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Mobilizing (Re)tellings of a Story to Accomplish Multiple Social Actions

Abstract

The paper introduces an instance of retelling: a series of telephone calls in which a young man tells about a recent event to three different recipients. Drawing on previous research on storytelling in conversation, the paper argues that the telling of the story is mobilized in each interactional context to accomplish multiple social actions, such as troubles telling and requesting advice, and that it forms an integral part of each action. Similar structural units of these tellings resonate in meaning, form and content but some lexico-syntactic details of these units vary according to the social actions that are being accomplished via the tellings. The actions are also seen as important contributions to the overall stance-taking activity of the participants. Moreover, the paper examines a feature of retelling that occurs in the data: reference to prior renderings of the same story, which highlights the import of a telling and guides recipients towards relevant response.

1. Introduction

The detailed examination of stories as they are told in conversational interaction typically leads us to treat any instance of storytelling as unique. After all, storytelling is a situated activity: interactants in a given setting and at a particular point in time work together to initiate a story, deliver it and bring it to completion in their jointly negotiated roles as tellers and recipients. Nevertheless, interactants, and also we analysts, may sometimes come across a retelling, i.e. the recounting of a story that has evidently been told before. Although such retellings intuitively seem common in conversations, it is relatively rare to find an initial telling and consecutive retellings captured on tape. Here, we use the term *retelling* to refer to any stretch of talk that can be recognized to have occurred before and to serve as a story in conversation. The focus of this study lies solely on retellings

by the same teller to different recipients, but the research discussed below may also include other types of settings.¹

In this paper, we are concerned with the dynamics of storytelling and, in particular, in how a speaker accomplishes multiple social actions through separate tellings about the same event to different recipients. That is, the speaker can be seen to mobilize the telling of a story for the purposes of a particular interactional moment. We argue that in doing so, the speaker and, consequently, the recipients also involve themselves in stance taking, i.e. position themselves in relation to the reported event and the co-participants. Additionally, we shall discuss the ways in which the speaker indicates that he has recounted the story in the past. Such elements guide recipients towards a relevant interpretation of the story and contribute to the stance taking of the participants.

The following section outlines previous research on conversational storytelling, stance taking and retold stories. Section 3 introduces the data, a series of three phone calls by one speaker to different recipients. In section 4, we analyse the calls and the tellings within them, focusing on the way in which the speaker designs his speech to perform different social actions. Finally, we give our concluding remarks in section 5.

2. Storytelling and stance taking in conversation

The following subsections introduce the formal and functional characteristics of a conversational story (2.1), consider displays of stance in storytelling (2.2) and discuss previous work on retold stories (2.3).

2.1 Conversational storytelling

A conversational story to us is an extended, structured turn of talk taken by (typically) one teller to give a report of an event in chronological order to one or more recipients in order to perform a social action (e.g. a complaint, an apology, a boast, an explanation, an expression of solidarity, a solicitation of empathy). Much of the current linguistic work on stories relies on the notion that the formal characteristics of a story stipulate a sequence of at least two narrative clauses (Labov & Waletzky 1967; Labov

¹ What is not discussed here, however, is the co-construction of stories that are familiar to most, if not all, participants present. For an examination of such retellings, see e.g. Norrick (1997) and Georgakopoulou (2005).

1972). In other words, in order to be understood as a story, the extended turn must include a temporal sequence of at least two events, which can be achieved by means of past tense, for example. Sacks (1992a: 244) gives a classic example of such a temporal sequence: in *the baby cried, the mummy picked it up* the chronological order between the incident of the baby first crying and the mummy then picking it up is highlighted. Sacks (1974) provides a structural outline of a story, consisting of a preface sequence, a telling sequence and a reception sequence. Labov & Waletzky (1967) similarly identify the overall structural units of a story as abstract, orientation, complication, evaluation, climax, resolution and coda. In this study, we employ Sacks' (1974) classification of the story components. Additionally, the general terms story plot and high point are used to refer to what Labov & Waletzky (1967) call the complication and the climax of the story, respectively.

Although the temporal fixedness of stories is a central requirement for many scholars working with narratives, recent approaches to stories in the field of linguistics and sociology call attention to the unfixed nature of the narrative in a discourse environment. Conversational stories are designed for their local, situated telling and are usually produced in close collaboration by the interactants (Ochs & Capps 2001: 54; Thornborrow & Coates 2005; Georgakopoulou 2007); that is, conversational narratives are seen as rather unconstrained, changeable units of talk. The recipient's role in conversational storytelling is also significant from the structural point of view: a story is something that is perceived as a story by the recipient, i.e. it is the recipient who gives the teller an opportunity in the flow of conversation to tell a story (Jefferson 1978; Sacks 1974; Sacks 1992b: 244).

What is more, a teller's awareness of who the audience are manifests in recipient design. Sacks et al. (1974: 272) explicate their understanding of recipient design as "a multitude of respects in which the talk by a party in a conversation is constructed or designed in ways which display an orientation and sensitivity to the particular other(s) who are the co-participants". They further propose that recipient design shows itself in multifaceted features of talk-in-interaction, such as topic selection, word selection, ordering of sequences as well as options and obligations for starting and terminating conversations. Furthermore, Goodwin (1981: 166) has shown that, in the course of telling a story to several recipients at the same time, a teller modifies the telling with the recipients' knowledge of the reported event in mind. Such on-line recipient design is the teller's way

of reworking the telling with reference to the recipients' varied degrees of knowledge. The present paper further adds to previous research on storytelling by examining the resources of recipient design that a teller uses when telling the same story over a series of telephone calls to different recipients, who have varying degrees of knowledge of and perspectives on the reported event.

2.2 Displays of stance in storytelling

This paper, along with previous studies on stance taking (Kärkkäinen 2003, 2007; Wu 2004; Haddington 2005; Keisanen 2006; Du Bois 2007; Englebretson 2007; Rauniomaa 2007, 2008), views stance taking as an interactive and intersubjective activity between the interlocutors of a given interactional situation. Moreover, stance is not regarded as an "inner state" of the conversation participant but rather as a situated activity, a socially relevant positioning of oneself in view of the object of contemplation and in view of prior interactional turns and events. Du Bois & Kärkkäinen (under review), for instance, argue that it is possible to illustrate the socially situated nature of human feelings as they are displayed in interaction, i.e. "[t]he analysis of stance displays relies first and foremost on the participants' orientation towards, and interpretation of, the trajectories of talk and unfolding action, as distinct from the analysts' orientations to same". Such analysis reveals the various means of displaying affective, evaluative and epistemic stance in unfolding sequences of interaction. Based on evidence from the interactions, we analyse how the interlocutors portray themselves and others in a certain light in view of the subject matter at hand. In this study, stance-taking activity is seen to comprise a sequence of turns that display stances.

As interlocutors tell stories and produce social actions, they are simultaneously taking stances. The stance-taking activity is organised by the concurrent social actions and the sequential organisation of the ongoing interaction. In this study, we focus on the resources and practices of stance taking, discussing them as parallel phenomena to social actions and activities. As Rauniomaa (2008: 40) suggests, an examination of stance taking may enrich sequential analyses of conversational fragments because it entails a multifaceted description of how the interactants position themselves in view of the matter at hand and one another. By way of analyzing the stance taking process, we can thus provide a diverse analysis of the interlocutor's level of involvement and positioning toward the co-

participants and the reported characters and events in storytelling (see also “convergent and divergent stance” in Du Bois 2007: 162).

