LIZA::S?
14. E pu tan na mas proksenepsi::
15. telospanton.
16. C ne
17. E tfinus.
18. C → tʃ' o::pcos ercetun tje milam mas
19. ercetun tʃ' epcanen ton etsi i Andi:: tʃ'
20. epienne tʃ' emilan ↑tu::!
21. E e? (.) ekamen do tje pse::s?
22. C epie tʃ' epcan ton tfin dom mitsi
23. peθca::.
24. M e oi re, °ton aynosto::°?
25. C nne::.
26. G enna firto::
27. C etravisen don =
28. E =ma tora sovara::?=
29. C = tfinos itan etsi:: to χore- o χoros tu
30. etsi polla pros to polla proklitiko::s
31. susto::s [ksero 'γο::,
32. A [χm χm χm.
33. C tje χorefce [tfinos
34. E [inda,
35. C tʃ' i Andi [[δame mes ta
36. E [[pco θarros!
37. C poθca tu tje χorefkan kolliti etsi::.
38. M ↑ate re::?

39. A ma sovaromila::s?
40. P → tʃ' [u::lli mera vura tom bater pu piso::
41. tʃini::?
42. A [tʃ' i Liza ti tis ipen?
43. C ↑tipoTE::.

Translation

1. C ((to E)) ((do you)) reme::MBE::R!
2. [Andie's syndrome::!
3. [hu
4. M what is her syndrome?
5. C → every time someone is talking to us
6. she starts talking to hi::m?
7. E n::,
8. C since th-- don't you remember that
9. day that those guys [LIZA's friends
10. from Limassol?
11. A [don't say that
12. agai::n re Christiana::.
13. C came?
14. E that she was going to introduce to us
15. actually.
16. C yes.
17. E those.
18. C → and e::very time someone was
19. talking to us Andie was coming and
20. pulling him one side like that and
- was talking to ↑hi::m!
21. E so? (.) did she do that last ni::ght
- too?
22. C she went and pulled that young guy
23. to one side, guy::s.
24. M oh no re, °the strange::r°?
25. C ye::s.
26. G I'll faint.
27. C she pulled him closer=
28. E =now seriously::?=
=he was so::rt the d- his dancing was
29. C sort of very provocative shaking
30. [for example::,
31. [hm, hm, hm
32. A and he was [dancing
33. C [what,
34. E and Andie [[here within his,
35. C [[a nerve!
36. E legs and they were dancing stuck like
37. C glue like tha::t.
38. M ↑oh really re::!
39. A seriously::?
40. P → so [does she spend a::ll her time with
41. the priest?
42. A [and what did Liza say to her?
43. C ↑nothI::Ng.

As was mentioned above in complaints it is important for the teller to establish his/her recipients' affiliation. In my data, where the teller is complaining about another, this is usually achieved with extreme and hyperbolic descriptions of the other's misbehaviour.

Thus, in 3: 1-3 the teller introduces a complaint about a non-present party's misbehaviour by soliciting a "reminiscence recognition" from E, the knowing recipient (cf. Lerner, 1992: 255) about the principal character's (cf. Goodwin, 1984) behaviour. By characterizing Andie's behaviour as a "syndrome", the teller (3: 3) foreshows a negative telling/criticism of Andie and establishes her stance towards the upcoming telling. In addition, through the reminiscence recognition solicit she invites the knowing recipient to confirm what it assesses and express a similar stance. Since the addressed recipient withholds a response, the teller through an extreme description (3: 5-6) identified as such by the ECF "every time" employs a second solicit of reminiscence recognition (3: 5) addressed to E, the knowing recipient. E (3: 6) responds negatively to the solicit and this is in disagreement with the expectations of the solicit. The teller initiates a third solicit of reminiscence recognition (3: 8-10) and finally receives recognition by the knowing recipient (3: 14-15). The ECF "every time" is repeated by the teller (3:18-20) in a last attempt to receive recognition. The addressed recipient with a "candidate understanding" (Wilkinson and Kitzinger, 2006) in the form of a question (3: 21) reveals recognition of the connection between the information given in the preface and the topic of the upcoming telling, that is, what the story is about and asks about it directly, "so? (.) did she do that last night too?".

The telling (3: 22-23) is designed as a surprise source as shown by the fact that it responds to a yes/no question (3: 21) with a detailed description of the third person's misconduct and the placement of the address form "guy::s" in turn final position. The telling is responded to by the recipient (3: 24) with an assertion of "ritualized disbelief" (Heritage, 1984: 339) which treats the prior utterance as news (Wilkinson and Kitzinger, 2006). The teller in each of her turns (22-23, 27, 29-31,

33, 35, 37) adds another increment which forms part of the exaggerated description of the transgression of the principal character's behaviour. The description of the other's transgression has its climax in 3: 37.

