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Title page

Title

Reason-for-calling invitations in Italian telephone calls: Action design and recipients' commitment

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Reason-for-calling invitations in Italian telephone calls

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Reason-for-calling invitations in Italian telephone calls: Action design and recipient commitment

Abstract

This paper investigates three main formats for reason-for-calling invitations in Italian telephone calls and shows that these invitation formats are designed to include an informing/descriptive component and a requesting component. These two elements are encoded and foregrounded differently in the design of each format, constructing diverse ways to name, refer to or describe the social occasion that recipients are invited to attend and different ways of requesting the invitees to state their commitment to participate. Our findings provide evidence that, by using one of the three formats, speakers are able to tailor the invitation to the different contextual conditions in which they and their recipients may be when the invitation is made, as well as to the circumstances of the social event, with the inviters often displaying caution in extending the invitation. This paper also investigates the types of constraints on the degree of commitment from the invitation recipient that each format entails, offering a contribution to study preference organization in first actions.

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Keywords: reason-for-calling invitations; action design; first actions; recipient's commitment; preference organization; Italian.

1. Introduction

Invitations are an important part of our social life. By inviting other people to partake in social activities and events, we give others access to our own life, home, spare time, habits, friends and acquaintances. These activities have an important ritual function in maintaining social relationships, a function that strongly depends on invitations being conceived and treated as gratuitous actions, made for the pleasure of sharing experiences and social occasions with others and, therefore, constructed as free from need or obligation. When we characterize invitations as based on this lack of obligation, we point out that they *do not intrinsically concern objects, assistance, services or information to be granted or offered*, as is the case with other social actions, such as offers, requests and other related actions (Curl

2006, Curl and Drew 2008, Rossi 2012, Drew and Couper-Kuhlen 2014). This aspect qualifies the act of inviting as radically different from requesting where the action is characterized as closely linked to a condition of need, as Drew and Couper-Kuhlen (2014: 2) state: "When we make a request we inherently and usually implicitly convey that we have need of something – we expose ourselves, as it were, to being seen as in wanting in some fashion". Although invitations can be produced under certain circumstances to alleviate the interlocutor's momentary distress (see Drew this issue, Bella and Moser this issue) or in return for a previous invitation (Bella 2009), in principle, we do not invite other people because we need their help or want to offer a service. Similarly, when accepting an invitation, we do not normally mean to offer any assistance or service; although specific types of offers, such as bringing a present, might be involved in accepting invitations.

However, similar to other actions that are undertaken to obtain a responsive behavior (i.e., 'first/initiating actions'), invitations inevitably exert some type of social obligations on those to whom we address them, more specifically concerning the responsive actions the invitations project in subsequent turns. As argued by Pomerantz and Heritage (2013: 215): "An invitation can be seen as a relational bid; accepting it ratifies the status of the relationship, and rejecting it is potentially failing to ratify it". In line with prior studies in Conversation Analysis (CA henceforth) research on preference related to responding actions (Pomerantz 1978 and 1984, Davidson 1984, Raymond 2003), acceptance and confirmation are also favored with invitations, while explicitly formulated rejection and disconfirmation are avoided or minimized. However, our analysis suggests that the fact that invitations are conveyed and understood as free from any pressure or need has consequences on the way in which the interaction develops. We will show that the gratuitous nature of invitations projects a range of possible answers, beyond the accept/reject option, as next relevant actions.

In this article, we explore preference principles in the formation of invitations by focusing on the way in which these actions are formed and delivered as *first actions*. The literature on invitations, and particularly that based on naturally occurring data and moreover in an Italian context, is quite scant. In the introductory essay of this issue, we provided a comprehensive literature review of the prior research on invitations (including the ethnography of speaking, intercultural pragmatics and other cognate fields) since the earlier philosophical discussions that followed the work of Austin (1962) and Searle (Searle 1969, 1976) on the conceptualization of speech acts and of their felicity conditions. For the specific purposes of this article, it is worth highlighting that despite the recent interest in studying first actions in CA, apart from a few sparse references to invitations in studies with a different

focus, little research has been conducted to date on the formation and delivery of the act of inviting. With rare exceptions, such as the work of Drew on the use of reportings in invitation sequences (1984, 1992),[1] the action of inviting in CA has focused more on the responses of the recipients (Davidson 1984, Barraja-Rohan 1994) and has been treated as akin and almost complementary to offers, requests, suggestions and proposals (Couper-Kuhlen 2014, Clayman and Heritage 2014; but see Drew 2013 for a detailed analysis of turn design in delivering casual and impromptu invitations as compared to those designed and deployed as reason-for-calling).

Drawing on previous studies on offers and requests (Curl 2006, Curl and Drew 2008, Rossi 2012, Couper-Kuhlen 2014, Drew and Couper Kuhlen 2014, Clayman and Heritage 2014), this paper sheds light on the implications of using specific formats in the delivery of invitations as associated with contingent interactional conditions, thereby contributing to CA research on preference organization of first/initiating actions; a less developed domain than that of second/responding actions (Pomerantz and Heritage 2013). The paper focuses on invitations produced in their homes by members of two families in calls to friends, acquaintances and other casual interlocutors that were specifically made for the purpose of inviting. Like other types of first/initiating actions, invitations can also be designed in different ways, according to whether the invitations are to be understood by the prospective invitees as taking up an autonomous and preconceived decision or, in contrast, as a consequence of some topic that has been previously mentioned. In the context of telephone calls, these two types of actions are identified as "reason-for-call" or as "interactionally generated" (Sacks 1992: Spring 1972, lecture 6; Drew 1984: 148, footnote 1; Curl 2006: 1259).

This article focuses on invitations of the first type and shows that speakers employ three main action formats in this position, including specific linguistic forms and larger patterns of turn design. Due to the initial position of the invitations in the call,[2] the contextual conditions underpinning the activity cannot be anchored in prior talk *within* that same conversation but must be contained or referred to in the construction of the action. Therefore, in delivering these types of invitations, speakers accomplish multiple actions at the same time, such as

[1] A more in-depth discussion of the work of Drew will be provided later in the section dedicated to the reason-for-calling invitation type 2.

[2] Not all the reason-for-calling invitations in our collection were deployed in the "anchor position" (Schegloff 1986, 117). Some of them occurred far from the call-opening sequence, and sometimes, the invitations came up even after other topics were discussed. These, however, were markedly introduced as "high priority" topics through the same markers used to introduce the first topic (e.g., "by the way" and "listen") (Curl 2006: 1259), followed by formulations of actions (e.g., "I wanted to ask" and "I just wanted to say").

providing the relevant information about the social event and the terms of the invitation (*informing*), describing the related circumstances that might be understood as relevant for future plans or events (*reporting,* Drew 1984), as well as soliciting the recipients' availability (*requesting*). As an outcome, speakers design turns that include and variously combine an *informative* component, in which future social occasions and their conditions are described (i.e., timing, place and other co-participants), and the *request* (implicit or explicit) of the recipients to state their participation commitment. The predominance of one or the other of these two components, together with the choice between a more compact or elaborated description of the conditions of the invitations and of the social event, and the selection of the affirmative or interrogative format, as well as other linguistic practices, all contribute to displaying that the orientation of the inviters to the invitation is contingent on the contextual conditions that are thus made relevant. These are, for instance, whether the event is restricted to the interlocutors or extended to other participants, whether the invitation is designed to be understood as preplanned or shortly conceived and, finally, whether the explicit commitment to participate is expected of the invitee or not.

We identified three main formats. In the first two formats, the inviter's orientation to the invitation is proposed to be contingent on *the speaker's interest*, wish or desire to share the sociable event. This is accomplished through two different uses of the affirmative format: compact and extended. The first (type 1: Inviters *inform* about the event and their wish to let recipients partake) takes the shape of a compact declarative single-unit turn, [We/I wanted to invite you to [X]],[3] in which the invitation and its eventual acceptance are proposed to satisfy the wish of the inviter. The second (type 2: Inviters *report* on the social event (+ solicit acceptance)) is an extended multi-unit turn in which the speaker produces elaborated reportings (Drew 1984) about future events, often introduced by formulations of decisions taken, reports on plans conceived, and so on. These reportings may or may not be followed by a request of the recipient to state his/her availability or willingness to participate or other actions relevant to acceptance. The format can be represented as follows: [I decided/I thought to do [X]] + ([How is your day?]), where round parentheses indicate that the second element is optional. Although foregrounding the affirmative format as a major resource, invitations of this second type might add the interrogative element to convey a more explicit request of the recipient. The third format (type 3: Inviters explicitly *request* the availability of recipients) uses the interrogative format to design a compact single-unit turn to propose that the inviter's

[3] Here, "X" refers to time, place, name of the event; not necessarily in this order, nor all explicitly stated.

orientation to the invitation is contingent more on *the recipient's will or ability* to take part in the future social event: [Why don't you come to [X]?]. This format more explicitly projects the alternative accept/reject response as a next action.