Stivers (2008: 31) postulates that “[w]hen someone tells a story, the teller provides the recipient with ‘access’ to an event and to the teller’s stance toward that event”. Her data show that there is a preference for the recipients to affiliate with the teller’s stance on the reported events. A story is not only in itself a display of stance, but a storytelling sequence may, and typically does, contain evaluations that are provided by both the teller and recipient(s) and that also function as displays of stance, aligning with and supporting the main storytelling and stance-taking activities (Sacks 1992a, 1992b; Niemelä 2005; Stivers 2008). It should also be noted that through different renderings of the same story, a teller can position himself in view of current recipients and interactional tasks, as is suggested in the studies that are reviewed in the following subsection.

2.3 Retellings

Polanyi (1981) was among the first to acknowledge the potential of studying retellings and suggested that “multiple tellings may reduce to the same underlying semantic structure in which the same events, set in a similarly constructed storyworld communicate the same global ‘point’”. However, Polanyi considered only a single telling, rather than multiple tellings. With the help of pertinent empirical data, others have since compared initial tellings with subsequent ones and explored their structural organization as well as their cognitive and interactional implications, emphasizing the significance of retellings for the narrative experience (see Ferrara 1994; Chafe 1998; and commentary by Norrick 1998a; Schiffrin 2006).

There are also a few studies that focus on how retellings are invoked by and integrated into their interactional environment. Norrick (1998b) argues that although the general structure of a story and perhaps some individual segments of it (e.g. a stretch of reported dialogue) may remain remarkably intact in retellings, the teller also brings in variation “to match the story with diverse topics and audience responses”. That is, each telling can be distinguished according to what purpose the story serves in the context and who the co-participants are (see also Norrick 2005). Günthner (2005) examines two tellings of a complaint story and contrasts them with the actual source of the complaint, a message that the teller’s neighbor has left on her answering machine. Günthner reveals the ways in which the

teller recontextualizes the story for the interactional purposes of each occasion: on the first telling, soon after receiving the message, the teller presents the story as a piece of news and on the second telling, over a year later, produces it as a contribution to a round of stories about bad experiences with neighbors. On both occasions, Günthner points out, the use of code-switching, prosody and other modifications (e.g. foregrounding some details of the story and backgrounding others) does not originate from the neighbor's message but from the teller's need to present the neighbor in a certain light. Similarly, Lappalainen (2005) presents a case in which a young man reports on a radio interview of a musician first to his friends and later at a congregational meeting for youth. Lappalainen shows that the first telling contains more paralinguistic variation (e.g. in fundamental frequency and intensity) and is thus more affective than the second one. Additionally, Lappalainen notes that the content of the tellings varies, the second one being more concise and less detailed for the purpose of illustrating a particular point. In other words, Günthner (2005) and Lappalainen (2005) both demonstrate that tellers may employ a range of modifications in order to position themselves in relation to the reported event, on the one hand, and the telling event, on the other.

In an exploration of evidentiality, Fox (2001) also touches upon retellings by discussing two telephone calls in which a speaker reports on his work situation to two friends and uses divergent evidential marking in referring to the same circumstances. Fox suggests that the speaker distances himself from his new employer considerably when talking to a friend who has training in the same field of profession as the speaker but who has been less fortunate in finding relevant employment. Based on this observation, Fox argues that speakers' use of evidentials both conveys their stance towards the issue at hand and indexes their relationship with co-participants. In various ways, then, the design of retellings can be seen to reflect and, in a sense, also maintain participant relationships.

The findings of the present paper contribute to the line of research that considers (re)tellings as evoked by and embedded in their interactional context. More specifically, we shall provide close sequential analyses of the (re)tellings to argue that each telling accomplishes not only one but multiple social actions and that each telling forms an integral part of those actions. That is, unlike previous reports on retellings, the present study underlines how a teller mobilizes tellings of a story to carry out certain actions not only across several interactions but within a single conversation and how the tellings in effect provide a basis for the actions so that they can

be carried out in the first place. We shall also show that the actions are interwoven together with the participants' stance-taking activity. Furthermore, we shall discuss a previously unexplored feature of retellings, which plays an important role in the examined calls: reference to prior renderings of the same story that highlights the import of a telling and guides recipients towards an appropriate uptake. This kind of metacommentary reveals that the teller considers the story to be the same on the separate tellings.

3. Data

As noted in several studies that deal with retellings (e.g. Chafe 1998: 285; Norrick 1998b: 77–78; Fox 2001: 177; Günthner 2005: 287), it may take some effort and require some luck to find instances of retelling in recorded naturally occurring interactions. We have gone through a collection of data that we have known to contain conversations involving the same speaker(s). In this study, we shall present a single case that comprises three tellings of a story by the same speaker to different recipients. The case is drawn from the corpus of conversational Finnish that is maintained by the Department of Finnish, Finno-Ugrian and Scandinavian Studies at the University of Helsinki, Finland (Keskusteluntutkimuksen arkisto, HY SKL). The data have been transcribed according to the conventions of Conversation Analysis (Jefferson 1984); keys to relevant transcription symbols can be found in Appendix I. Each line of the Finnish transcript is followed by an interlinear morpheme-by-morpheme gloss (see Appendix II) and a free English translation.

Let us briefly introduce the case here. A young man, Vesa, makes a series of telephone calls to his friends within the same day (and possibly in almost immediate succession) to report on a recent event. The level of intimacy between the caller and individual recipients varies, as do the particular purposes that each call serves. However, the general reason for the call (Sacks 1992b: 773–779) in all the instances relates to the trouble that Vesa has had with his computer monitor. Recipients either display to have knowledge of or are explicitly made aware of the fact that Vesa's monitor has broken down and he has taken it to warranty service some time ago. In all three calls, Vesa then constructs a topical story, a troubles telling: he has now received the monitor back from the service, but after he has hooked it up and used it for a short period of time, it has broken down again.

4. Mobilizing (re)tellings

This section introduces a series of telephone calls that the young man makes to several recipients during the same day. The analysis of the tellings within the three calls illuminates the way in which the speaker designs his speech in each call with the given interactional tasks and recipient in mind. The tellings and the calls are analysed in terms of the unfolding sequential structure, the overall stance-taking activity and the implicit or explicit references that are made to other calls. A comparison of the structural units of the tellings, namely the story plot and high point, is also provided.

4.1 Call 1: Troubles telling to request advice from a legal expert

Vesa makes his first call about the computer monitor to a law student, Jore. Vesa asks Jore for legal advice and also vents his frustration during the telephone call.

(1) Jore (HY SKL sg122_a2)

- 01 JORE: *Joel Repka?*
 first_name last_name
 ‘Joel Repka’
- 02 VESA: *no Vesa täs terve,*
 PRT first_name here PRT
 ‘it’s Vesa here hi’
- 03 JORE: *↑no2 terve,*
 PRT PRT
 ‘oh hi’
- 04 VESA: *.mt .hh kuule,*
 PRT
 ‘listen’
- 05 JORE: *joo?*
 PRT
 ‘yes’

² The Finnish particle *no* cannot be directly translated into English. In most cases, we have not translated it at all. Where it seems to receive particular emphasis, we have translated it as ‘oh’ and ‘yeah’.