The recipients, that is, M (3: 38), A (3: 39) and P (3: 40-41) make an evaluation upon the story-completion one after the other. Thus M (3: 38) and A (3: 39) both display "assertions of ritualized disbelief".⁴ P (3: 40-41), produces a rhetorical question, identified as such because it does not expect a response since it brings into question a common knowledge. It is framed as ironic evaluation, based on the fact that is not sequentially linked to the previous talk. In addition, the extreme ECF "all her time" adds to the ironic hearing. The ironic evaluation conveyed is also recognized based on the shared knowledge that Andie is visiting a priest often and consults with him. Hence, with this assertion P (3: 40-41) offers another argument for Andie's behaviour being reprehensible by ironically evaluating her incompatible actions. Her behaviour as described by the teller contradicts the fact that she is known to spend a great deal of time with the priest.

4 Conclusion

In this paper I investigated one aspect of the interactional and sequential work accomplished with ECFs in complaining through a description of a non-present party's misbehavior and in reporting opposition-type stories. Specifically, the focus was on complaints about the behaviour of a third non-present party which develops with the reporting of two-party "opposition type" exchanges in which the teller is one of the two parties involved (Schegloff, 1984). The contrasting positions are presented with the BCBC formula with the opponent's position occupying the last turn.

In exploring the sequential positioning of ECFs, I discovered that a regular place of their

⁴ These items "treat a prior utterance as news for recipient" (Heritage, 1984: 339), but according to Wilkinson and Kitzinger these kinds of assertions "do more than this: they convey the speaker's amazed incredulity and may also thus constitute a kind of surprise response in their own right" (2006: 34).

occurrence in storytelling sequences is on the punchline of the story and more specifically on the culmination of the reporting of “opposition type” conversation.

The occurrence of ECFs at the end of the telling sequence seems to be associated with issues of affiliation that are sought from the recipients since the “the story recipient’s slot after story completion” is a marked place for the occurrence of evaluations where the recipient is expected to side either with the teller or her opponent. (Schegloff, 1984: 44). Thus at this place the teller offers to the recipient something extreme to evaluate and challenge.

In the extracts above recipients respond with evaluations expressed with rhetorical questions which consist of repetitions of “extreme case formulation(s)” (Pomerantz, 1986) and “impossible description(s)” (Torode, 1996) of a third person’s overbuilt claim or words.

To sum up extracts (1 & 2) examined in this paper revealed the following pattern:

1. Opposition-type stories BCBC
2. Punchline: Reporting C’s ECF
3. Recipient’s slot: Challenging the ECF {by non-literal means: rhetorical questions, ironic evaluations, impossible descriptions, repetitions of C’s ECF)

Extract 3 revealed the following pattern

Teller: Description of the other’s misbehavior with ECFs.

Recipient: Evaluation with ECF

To conclude with this study proves that the occurrence of ECF at the punchline is used to elicit the affiliation of the recipients, who express agreement/affiliation with the teller by challenging the ECF proffered by her opponent. This proves Sacks’s (1972: 341) observation that in some sequences certain activities have regular places of occurrence to such an extent that their absence is noticeable. This observation leads “to a distinction between a “slot” and the “items” which fill it and to proposing that certain activities are accomplished by a combination between some item and some slot” (id.).

Appendix I

Transcription System

[Separate left square brackets, one above the other on two successive lines with utterances by different speakers, indicates a point of overlap onset, whether at the start of an utterance or later.
[
=	Equal signs ordinarily come in pairs – one at the end of a line and another at the start of a next line. If the two lines connected by the equal signs are by the same speaker, then there was a single, continuous utterance with no break or pause, which was broken up in order to by different speakers, then the second followed the first
(2)	Numbers in parenthesis indicate silence.
(.)	A dot in parentheses indicates a micropause.
.	The period indicates a falling or final, intonation contour, not necessarily the end of a sentence.
?	A question mark indicates rising intonation, not necessarily a question.
,	A comma indicates continuing intonation, not necessarily a clause boundary.
::	Colons are used to indicate the prolongation or stretching of the sound just preceding them. The more colons the longer the stretching.
-	A hyphen after a word or part of a word indicates a cut-off or self-interruption, often done with a glottal or dental stop.
<u>word</u>	Underlining is used to indicate stress or emphasis.
WORD	Capital letters indicate louder than the rest talk.
↑	The up arrow indicate a segment starting on sharper rise.
> <	The combination of “more than” and “less than” symbols indicates that the talk between them is compressed or rushed.
.hhh	The dot followed by “h’s” indicates inbreath
(h)	The letter “h” in parentheses inside the boundaries of a word indicates laughter.
(word)	When all or a part of an utterance is in parentheses, this indicates uncertainty on the transcriber’s part, but represents a likely possibility.
()	Empty parentheses indicate that something is being said, but no hearing can be achieved.
→	An arrow marks significant turns.

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