

The practical epistemology of personal names in emergency calls requesting assistance

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The paper examines a case in which proper names are used in interaction. It examines in particular the uses of proper names at the beginnings of telephone calls to a medical emergency dispatch centre. The case analysed is the use of the proper name as a form of self-identification by the caller. This is a special case of the beginnings of phone calls to an emergency number. The paper focuses on the actions that the use of proper names accomplishes in the interaction.

The typical opening routine of phone calls to an emergency number is different from that of ordinary phone calls. In my corpus of emergency telephone calls there is an asymmetry in the speakers' identification: whereas the call takers, at their first opportunity to talk, provide the categorical identification of the service reached by the caller (for instance, "nine one one" as in Usa, or "one one eight" in my case), the identification of the caller is not usually an issue. While the callers to the service may gain confirmation from this first answer by the emergency operators that they have reached the intended number, they do not usually self-identify. The emergency phone calls therefore show a *reduction* of a routine opening, compared to ordinary telephone calls, due to their *specialization*. Normally, the caller's very first turn is used to state the problem that has caused the request for assistance. In the cases presented in this paper, instead, the caller self-identifies by using his/her proper name. The paper analyses what kind of activity is performed by the caller through

the use of his/her proper name; what consequences ensue for the interaction; and what kind of sequential development is observed.

The material on which the paper is based derives from research conducted on a medical emergency call and dispatch centre in Italy: Trentino Emergenza 118.

1. The absence of caller self-identification in emergency telephone calls

The presence of only the proper name as a form of caller identification is an exception in my corpus of emergency calls for assistance. Generally, the callers to emergency services do not self-identify (this routine seems to be confirmed also in the Zimmerman corpus: “usually anonymous callers”, Whalen & Zimmerman 1990, 471).

Consider these examples:

1. ac030822124804 ch51
 - 00 o: centodiciotto?
one one eight?
 - 01 c: (-monte rovere) ascolti, al- al monte rovere,
(-monte rovere) listen, at- at monte rovere,
 - 02 chilometro dicio- e[:h nove,
kilometre eight- e[:h nine
 - 04 è caduto uno in bicicletta giù da un burrone.
a cyclist's fallen down a ravine.

2. ac030822125813 ch51
 - 00 o: centodiciotto?
one one eight?
 - 01 c: signora, sono sull'autostrada e da trento (stiamo andando)
madam, I am on the motorway and from trento (we're heading)
 - 02 verso modena. c'è stato un incidente.
towards modena. there's been an accident.

3. ac030830182009 ch20
 - 00 o: centodiciotto
one one eight
 - 01 c: pronto
hello
 - 02 o: pronto
hello
 - 03 c: pronto, guardi strada della fricca
hallo, listen, fricca road
 - 04 o: sì

yes
 05 c: c'è un incidente, mi è venuto dietro u- una moto,
there's been an accident, a motorbike crashed into the back of my car

4. vr_2006.wav
 00 o: sì, verona emergenza?
yes, verona emergency?
 01 c: eh, hem, in località, poiane, in via dossobuono,
eh, hem, in poiane, dossobuono road,
 02 a sommacampagna, è appena caduto un aereo.
in sommacampagna, an airplane just crashed

These excerpts illustrate how the beginning of a phone call requesting assistance is usually constructed. After the summons constituted by the ringing of the telephone (not indicated in the transcripts) in the operations centre, the operator responds by producing a categorical self-identification (extracts 1, 2, 3: “one one eight”; extract 4: “yes, verona emergency?”). The caller thus knows that s/he has reached the right number. The caller’s first turn after the operator’s categorical identification is entirely taken up with presentation of the problem that has occasioned the call, generally describing “what has happened” and “where it has happened” (see extract 1, lines 1-4: “*listen, at- at monte rovere, kilometre eight- e::h nine a cyclist's fallen down a ravine,*”; extract 2, lines 1-2: “*madam, I am on the motorway and from trento (we're heading) toward modena. there's been an accident*”; extract 3, lines 3, 5: “*listen fricca road, there's been an accident, a motorbike crashed into the back of my car*”; extract 4, lines 1-2: “*eh, hem, in poiane, dossobuono road, in sommacampagna, an airplane just crashed*”). Statement of categorical identity by the operator in emergency assistance calls not only closes the summon/answer adjacency pair but also has fundamental consequences for the ensuing activity. The second turn of an emergency call (the first for the caller) is immediately taken up by presentation of the problem and the request for help. In only two quick steps a series of identities necessary for the exchange are immediately established. These are pairs of complementary roles. Speech requires that there is a *speaker* (at the moment) and a *listener* (at the moment); a telephone conversation requires that the duties and rights of the *caller* and the *answerer* be established. The participants in a phone call to an emergency number reciprocally position themselves as ‘the furnisher of the

assistance requested”, on the one hand, and the ‘citizen’ or ‘person needing help’ on the other. The work of defining institutional identities performed in only two steps establishes the framework for the ensuing interaction. In emergency phone calls, therefore, the caller is essentially anonymous. The caller assumes the interactional role of the requester of assistance, s/he states a fact or recounts a story (Zimmerman 1992) – a fact or story justifying the phone call and which are the bases for action by the organization receiving the call. The identity of the caller is therefore the one that emerges from the organization of the call requesting assistance: an identity anonymous as to identification of the speaker, but appropriate when it complies with the expectations regulating that interaction system.