- 06 VESA: *tota;*
PRT
'I mean'
- 07 *krhm .mt hh .hh*
- 08 *vitsi ku sä oo-t tollane a-lakimies,*
gosh because 2SG be-2SG like.that lawyer
'gosh you being a lawyer and all'
- 09 *ja nyt mu-a vitutta-a?*
and now 1SG-PTV piss.off-3SG
'and now I'm pissed off'
- 10 JORE: *no [:]?*
PRT
'yeah'
- 11 VESA: *[ku] mu-l on*
because 1SG-ADE be:3SG
'because I'm having
(.) *mu-n monitori-huollo-n kans ongelmi-a,*
1SG-GEN monitor-service-GEN with problem-PL-PTV
trouble with my monitor service'
- 12 *ni osaa-t sä neuvo-o yhtään,*
so can-2SG 2SG advise-INF any
'can you give (me) any advice'
- 13 *siis mä vaan aattel-i-n et mu-n täytyy nyt*
PRT 1SG just think-PST-1SG that 1SG-GEN have.to now
'I mean I just thought that I have to
jolleki saada vähän purka-a tä-tä .hhh [:],
someone:ALL get.to a.little vent-INF this-PTV
vent this a bit to someone now'
- 14 JORE: *[mhm]?*
- 15 VESA: *se ol-i-*
3SG be-PST:3SG
'it was'
- 16 (.) *monitori ol-i huollo-s puoltoist viikko-o,*
monitor be-PST:3SG service-INE one.and.half week-PTV
'the monitor was in service for a week and a half'
- 17 *mä sa-i-n takuu-seen se-n,*
1SG get-PST-1SG warranty-ILL 3SG-ACC
'I got it covered by warranty service'

- 18 *ihan okei,*
quite okay
'that was okay'
- 19 *mut vaan men-i aika-a,*
but just take-PST:3SG time-PTV
'but it just took some time'
- 20 *.hhh nii-l ei ol-lu ees tarjota niinku*
3PL-ADE NEG be-PCP even offer PRT
'they didn't even have like
(.) *vara-monitori-a tila-lle?*
spare-monitor-PTV place-ALL
a spare monitor to offer (me) in its stead'
- 21 *[.hh]*
- 22 JORE: *[mm]?*
- 23 VESA: *ja nyt se tul-i tänne,*
and now 3SG arrive-PST:3SG here
'and now it arrived here'
- 24 *.hh paketi-ssa tänään,*
parcel-INE today
'in a parcel today'
- 25 *.hh mä h- kytk-i-n se-n konee-seen,*
1SG hook-PST-1SG 3SG-ACC machine-ILL
'I hooked it up on the computer'
- 26 *se ol-i nyt tunni-n käytö-s,*
3SG be-PST:3SG now hour-GEN use-INE
'it was now in use for an hour'
- 27 *nyt se hajos*
now 3SG break.down:PST:3SG
'now it broke down'
ihan sama-l lai-lla uuestaan.
exactly same-ADE way-ADE again
'in exactly the same way again'
- 28 JORE: *@voi paska/@.*
PRT shit
'oh shit'
- 29 VESA: *.hh ni on-ks mitään (.) niinku,*
so be:3SG-Q any PRT
'so is there any like'

- 30 (.) *esimerki-ks*,
 example-TRANS
 ‘for example’
- 31 *on-ks su-l mitään käsitys-tä että*,
 be:3SG-Q 2SG-ADE any idea-PTV that
 ‘do you have any idea that’
- 32 *teke-e-ks firma-t sellas-t että*,
 do-3SG-Q company-PL like.that-PTV that
 ‘do companies do so that’
- 33 *.hh nss että*,
 that
 ‘that’
- 34 (0.5) *ehm*,
- 35 (0.5) *niinku-*
 PRT
 ‘like’
- 36 (.) *on-ks su-l mitään t- käsitys-tä*,
 be:3SG-Q 2SG-ADE any idea-PTV
 ‘do you have any idea’
- 37 *esimerki-ks huollo-ssa*,
 example-TRANS service-INE
 ‘for example in service’
- 38 *et jos joku homma ei skulaa*,
 that if some thing NEG work
 ‘that if something doesn’t work’
- 39 *ni ne vaihta-a se-n uute-en*,
 so 3PL exchange-3SG 3SG-ACC new-ILL
 ‘they’ll exchange it for a new one’
- 40 *voi-ks niinku vaati-i vaihtaa uute-en*,
 can-Q PRT demand-INF exchange new-ILL
 ‘can one like demand (them) to exchange it for a new one’
- 41 *tällase-s tilantee-s*,
 like.this-INE situation-INE
 ‘in a situation like this’

After identifications and greetings, Vesa produces the particle *kuule* ‘listen’ (l. 4) that anticipates the introduction of the reason for the call (Hakulinen et al. 2003). The particle functions similarly to the English *listen*, which prefaces turns that initiate some new course of action (e.g. an arrangement-making sequence) at an interactionally-appropriate moment (e.g. after a

reciprocal how-are-you inquiry sequence) (Sidnell 2007: 402). The reason for this particular call begins to unfold when Vesa identifies Jore as an expert on legal matters, *vitsi ku sä oot tollanen a- lakimies* ‘gosh you being a lawyer and all’ (l. 8). The pro-adjective *tollane*, literally ‘like that’, draws attention to the characteristics of the category that follows, here *lakimies* ‘lawyer’ (ISK § 1411). Sacks (1992a: 41) argues that “any member of any category is presumptively a representative of that category for the purpose of use of whatever knowledge is stored by reference to that category”. Sacks further shows that introductions of categories occur in early parts of conversations, which allows interactants to formulate the topic according to what kind of knowledge the category implies. In this case, the evoked category suggests that Vesa will proceed with the topic of legal matters.

Before doing so, however, Vesa introduces an additional motive for contacting Jore: he initiates a troubles-telling sequence (Jefferson & Lee 1981; Jefferson 1984, 1988), *ja nyt mua vituttaa* ‘and now I’m pissed off’ (l. 9). The stance-laden evaluation seeks affiliation from the recipient, indicating to the recipient that the teller is in a particularly aggravated state of mind and that a sympathetic response would be appropriate (see Sacks 1992b: 228). Vesa thus offers two aspects of the topic to be dealt with: some yet unspecified legal matters and his own emotional state. As a response, Jore produces a go-ahead, *no* ‘yeah’ (l. 10), preparing himself for further talk by Vesa (see Sorjonen 2002: 172). Vesa then carries on both aspects of the topic by prefacing a subsequent story about the trouble that he has, *ku mul on mun monitorihuollon kans ongelmia* ‘because I’m having trouble with my monitor service’ (l. 11), and a request for advice from Jore, *ni osaat sä neuvoa yhtään* ‘can you give (me) any advice’ (l. 12). Rather than providing Jore an opportunity to respond, Vesa continues to account for the call, *siis mä vaan aattelin et mun täytyy nyt jolleki saada vähän purkaa tätä* ‘I mean I just thought that I have to vent this a bit to someone now’ (l. 13). The account further highlights the emotional side of the matter and sets up expectations for subsequent recipient uptake. All in all, Vesa primes Jore to anticipate a telling that illuminates the trouble that Vesa is having with his monitor service, a telling that serves, on the one hand, as a factual request for advice and, on the other hand, as an emotional venting of frustration. In other words, Vesa positions himself as someone who desperately needs some advice from his lawyer friend.

