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INTERACTIONS IN CALLS  
TO THE 9-1-1 EMERGENCY SYSTEM IN COSTA RICA

by

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And approved by

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## ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Interactions in calls  
to the 9-1-1 Emergency System in Costa Rica

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This dissertation examines interactions in calls to the 9-1-1 Emergency System in Costa Rica, and particularly focuses on the analysis of the overall structural organization of calls, and interactional activities of requesting help and formulating place. The dissertation uses the methodology of Conversation Analysis to examine recordings of naturally occurring interactions on the 9-1-1 telephone line, supplemented by non-participant observations in the call room and interviews with 9-1-1 officials. I analyze 215 calls of actual incidents. My findings show that, in the overall structural organization of the call, callers proffer (and sometimes engage in) greetings during the opening of the call. In the interrogative series phase, besides formulating the location of the incident and the problem, call-takers verify the caller's contact information (i.e., name and telephone number). In the response of assistance phase, call-takers do not promise the assistance, but suggest it by using a combination of informings (i.e., the information was sent, the

dispatch center is in charge of dispatching assistance, be alert on the assistance).

Regarding requesting help, my analysis shows that by using particular turn designs callers may display an orientation to their low entitlement to the request and to high contingencies in getting the assistance (e.g., “para ver si”, “do me a favor” construction, “be kind” construction), or, alternatively, to low contingencies in getting the assistance and high entitlement to the request (e.g., description of self-evident incidents). Regarding formulating place, findings show that callers use three practices: geographical formulations, landmark formulations, and “other signs” formulations. The landmark formulation is comprised of a landmark, a distance from the landmark, and the direction of the movement. A place formulation is institutionally sufficient by call-takers when it includes both geographical and landmark formulations. These findings inform us about different practices that different communities use when calling to 9-1-1 services. By examining the overall structural organization of calls, and interactional activities of requesting help and formulating place, and analyzing possible interactional problems that participants might experience when calling for help, this dissertation has a potential to inform and possibly improve the 9-1-1 service in Costa Rica.

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## DEDICATION

To my father, who could not see this dissertation complete

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## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

People call emergency services when they are in need of help, whether it be for life-threatening incidents (e.g., a heart attack) or incidents of marginal urgency (e.g., having fever and body pain). 911 services are crucial for preserving people's lives and property, given that they provide critical services to citizens and communities (e.g., extinguishing a fire in a park). A rapid response to a call for assistance can save lives and property; therefore, communication is key.

Collecting information about the incident and its location is a crucial part of 911 service interactions. This information is needed not only to figure out what is happening and to dispatch the assistance, but also to dispatch the appropriate assistance. For example, if a caller reports a car accident involving an injured person, the call-taker might dispatch both the police and an ambulance. On the other hand, if a caller reports a car accident not involving an injured person, the call-taker might only dispatch the police. Effective communication, however, does not entirely rely on a single participant of the call. Both callers and call-takers are responsible for negotiating and co-constructing the incident. For instance, if the caller only reports a car accident, the call-taker might find out, through an interrogative series, that there is an injured person in the accident; therefore, they would be able to dispatch the appropriate response teams.

Effectively communicating the details of an incident impacts not only the response time of the assistance, but also the distribution of resources within the emergency center. Since the center can only deal with a limited number of calls at a given

time, if a call proceeds smoothly, call-takers may subsequently be available for further incoming calls.

This dissertation analyzes interactions from the 9-1-1 Emergency System in Costa Rica. This is a countrywide, state-funded, and centralized system that receives calls from all over the country, and subsequently transfers the information to local response teams. The system coordinates more than ten institutions, such as the Costa Rican Red Cross, Fire Department, and Judiciary Investigation Bureau.

This dissertation uses the methodology of Conversation Analysis and analyzes data by means of examining naturally occurring interactions (i.e., actual calls to 9-1-1 Costa Rica). This inductive approach grounds all of the analytic claims in a participant's observable conduct. A conversation analysis proceeds by building collections of particular interactional phenomena in order to explain recurrent patterns of communication and how participants deal with recurrent interactional tasks. This dissertation also uses ethnographic methods, such as non-participant observations from the call room and interviews with 9-1-1 officials, in order to better understand this institutional setting.