Generally, the openings of all telephone conversations, and not only emergency ones, are interactionally “dense” (Schegloff 1968). The speakers position themselves reciprocally and precisely in the space of a few turns and a few instants. The openings of the phone calls for assistance are different from the openings of ordinary phone calls (Schegloff 1986).

In the case of ordinary phone calls, before the speaker talks properly about something, he/she must perform a series of tasks in order to align his/her identity (Schegloff 1979b). Speakers on the telephone do not have the visual resources that enable recognizing someone by sight (and hence set up the interaction). In telephone conversations, identification takes place through the voice and words. Identification is one of the 3 (or 4) types of sequences identified by Schegloff (1986) which must be completed before the first topic can be introduced. The first sequence consists of a ‘summons’ and an ‘answer’. There follows a sequence of identification; and then a sequence of greetings (“hello”, “hi”, and similar). A possible fourth sequence, typical of American context, consists of “exchanges about health” (“how’s it going?”, “how are you?”, and similar). Only at the end of the last exchange of information about health can the first topic be introduced. At this point of the interaction, it is generally the caller who is in the correct position to introduce the first topic, and to state the reason for the call. The opening section thus performs a crucial role for what it has

been called “the positioning problem” [(Schegloff 1986), pp. 116-117] in ordinary telephone conversations. The positioning problem consists in the fact that the reason for the call must be uttered at a certain moment in the conversation: it is not enough that the other speaker has lifted the receiver to state immediately the information that has occasioned the call. The initial procedures of ordinary phone calls thus allow the opening of a first structural ‘slot’ in which to insert the reason for the call, the topic to be discussed. That is to say, they furnish the basic position, the first ‘anchoring point’ from which the caller can start introducing the content of the message.

In ordinary phone calls, the identification sequence serves for *recognition* of the speakers. Once the channel has been opened, the speakers must recognize each other, know who they are dealing with – or more properly, know who is at the other head of the line. The first turn of the answerer (“hello?”) not only opens the channel but also provides a snatch of a voice that can already be recognized. The caller can now verify whether voice answering the phone is the voice of the person with whom s/he wants to speak; or whether it is the known voice of a person whom the caller can ask to speak to the person sought; or finally whether it is an unknown voice – which may also mean a connection problem (wrong number, the person sought has moved, etc.) – or one whose identification is uncertain. When a phone call takes place between people known to each other, identification of the answerer by the caller happens in an implicit way through the voice.

When recognition is not accomplished on the basis of the voice alone, another mechanism intervenes: self-identification. Schegloff (1986) writes that it is reasonable to believe that the closer the relationship between the speakers, the fewer will be the resources mobilized for self-identification. Names are among the most important of these “minimum resources” (e.g. “It’s George”). It is likely that this “preference for recognition over self-identification” will be released if recognition problems arise and the participants in the telephone interaction (the caller and the answerer) do not recognize each other (Sacks and Schegloff 1979). If recognition is not achieved, “preference for minimum self-identification” may follow. Minimum identification can be furnished by progressively adding small items which enable the

answerer to gain a suitable referent for the caller: for example, by furnishing the surname, the profession, etc. At this point the name may be subjected to the maximum possible expansion (for instance, by means of a description) to achieve the goal of minimum identification (for example: “Hi, its George XY, Paul ZX’s friend, the architect, we met one year ago in Greece on Mary and Stephen’s boat for your birthday, do you remember?”).

The case of emergency phone calls differs from that of ordinary conversations. The emergency operator’s answer is not intended to have his/her voice recognized, as in ordinary phone calls, but to furnish an institutional identity, the one which the service requires and the caller expects. In fact, Zimmerman writes, “in dialing the advertised number of the police or fire department, callers expect to connect with an answerer acting in the capacity of an agent of that organization, an identity that the answerer's self-identification confirms” [(Zimmerman 1992b), p. 43]. Hence the emergency operator’s answer exhibits the characteristic of being *specialized* to serve a particular purpose in the ongoing interaction [(Wakin and Zimmerman 1999), (Whalen and Zimmerman 1987)]. The answerer’s categorical self-identification (“one one eight”) enables the caller to determine that s/he has got through to the right number to ask for assistance, not to recognize the speaker as an individual.