Vesa further explains that he did not experience trouble over getting the monitor repaired under warranty, *mä sain takuuseen sen, ihan okei* ‘I got it covered by warranty service, that was okay’ (ll. 17–18), which might

be the most obvious reason for a legal complaint. Instead, he has been kept waiting for quite a while: the warranty service have taken a week and a half to repair Vesa's monitor. He further validates his position as someone who has come in for unjust treatment by providing an explicit complaint, *niil ei ollu ees tarjota niinku varamonitoria tilalle* 'they didn't even like have a spare monitor to offer (me) in its stead' (l. 20). The extreme case formulation *ei ees* 'not even' legitimizes the complaint by highlighting a possible, perhaps even typical, means of compensation for which he as a consumer is eligible (see Pomerantz 1986). Jore acknowledges the complaint by producing the particle *mm* (l. 22).

As Vesa's talk unfolds, he provides Jore with the specifics of his monitor trouble. The plot of the first telling explicates that the cargo delivery arrived right then on that day, *ja nyt se tuli tänne, paketissa tänään, mä h- kytkin sen koneeseen, se oli nyt tunnin käytös* 'and now it arrived here, in a parcel today, I hooked it up on the computer, it was now in use for an hour' (ll. 23–26). Vesa's relatively high-pitched, groaning and whiny voice with wide-ranging pitch movement depicts utter frustration as he delivers the highpoint of the telling, *nyt se hajos ihan samal lailla uuestaan* 'now it broke down in exactly the same way again' (l. 27). The plot and the highpoint will be compared with the second and third telling in section 4.4. It is worth noting here, however, that in the second telling, the reoccurrence of the monitor trouble is emphasized but the manner of the trouble is not specified. Further, unlike in the third call to a technically-oriented friend, Vesa here diagnoses the monitor break-down, indicating that he knows that the exact same monitor fault has occurred.

In the course of the telling, Vesa's stance-taking activity is displayed through a series of social actions. The story-initial announcement of the teller's emotional state and the source of his troubles not only prime the subsequent telling and request for advice but also allow the teller to position himself with regard to the reported event. Throughout the telling, Vesa nurses a grievance concerning the monitor service, and turn by turn Vesa builds his case and positions himself as the victim of unjust treatment by the monitor service. Jore responds to Vesa's telling with a highly emphatic evaluation *voi paska* 'oh shit' (l. 28), taking a convergent stance with Vesa's. Jore affiliates with Vesa's prior troubles telling and thus legitimizes Vesa's position as a customer who has been treated unjustly. Over the next 13 lines, Vesa continues to formulate his request for advice which concerns whether the manufacturer is obliged to replace his monitor with a new one or at least provide him with a spare monitor while his is in

service. The legitimacy of Vesa's complaint is dealt with later on in the call (data not shown).

It is worth noting that through the different ways in which he refers to the recipient, Vesa subtly implies that different aspects of the reported event may be brought to light. On the one hand, Vesa makes a personal request for help, referring to Jore as a lawyer and explicitly seeking advice from him (l. 8 and 12). In this way, Vesa suggests that he has specifically chosen Jore as a recipient because of Jore's knowledge of the law. On the other hand, Vesa engages in general troubles telling, as he explicitly states on line 13: *siis mä vaan aattelin et mun täytyy nyt jolleki saada vähän purkaa tätä* 'I mean I just thought that I have to vent this a bit to someone now'. The indefinite pronoun *jolleki* 'to someone' hints at the possibility that Vesa would also have been able to relate the trouble to other, unspecified recipients. To put it differently, Vesa implies through very subtle means that Jore is one among several possible recipients. Through this single utterance, Vesa positions himself with regard to the source of his troubles, the current recipient who can help him with certain aspects of the troubles as well as his circle of friends and acquaintances who could potentially assist him with other aspects of the troubles.

Moreover, once Jore has given Vesa legal advice on the matter, Vesa goes on to recap the trouble he has had with the monitor and begins to close the call: *mä aattelin et nyt mun täytyy soittaa kaikille ystäväilleni ja kiroilla ja sit niitten pitää lohduttaa mua* 'I thought that now I have to call all my friends and curse and then they will have to comfort me'. This remark makes explicit what was earlier implied; it reframes the call as possibly one among several that deal with this particular matter. At the same time, the extreme case formulation *kaikille ystäväilleni* 'to all my friends' highlights the seriousness of Vesa's trouble (see Pomerantz 1986). Indeed, after consulting Jore on legal matters, Vesa turns to another call recipient to sort out domestic practicalities.

4.2 Call 2: Troubles telling to inform a flatmate

In another telephone call recorded on the same day, Vesa relates the story to a young woman, Mirkku. She evidently lives in the same household as Vesa and can therefore be affected by the recent turn of events. The relatively close relationship between the two is mainly inferable from data that are not shown here but also from certain features of the telling in the following extract.

(2) Mirckku (HY SKL sg122_a3)

- 01 MIRKKU: *hello?*
- 02 VESA: *no Vesa t(h)äs h(h)ei,*
 PRT first_name here PRT
 ‘it’s Vesa here hi’
- 03 MIRKKU: *no moi,*
 PRT PRT
 ‘hi’
- 04 VESA: *.hhh tiä-t sä mit(h)ä,*
 know-2SG 2SG what
 ‘you know what’
- 05 *(.) .hhhh (.)*
- 06 *se mu-n [moni]tori<*
 3SG 1SG-GEN monitor
 ‘that monitor of mine’
- 07 MIRKKU: *[mitä?]*
 what
 ‘what’
- 08 *(.)*
- 09 VESA: *se mu-n monitori hajos taas.*
 3SG 1SG-GEN monitor break.down:PST:3SG again
 ‘that monitor of mine broke down again’
- 10 *(0.4)*
- 11 MIRKKU: *↑taas.*
 again
 ‘again’
- 12 *(.)*
- 13 VESA: *joo-o.*
 PRT
 ‘yes’
- 14 *(0.8)*
- 15 MIRKKU: *hm,*
- 16 VESA: *se ol-i tunnin tai puoltoist päällä,*
 3SG be-PST:3SG hour-GEN or one.and.half on
 ‘it was on for an hour or an hour and a half’

- 17 *ä: y- tä-st on nyt jo vähän aika-a,*
 this-ELA be:3SG now already a.little time-PTV
 ‘it’s been a while now’
- 18 *mut mä just tajus-i-n et*
 but 1SG just realize-PST-1SG that
 ‘but I just realized that
- mä e-n vielä su-lle soitta-nu.*
 1SG NEG-1SG yet 2SG-ALL call-PCP
 ‘I didn’t call you yet’
- .hhhhh*
- 19 (0.5)
- 20 *siis Tom eht-i pela-ta si-llä<*
 PRT first_name get.to-PST:3SG play-INF 3SG-ADE
 ‘I mean Tom got to play on it
- (.) puol tunti-i,*
 half hour-PTV
 for half an hour’
- 21 *mä e-n ehti-ny käyttä-ä*
 1SG NEG-1SG get.to-PCP use-INF
 ‘I didn’t get to use
- £mu-n konet-ta ollen#kaa#£,*
 1SG-GEN machine-PTV at.all
 my computer at all’
- 22 *(.) .hhh*
- 23 MIRKKU: *mhm,*
- 24 VESA: *sit se ol-i vähän aika-a käynnis,*
 then 3SG be-PST:3SG a.little time-PTV on
 ‘then it was on for a little while’
- 25 *nyt se hajos taas.*
 now 3SG break.down:PST:3SG again
 ‘now it broke down again’
- 26 (0.6)
- 27 *mä oo-n niin rikki.*
 1SG be-1SG so shattered
 ‘I’m so shattered’
- 28 (0.5)
- 29 MIRKKU: *.mt*
- 30 (0.9)

- 31 VESA: *oikeesti siis, [.hhhh]*
 seriously PRT
 ‘I mean seriously’
- 32 MIRKKU: *[ei(h),]*
 NEG
 ‘no’

Line 4, *tiät sä mitä* ‘you know what’, can be interpreted by the recipient either as a story preface or a pre-announcement (see Sacks 1974; Jefferson 1978; Terasaki 2004: 181; Schegloff 2007: 37–44): it invites the recipient to assess the newsworthiness of the speaker’s following talk. Furthermore, the breathy quality of the utterance can be heard to serve as a display of tiredness, suggesting to the recipient that what is projected is something negative (i.e. it makes the speaker weary) and that an appropriate response is expected from her.