Our analysis shows that invitations of types 1 and 2 do not seem to be designed to maximize the production of an explicit and prompt acceptance. Speakers seem to behave in a very cautious way, almost avoiding the solicitation of any explicit response; thus, apparently characterizing the action of inviting as dispreferred. However, this situation is in contrast with the preference norms of the third format, which is designed to maximize acceptance. These findings argue against "treating all instances of a gross category as being subject to the same preference principles" (Pomerantz and Heritage 2013: 245) and instead suggest that preference organization for invitations responds to the different orientations of the speaker to a variety of interactional conditions. This article shows that reason-for-calling invitations are designed to project a more articulated inventory of responses than the alternative between acceptance and rejection, including the no-answer option. For this reason, we opted in favor of the notion of *recipients' commitment*, instead of the alternative between *acceptance*/*rejection*. We also demonstrate that the invitation format has a varied compelling force on responses according to whether the social event is portrayed as having a collective or private nature and whether the invitation is the outcome of a preplanned project or a more spontaneously conceived decision.

2. Data and method

This study is based on a corpus of 166 telephone calls, a majority of which were recorded by members of two family groups to friends, parents and acquaintances from 2001 to 2008. The recordings also included calls with casual outsiders, service providers and other institutional representatives. A third, much smaller, set of calls to friends was recorded by university students in 2008. We identified 27 calls containing invitations, of which 15 were designed and understood as the reason for the call and constitute the collection on which this article is based. The study uses the methodology of CA. An in-depth presentation of this analytical approach is illustrated in the introductory essay of this special issue. One cornerstone of CA is the sequential organization of interaction and the relevance of this order to understanding social actions (Schegloff 2007, Stivers 2013). We are also aware that invitations very rarely occur as isolated actions; invitations often initiate complex sequences (Barraja-Rohan 1994,

Traverso et al., this issue). In these cases, the initial occurrence might be repeated or reformulated during the same interaction or re-issued later in the same interaction after an initial rejection, in the context of making arrangements or for other contingent reasons. Therefore, our analysis necessarily considers the way in which an interaction develops *after* the delivery of the first occurrence of the invitation. However, it is worth highlighting that, without detracting from an emphasis on the complexity of the whole sequence, the focus of this study is on the turn design of invitations as *initiating actions* and on the way in which speakers construct a turn that sets up "contingencies of its own for what comes next, for how the recipient will respond" (Drew 2013: 131).

3. Reason-for-calling invitations and their formats

In this section, we describe the three main formats of reason-for-calling invitations in our corpus. We show how these formats methodically correlate with a specific stance conveyed by the inviter on the social occasion, on the invitation itself and its terms, on the recipients' projected ability or willingness to participate and, finally, on the orientation of the inviters to the expected commitment of the recipients. With regard to our characterization of types 1 (the informing format) and 3 (the requesting format), we refer to prior CA studies on requests, offers and their related actions, in which the selection of the declarative or interrogative format is viewed as formulating the speaker's or the recipient's interest/orientation in the nominated action, designing the activity as more "self" or "other-oriented" (Vynkuizen and Szymanski 2005: 96-101). Similarly, in her analysis of the interplay of grammar and social actions, Couper-Kuhlen (2014) refers to the recurrent lexico-syntactic patterns associated with requests, offers, proposals and suggestions. She contrasts "declarative" statements in which the speaker asserts a need, wish or desire (p. 639) with "queries concerning the recipient's ability or willingness to carry out a future action" (p. 639). Elaborating further along these lines, Clayman and Heritage (2014) refer to a set of practices in formulating the speaker's or the recipient's interest in the nominated action as designing the activity as more "self-attentive" ("I'd like to have you join.") or "other-attentive" ("Would you like to get out?") (pp. 69–60). With regard to type 2 (the reporting format), where the action of reporting is predominant in the design of the turn, we refer to the seminal study by Drew (1984), in which the potential of reportings in invitation sequences was first explored.

We organized this paper to present the three formats according to the level of commitment that each is designed to solicit from the recipients (from low to high) and the explicitness of the answer that the format requires.

3.1 Invitations type 1: The informing format

In our first group, invitations are shaped according to a very compact format in which speakers inform recipients about a future social occasion by stating their wish to have them partake it. As exemplified in extract 1, the action is packaged in one turn.

(1) [it-INV_PM.OD_4-5ott2002_02:57:07_Tomba1]

13	Paola:	↑no:: voleva-	>volevamo invitarvi	domani	sera	da?	Tomba.<	
		no want-2p Past Ind.	*want-2p Past Ind.*	*tomorrow*	*evening*	*at*	*Tomba*	
		no we want-	**wanted to invite you**	**tomorrow**	**evening**	**to**	**Tomba's**	

Rather than focusing on the recipients' interest for the event (Clayman and Heritage, 2014: pp. 59–60), the inviter expresses her desire to have the recipients partake in the future event by using the declarative "we wanted" element (Vynkuizen & Szymanski, 2005: p. 96). The action is delivered through a formulation in the affirmative construction; by nominating the action that is accomplished ("to invite") Paola conveys to Daniele the implicit requesting component to participate.[4] Furthermore, the initial "we wanted" element displays the invitation as the result of the speaker's decision and, thus, is conceived independently.[5] The third element consists in the nominated future social occasion, here conveyed by the name of the restaurant (Tomba). This construction proposes the invitation as the result of a previous decision, consisting in the announcement of the speaker's design to have the recipient to participate to the future sociable event and, as such, as a self-attentive action (Clayman and Heritage 2014: 60).

As the analysis of the following fragments shows, speakers convey a particular stance on the invitation with this format whereby their wish to have the recipients present in a social occasion is displayed as a sufficient condition for the invitation to be issued, with little

[4] With the "requesting component," we refer here to clauses or formulations in which the participation of the recipients to the nominated future activity or event is explicitly mentioned, implicitly referred to or made relevant by means of checking on the recipients' availability for the day ('Are you up to it?' or 'How is your day?') or of offering conditional statements ('if you would like to come').

[5] The "we wanted" element has a double function: it embodies a modal function, mitigating the assertive potential of the invitation and, at the same time, it also works as a performative verb, whereby the speaker conveys her actual will to invite the recipient.

concern about the recipients' contextual conditions. This characterisation is confirmed by the fact that any reference to the recipient's willingness, ability or interest to take part in the social occasion is not explicitly included in the format with which the action is launched, but the reference is delivered later in a separate turn and may sometimes even be missing. This type of invitation mainly consists of an announcement of the speaker's decision to invite the recipient to the event, nominated and/or described. Fragments 2–5 illustrate this format.

In the fragment below, Paola calls Manu, her sister, at home. Her brother-in-law, Daniele, answers the phone.

(2) [it-INV_PM.OD_4-5ott2002_02:57:07_Tomba1]

1			((*telephone rings*))
2		Daniele:	sì,= pronto?
			yes hello
3		Paola:	eh::: Daniele son la Paːola;
			eh Daniele be-1s Pres Ind the Paola
			eh Daniele it's Paola
4		Daniele:	ciaːo Pahohla
			hey Pahohla
5		Paola:	cia::=ciao Daniele (.) [com'andiamo?
			hey hey Daniele how go-1p Pres Ind
			hey hey Daniele how are things going?
6		Daniele:	[c-
			ho-[6]
7		Daniele:	bene e voːi
			well and you-p
			fine and you
8		Paola:	.h ↑abbastanza bene grazie.
			.h quite good thanks
9		Daniele:	°bene dai[7] mi fa piacere° [vuoi la Manu?
			good give-2s Imp. to me make-3s pleasure want-2sPres Ind the Manu
			good (INTENS) good to hear do you want to talk to Manu
10	→	Paola:	[voleva-
			want-1p Past. Ind.
			we want-
11		Paola:	eː:h?
			eh
12		Daniele:	vuo'la Manuela?
			want-2sPres Ind the Manuela
			d'you want Manuela
13	→	Paola:	↑no:: voleva- >volevamo invitarvi domani sera
			no want-2p Past Ind. want-2p Past Ind. invite you-p tomorrow evening
			no we want- wanted to invite you tomorrow evening
14			da? Tomba.<

[6] The Italian 'How are you?' is *Come va*? or *Come andiamo*? or *Come stai*?. They all begin with the interrogative adverb come/'how'. Here, Daniele produces only the first consonant sound of the word before self-interrupting, finding himself in overlap with Paola who continues her turn in line 5.