The first section of the paper presents the "normal" way of opening telephone conversations in ordinary phone calls, as described by Schegloff and others. Moreover, excerpts of "canonical" emergency call openings are given and briefly analysed. While it is certainly important to describe "standard" ordinary and emergency calls openings in this section, the author might perhaps want to structure this part more carefully – in its current form, there are some redundancies that lengthen the text unnecessarily.

Two further suggestions:

- The paper is going to be published in a book about "proper names in interaction". As the emergency call openings presented here contain systematically place names (which of course are also 'proper names'), it might be sensible to introduce a

footnote somewhere at the beginning, explaining that the analysis of the "place names" is beyond the scope of this paper.

- Perhaps it might be helpful to clarify what is meant by "ordinary phone calls": the author visibly refers to phone calls among acquainted people – but of course there is no dichotomous opposition of the kind "ordinary" vs. "emergency" phone call openings, as there are plenty of other phone call openings that do not belong to either of these types (such as service calls, calls to institutions etc.).

2. The caller's categorical self-identification

Certain emergency phone calls show how the caller uses some form of self-presentation. These are forms where not names but instead categorical self-identifications are used. Consider the following extracts:

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5. AC 030911 163154 ch03
00 O: centodiciotto pronto
    one one eight hello
01 C: pronto?
    hello?
02 O: pronto buon giorno mi dica
    hello good morning how can I help you
03 C: sono un autista dell'Atesina,
    I'm an Atesina coach driver
04 O: •sì
    •yes
05 C: •c'è stato un incidente qua ai Murazzi.
    •there's been an accident here at Murazzi
06 un furgone e: una macchina (.) Ford.
    a van and: a car (.) Ford
07 O: e hanno fatto un incidente? ma:: le persone quante sono?
    and they've had an accident? but:: how many people are there?

6. AC 030902 181321 ch03
00 O: centodiciotto
    one one eight
01 C: buongiorno vorrei chiamare perché la signora non sta bene.
    good morning, I'm calling because the lady's unwell
02 allora io sono assistente di una signora anziana
    I'm an assistant to an elderly lady
03 O: sì
    yes
04 C: lei non sta bene, dice che dolori nel torace e:
    she's not well, she says she's got chest pains and:
05 ha pressione bassissima 60 per 30 e abbiamo dato caffè però
    her blood pressure's really low 60 by 30 and we've given her
    coffee but
06 non ha funzionato •e-
    it didn't work •e-
07 O: •dove abitate?
    •what's your address?

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In extract 5 (line 3) the caller first self-presents as a coach driver for a public inter-urban transport service and then gives the reason for the call, namely a road accident in a certain locality (line 5: “there’s been an accident here at Murazzi”). In extract 6, the reason for the call is immediately given by the caller (the illness of an elderly person - line 1: “I’m calling because the lady’s unwell”) and immediately afterwards the caller self-identifies as the “assistant” to this elderly person (line 2).

These forms of categorical self-presentation are similar to those used in inter-organizational communications when they take place between representatives of institutions responsible for the management and organization of emergency services.¹ Consider the following extracts:

7. AC 030827 173108 ch02
 00 O: centodiciotto
 one one eight
 01 C: sì l’autostrada del Brennero
 yes the Brenner motorway
 02 O: mi dica
 go ahead
 03 C: allora chilometro centoquarantatrè sud,
 kilometre one hundred and forty three south
 04 abbiamo ricevuto chiamata di soccorso sanitario
 we’ve received a call for medical assistance

8. AC 03902 171350 ch02
 00 O: centodiciotto pronto
 one one eight hello
 01 C: salve è la polizia ferroviaria
 is that the railway police
 02 O: sì
 yes
 03 C: una cortesia siccome è venuto qua adesso un autista dell’Atesina e
 mi
 do me a favour because there’s an Atesina coach driver here and
 04 ha detto che siccome in piazza Dante c’è lì quel raduno di
 macchine
 he says that there’s this car rally in piazza Dante
 05 O: aspetta un attimo allora va là che ti passo il collega della zona,
 hang on a second, I’ll hand you over to my colleague for the zone
 06 sta in linea un attimo
 hold on for a second

These are anonymous forms of self-presentation, which do not involve identification but are based on recognition of significant organizational features.² As Zimmerman (1992, 452) writes, “categorical self-identification [...] places the call on a particular

footing (“my organization to your organization”), establishing a particular kind of warrant for C’s knowledge of – and interest in – the trouble they report”.³

The speaker’s categorical self-presentation exhibits an epistemic characteristic of the interaction (Whalen & Zimmerman 1990; Roth 2002; Heritage & Raymond 2005; Raymond & Heritage 2006) which is all the more significant in the case of callers who do not belong to an organization (see the above extracts 5 and 6). By using forms of self-identification, the callers state their position in regard to the events being reported. They furnish elements indicating in what capacity they are asking for assistance. They clarify the bases on which the account has been produced; they furnish proof of the reasonableness and recognizability of their requests; and they give reassurance as to the motives for the call. As Whalen and Zimmerman put it, by using a form of categorical auto-identification, the callers specify “how and why he or she came to know the trouble and knew it as a trouble” (Whalen & Zimmerman 1990, 472).⁴

We will return to this topic in the next section.