Vesa then proceeds to the telling: he provides an identification of the referent and an initial characterization of it, *se mun monitori hajos taas* ‘that monitor of mine broke down again’ (l. 9). The demonstrative determiner *se*, here translated as ‘that’, marks the referent identifiable (Laury 1997), implying that Mirkku is able to pin down the correct monitor based on her knowledge of some prior events. Additionally, the adverb *taas* ‘again’ reveals that the series of events has now recurred. These implications are confirmed by Mirkku’s display of disbelief, the repetition of the adverb *taas* ‘again’ with a high onset (l. 11).

The fact that Mirkku is aware of certain events in the past is also reflected in the details that Vesa includes in, or rather excludes from, the story. Information about how Vesa initially took the computer monitor to be serviced and how he has now got it back, which form a large part of the first telling, do not appear in the second telling. Moreover, Mirkku does not orient to the absence of such information in any way. Instead, she remains quiet while Vesa goes on to relate the most recent developments in the computer monitor incident, or to provide the story plot, *se oli tunnin tai puoltoist päällä* ‘it was on for an hour or an hour and a half’ (l. 16). Reference to time possibly gives an impetus to a brief digression that details the timing of the reported episode in relation to the present telephone call, *ä: y- täst on nyt jo vähän aikaa, mut mä just tajusin et mä en vielä sulle soittanu* ‘it’s been a while now, but I just realized that I didn’t call you yet’ (ll. 17–18). Vesa then returns to the main story line, explaining that his friend had had a chance to play for half an hour on the

monitor but, to Vesa's disappointment, he himself had not got to play at all (ll. 20–21). He further reports that the monitor had been on, unused, for a while and then provides the story highpoint, *nyt se hajos taas* 'now it broke down again' (ll. 22–25). The delivery of the highpoint is emphatic; yet Mirkku remains silent. After a 0.6-second pause, in lack of recipient response, Vesa evaluates his own emotional state, *mä oon niin rikki* 'I'm so shattered' (l. 27).

In terms of stance taking, Vesa positions himself through various social actions as deserving pity due to his monitor trouble. In fact, the story preface at the very beginning of the call, uttered in a wretched and discouraged voice, *tiät sä mitä* 'you know what' (l. 4) and the news delivery *se mun monitori* < *se mun monitori hajos taas* 'that monitor of mine < that monitor of mine broke down again' (l. 6 and 9) seek commiseration from Mirkku. After explaining that his friend Tom has had a chance to play on the monitor for a while, Vesa further provides a particularly bleak appeal for pity (l. 21), *mä en ehtiny käyttää mun konetta ollenkaa* 'I didn't get to use my computer at all'. He laments, in a pouting manner, that he himself did not get a chance to play on his own monitor at all, which is a particularly unfortunate development of events from Vesa's point of view and thus justifies the display of self-pity and solicitation of sympathy. This perhaps somewhat exaggerated lament elicits only a minimal response from Mirkku, the particle *mhm* (l. 23). Throughout Vesa's telling, Mirkku provides only minimal or delayed responses, and at points Vesa explicitly displays his stance, pursuing a more sympathetic uptake (*mä oon niin rikki* 'I'm so shattered', l. 27, and *oikeesti siis* 'I mean seriously', l. 31). However, even the final receipt of the news by the recipient is a minimal *ei* 'no' (l. 32), the breathy quality of which is perhaps designed to correspond with the weary way in which the teller initially framed the story.

Similarly to the first telling, this second telling contains a brief commentary on the teller's choice of recipient and the relationship between different tellings of the story. While digressing from the main story line, Vesa makes a remark that suggests the telling is one in a series: *ä: y- täst on nyt jo vähän aikaa, mut mä just tajusin et mä en vielä sulle soittanu* 'it's been a while now but I just realized that I didn't call you yet' (ll. 17–18). The word order of the utterance is marked: the adverbial *sulle* 'to you' precedes the predicate *soittanu* 'call' and thus puts emphasis on the recipient of the call rather than the call activity. Furthermore, the position of the particle *vielä* 'yet' immediately before the adverbial brings out two

slightly different perspectives: temporality and accountability. Not only does the particle here indicate that the present call is somewhat delayed with reference to the reported event but it also implies that the present recipient in effect ranks high on the list of possible recipients. In other words, Vesa indicates that he is in some sense responsible for informing Mirkku what goes on in their household while she is away. The troubles telling and the news delivery thus serve a practical purpose in this call, letting the recipient know what she can expect to see when she returns home: a broken-down computer monitor and, because of that, a ‘shattered’ man (as Vesa formulates on line 27).

Interestingly, soon after the extract presented here, Vesa reports on the first call, starting with *sit mä soitin äsken Jorelle* ‘then I just called Jore’. In this way, Vesa expands the story in order to pursue an appropriate response from his current recipient. The report covers some later developments of the incident (i.e. developments that are only reportable in subsequent calls because they involve the first one) and provides an account for why Vesa may have selected Jore as the first recipient. The report also makes it explicit that Vesa has at least two relevant recipients for the story. Despite the apparent problems in recipient uptake, the teller here succeeds in delivering the news and telling about his current troubles to a recipient for whom he is accountable, and also in portraying the news and troubles as serious. The third call that Vesa makes contains another instance of troubles telling and news delivery, but with a different emphasis.

4.3 Call 3: Troubles telling to solicit sympathy from a fellow player

Vesa makes his third call to Jukka, who, judging by Vesa’s technical talk, appears to be more knowledgeable about computer monitors than the previous call recipients.

(3) Jukka (HY SKL sg122_a4)

01 JUKKA: *Jukka-setä?*
first_name-uncle
‘Uncle Jukka’

02 VESA: *saatana mu-n monitori hajos taas.*
satan 1SG-GEN monitor break.down:PST:3SG again
‘bloody hell my monitor broke down again’

03 (0.5)

- 04 JUKKA: *tä.*
PRT
'what'
- 05 VESA: *joo-o.*
PRT
'yeah'
- 06 (0.8)
- 07 JUKKA: *se tul-i ensin [kom-]*
3SG arrive-PST:3SG first
'it arrived first (to kom-)'
- 08 VESA: *[siis] se tul-i äsken*
PRT 3SG arrive-PST:3SG just
'I mean it just arrived'
- niinku kargo-na sie-ltä,*
PRT cargo-ESS there-ABL
'as cargo from there'
- 09 *niinku ne toimitt-i tänään se-n,*
PRT 3PL deliver-PST:3SG today 3SG-ACC
'like they delivered it today'
- 10 *me kannet-t-i-in se Tom-in kans*
1PL carry-PASS-PST-4 3SG first_name-GEN with
'we carried it with Tom'
- Comsoli-st,*
company_name-ELA
'from Comsol'
- 11 *ku se tul-i sinne päivä-llä .hh,*
when 3SG arrive-PST:3SG there day-ADE
'when it arrived there during the day'
- 12 *takuu-seen,*
warranty-ILL
'covered by warranty'
- 13 *ilmase-ks,*
free-TRANS
'for free'
- 14 *ei mitä[än],*
NEG any
'no problem'
- 15 JUKKA: *[mm]?*