[7]The expression *dai* in Italian is literally the second person singular of the verb 'to give' in the imperative mood. It is frequently used with many functions as a discourse marker (Pauletto & Fatigante 2015). Here, pronounced with *bene*, it aligns with the *abbastanza bene* (l.8), which is a downgraded form of *bene* (l.7) and it is used to close down the how-are-you sequence.

		to Tomba's
15		(1.2)
16	Daniele:	doma:ni se:ra?
		tomorrow evening
17	Paola:	↑eh
		eh
18		(1.4)
19	Daniele:	[m::::.
		m::::
20	Paola:	[come siete messi.
		how are-2p Pres Ind. put
		are you up for it?

The opening of the call has the standard sequential development (Schegloff 1986), with Paola beginning the invitation in line 10 after the "how are you" sequences. Since Paola does not introduce the reason for the call at the standard "anchor position" (line 8, at the end of the "how are you" exchange), Daniele anticipates it by asking if she wants to talk to Manu[8]. Thus, Daniele finds himself in overlap with Paola, who delivers the invitation. This generates the repair sequence in lines 11–12. After having disconfirmed Daniele's assumption, Paola re-delivers the invitation (l.13).

Paola delivers the invitation in a straightforward manner, according to the features described above. Included in the construction are details concerning the place ("Tomba" is the name of the restaurant) and the time ("tomorrow evening") of the event: the real nature of the main activity involved in it remaining implied.[9] In this way, by referring to the dinner by the name of the restaurant, Paola shows how she relies on shared knowledge. Furthermore, it can be noticed that Paola withholds any reformulation of the invitation when Daniele's behaviour shows that he may have difficulty accepting the invitation, as indicated by the 1.2-second pause (Jefferson 1988) in line 15 and by the fact that he checks the date and time of the dinner. Despite these indications, Paola merely confirms the terms of the invitation (l.17).[10] In addition, she does not provide any alternative options (Davidson 1984) when another extended pause occurs in line 18. Rather than reformulating the terms of the invitation, Paola asks Daniele about their whereabouts (and, thus, their availability) for the day in line 20. In this way, she solicits Daniele to explain the problems related to their

[8] Note that Daniele made a previous attempt to pre-empt Paola's "how are you" turn (line 6) and to acquire the "anchor position" dedicated to introducing the first topic (see Schegloff 1986 for the description of this practice). He then succeeds in line 9. By asking Paola whether or not she wants to talk to her sister, he displays his understanding of the call as one of the habitualised calls between Paola and her sister, Manu (Drew & Chilton 2000).

[9] On the relevant work that formulations of places and actions accomplish in interaction, see Sacks 1992, Lectures 23 and 26 April, Spring 1971, Drew 1992, and Jefferson 1986.

[10] In Italian, the particle eh can be used as 'yes'.

eventual participation while displaying that the terms of the invitation are not subject to change and are not negotiable.

The example in the next fragment comes from the same call. After having reported on the arrangements for the following day, Daniele concludes with a positive prediction and passes the call to Manu.

(3) [it-INV_PM.OD_4-5ott2002_02:57:07_Tomba2]

1		Manu:	pronto?
			hello
2		Paola:	ciao Ma[nu
			hey Manu (DIM.)
3		Manu:	[↑ciao Pa:ola::
			hey Paola
4	→	Paola:	ciao. [voleva-
			hey want-2p Past Ind
			hi we want-
5		Manu:	[↑alo::ra e:::h,
			so eh
6		Paola:	e- co- tutto be:ne?
			e- wh- all well
			e wh- is everything alright
7		Manu:	insomma, uhuhu
			well uhuhu

((An extended complaint sequence follows before the invitation is resumed.))

The opening of the interaction is reduced, owing to the prior exchange with Daniele. The "how are yous" are missing, and Paola moves to make the invitation soon after the greetings (l.4). However, she finds herself in overlap with Manu, who evidently treats the call as a "habitualised call"[11] with her sister, as shown by the two phatic markers in line 5. However, Manu's prosody is taken by Paola as indicating incipient trouble talk and done to solicit further enquiry (l.6). Although the conversation follows a different path and the invitation is suspended, as indicated in Paola's self-repair in l.l.4 (Schegloff, Sacks and Jefferson 1977), it is clear from the part that is produced that Paola is about to use the "I wanted to invite you to [X]" format.[12]

What is significant here is that, despite the fact that Daniele describes the circumstances of the invitation as not auspicious (previous fragment), Paola chooses the same construction. This shows that, with the "I wanted to invite you to [X]" format, speakers display that eventual contingencies in the current life of the recipients are not so determinant for the

[11] See footnote 8.

[12] We found other instances in which, after a first production of the invitation, the call is passed over to another recipient, but the invitation is delivered with the same format as the prior occurrence. Thus, it is treated as a *new first*.

invitation to be made. This consequently casts the social event as a non-negotiable activity;[13] one in which the recipients are invited to join in, but whose terms they cannot change. The action is cast as simply a matter of "take it or leave it." It is something to inform recipients about and something for them to adjust to in their schedule; something on which they do not have control. Inviters do not produce subsequent versions of the invitation in which the terms of the event are modified to deal with potential rejections (Davidson 1984). For these reasons, we can define this format as accepting as response a low commitment from the recipient.

To provide further evidence for this lack of control on the terms of the invitation by the invitees, we focus on the part of the call where Daniele repeatedly solicits Paola to offer an account for the invitation (i.e., a more specific characterisation of the dinner as a social event [arrowed lines]) before handing the call over to Manu.[14]

(4) [it-INV_PM.OD_4-5ott2002_02:57:07_Tomba1]

31		Daniele:	qui'di domani sera, n::on ↑so a che ora veniamo
			so tomorrow evening not know-1s Pres Ind what time come-2p Pres Ind
			so tomorrow evening I don't know what time we will be back
32			a casa ma direi presto sì dovremo riuscirci
			at home *but say-1s Cond early yes shall-2p Cond make it*
			home but I would say early yes we might be able to make it
33		Paola:	.hh m'insomma se voi avete [voglia di veni:re? noi pens-
			.hh b'well if you-2p Pres Ind have will to come we thin-
			.hh b'well if you feel like coming we thin-
34	→	Daniele:	[co'a si festeggia.
			what is to celebrate Pres Ind (Impers.)
			what do we celebrate
35		Paola:	pensavamo di andarci attorno alle otto:. [ci andiamo io Marco=
			think-2p Past to go there around to eight there go-2pPres Ind I Marco
			thought to go there around eight it's me Marco
36	→	Daniele:	[cosa si festeggia
			what is to celebrate Pres Ind (Impers.)
			what do we celebrate
37		Paola:	=e sua mamma andiamo lì da Tomba.
			and his mom go-2pPres Ind there at Tomba
			and his mom we're going there to Tomba's
38	→	Daniele:	cosa si festeggia.
			what is to celebrate Pres Ind (Impers.)
			what do we celebrate
39		Paola:	n:-n- mo' nie:n[te
			n n wel'nothing

[13] We do not have evidence of the motives as to why these events are portrayed as not negotiable. We will attempt an explanation later based on the analysis of the way in which the conversation unfolds (frag. 4).

[14] It is worth recalling that, in offering the invitation, Paola referred to the type of social occasion by naming a restaurant, implying an invitation to dinner. As argued by Sacks (1992, vol.2: p. 367–369, lecture 23, April 1971) (albeit the implicit reference being used here), by implying that the invitation to go out to "dinner," Paola uses a "first-preference invitation." This characterisation, however, like any other formulation, is only "partial" (Drew 1992: p. 498), overshadowing other eventual activities that will take place during the dinner or the presence of other participants. These other non-mentioned terms of the invitation seem to be the focus of Daniele's question (extract 4).