Section 2 analyses openings in which the caller's self-identification is realised by exhibiting membership to a specific category. It would be interesting to understand – already at this stage – in which cases this kind of categorical self-identification is used (as opposed to the previously described cases in which no self-identification occurs). Also, the author might be interested to look at what sequential moments "categorical self-identification" occurs (compare ex. 5 and 6: in the latter, the caller introduces the reason for the call *before* self-identifying; it is interesting that he should use a conditional verb form in this case "vorrei chiamare").

The author thus explains that "categorical self-identification" can be achieved a) by exhibiting some kind of social category (such as "assistente", "autista") or b) by using the name of the organisation on behalf of which the caller is calling (mainly in inter-organisational calls). Self-categorisations such as "autostrada del Brennero" or "polizia ferroviaria" differ from the former cases ("assistente", "autista") with regard to their "organisational inscription", as explains the author. The impression that

arises is that in certain kinds of inter-organisational calls (such as 118 and "polizia ferroviaria"; ex. 8) the callers exhibit some kind of common membership (something like "helping institutions") in the subsequent interaction. This is visible, for instance, in the use of "tu"-forms – whereas in "citizen-organisation" emergency calls it is probably more likely to have "lei". This is of course only an intuition that emerged from a very superficial look at the excerpts in this paper (including those in the notes).

3. Use of the name in the speaker's self-identification

Now consider the case where the caller self-identifies by using his/her own name.

Some examples follow:

9. AC 030820 150939 ch20
- 00 O: centodiciotto
one one eight
- 01 C: buongiorno sono Edoardo Pagina da Rovereto
good morning, this is Edoardo Pagina from Rovereto
- 02 O: prego?
sorry?
- 03 C: Edoardo Pagina da Rovereto, Borgosacco
Edoardo Pagina from Rovereto, Borgosacco
- 04 O: sì
yes
- 06 C: via zandonai due. le chiedevo urgentemente un'ambulanza per mio figlio
zandonai road number two. I urgently need an ambulance for my son
- 07 che ha ventiquattro anni, si chiama Iginò Pagina.
who's twenty-four years old, his name's Iginò Pagina
- [8 lines omitted]
- 16 O: mh. e:: cosa si tratta? che problemi ci sono?
mh. and:: what's going on? What's the problem?
- 17 C: mh ma: beh è un tossicodipendente,
mh ma: well, he's a drug addict
- 18 si è sbronzato di alcool nella pausa a mezzogiorno (--) mh
he got drunk during the midday break (--) mh
- 19 nascosto rispetto a me in casa.
behind my back here at home
- 20 adesso sono qui anche polizia e carabinieri che sono intervenuti
now the police and the carabinieri have come
- 21 anche loro però è più un caso medico se:=
and they also think it's a medical case if:=
10. AC 030827 180646 ch01
- 00 O: centodiciotto
one one eight
- 01 C: buonasera son Bondini Mina mio marito Rotilo Alberto non sta bene
good evening, this is Bondini Mina, my husband Rotilo Alberto is not well
- 02 *and he wants to be hospitalized*
- 03 O: prego?

04 C: *sorry?*
 mio marito Rotilo Alberto non sta bene e vorrebbe un ricovero
my husband Rotilo Alberto is unwell and wants to be hospitalized
 05 in psichiatria, l'ho trovato prima con un coltello in mano
in the psychiatric ward, I first found him holding a knife
 06 e poi con una lametta che voleva piantarsela,
and then a blade that he wanted to stab himself with
 07 il coltello voleva piantarselo nella pancia
he wanted to stab himself in the stomach with the knife
 08 O: eh ma e adesso dove si trova suo marito?
eh, but where's your husband now?

11.AC 030902 193030 ch03
 00 O: centodiciotto pronto
one one eight hello
 01 C: ah buonasera sono: Tondini di Vigolo Vattaro
ah good evening, this is: Tondini from Vigolo Vattaro
 02 O: sì mi dica
yes go ahead
 03 C: chiedo un'ambulanza per la zia che no:: non sta bene, ha cenato
I need an ambulance for my aunt who's:: not well, she had supper
 04 O: s:ì
y:es
 05 C: e dopo ha sentito dei forti dolori dietro la nuca e::
and afterwards she felt sharp pains at the back of her neck and::
 06 ha mal di schiena, ha il batticuore, no so come se dis "baticor"
she's got backache, she's got palpitations, I dunno how you say
"baticor"
 07 O: sì
yes
 08 C: e ha mal di stomaco, mal di pancia, dolori alla schiena
and she's got stomach-ache, pains in her back
 09 O: eh dolori alla schiena, ma eh soffriva altre volte?
eh pains in the back, but eh has she had them before?