- 16 VESA: *.hh kytket-t-i-in se to-hon,*
hook-PASS-PST-4 3SG that-ILL
'we hooked it up on that'
- 17 *se ol-i tunni-n päällä,*
3SG be-PST:3SG hour-GEN on
'it was on for an hour'
- 18 *Tom pelas siin Karmageddoni-a,*
first_name play:PST:3SG there game_title-PTV
'Tom played Karmageddon'
- 19 *.hh sit me istahet-t-i-in tähän sivu-un,*
then 1PL sit-PASS-PST-4 here side-ILL
'then we sat down here beside it'
- 20 *yhtäkkiä se alko väaristä-ä,*
suddenly 3SG start:PST:3SG warp-INF
'suddenly it started warping'
- 21 *silleen et ne,*
so that 3PL
'so that they'
- 22 *.hh e- mitä lie elektroni-t,*
what may.be electron-PL
'whatever they are electrons'
- 23 *kun ne- se pommitta-a nii-t to-hon,*
when 3PL 3SG bomb-3SG 3PL-PTV that-ILL
'when they- it shoots them on the'
- 24 *(.) to-hon,*
that-ILL
'on the'
- 25 JUKKA: *joo,*
PRT
'yes'
- 26 VESA: *kuva-putke-lle?*
picture-tube-ALL
'picture tube'
- 27 *.hh se alko niinku liikku-ma-an sivu-un.*
3SG start:PST:3SG PRT move-PCP-ILL side-ILL
'it started like moving sideways'
- 28 *(0.5) silleen et se niinku,*
so that 3SG PRT
'so that it like'

- 29 *tuo-lt laida-st niinku men-i silleen*
 there-ABL side-ELA PRT go-PST:3SG so
 ‘got like all’
ihan väänkyrä-lle,
 quite warp-ALL
 warped on the side’
- 30 *et ne se- selvästi-kin jotain niinku*
 that 3PL 3SG clearly-CLI something PRT
 ‘so that clearly something like’
alko tapahtu-u.
 start:PST:3SG happen-INF
 started to happen’
- 31 JUKKA: *[mm],*
- 32 VESA: *[mut] ei silleen silm-i-n havaita-*
 but NEG so eye-PL-INSTR (observe)
 ‘but not like so visibly’
- 33 *mä kato-i-n et hei,*
 1SG look-PST-1SG that PRT
 ‘I looked at it like hey’
- 34 *miks toi on to-n näkönen,*
 why that be:3SG that-GEN looking
 ‘why does it look like that’
- 35 *.hh sit yhtäkkii se vaan sammu.*
 then suddenly 3SG just die:PST:3SG
 ‘then suddenly it just died’
- 36 (0.5) *ihan sama-lla lai-lla,*
 exactly same-ADE way-ADE
 ‘in exactly the same way’
- 37 *nyt se ei käynnisty.*
 now 3SG NEG start
 ‘now it won’t start’
- 38 JUKKA: *hm,*
- 39 VESA: *.hh hh nyt sä oo-t jo kolmas vai neljäs ihminen*
 now 2SG be-2SG already third or fourth person
 ‘now you’re already the third or fourth person’
ke-lle mä soita-n niinku ihan vihase-na,
 who-ALL 1SG call-1SG PRT really angry-ESS
 I’m calling like really angry’

Jukka expresses astonishment in receiving Vesa's news and requests confirmation of its accuracy by way of the particle *tä* 'what' (l. 4) (see Haakana 2008: 100–101, see also Selting 1996), and Vesa confirms the news with *joo-o* 'yeah' (l. 5). Jukka then produces a story provocation (Lerner 1992: 254): he indicates his knowledge that Vesa's monitor was serviced in a company called Comsol and invites Vesa to give an account of what has happened by producing a truncated intonation unit *se tuli ensin kom-* 'it arrived first (to kom-)' (l. 7). Indeed, Vesa takes over the telling by producing an overlapping turn, *siis se tuli äsken niinku kargona sieltä, niinku ne toimitti tänään sen* 'I mean it just arrived as cargo from there, like they delivered it today' (ll. 8–9). Vesa goes on to tell how he and another friend of his, Tom, carried the monitor home from Comsol, specifying to where the monitor had actually been delivered, *me kannettiin se Tomin kans Comsolist, ku se tuli sinne päivällä* 'we carried it with Tom from Comsol, when it arrived there during the day' (ll. 10–11). As in the previous calls, Vesa here emphasizes the fact that there was no problem with warranty agreement: *takuuseen, ilmaseks, ei mitään* 'covered by warranty, for free, no problem' (ll. 12–14). He thus indicates that he is not dealing with a warranty dispute, which could be considered a typical cause of trouble. Jukka acknowledges the announcement with the particle *mm* (l. 15), encouraging Vesa to go ahead with the telling.

Vesa proceeds to give Jukka an elaborate description of the physical and technical trouble that directly gets in the way of his game-playing activities, e.g. having to carry the monitor home, the monitor then acting up, shutting down and not starting after an hour's use. He walks Jukka through the process of the monitor malfunctioning: he produces a reporting clause followed by direct reported speech, *mä katoin et hei, miks toi on ton näkönen* 'I looked at it like hey, why does it look like that' (ll. 33–34), which, on the one hand, indicates that he could see that something was wrong with the monitor and, on the other hand, displays his astonishment and alarm in realising that the monitor started acting up again. Jukka's direct reported speech builds the telling towards its highpoint, the monitor dying, *sit yhtäkkii se vaan sammuu, ihan samalla lailla* 'then suddenly it just died, in exactly the same way' (ll. 35–36). The phrase *ihan samalla lailla* 'in exactly the same way' highlights the recurrent and therefore particularly frustrating nature of Vesa's trouble. The highpoint is followed by the resolution, *nyt se ei käynnisty* 'now it won't start' (l. 37), explicating the desolate state of affairs.

The highpoint and the resolution elicit a subdued minimal response from Jukka in the form of the particle *hm* (l. 38). Thus Vesa provides a more explicit evaluation of his own emotional state and appeals for consolation, *nyt sä oot jo kolmas vai neljäs ihminen kelle mä soitan niinku ihan vihasena, niinku et nyt mä tarviin lohdutusta* ‘now you’re already the third or fourth person I’m calling like really angry, that I need comforting now’ (ll. 39–40), which indicates that Jukka’s response was inadequate in the first place. On line 41, Jukka coughs a couple of times and still fails to respond in an affiliative manner, which prompts Vesa to escalate his appeal for affiliation by emphasizing the depth of his trouble, *oikeesti* ‘seriously’ (l. 42), and resorting to an emphatic interjection, *siis niinku saatanan perkele* ‘I mean fucking hell’ (l. 43). After a 1.0-second pause and no response from Jukka, Vesa produces yet another evaluation, *tää on niinku väärin* ‘this is like unfair’ (l. 46). Finally, Jukka provides Vesa with a high-onset, emphatic display of agreement and affiliation, *niin on* ‘it sure is’ (l. 47), and offers justification for his prior lack of response, *vähän vaikee sanoo enää mitään* ‘it’s a bit hard to say anything anymore’ (l. 48).