40	Daniele:	[niente. così.
		nothing just that
41	Paola:	co↑ sì:::, m::=una serata::, allora se voi volevate veni:re::,
		just that an evening so if you will-2p Past come
		just that m an evening so if you'd feel like coming
42	Daniele:	m::. aspe- aspetta un secondo Paola.
		m wai- wait Imp. a second Paola
		m wai- wait a second Paola
43	Paola:	va bene.
		alright

(Daniele fetches Manuela to the phone)

When Daniele asks the same question three times (i.e., "What do we celebrate?"), he indirectly forecasts their (his and Manu's) participation and displays his understanding of the invitation as involving a special occasion. However, this implication is not confirmed by Paola, who answers only the third time. She minimises the event ("nothing just that an evening," ll.40–41), characterising it as just a routine family dinner at a restaurant. It can be argued that this characterisation of the social occasion can be considered accountable for the low-commitment stance, which is implied in the invitation. Paola's position on the recipients' participation is also conveyed in her reformulation of the invitation, starting in l.33.[15] She provides the details of the dinner (i.e., time, participants and place) and constructs the recipients' participation as a matter that is "up to them" to decide ("hh b'well if you feel like coming", l. 33; "so if you'd feel like coming," l.41), without pursuing a definitive response. Note that Paola has mentioned the participation of another family member (l.35-37: "me Marco and his mom we're going there to Tomba"). In this way, the social event is implicitly portrayed as one in which Daniele and Manu are only "secondary" co-participants and, more crucially, whose eventual rejection would not put the event at risk. Thus, the activity at the chore of the invitation that is formatted in this way seems to be conveyed as not negotiable not only because preplanned, but also because it concerns other people than the caller and the called and, as such, it is presented as a *collective* invitation.

The example in the next fragment has the same format and encodes a similar stance, although it differs from the previous ones for its institutional character. The caller is an employee of a cultural association, inviting Paola to attend a meeting with a famous journalist.

(5) [it-INV_PM.AV_ott2007(2.15_2.51)_Cultural Association]

[15] Note that with this reformulation, Paola does not change the terms of the event. This second version is also produced much later, *after* Daniele has fully elaborated on another commitment for the day. Thus, this reformulation is completely different from the type of "subsequent versions" to invitations explored by Davidson (1984).

1		Paola:	pron^toho?
			hello
2		Empl:	.hh >pronto<=buonasera sono:: (.) Diana Siani dell' Associazione
			.hh hello good evening be-1s Pres Ind Diana Siani of the Association
			.hh hello good evening it's Diana Siani of the Cultural
3			culturale Casa delle Ide[e,
			cultural Casa delle Idee
			association Casa delle Idee
4		Paola:	[s:ì:: <buongiorno
			yes good day
			yes good morning
5		Empl:	parlo con la signora Paola?
			speak-1s Pres Ind with the Ms. Paola
			am I speaking to Ms Paola
6		Paola:	sì.
			yes
7			(.)
8	→	Empl:	.h perfetto. volevo invitarla all'incontro di questa se:ra,
			.h perfect want-1s Past Ind invite you-s (FORM.) at the meeting of this evening
			.h perfect I'd like to invite you to this evening meeting
9		Paola:	.h sì
			.h yes
10		Empl:	con Sergio Zavoli.
			with Sergio Zavoli
11		Paola:	sì sì <aveva:te lasciato il messa:ggio ieri?
			yes yes leave-2p Past Ind the message yesterday
			yes yes did you leave the message yesterday
12			(0.6)
13		Empl:	.hh e:::::hm[::-
			.hh e:::::hm::
14		Paola:	[>ho trovato il messaggio in segreteria telefonica
			find-1s Past Ind the message in answering machine
			I found the message in the answering machine
15			i[:eri per-
			yesterday ab[16]-
16		Empl:	[ieri no magari era di qualche giorno fa
			yesterday no perhaps (IT) be-3s Past Ind of some day ago
			yesterday no perhaps it was some days ago
17			(.)
18		Paola:	↑mh ah beh può da:rsi. sì<sì comunque parlava proprio di
			mh ah well (IT) could be yes yes anyway talk-3s Past Ind precisely of
			mh ah well it could be yes yes anyway it mentioned precisely about
19			Sergio Zavoli.
			Sergio Zavoli
20			(0.2)

The institutional nature of the interaction is displayed by how the caller self-identifies with the nominated institution (ll. 2–3) and solicits the called party to confirm her identity (l.5). The invitation is in the same format as those found in the prior examples. The fact that, in this case, the format 'I wanted to invite you to X' is designed more to inform the recipient that

[16] The Italian preposition *per* could be interpreted here as 'about' in the sentence, "I found the message about the …."

she is admitted to the event, rather than to show her that the inviter would be pleased to have her partake in the social occasion casts also the ordinary invitations in the prior examples as having a rather impersonal flavour.

Indeed, Paola aligns to the informative side of the action, treating it as news telling. She claims to be already informed about the event and checks on whether or not the call concerns the meeting she knows about (ll.11–19). However, her concern about clarifying the details of the invitation (i.e., whether or not the event is the same that she knows about) shows that she treats the information as consequential for her eventual participation, thus treating the call as having other purposes than mere news telling (Drew 1984).[17]

This example is similar to the previous ones. The inviter expects low commitment on the recipient's acceptance. Although, in the family dinner examples (1-4), the participants make explicit reference to the recipients' eventual participation, this occurs much later in the call (transcript not shown); on the other hand, in example 5, the call reaches a conclusion without any reference by both parties to Paola's acceptance.[18] This aspect can be accounted for by the fact that, owing to the institutional nature of the invitation, by not delivering any question about the availability of the invitee, the inviter conveys that she cannot modify the terms of the event to comply with the invitee's circumstances. Also in the family dinner example the inviter displays that she was not prepared to change the terms of the social occasion to suit Daniele; both because it was no special occasion and because Daniele and Manu were not the "primary" co-participants and therefore their rejection would not jeopardise the event. Therefore, we can claim that, in both calls, the action is designed to display the invitation to a *collective event* and, as such, as one in which other people are involved, not only the participants to the call. The invitation is therefore designed as a matter of "take it or leave it" and one in which it is the recipient who eventually has to adapt to the terms of the invitation.

3.2 Invitations type 2: The reporting format

[17] This leads us to argue that this is an example of a free-participation institutional invitation.

[18] The absence of any acceptance-/rejection-relevant actions might also be taken as evidence that the action accomplished is not an invitation. With respect to this, two observations can be raised. First, as we have mentioned, although the invitation is made by an association to a single private person and it involves a public event, the occasion can still be characterized as a social event. Second, it is precisely the institutional character of the event and it being *public*, *collective* and *pre-organised* that might be accountable for designing the invitation with a different orientation on the expected answer and on the absence of any request to display a commitment to participate.

In the reporting format that characterises the second type of invitations in our corpus, the informing and requesting components are blended to produce a different balance, as compared to the prior format type. First, the future event is described through *extended reportings* rather than through briefly naming or referring to it, as we have seen in the examples of the first set. Another difference is that references to the recipients' willingness/ability to participate, when produced, are *part of* the extended turn construction of the invitation. In the examples of the previous set, by contrast, the inviters' references to the recipients' circumstances that might allow or prevent their participation are implicitly embodied in the declarative turn through the use of the verb 'to invite'; any explicit request of the recipients' availability is delayed and, sometimes, even missing.

We identified three main elements in the construction of the invitations of this set. First, the invitation is introduced by a *formulation of the action* that accounts for the ensuing talk, such as "I have noticed," "I have decided" and "I wanted to say." This is followed by *a report* of a certain extent in which the inviter accounts for the terms of the social occasion and of the circumstances of the invitation. Finally, the sequence might end with the third component, designed to make relevant the *recipients' position about his/her commitment, in terms of acceptance or rejection* (frag. 6–9). The reporting component occupies the larger part of the turn, it develops across many turn units and can be formulated in different ways. For instance, it can be shaped as an announcement of decisions that have been taken about future events, accounts for the decision based on previous commitments (ex. 6: "I decided to do something today with Sandra because so tomorrow…."), informings about arrangements taken (ex. 8: "I heard Antonella and we arranged that we go for a pizza at seven"), noticings (ex. 9: "I have noticed one thing…").