In extract 9 the caller identifies himself by name and surname (PN+FN); in extract 10 by surname and name (FN+PN); and in extract 11 only by surname (FN). These are cases in which the callers use their names to identify themselves (Schegloff 2007). To be noted first is that the makers of emergency phone calls do not self-present using the personal name (PN) alone. The personal name is always coupled with the family name (PN+FN, FN+PN), or only the family name (FN) is used. What does the name (PN+FN, FN+PN, FN) 'do' in this type of interaction?

Firstly, we may first look at the 'orientations' exhibited by callers when they use their names for self-presentation. This is a case of "recipient designed" turn construction. Zimmerman (1992) gives two possible explanations for the fact that callers present themselves by name in emergency phone calls. The first is that "self-identification may reflect the supposition of some Cs that it is necessary to identify oneself when speaking to the authorities" (Zimmerman 1992, 449-450). The second

is that it may be a cooperative gesture: the caller may believe that his/her name is something that the answerer needs to know, so that the caller anticipates what may be requested from him/her. But in fact, as Zimmerman notes in the same passage, emergency centre operators do not need this information.⁵ But giving the name furnishes a footing (Goffman 1979; Levinson 1988; Zimmerman 1990) that guarantees the caller's seriousness.

Secondly, from the sequential point of view, and in regard to the structure of the conversational interaction, the speaker's self-presentation with his/her name (and the surname in various combinations) appears to delay the giving of the reason for the call (Zimmerman 1992, 450). Recall that the typical form of emergency phone calls abbreviates the opening sequence by 'specializing' it. The caller's first turn is not used for any interactional activity (not even identification of the speaker) besides giving the reason for the call. As Zimmerman (1992, 450) writes, "such early self-identification appears to achieve an extension of C's first turn".⁶ The presence of the name as self-identification therefore prefigures an extension of the sequence typical of the openings of emergency phone calls. Together with the name, there typically appear other elements of telephone openings between strangers, such as greetings (extract 9, line 1: "good morning, this is [name] [surname] from [town]"; extract 10, line 1: "good morning, this is [name] [surname]"; extract 11, line 1: "good evening, this is [last name] from [town]") which *extend* the initial sequence typical of emergency phone calls. Statement of the reason for the call is systematically moved forward, and it is no longer the caller's immediate action after checking that the channel is open. This pattern makes the openings of emergency phone calls (in which callers present themselves by name and surname) resemble those of ordinary phone calls between strangers.

The sequential extension that we have just seen is closely connected with a third distinctive feature of the context examined here. To say that, in emergency phone calls, the reason for the call is sequentially anticipated to the first possible turn is to say that that opportunity to state the problem which has occasioned the call and the request for assistance is maximized. One component of emergency situations is the

temporal constraint that operates on the social interaction. This time pressure is professionally exerted on the emergency operators, who must determine ‘what has happened’ and ‘where it has happened’ in the briefest possible time. But this time pressure is felt by the caller as well. This temporal characteristic of emergency communication is exhibited by the form and components of the first turn available to the caller: this first turn is usually entirely devoted to presentation of the problem and comprises none of the other components typical of the openings of telephone conversations. The more urgent the situation, the more the time constraint is visible in the form and components of the turn. Vice versa, the less urgent the phone call, the less this temporal compression is visible in the caller’s first turn.

This characteristic of the communication of emergency has similarities with the notion of ‘preference’ (Pomerantz 1984). Following the operator’s answer (“one one eight”) the caller’s turn may be an urgent or non-urgent request (i.e. relative to a ‘weak’ or uncertain emergency). If it is an urgent call, this characteristic will be immediately exhibited in the caller’s first turn, without hesitations or reserve. The caller’s first turn in an urgent phone call will (1) present the problem prompting the call, and (2) will do so immediately, with no space between the operator’s first turn and the problem-presentation turn. The caller seeks to maximize the possibility of introducing the problem. If instead the situation is not urgent, the caller’s first turn will have other characteristics. The first turn may delay presentation of the problem by comprising greetings, self-identification, a check that the correct number has been reached, etcetera. These forms *postpone* the significant action expected after the operator’s first turn, i.e. presentation of the problem, which does not take place immediately. This deferral in time prefigures a non-urgent situation, or one of ‘weak’ emergency. In cases of non-emergency or of ‘weak’ emergency, performance of the opening sequence of the phone call may take up several turns. As pointed out by Levinson (1993, p. 383), “CIT OR”.