Vesa’s third telling also consists of social actions that contribute to the overall stance-taking activity. The abrupt and emphatic news delivery at the beginning of the call sets up the highly indignant stance that is re-validated by further displays of stance. For instance, Vesa describes his emotional state on several occasions as angry and in need of comforting and his situation as frustrating and unfair. In all three calls, Vesa solicits sympathy and an affiliative response from the recipient. Nonetheless, in each call he positions himself differently in view of the trouble and the recipient: In the first call, he presents himself as a victim of wrong-doing in need of expert advice in legal matters. In the second call, he not only informs his flatmate of the monitor trouble but also takes a stance as a lamenting sufferer in an unfortunate incident, who deserves the recipient’s pity. In the third call, he positions himself as an upset and indignant sufferer of monitor trouble in a more laddish and coarse manner.

It is worth pointing out that the recipient design of the third call is geared towards technically-oriented troubles telling: it involves soliciting sympathy from a potentially like-minded game-playing enthusiast, who truly understands the technicalities and frustrations of the teller’s trouble. By contrast, the first call is oriented towards seeking legal advice from Jore. Vesa does not describe the technical details to the recipient but makes reference to the time spent without his monitor as potentially relevant grounds for legal compensation, e.g. *mut vaan meni aikaa* ‘but it just took

some time' and *puoltoista viikkoo* 'a week and a half'. By further contrast, the monitor delivery, technical details or loss of monitor time are not mentioned at all in the second call to Mirkku because they appear irrelevant in relation to the emotional yet practical purpose of Vesa's call to her. In sum, the recipient design of the tellings is manifested at different levels of detail in the description of the trouble, in the manner of presenting the news and in the position adopted by the teller.

What is particularly striking about the third telling is that it contains an explicit reference to preceding telephone calls. After Vesa has told the story and Jukka has given only a minimal response *hm* (l. 38), Vesa claims his right to tell about his troubles by remarking that *nyt sä oot jo kolmas vai neljäs ihminen kelle mä soitan niinku ihan vihasena, niinku et nyt mä tarviin lohdutusta* 'now you're already the third or fourth person I'm calling like really angry, that I need comforting now' (ll. 39–40). This remark foregrounds the troubles telling: a description of the teller's current emotional state and a suggestion for relevant recipient responses sums up the gist of the ongoing conversation. Moreover, the remark implies that despite the numerous calls, Vesa has not yet received enough consolation for his troubles. In this way, he is able to present the trouble as serious, to account for the retellings and also to put pressure on Jukka to provide an appropriate response. Indeed, by making past explicit in the calls, the teller pre-empts the possibility that he will be brought to account for his position in the recipients' following turns or on another occasion (see Keisanen 2007 for how speakers can be challenged for a claim or position that they have just expressed).³

4.4 Comparison of the structural units of the tellings

In all three calls, which Vesa makes to Jore, Mirkku and Jukka, he tells the same story about how he has received his monitor back from the service, but after he has hooked it up and used it for a short period of time, it has broken down again. The degree of detail varies considerably between the tellings depending on the recipient and the relevant social actions. However, some parts of the story are (re)told by the teller in more or less

³ It is worth noting that the calls were made during the same day, which might be one reason for the explicit mentions. Also, as evidenced by comments elsewhere in the calls and by the references to Tom in the last two calls, the calls are made in the presence of a person who has first-hand experience of the reported event. This may also make the teller accountable for repeatedly telling the same story (see Goodwin 1979, 1980).

the same way in all three tellings; for example, the story plot leading up to the highpoint of the story contains a reference to the amount of time that the computer monitor was on. Although in many respects similar, the time references have certain subtle lexico-syntactic differences that relate to the social action that is accomplished via the telling.

(4) The story plot

Call 1 (Jore)

26 VESA: *se ol-i nyt tunni-n käytö-s,*
 3SG be-PST:3SG now hour-GEN use-INE
 ‘it was now in use for an hour’

Call 2 (Mirkku)

16 VESA: *se ol-i tunnin tai puoltoist päällä,*
 3SG be-PST:3SG hour-GEN or one.and.half on
 ‘it was on for an hour or an hour and a half’

Call 3 (Jukka)

17 VESA: *se ol-i tunni-n päällä,*
 3SG be-PST:3SG hour-GEN on
 ‘it was on for an hour’

This part of the story is rendered in the same copular form in the three tellings: ‘it was [on/in use] for [reference to time]’. The first telling is different from the other two in that it claims the monitor was in use rather than simply on, *se oli nyt tunnin käytös* ‘it was now in use for an hour’ (Call 1, l. 26). As the first telling acts as a prelude to a request for legal advice, the adverbial *käytös* ‘in use’ (which describes a more active process compared to the adverbial *päällä* ‘on’) correlates with the social action in question. The (un)use of the monitor is a highly relevant aspect in a potential lawsuit over warranty service.

In the first call, the adverbial *nyt* ‘now’ underlines the acuteness of the trouble. According to Vesa, the computer has been in use for an hour. It is likely that the unit for the measurement of time, an hour, is here used as a conventional approximation. The time estimate is nevertheless rather precise compared to the second call in which the reference to time is more

unspecific, *se oli tunnin tai puoltoist päällä*, ‘it was on for an hour or an hour and a half’ (Call 2, l. 16). In fact, Vesa offers a longer time frame between two conventional approximations, ‘an hour’ and ‘an hour and a half’, giving the impression that he does not know the exact length of time that the computer was on. In the third call, the estimate is the same as in the first call, an hour, but the adverbial *nyt* ‘now’, denoting acuteness, is not present. The plot of the telling in the first call (to acquire legal advice) contains features that underscore the acuteness of the trouble and contribute to the preciseness in describing the facts. In comparison, the telling in the second call contains a less specified and more relaxed time-span that correlates with the non-urgent nature of the call, which is also manifested in Vesa’s subsequent realisation, *mut mä just tajusin, et mä en vielä sulle soittanu*, ‘but I just realised that I didn’t call you yet’ (Call 2, ll. 18–19). It appears that these lexico-syntactic differences support the overall design of the tellings with regard to the recipient and the accomplished action.

Also, the consecutive highpoint of the story is presented in a similar way in all the tellings, but the individual highpoints contain some lexico-syntactic differences that correlate with the social action that is accomplished by the tellings.