The use of reportings in invitation sequences has been analysed first by Drew (1984). Drew has identified some properties of reportings and their sequential consequences for recipients in invitation sequences, with regards to both activities: doing and responding to an invitation (i.e., deferring or rejecting). With reference to reportings done by the inviters, he shows that, in this way, speakers portray the invitation as arising from the reported circumstances and/or as the result of prior decisions (pp. 139–140). Drew argues that through reportings inviters mitigate a possible intrusiveness associated with the invitation (ibid. p. 140), and they put recipients in the position of having themselves "to determine and address their coparticipation in the events" (p. 143). According to Drew, recipients aligns to the reporting as implying invitations by avoiding to treat the reporting as a news announcement

and by withholding any appreciation. By doing these two things, the recipients display their orientation to the announcement as something done for purposes other than simple news telling. Second and alternatively, the recipients might exploit the anticipatory potential of the reportings and perform pre-invitation actions.[19]

The invitation in the next fragment is about a birthday party organised by Carla for her seven-year-old daughter, Sandra. She calls her friend, Alessandra. Alessandra's husband, Giacomo, answers the phone. It is worth knowing that one week before the party had to be cancelled because Sandra fell ill.

(6) it-INV_PM.BE_6giugno2008_Doing qualcosina[20] today I]

1			((*telephone rings*))
2		Giacomo:	pronto?
			hello
3		Carla:	buongiorno Giacomo, (0.4) °mth° la Carlona[21] sono.
			good morning Giacomo mth the big Carla be-1s Pres Ind
			good morning Giacomo mth it's big Carla
4		Giacomo:	si[gnora i miei omaggi[22]
			madam my respects
5	→	Carla:	[ciahahahao .hhhh ascolta tesoro io:::, ho deciso di far
			ciao .hhhh listen-2s Imp *darling decide-1s Past Ind to do*
			ciao .hhhh listen my dear I decided to do
6			qualcosina oggi con la Sandra, perché:: così domani::,
			something today with Sandra because so tomorrow
7			la porto da mia mamma:=e si fa
			her take-1s Pres Ind *to my mum and her* (REFLEX) *make-3p Pres Ind*
			I take her to my mum and she can have
8			una settimana di convalescenza dai no[nni. .hh voi come=
			a week *of convalescence at the grandparents .hh you-2p how*
			a week of convalescence at her grandparents .hh you how
9		Giacomo:	[°certo°
			sure
10		Carla:	=siete organizza::ti <so che l'Ale
			be-2p Pres Ind organise *know-1s Pres Ind that the Ale* (dimin.)
			is your day I heard that Ale
11			non sta tanto be::ne.
			not stay-3s Pres Ind very well
			isn't very well
12		Giacomo:	infatti
			exactly

As in the majority of the calls in our corpus, also the opening sequence of this one is reduced (Drew and Chilton 2000, Galatolo et al., 2016). This is shown by the fact that Carla moves to introducing the reason for the call (l.5) soon after the greeting/identification

[19] These cases are reported and analysed in a study by Drew (1984) as examples 11 and 12, pp. 141–142.
[20] The expression *qualcosina*/'something' is a diminutive term of *qualcosa*/'something'.
[21] *Carlona* is augmentative for *Carla*, corresponding to something like 'big Carla'.
[22] It is a very formal greeting and, as such, is produced as designedly inapposite here and is used to convey humour and playfulness, as indicated by Carla's laughter (l.5).

sequences.[23] The in-breath and the introductory marker ("listen"),[24] accompanied by the address term, projects that the reason for calling is about to be delivered. Carla then begins to launch the invitation sequence by announcing that her daughter's birthday party (here referred to as *qualcosina*) is for that same day.

The invitation sequence is designed according to the three-part format outlined above. In line 5, she begins her report with (i) a formulation of the named action ("I decided", l.5) that introduces (ii) the nominated event and the account for its bad timing ("to do something today with Sandra because so tomorrow…", l.6). The report ends with (iii) a request for information about the recipients' availability ("How is your day? I heard that Ale isn't very well.", ll.10-11).

Several features in her reporting concur to present Carla's cautious stance on the invitation, which ends in portraying the party as a trivial occasion and the recipients' acceptance as unlikely. First, the event is not nominated with *the proper formulation that designates the specific social event* (or the birthday party),[25] but it is referred to with a generic and diminutive term (*qualcosina*).[26] The choice of this term has many implications. First, because it is nonspecific, it shows that Carla relies on common knowledge about the topic. Second, with the diminutive version, Carla describes the party as a very informal social event (either one of those 'dear little things' and/or negligible events). Then, she also accounts for the timing ("today"), highlighting its potentially bad timing for the recipients. Fourth, the reasons she mentions are a sort of "extenuating circumstances": the daughter is still convalescing, and this arrangement allows Carla to travel to her parents the following day, leaving Sandra there for the week.[27] The reporting is designed in such a way as to mitigate Carla's responsibility for the invitation, whose terms are not negotiable and for

[23] It is worth noticing here that participants display great familiarity. Not only does Carla recognise Giacomo just by his voice, but she also uses a self-derogatory name for herself (*Carlona*) and a term of endearment to address Giacomo (*tesoro*/'darling'). Giacomo aligns to this stance; he adds irony by greeting her back with an exaggerated deferential expression (l.4).

[24] As argued by Curl (2006: 1260), the production of "listen" or other similar markers (e.g., "so" and "by the way,") to introduce the invitation sequence is linked to the position of the invitation as the reason for calling, thus serving to provide an account for making the call rather than being associated to a specific category of action. For this reason, we will not elaborate further on that.

[25] In his lecture on April 23, 1972, "Characterizing an event" (1992, Vol.2, pp. 367–369), Sacks argues that in invitations, speakers do not choose the terms of an invitation "to fully describe what you're inviting the person for." He adds that, although all formulations are partial descriptions of all the activities that will take place during that event, "there is a way of selecting from among partial formulations which says 'select first preference' such that if the partial formulation you select is not first preference, then you're indicating that a first preference is not present" (p. 368). Here, by selecting the formulation "doing *qualcosina*"' Carla indicates that the first preference formulation for that event (i.e., "birthday party") is absent and thus "relevantly" absent.

[26] In Italian, *-ino* and *-ina* are diminutive suffixes.

[27] Carla's parents do not live too far away, but they are still at a distance that requires a car trip of a couple of hours.

which she has no choice. Furthermore, by later describing the event as nothing so gratifying (*qualcosina*),[28] she provides Giacomo with reasons for potential rejection.

Another crucial constructional aspect concerns the request to Giacomo to state his own and his wife Ale's commitment to go to the party. By latching "I heard that Ale isn't very well" directly after her request to know about Giacomo and Ale's plans for the day ("How is your day?"), Carla lays the ground for two different options. On the one hand, she provides Giacomo with the possibility to "sequentially delete" (Jefferson 1978: 229; Jefferson 1986: 159) the request and to respond only to the most contiguous statement (Sacks 1987). Indeed, in line 12 Giacomo confirms the information about Ale's health condition without elaborating on the consequences that these might have on their attendance at the party. Therefore, he withholds his response to the invitation. On the other hand, by latching her claim to know about Ale's condition to the request on whether or not they would be able to participate, Carla provides Giacomo with a possible reason for rejection, which he does not exploit.

Carla delivers the whole sequence as one single unit, offering Giacomo very few opportunities to respond. Her speech is rather speedy, without gaps; she also uses latching and a rush-through (Schegloff 1982, Walker 2003) before the short in-breath that precedes the request to know the recipients' whereabouts (l.10). During Carla's elaborated turn, Giacomo briefly acknowledges the circumstances reported in line 9. With *certo*/'sure',[29] he agrees with the account provided. He also confirms Carla's knowledge about Ale's condition (l.12). At the same time, he withholds any reference to possible implications concerning their attendance at the party. Later, Giacomo also avoids committing when Carla makes a further enquiry, as shown below:

(7) [it-INV_PM.BE_6giugno2008_Doing qualcosina today II]

17		Giacomo:	eh:: mo:,[30] te la[31] passo.
			eh now to you-s her pass-1sPres Ind
			eh, now, I hand you over to her.
18	→	Carla:	eh, tu come sei messo, non avrai voglia di casino.[32]
			eh you-s how be put-2s Pres Ind not have 2s-Fut Ind wish of mess
			eh, you, what are you up to? I bet you don't fancy chaos.
19		Giacomo:	io devo fare un lavoretto[33]

[28] Also, Carla later insists on this by characterizing the event as "annoying" (frag. 7, l.18).
[29] This word is often used in Italian interaction as an acknowledgement token. As compared to other similar continuers ('mhm' and *sì*/ 'yes'), owing to its semantic meaning, *certo*/ 'sure' can be used to convey a stronger commitment to a statement, adding an affiliative stance to its acknowledgement function. However, to our knowledge, there is no research done on this phenomenon in Italian.
[30] Dialectal expression for *adesso*/'now'.
[31] *La* is personal pronoun singular and feminine and stands for Ale.
[32] Literally, "whorehouse" means chaos, mess, or confusion.
[33] *Lavoretto* is the diminutive form of *lavoro*. Here it means 'work of little effort'.