The presence of the caller’s name in the opening sequence of emergency phone calls is therefore a marked form that prefigures a non-urgent situation of ‘weak’ or uncertain emergency.

The fourth aspect of the use of names in the opening sequence of emergency phone calls concerns what Whalen and Zimmerman (1990) term the ‘caller stance’, that is, “How callers construct their report so as to display, or render salient, the circumstantial basis of adequate knowledge. Another way of putting this question is to ask how callers, in their reporting, situate or align themselves with regard to the trouble in a manner that lends at least initial credibility to their description” (Whalen & Zimmerman 1990: 474).⁷ We have seen that categorical self-presentation can serve as a ‘guarantee’ furnished by the caller on his/request for assistance. Also the first name (and surname) can perform this function.

Categorical self-presentation assures construction of trust in the caller, but it does so on an anonymous basis. Self-presentation using the name and surname provides a personally-based fiduciary footing for the request for assistance. Use of the first name and surname individualizes the action on the basis of the caller’s personal presentation.⁸ It is as if the speaker, in renouncing anonymity, offers the most direct way to be traced. The speaker makes him/herself responsible for the request by offering a way in which s/he can be personally identified.

Whalen and Zimmerman (1990) suggest that the caller's stance “involves at least three components: (a) a categorization of the trouble [...]; (b) an ‘epistemological display’, that is, a demonstration in their talk of how they came to know of the trouble and categorize it as they have; and (c) the closely related matter of a display of their ‘relationship’ to the event (e.g., is it ‘their’ trouble or someone else’s?)” (Whalen & Zimmerman 1990: 474). In the cases discussed here, self-presentation with the name (PN+FN or FN alone) is connected to a second figure (Goffman 1979) on whose behalf the assistance is requested. Self-presentation with the name is therefore a sort of ‘bridge’ to the person on whose behalf the assistance is being requested. The person for whom the phone call is being made is related to the caller by kinship (aunt, child, husband) and is not a stranger (Schegloff 2007a). Self-presentation using the name (PN+FN or FN alone) is therefore a way to individualize not only the caller but also the ‘source of the trouble’. The person for whom the assistance is being requested may be presented in turn with his/her name

(PN+FN or FN alone). The name thus becomes a device with which to individualize the request for assistance.

Finally, besides identification, furnishing the name makes it possible to be recognized. This means that in the context examined here – emergency phone calls – presentation of the caller's name, and subsequently of the person for whom assistance is being requested, makes it possible for them to be recognized if they are known to the organization. In the cases above, these persons were a drug addict (extract 9), a psychiatric patient (extract 10), and an elderly woman (extract 11). Statement of the name can allow interactional recognition by the operator who takes the call, or organizational recognition, once the name has been fed into the computer system that collects all information about previous requests for the service.⁹

Recognition is a feature of inter-organizational phone calls or when the caller is a member of the organization being called. Consider these cases:

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12.AC 030827 170308 ch51
00 O: centodiciotto
      one one eight
01 C: son Pallotti
      this is Pallotti
02 O: salve dottore, Sandrina sono
      hi doctor, this is Sandrina
03 C: ciao
      hi
04 O: dica
      tell me
05 C: allora ho bisogno dell'ambulanza
      well I need an ambulance
06 O: sì
      yes
07 C: perché mi hanno avvertito per telefono adesso,
      because they've just told me by phone
08   una donna anziana caduta in bagno, trauma toracico a Grumes
      a women has fallen in her bathroom, thoracic trauma at Grumes

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13.AC 030830 175735 ch50
00 O: centodiciotto buongiorno
      one one eight good morning
01 C: ciao qua Vigili del Fuoco.
      hi, Fire Brigade here
02   siete al corrente dell' incidente sull'autostrada?
      are you aware of the accident on the motorway?
03 O: no, >Giuseppe, dove?
      no, Giuseppe, where?
04 C: ah e:: sull'autostrada: qua,
      ah e:: on the motorway: here
05   poco prima del casello della:: di San Michele
      just before the tollbooth at:: at San Michele

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In extract 12 (line 2: “hi doctor, this is Sandrina”), the emergency centre operator answers the caller’s self-identification using his name (family name) with an evident recognitional (professional title). In extract 13 (line 3: “no, Giuseppe, where?”) the operator answers the caller’s categorical self-identification with an evident (personal) recognitional.

A particular case of use of the name for recognition when a caller uses his/her name for self-identification is a repeat phone call by the same person to the same service.¹⁰

Consider these examples:

```

14. AC 030902 191701 ch02
00 O: centodiciotto
      one one eight
01 C: ah buonasera, senta io sono Toscani, avevo parlato con lei
      ah good evening, this is Toscani, I spoke to you before
02 O: sì sì sì. lei è in strada o fuori?
      yes yes yes, are you on the road or off?
03 C: c'è mia moglie in strada
      my wife's on the road
04 O: ok, come sta la signora?
      ok, how is she?