(5) The highpoint of the story

Call 1 (Jore)

27 VESA: *nyt se hajos ihan sama-l lai-lla uuestaan.*
 now 3SG break.down:PST:3SG exactly same-ADE way-ADE again
 ‘now it broke down in exactly the same way again’

Call 2 (Mirkku)

25 VESA: *nyt se hajos taas.*
 now 3SG break.down:PST:3SG again
 ‘now it broke down again’

Call 3 (Jukka)

35 VESA: *.hh sit yhtäkkii se vaan sammu.*
 then suddenly 3SG just die:PST:3SG
 ‘then suddenly it just died’

- 36 (0.5) *ihan sama-lla lai-lla,*
 exactly same-ADE way-ADE
 ‘in exactly the same way’
- 37 *nyt se ei käynnisty.*
 now 3SG NEG start
 ‘now it won’t start’

The highpoint of each telling describes the breaking down or switching off of the monitor yet again. In the first call, Vesa provides Jore, the legal expert, with details of the way in which the monitor has broken down, *nyt se hajos ihan samal lailla uuestaan*, ‘now it broke down in exactly the same way again’ (Call 1, l. 27). Importantly, the adverbial phrase *ihan samal lailla* ‘in exactly the same way’ is embedded within the same intonation unit. Vesa thus indicates that he knows that the exact same fault has reappeared. By contrast, in the highpoint of the third telling to technically-oriented Jukka, Vesa first merely provides him with the description of the monitor trouble, *sit yhtäkkiä se vaan sammui*, ‘then suddenly it just died’ (Call 3, l. 35), and then further describes the symptoms with *ihan samalla lailla* ‘in exactly the same way’ (Call 3, l. 36) in a separate intonation unit. It is noteworthy that Vesa does not provide Jukka with a diagnosis of the monitor break-down as he does in the calls to Jore and Mirkku (the monitor ‘broke down again’; Call 1, l. 27 and Call 2, l. 25). In other words, he provides Jukka with the symptoms and leaves the actual diagnosing to the expert. Vesa also states that the monitor will not start again, *nyt se ei käynnisty* ‘now it won’t start’ (Call 3, l. 37), acknowledging the fact that he has indeed tried, unsuccessfully, to restart the monitor. The highpoint of the second telling, *nyt se hajos taas* ‘now it broke down again’, emphasizes the reoccurrence of the monitor trouble in a more subtle way, namely by way of the adverbial *taas* ‘again’. The telling is used to inform Mirkku, who shares a home with Vesa, of the trouble Vesa is having with his monitor and how that affects his emotional state. The particulars of the monitor trouble are not significant in doing so. The lexico-syntactic details of each highpoint fit the social actions that are being accomplished via the tellings.

The chronological order of events presumes that some elements of the story structure are similar no matter who the recipient is. The narrative clauses of a story are temporally ordered, and that order cannot be reversed without changing the meaning of the story (Labov & Waletzky 1967). In the present case, the plot first proceeds in a set fashion and then reaches the

highpoint, which is manifested in all three examples in a recognisably similar form. A previous study (Niemelä under review) on first and second stories told by different tellers concludes that the lexico-syntactic, prosodic and semantic features of the highpoint of the second story usually resonate to a great degree with those of the first story. The highpoints of the stories told by the same teller similarly resonate in meaning, form and content. However, current analysis shows that some lexico-syntactic details of the tellings vary according to the social actions that are being accomplished via the tellings.

To sum up, (re)tellings of a particular event contain some essential parts of the story, e.g. elements that establish the temporal junction of the story, that remain more or less the same every time. The less constant aspects of the story, e.g. the evaluations and the degree of detail in the telling, are shaped by the teller's stance, the reason for the call, the recipient and the overall telling context. In the case that has been discussed here, such dynamic aspects further include references to the possibility or actuality of multiple tellings, which convey the teller's stance towards the reported trouble and at the same time account for that stance.

5. Conclusion

In this paper, we have performed sequential analyses of three calls in which the caller tells the same story to three different recipients. The analyses have not aimed at disclosing a core story but have nevertheless highlighted some similarities between the tellings. A more detailed look at the similarities has revealed subtle differences within them that are part of the overall design of the telling. In comparing the structural units of the tellings, we have shown that some units (e.g. the highpoints of the stories) resonate in meaning, form and content but that some lexico-syntactic details of these units vary according to the social actions that are being accomplished via the tellings. In other words, the lexico-syntactic details of specific structural units of the tellings correspond with the social action that is accomplished via the telling. The design of the telling for a particular purpose is manifested even in the smallest details of each unit within the telling.

We have added to previous research on retellings by showing how the teller mobilizes the tellings to accomplish certain actions both across the three calls and within single calls. Furthermore, we have shown that the (re)tellings form an integral part of each accomplished action; i.e. they

provide a basis on which the actions can be constructed. In the first call, the telling functions as an instance of troubles telling and a prelude to a request for legal advice from a legal expert concerning the teller's monitor trouble. The second instance of troubles telling is utilised to inform a recipient who as the teller's flatmate is entitled to know about the trouble. Finally in the third call, the teller provides a detailed technical description of the monitor trouble to a technically-oriented fellow game-player; by way of troubles telling, the teller solicits sympathy from a friend who understands how frustrating monitor trouble can be. The main contribution of the analyses has uncovered the individual features of the tellings that are designed with the recipient in mind (e.g. type of relationship, common interests) and that take into account the telling context (e.g. the timing and order of the tellings).

The actions that are accomplished by these (re)tellings are also seen as important contributions to the overall stance-taking activity of the participants. It has earlier been argued that a teller's need to present the reported characters and the issue at hand in a certain light is manifested in the use of code-switching, prosody and other modifications, for example. We have further shown that all the calls in our data contain layered social activity: on the one hand, they involve multiple social actions such as troubles telling, seeking advice and informing; on the other hand, the actions display the teller's stance and position him even more strongly with regard to the recipient and the reported event. An examination of these layered social activities reveals the complex constellation of relationships, objects and events within which participants position themselves that an analysis of individual social actions alone cannot unravel.

We have also put emphasis on how the teller orients to the tellings as retellings. Each telling contains metacommentary on the circumstances of that particular telling event. We examined these references to prior renderings of the same story and showed how they highlight the import of a telling and guide recipients towards relevant response. That is, we noted how the teller makes implicit and explicit references to the previous and possible subsequent calls to other recipients about his current troubles. These remarks aid the recipients in interpreting the story as troubles telling and, furthermore, in putting the trouble into proper perspective: it is serious and urgent enough to require the attention of the teller's friends and to elicit displays of sympathy and consolation. What is more, the remarks add an extra twist to the stance taking that the participants are involved in: the teller assumes responsibility of his stance taking by reporting on it himself.

In a sense, then, the teller reserves the right to go on telling about the trouble he has had, to these recipients and others.

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APPENDIX I**Transcription Key**

Based on Jefferson (1984)

.	terminal contour: falling
?	terminal contour: strongly rising
,	continuative contour: slight rise
[]	overlapping
=	latching
(.)	micropause (less than 0.2 sec)
(2.0)	length of pause in approximate seconds
ye:s	stretching of sound
ye-	truncated word
<	word finished abruptly (but not truncated)
hhh	audible breath
.hhh	audible in-breath
ye(hh)s	within-speech aspiration, usually indicating laughter
↑	a marked upward shift in pitch, high pitch has sudden onset but gradually wanders down
@yes/@	change in voice quality, usually reported speech
£	smiley voice quality
#	creaky voice quality
.mt, krh(m), .nss	vocal noises

APPENDIX II

Gloss Abbreviations

Based on Bickel et al. (2008)

-	morpheme boundary in the original and the gloss when morphemes are segmented in both
:	morpheme boundary in the gloss when morphemes are not segmented in the original
.	morpheme boundary in the gloss when one morpheme in the original corresponds with several in the gloss
1SG, 2SG, 3SG	first person singular (ending or personal pronoun), etc.
1PL, 2PL, 3PL	first person plural (ending or personal pronoun), etc.
4	passive person ending
ABL	ablative ('from')
ACC	accusative
ADE	adessive ('at, on')
ALL	allative ('to')
CLI	clitic
ELA	elative ('out of, from')
GEN	genitive
ILL	illative ('into, to')
INE	inessive ('in')
INF	infinitive
INSTR	instructive ('with')
NEG	negation
PASS	passive
PCP	participle
PL	plural
PRT	particle
PST	past tense
PTV	partitive ('part of')

Q	question clitic
TRANS	translative ('into, for')

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