		I must make a work (DIM)
		I have some stuff to do.
20	Carla:	bravo lavora eh ehe eh [ehe .hhhh
		good work-2s Pres Ind eh ehe eh ehe .hhhh
		well done, you work, eh ehe eh ehe .hhhh
21	Giacomo:	[°drammatico°
		dramatic
22	Carla:	di quelli drammatici? .hh ehe ehe ehe .hhh dài [va là[34]
		of those dramatic .hh ehe ehe ehe .hhh come on (IDIOMATIC)
		one of those dramatic things, hh ehe ehe ehe .hhh come on. (IDIOMATIC)
23	Giacomo:	[va beh'
		alright
24		comunque [si vedrà
		anyway Imp. Pron see-3s Fut Ind
		anyway we'll see.
25	Carla:	[vedi,
		see-2sPres Ind
		you'll see.
26	Giacomo:	eh.
		eh
27	Carla:	vedi te.
		see-2s Pres Ind you (Pron Subj)
		you'll see yourself.
28	Giacomo:	>ci[ao<
		bye
29	Carla:	[cia::o.
		bye

When the call is about to be handed over to Ale, Giacomo does not provide any definitive response in terms of his participation, opting to withhold any commitment (l.24: "Anyway, we'll see."). Carla does not pursue any further statement: she does not produce any subsequent version of the invitation, but she does acknowledge Giacomo's position by repeating part of his turn (l.25) and reformulating it (l.27). The way in which both practices (the reporting and the request about the recipient's availability) are constructed conveys Carla's caution in performing the action, as well as her belief that her friends' participation is unlikely.

In the next fragment, Paola calls her husband Marco at work. In line 7, she begins her turn by answering Marco's enquiry about her previous miscall.

(8) [it-INV_PM.0E_ nov2007(8.50-10.02)_Invitation to join]

(*The opening sequence occupies lines 1–6, and it is not shown.*)

7	Paola:	.hh mtch mhm?[35] mhmmhm pensavo che tu?
		.hh mtch mhm mhmmhm think 1s-Past Ind that you
		.hh mtch mhm? mhmmhm I thought you

[34] *Va là* is an idiomatic expression that has many different meanings. Here, it is used to reinforce the preceding expression *dài*, playing down the importance of the "dramatic work" announced by Giacomo.
[35] Paola is chomping.

8			non:::m:: [mtch mtch fossi imPEgnato=
			not m:: mtch mtch be-2s Subj Past busy
			didn't m:: mtch mtch were busy
9		Marco:	[non ho sentito
			not hear-1s Past Ind
			I didn't hear
10	→	Paola:	=>da qualche altra par-< <ti volevo solo dire che
			in some other side to you-s want-1sPast Ind only say that
			somewhere else- I just wanted to say that
11			ho sentito la Antonella, [.mhhh e siamo d'accordo che- alle sett'=
			heard-1s Past Ind the Antonella .mhhh and agree-2p Pres Ind that at sev'
			I heard Antonella mhhh and we arranged that at seven
12		Marco:	[mhm mhm?
			mhm mhm
13		Paola:	=anche andiamo=a mangiare una pizza insieme, [lì vicino al cinema
			also go-2p Pres Ind to eat a pizza together there close to the cinema
			also we go for a pizza together there by the cinema
14		Marco:	[prima
			before
15		Marco:	uh:,
			uh
16		Paola:	e:: quindi te lo volevo dire, nel caso tu volessi::
			and so to you-s it want-1s Past Ind say in case you-2s want Subj Past
			and so I wanted to tell you in case you fancied
17			non so::,
			not know-1s Pres Ind
			I don't know
18			(0.2)
19		Marco:	unirmi,
			join Inf Refl
			join
20		Paola:	eh ma tu sei a yoga no?
			eh but you are at yoga not
			eh but you are at yoga class aren't you
21			(0.4)
22		Marco:	ah sì vero. quindi no.
			ah yes true so no
			ah yes true so no
23		Paola:	mm. va be'.
			mm. alright

Attached to the answer, Paola begins the invitation sequence with a rush-through device (l.10). The action is designed according to the same three-part structure we identified in the prior fragment. Therefore, the format includes (i) a formulation of the action that accounts for the subsequent telling ("I just wanted to say that," l.10), (ii) the reporting in which a characterisation of the social occasion (pizza, at 7:00, with Antonella) and of its circumstances (arrangement made with Antonella) are mentioned (ll. 11–13) and (iii) an acceptance-relevant action ("and so I wanted to tell you in case you fancied I don't know") (l.16).

Paola calls to inform Marco about a change in the couple's plans for the evening, which originally involved only going to the cinema with Antonella and now includes also going for pizza together. Paola presents the decision as the upshot of a call she has had with Antonella and designs the announcement as to imply Marco's involvement ("so I wanted to tell you in case you fancied I don't know," l. 16).

Similarly to the invitation delivered by Carla to Giacomo in example 6, here Paola mitigates her responsibility for the invitation by depicting the decision as a consequence of the call she had with Antonella. The defensive character of the action is evidenced also in the way in which she delays her request for Marco to state his commitment. Paola purposely leaves the requesting part of the utterance incomplete (Koshik 2002, Margutti 2010), leaving Marco to finish the sentence; Marco does this by proffering the verb "join" (l.19). By formulating the upshot of the reporting, Marco refers to his eventual participation, but without expressing a definite commitment.

This example is similar to fragment 6. Here, Marco (like Giacomo) withholds any acknowledgement of the report as a news delivery, as indicated by the continuer in line 12. At the same time, he also withholds any possible implications of Paola reporting for his co-participation until the moment when he completes the unfinished utterance. In addition, both recipients (in fragments 6 and 8) do not exploit the anticipatory potential for invitation of the reporting (Drew 1984).

This example has another feature in common with the previous: both inviters display to know about contingencies preventing invitees' acceptance. In example 8 (l.19) Marco offers the suitable completion of Paola's unfinished turn, displaying that now he treats the report as having a potential for his future conduct and acceptance. However, Paola does not validate Marco's position and reminds him of his yoga lesson for that evening (l.20), thus revealing that she knows that Marco has reasons for not accepting. We have seen the same practice in fragment 6, where Carla reports that she knows that Ale is not very well (ll.10–11), a circumstance that might provide a reason to decline the invitation. By the inviters showing that they have access to aspects of the recipients' private life (or B-events, as in Labov & Fanshel 1977, Pomerantz 1980, Heritage 2012) and to reasons that might prevent their participation in future events, in contrast with invitations of type 1, both inviters in the invitations of this set show that they are sensitive to the recipients' inauspicious circumstances (e.g., bad timing, illness and competing overlapping engagements). However, at the same time, they also display that this is not a sufficient reason for not issuing the invitation. Again, similar to the invitations of the first type, it is left to the recipients to decide

whether or not to participate and to adjust themselves and their lives to the circumstances of the social occasion whose terms remain not negotiable.

Owing to the features described above of the two first formats, it might happen that, in interactions such as those reported in excerpts 7 and 8, the characterization of the initial action as actually doing invitation can be rather dubious and uncertain, depending on the way in which the action is formulated and, consequently, on the different rendering of the speakers' orientation to the contingencies associated to the action that is thus implemented.[36] Particularly relevant to this aspect is the awareness that "the recognition of an action is a complex process in which successive actions interlock to function as ways of validating, adjusting or invalidating the actions to which they respond" (Clayman and Heritage 2014: 57). Again, we would like to point out that our aim is not that of treating invitations as a gross category of actions, but rather to identify how the distinct features of each of the three types contribute to a more comprehensive description of each specific action and of its relevance.

However, as we mentioned above, participants design and understand reportings also in light of their anticipatory potential for invitations. Example 9 is a case in point. Massimo informs Paola about a concert, portrayed as an extraordinary opportunity.