```

In extracts 9, 10 and 11, the operator’s turns are ambiguous as to the recognizability of the caller (or of the person on whose behalf the request for assistance is being made). Hence the caller’s formula of personal self-identification, through use of his/her name (PN + FN, FN + PN, or FN alone), offers an opportunity for recognition which may or may not be taken up by the operator. In this case, the use of the name can be regarded as a form of *anticipatory cooperation* by the caller.

The analyses presented in section 3 focus on the use of personal names in emergency call openings. The author's considerations are convincing and clearly show the practical differences between these ways of opening an emergency call and those described in the previous sections. From a linguistic point of view, it would be interesting to have a closer look on the three different kinds of "personal name formulation" that the author has identified (only FN, FN + PN, PN + FN).

4. Conclusions

Names have been studied in philosophy as reference devices (Searle 1958). If reference to the philosophical/logical tradition of name studies is introduced here, it should not be done by mentioning only Searle: this tradition is of course older and includes important work by Mill 1843, Frege 1892, Russell 1905, Kripke 1972 among others. However, there will certainly be a description of the philosophical/logical tradition in the introduction to the book.

In sociology, names have been studied in regard to symbolic and cultural aspects to do with history, gender, and social changes (Liebersohn 2000; Liebersohn & Bell 1992; Liebersohn, Dumais, and Baumann 2000; Ruane & Cerulo 2004; Wong).

Conversation analysis has studied names as part of common reference processes to a person in interaction (see Drew 2002; Goodwin 2003; Schegloff 2007a; Stivers 2007; Enfield and Stivers eds. 2007).

It is a little bit odd to mention the "name studies" in different fields in the conclusive part of the paper – these are typically things that can be found in the introductory sections.

In this paper I have examined how names are used for self-presentation in the particular context of emergency phone calls.

I have analysed in particular the social and interactional tasks performed using proper names. Four main features appear: names are preliminary to the main activity of reporting trouble; usually the trouble reported after the self-identification of the caller is a minor one; usually the reporting of trouble is made on behalf of some other person with whom there is a social relation: personal names act as “practical epistemological devices” that frame the stance of an individual to the event; names could be seen as a possible recognitionals (Sacks & Schegloff 1979).

One of the main consequences is that proper names act as individualization devices in emergency calls, contrary to the usually anonymous character of the interaction. Second, the use of names prefigures a cooperative stance on the part of the caller, in that the caller makes possible (personal or organizational) recognition by the call-taker.

The conclusion is a little bit short. It would be helpful if the author could sum up more systematically the findings of his paper – for instance by explaining the practical differences of three kinds of openings presented in the analytic part of the paper (no identification/categorical identification/name identification). Moreover, it might be useful to emphasize the fact that using personal names in this specific activity is not only a matter of self-identifying in the preferential way (i.e. through recognitional) but that it has very practical consequences. In this way, the author's paper will certainly be seen as an original contribution to the study of personal names in interaction (Indeed, in CA literature as well as in onomastic research "personal names" have largely been investigated merely as "person reference devices", whereas other aspects – such as the ones presented in this paper – have remained unexplored).

A final note: it would be helpful if the author could eliminate and/or shorten the transcript excerpts currently figuring in the footnotes.

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NOTES

04 *yes: Baristim speaking, which is a factory*
 in via Fornaci numero trentacinque
 in via Fornace, number thirty-five
 05 O: a Rovereto?
 in Rovereto?
 06 C: sì qua a Rovereto, vici- davanti alla Presstotal, se può
 venire
 yes, here in Rovereto, close-opposite Presstotal, if
 07 un'autoambulanza con urgenza che c'è un
 an ambulance can come urgently because there's
 08 ragazzo non mi è stato detto cosa che ha, ma è: urgente
 a lad, they haven't told me what he's got, but it's:
 urgent

In these cases, the caller's self-identification also immediately furnishes information about the type of assistance requested, as well as indication of the place where the event has happened. This is therefore a case in which just one formulation performing the predominant role of self-identifying the caller, at the same time performs two further functions strictly connected with emergency phone calls: stating 'what has happened' and 'where it has happened' (Fele 2007).

⁴ An interesting form of categorical self-identification, which often mixes the categorical formulation with individualization of the caller, is represented by calls from doctors to the operations centre.

Consider these examples:

4. AC 030829 190303 ch50
 00 O: centodiciotto
 one one eight
 01 C: pronto buonasera, sono il dottor Trottabene chiamo da
 Pinzolo.
 good evening, this is doctor Trottabene, I'm calling from
 Pinzolo
 02 posso dire a lei?
 can I tell it to you?
 03 O: sì
 yes
 04 C: allora ho:: un'urgenza di un'ambulanza per un sospetto
 ictus,
 well:: I urgently need an ambulance for a suspected
 ictus,
 05 non ancora ben stabilizzato di una signora di cui non ho i
 dati
 still not stabilized, of a woman whose details I haven't got
 06 perché era di passaggio vicino all'albergo e l'ho soccorsa
 because she was passing by the hotel, and I gave her first
 aid
 07 in un albergo
 in a hotel

5. AC 030830 193100 ch50
 00 O: centodiciotto
 one one eight
 01 C: ah buonasera sono il dottor Toni Tottigaran
 ah good evening, this is doctor Toni Tottigaran
 02 della Guardia Medica qua de Rovereto
 from the first-aid station here in Rovereto

03 O: sì
 yes
 04 C: siamo qua in casa della signora Nutti Verina
we're at the home of Mrs Nutti Verina
 05 O: sì
 yes
 06 C: via Sant'Antonio cinquantadue
via Sant'Antonio, fifty-two
 07 O: sì
 Yes

⁵ Taking names is one of the operator's tasks: but the names which the operator takes are those of the person to whom assistance is to be given (if possible), not of the caller. See this extract:

6. AC 030825 185440 ch02
 00 O: centodiciotto pronto
one one eight hello
 01 C: ah buonasera senta qua parla Spagnoli,
ah good evening, this is Spagnoli speaking
 02 di corso tre novembre diciotto,
from corso tre novembre, eighteen
 03 ci sarebbe mio marito che non sta bene
there's my husband who's not well
 04 da portare fuori, ho già telefonato
to be taken out, I've already phoned
 05 al reparto nefrologia •dialisi
the nephrology ward, dialysis
 06 O: •eh
 07 C: e siccome ha la pressione molto bassa e difficoltà di
 respiro
and because he's got very low blood pressure and breathing
difficulties
 08 O: m•h
 09 C: •mh
 10 O: voi non riuscite a portarlo con vostri mezzi?
could you take him in one of your vehicles
 11 C: no non cammina •no
no, he can't walk, no
 12 O: •ah non cammina. perché adesso al momento
ah he can't walk, because at the moment
 13 non ho qua macchine, sono uscite tutte per l'urgenza
I haven't got vehicles here, they're all out on emergency
calls
 14 C: perché è un dializzato e venite sempre
because he's a dialysis patient and you always come
 15 con l'ambulanza a prenderlo
with the ambulance to pick him up
 16 O: (----) allora da dove chiama? da dove da Trento?
 (----) *so where are you calling from? from Trento?*
 17 C: sì sì Trento, corso tre novembre diciot•to
yes yes Trento, corso tre novembre, eighteen
 18 O: •allora
 so
 19 corso tre novembre
corso tre novembre
 20 C: diciotto

-
- 21 O: *eighteen*
 come si chiama?
what's his name?
 22 C: Spagnoli Dino
Spagnoli Dino
 23 O: come?
sorry?
 24 C: Spagnoli
Spagnoli
 25 O: Dino
Dino
 26 C: Spagnoli Dino. con una elle
Spagnoli Dino, with one l
 27 O: sì. mi lascia un numero di telefono?
 yes. can you give me a phone number

⁶ As Zimmerman writes: “The delivery of first topic can also be deferred by second turn components that are hearably prefatory to deliver of reason-for-call, such as caller self-identification” (Zimmerman 1992, 48).

⁷ Similar to the notion of footing and of “caller stance” is the notion of “positioning” discussed in a socio-psychological constructivist paradigm. See Harré & van Langenhove (eds.) 1999; Harré & Moghaddam (eds.) 2003. For the linguistic notion of “position” see Leech (1974: 49-52).

⁸ See Leech (1974: 160): “proper names clearly incorporate the quality of uniqueness [...] most of them [incorporate] the feature SINGULAR”

⁹ Phone calls made with a certain frequency to the operations centre by people with psychiatric problems generally open with speaker self-identification using the proper name. See this extract:

7. AC 030825 203200 ch51
- 00 O: centodicotto pronto
one one eight hello
- 01 C: ascolti son la [cognome] Maria, non sto bene per niente,
listen I am [FN] Maria, I'm not feeling at all well,
- 02 ho rimesso anche stasera, ho ho sudo e mi fa male il petto
I've thrown up this evening as well, I'm sweating and I've got chest pains
- 03 O: eh. ma ha sentito la guardia medica Maria?
eh. but have you called the doctor in charge, Maria?

¹⁰ On repeat calls see Drew 1989; Shaw and Kitzinger 2007; Raymond and Zimmerman 2007.