(9) [it-INV_PM.0H_nov2001(36.23-38.47s) _Concert]

34	→	Massimo:	però:: ho notato una cosa Pao[la, *but notice-1s Past Ind one thing Paola* **but I have noticed one thing Paola** ((*with a slightly raised volume of voice*))
35		Paola:	[mhm, **mhm**
36		Massimo:	che, (.) il venerdì prima:, **that the Friday before**
37		Paola:	mhm mhm? **mhm mhm?**
38		Massimo:	c'è::, la sera a Santa Cecilia un tal pianista che si chiama *there is the evening at Saint Cecilia one certain pianist who is called* **there's the evening at Santa Cecilia that pianist who is called**
39			Michail Ple[tnev, .h il nome non ti dirà niente *Michail Pletnev, .h the name not to you tell-3s Fut Ind nothing* **Michail Pletnev, .h the name won't tell you anything**
40		Paola:	[mhm mhm, **mhm mhm,**
41		Massimo:	presu[mo, .hh=uh::,[ed è- *presume-1s Pres Ind .hh=uh::, and be-3s Pres Ind* **I presume .hh=uh::, and he is**
42		Paola:	[mhm::, **mhm::,**
43		Paola:	[no. (.) a me no.

[36] In this regard, see the analysis of Emma inviting Margy and her mum to Coco's in excerpt n. 12 [NB VII] Clayman and Heritage (2014:62).

			no to me no
			no not to me
44	Massimo:	uh:- ed è	veramente molto molto bravo.
		uh:- and be-3s Pres Ind	*really very very good*
		uh:- and he's	**really very very good**
45	Paola:	sì.	
		yes	
46		(0.6)	
47	Massimo:	allo[::ra	
		so	
48	Paola:	[fammi vedere un attimo?	
		let me see a moment	
		let me see a moment	
49	Massimo:	come dici?	
		what say-2s Pres Ind Interr	
		what do you say	
50	Paola:	venerdì ventitre ? dunque.	
		Friday twentythree so	
51	Massimo:	sì,	
		yes	
52	Paola:	sì.=	
		yes	

In line 34,[37] Massimo introduces the report with the usual (i) formulation of the action ("I have noticed one thing, Paola.") followed by (ii) the description of the concert as a high-interest event (ll.38–44). Similar to the recipients in the previous examples of this section, Paola produces several minimal acknowledgement tokens (ll.35, 37, 40, 41), showing that she is attending to the telling not as newsworthy "per se," but as to what it might implicate (Drew 1982: 137). This case differs from the examples in fragments 6 to 8 because the third component (i.e., [iii] the request about the recipient's availability to participate in the event) does not occur. Here, Paola spontaneously moves to an acceptance-relevant action (ll.48, 50). Pre-empting any request on her willingness to participate, she treats the reporting as anticipatory of a forthcoming invitation.

3.3 Invitations type 3: The requesting format

Regarding the invitations in this last set, speakers employ a polar-interrogative construction to request a statement from the recipients about their ability/willingness to join in the social occasion, thus constraining the recipients to state their commitment to the invitation. In the

[37] The invitation is *one* of the reasons for this call (see footnote n.2); therefore, it is produced in the middle of the conversation after other topics have been discussed. It is worth noticing that the inviter (Massimo) introduces the inviting sequence with a formulation of the action of noticing and uses raised volume of voice to qualify the incoming talk as delivering the next topic as one of the reasons of the call.

next fragment, Alessia invites her sister to dinner to celebrate her new house. Their conversation follows a prior call in which Alessia had reported having argued with their father about her moving.

(10) [it-INV_PM.0N_Febbraio 2001_Casa nuova]

1		Paola:	Pro:nto?
			hello
2		Alessia:	Paola son sempre i:o
			Paola be-1sPres Ind always me
			Paola it's me again
3		Paola:	ciao Alessia
			hi Alessia
4	→	Alessia:	cia:o. asco:lta >ti volevo dire< poi
			hi listen Imp. (to) you-s want-1s Past Ind say then
			hi listen I wanted to tell you then
5			quand'ho finito il trasloco ci venite
			when finish-1s Past Ind the moving here come-2p Pres Ind
			when the moving is finished you'll come here
			a mangiare a casa mia:.[( )
			to eat at home my
			to eat at my home
6		Paola:	[^oh ma sì? di
			oh but yes
7			^sicu:ro.
			certainly

The identification sequence (l.2 "It's me again.") clearly addresses the fact that this is a "next" call to a recent, previous one, thus accounting for the compressed opening sequence. After the brief greetings exchange (ll.3-4), Alessia introduces the reason for the call with the phatic marker "listen," followed by the formulation of the action she is performing ("I wanted to say"), which we have seen is a common practice to introduce reason-for-calling invitations. Alessia designs the invitation as a polar question,[38] asking whether or not Paola and her husband (note that "you" in l.5 is plural) will go to dinner to her once she has moved into her new house. Although Alessia positions the invitation as the reason for *this* call, through the identification "It's me again" and the definite article *il/*'the' (l.5: *il trasloco*/'the

[38] Features of polar questions in the Northern variety of Italian (i.e., the variety spoken in this corpus) are discussed extensively in Rossano (2010). In Italian, polar (yes-no) interrogatives do not present any distinct morphological or syntactic feature that distinguishes this type of questions from declaratives; their questioning function is mainly conveyed by intonation, whose patterns vary in relation to regional varieties (Rossano 2010: 2759) and from the epistemic status of participants (Heritage 2012). In this example, Alessia formats the invitation with one of those polar questions. She is making an assertion concerning the future of her sister's and brother-in low's life (*quand'ho finito il trasloco ci venite a mangiare a casa mia*/ 'when the moving is finished you'll come to eat to my home'); therefore, she asserts something about which only Paola (the recipient) is entitled to know and has right to decide. This casts the utterance has having a questioning function. This is confirmed by Paola positive answer in ll.6-7.

moving') that presents the topic as known to the recipient, she also marks it as generated from a prior interaction and shared (recent) background.

Another feature, which contrasts with the two previous formats analysed here, is the other-attentive nature that is conveyed by the interrogative format, which designs the invitation from its start as concerning *what the recipient will do* rather than *what the inviter has decided to do or he/she is doing*, as in the two preceding formats. The question encodes the requesting component *in* the design of the invitation from its very beginning, foregrounding the relevance of Paola's commitment to the social occasion.

It is also worth noting that here the social occasion is *not preplanned*, which is in contrast with the invitation types analysed so far. Furthermore, here the invitation is limited to the parties involved in the call and to their partners and, therefore, the social event is conveyed as a *private* meeting. Positioned and designed in this way, the invitation displays a spontaneous and unplanned character. In line 6, the acceptance is produced promptly and emphatically.

The invitation in fragment 11 follows the same trajectory. This is also one in a series of calls that Paola and Loredana have had during the day, trying to arrange a meeting.

(11) [it-INV_pm.0q_12-13 sett 2002_13b/series (ii)]

1		Lor.:	pronto:?
			hello
2		Paola:	eh Loredana [son la Paola
			eh Loredana be-1s Pres Ind the Paola
			eh Loredana it's Paola
3		Lor.:	[ehi cia::o Paola [ciao.
			ehi hi Paola hi
4		Paola:	[cia::o, ascolta le- (.)
			hi listen le-
5	→		bella [.hh volevo dirti ↑perché
			beautiful[39] *.hh want-1s Pqst Ind tell you-s why*
			darling .hh I wanted to tell you why
6		Lor.:	[dimmi
			tell me
7		Paola:	non vieni qui a pranzo?
			not come-2s Pres Ind here at lunch
			don't you come here for lunch
8		Lor.:	.hh perché no ti spiego perché
			.hh because no to you-s explain-1s Pres Ind why
			.hh because no I explain to you why
9			perché io devo veder la Silvi[a,
			because I must see the Silvia
			because I must meet Silvia
10		Paola:	[ah:::.
			ah

[39] In Italian, the adjective *bello, bella*/'beautiful' can be used also as a term of endearment.

Like the opening of the call in the prior fragment, the immediate identification and the avoidance of the "how are you" sequences here display the speakers' orientation to their previous contacts. Furthermore, the lack of any preambles to the invitation in line 5 indicates that Paola relies on shared (recent) knowledge.

Here we found another polar interrogative construction (this time, a "why-not" interrogative) in which Paola asks Loredana to "come to lunch"; thus, explicitly addressing her willingness or ability to accept. Loredana directly provides an account for the rejection. She designs her answer to mirror the question, beginning with the same word "*perché*" (note that in Italian, 'why' and 'because' are both rendered with the same word (*perché*), which launches an account and projects a rejection. The account is self-repaired ("no") to include the formulation of the account ("I explain to you why," l.8), making the impending rejection more explicit. In this way, the invitation succeeds in obtaining a response (this time negative) concerning the recipient's commitment to the event. Note that, also in this case, the other-oriented format is associated to inviting someone to a private event and the invitation is portrayed as unplanned.

We conclude this section with a boundary case, featuring the last two formats (reporting and requesting) mixed together. The example shows the complexities of delivering and understanding actions, especially when these are the reasons for calling and when the speakers lack reference to some shared (recent) background information that would account for the implementation of the action. As the analysis will show, this example provides evidence that, by selecting one specific format -in this case, the requesting-interrogative format- speakers manage to convey a precise stance on the invitation and on the social occasion. In this way, they consequently propose the invitation as requiring of recipients to state explicitly (or not) their commitment to the social event, also independently from the real nature (public or private) of the event.

The inviter, Bea, has been called back by Anna after a prior miscall (data not shown).

(12) [it-INV_RG_Invito al centro diurno]

1	Bea:	.hh niente ti volevo dire che fra quindici giorni	
		.hh nothing to you-s want-1s Past Ind say that in fifteen days	
		.hh nothing I wanted to tell you that in a fortnight	
2		inaugurano il centro diurno,	
		inaugurate-3pl Pres Ind the centre daily	
		the day care centre will be inaugurated	
3		(0.2)	
4	Anna:	^a::h=è-	↓di già = hanno già finito?

			ah be-3s Pres Ind already finish-3p Past Ind already[40]
			ah is- already do dey have finished already
5			(0.2)
6		Bea:	e:h sì ormai hanno (.) fini:to era già
			eh yes by now finish-3p Past Ind be-3s Past Ind already
			eh yes by now they finished it was already
7			dovevan già inaugurarlo in primave:ra
			should-3p already inaugurate+it in spring
			they were about to inaugurate it already in spring
8			non son riusciti quindi=
			not succeed-3p Pres Ind so
			they didn't manage so
9		Anna:	=ah bene dai una volta ogni ^thantho vheherho
			ah good (INTENS) one time every now (TAG)
			=ah good (INTENS) once in a time isn't it
10			.hh che non avete più gli operai
			.hh that not have-1p Pres Ind anymore the workers
			.hh that you don't have workers anymore
11			in mezzo =no perchè se no[hh.
			in middle no because if not
			bothering you because otherwise
12		Bea:	[esatto esat[to
			exactly exactly
13		Anna:	[e:h nhmn eh
			eh nhmn eh
14			allora [insomma
			so therefore
15		Bea:	[no ma-
			no but
16			(.)
17		Bea:	sì io sono tenuta a parcit[41]- (.) a partecipare a ce[42]-
			yes I ought to parcit- to participate to di-
			yes I ought to parcit- to participate to di-
18			a:: questa::, (.) inaugurazione, [mm ( )
			to this inauguration mm
19		Anna:	[e:h sì perché ci
			eh yes because there
20			saran[n-
			will be-3p
			will be
21	→	Bea:	( ) e se venissi anche tu?
			( ) and if come-2s Past Subj too you
			( ) and if you came as well
22		Anna:	.hh #ə:hm# odi::o=mhm:: ma- io ci sto a::n:che cioè
			.hh #ə:hm# my good=mhm but I there stay also well
			.hh #ə:hm# my good=mhm but I can also come well
23			non c'è mica problema tanto °coh-° cosa
			there isn't at all problem in any case wha- what
			there isn't any problem at all in any case when- when
24			la fanno ne::' mattina, pomeriggio, °'n so°.
			it-fem[43] make-3p Pres Ind in the morning afternoon don't know
			do they make it in the morning afternoon don't know

[40] The second "already" is inserted between the auxiliary and the past participle of the verb "to finish."
[41] She produces the verb "par**ti**cipate" with a misspelling ("par**cit**") and self-interrupts.
[42] Probably "ce-" stands for *"cena"* (dinner), which then she substitutes with "inauguration."
[43] "It" refers to the inauguration, which is a feminine word in Italian.

In lines 1-2, Bea refers to her prior call and selects the reporting format to initiate the invitation sequence. However, Anna (the recipient) treats the reportings as news telling. In line 4, Anna receives the information with an *ah*-prefaced turn, which precisely treats the information as newsworthy (Heritage, 1984). This position is reinforced in lines 9–11 where she further appreciates the circumstances reported. This position seems to be maintained also in lines 13 and 19 in which she expands and comments on the topic of the vernissage. This shows that Anna is *not* aligning to the report as anticipating an invitation, which Bea finally explicitly formulates in line 21 with the interrogative format, embodying the requesting and other-oriented format. The fact that Anna was not expecting the invitation is also evident in the design of her answer: she produces a series of delay tokens, which mark her change of state in the understanding of the course of action (Heritage 1984), before asking about the timing of the event, thus displaying that acceptance is underway.

The invitation in this fragment begins with the reporting and ends with an explicit request to the recipient to state her availability to partake in the social occasion announced. This double format is probably due to the fact that Anna seems to have treated the launching of the invitation as news telling. Like the other examples in this section (and in contrast to those in the two previous), through an interrogative-formatted request Bea foregrounds Anna's participation, treating her participation as relevant for the accomplishment of the invitation. Furthermore, and perhaps on this basis, Bea and the other inviters in these examples display to establish an association between this format and the *private* and *unplanned nature* of the invitation, which allows them to be more explicit in soliciting those recipients to state their un/availability to take part in the nominated social occasion and to commit themselves to the invitation. Note that here the invitation is portrayed as having a private and personal relevance for Bea, albeit the social occasion is indeed collective and public.

4. Conclusions

With a focus on reason-for-calling invitations, this paper reports on the three formats that were repeatedly used to convey this type of invitation in one corpus of ordinary telephone calls between family, friends and acquaintances in Italy. When, under these circumstances, speakers got in touch to issue an invitation, they employed one of these formats, each

encoding and blending in different ways the actions of *informing* about the social event, *reporting* on the relevant circumstances associated with the invitation in general and, finally, *requesting* recipients to state their commitment concerning their participation. The key role of one or the other of these two components (i.e., *informing* and *requesting*) is conveyed by the construction of the invitation. For each format, we identified as relevant the use of the affirmative or interrogative syntax, the design of a compact single-unit or expanded multi-unit turn (determining the difference between a major emphasis on informing or on reporting), the blending of the informative and requesting component or their separation in the construction of the turn. The analysis showed that with the compact affirmative-formatted invitation (type 1: the informing format), speakers conveyed the invitation more as an announcement about the social event and their own wish to experience the event with the recipients. The event was briefly and explicitly nominated or implicitly referred to (by mentioning the name of the place), and the request for the recipients' presence was semantically implied in the performative verb "to invite." No further reference to the availability or willingness of the recipients to participate was included in the design of this format, whereby the invitation was presented as not negotiable. As the analysis showed, this format was used in association with social events that are described as collective and, for this reason, are also preplanned. In the more extended affirmative-formatted invitations of type 2 (the reporting format), speakers displayed a slightly more other-attentive stance, as indicated by the fact that, after the reporting (and as part of the invitation delivery), inviters could address to the recipients a request concerning their eventual availability or ability to participate. In invitations of this type, which also were associated with collective and preplanned social events, inviters used caution in issuing the invitation and in designing their acceptance-relevant actions, displaying a more other-attentive orientation. It is worth highlighting that, also with invitations of this type, acceptance or rejection could be withheld, delayed or even absent. Finally, with the last compact interrogative-formatted invitations (type 3: the requesting format), speakers were able to cast themselves as having more right to solicit recipients to take an explicit position (accept or reject), maximizing the acceptance option. This, we claim, was done by foregrounding the relevance of the recipients' participation in the construction of the invitation right from its very inception. This last format contrasts with the prior two because it employs interrogative syntax and is associated with invitations designed to have a more private and unplanned nature, sometimes also independently from the objective nature of the social event, as in the last example.

These findings show that speakers orient to a wide range of responsive options, which includes the right for recipients to withhold their definitive commitment to an invitation. This study also shows that invitations can be issued even under circumstances where inviters have reasonable indications that invitees will not be able to accept, either because of impediments or other commitments. In delivering this type of invitation, speakers display an orientation to precise and contingent conditions associated with the action of inviting. More crucially, the selection of one of the three formats seems to be sensitive to two main interactional conditions: (1) whether the social event and the recipients' participation is portrayed as more of a collective affair or a more private matter and (2) whether the invitation is presented as a preplanned or a more spontaneously conceived action. With these results, our study aims to contribute to future directions in the study of social actions, in which the complexity and specificity of the actions are addressed, as well as their underlying preference organization.

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