This dissertation analyzes the overall structural organization of calls and interactional practices of requesting help and formulating place. By examining these phenomena and analyzing possible interactional problems that participants might experience, this dissertation has a potential to inform and possibly improve the 9-1-1 service in Costa Rica. This dissertation contributes to Conversation Analysis by shedding light on the action of requesting help and on how participants co-construct the location of the incident. Furthermore, this dissertation also contributes to Conversation Analysis by

extending research to languages other than English, the language in which most conversation analytic research has been conducted. This dissertation extends research to the Spanish language, in the context of emergency calls, and in Costa Rica.

### **Overview of the dissertation**

The dissertation is organized as follows. Chapter 2 reviews research on two main areas: institutional talk and interactions in emergency calls. First, I review conversation analytic research on institutional talk and provide a summary of the main characteristics of institutional talk: task-oriented interactions, particular constraints on participation, and specialized inferential frameworks (Drew & Heritage, 1992a; Heritage & Clayman, 2010). Secondly, I review research on emergency calls, including the overall structural organization of the calls, as well as research on particular phenomena, such as emotions in emergency calls (Kidwell, 2006; Svennevig, 2012; K. Tracy & Tracy, 1998; S. J. Tracy & Tracy, 1998; J. Whalen & Zimmerman, 1998).

Chapter 3 sets up the methodological framework for this dissertation. This chapter is organized into two main sections: methods and data, and background information about 9-1-1 Costa Rica. First, in the methods and data section, I explain the assumptions and goals of the conversation analytic method, describe the dataset and explain the main conventions of the transcription system. Second, I provide background information on the history of the emergency system in Costa Rica, the call processing, and my non-participant observation in the call room. I also describe the flow of information between different emergency assistance organizations. Lastly, I describe the call-takers' work station and equipment, as well as the computer application in which the incident log is created.

Chapter 4 explores the overall structural organization of emergency calls in the context of the 9-1-1 Emergency System in Costa Rica. First, I provide a review of prior research on the overall structural organization of emergency calls. Second, I analyze the different activities that constitute calling to the emergency services: an opening sequence, a reason for the call, an interrogative series, a response of assistance, and a closing sequence. The analysis also reveals some distinct aspects of calls to the Costa Rican service, particularly regarding call openings, interrogative series, and responses of assistance.

Chapter 5 explores the activity of requesting help. First, I provide a succinct review of research on the reason for the call to 9-1-1. Secondly, I analyze the design of requesting turns, focusing on three main formats: explicit requests, reports, and descriptions. Drawing on notions of entitlement and contingency of requests (Curl & Drew, 2008) and benefactive stance and status (Clayman & Heritage, 2014), I discuss how, in designing requests, callers display their orientations to contingencies involved in the provision of help and entitlement to the service.

Chapter 6 explores the activity of formulating the location of the incident. First, I review research on place formulation with emphasis on formulating place in the context of emergency calls. Second, I describe practices used by callers when formulating the location of the incident, namely: geographical formulations, landmark formulations, and “other signs” formulations. I draw upon the notion of granularity (Schegloff, 2000) to argue that these practices correspond to different levels of granularity in place formulations. Third, I examine what constitutes an institutionally sufficient place formulation.

Chapter 7 closes the dissertation. First, I review the interactional phenomena analyzed in each chapter and summarize the findings. Lastly, I discuss the theoretical implications of the reported findings, as well as the possible practical implications of this research.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Literature review**

In what follows, I first review conversation analytic research on institutional interaction, and then review research on emergency calls. I also provide reviews of particular interactional phenomena in each analytic chapter.

#### **Conversation analytic approach to institutional interaction**

From a conversation analytic (CA) perspective, the institutionality of interaction is not predetermined by the setting (e.g., whether the interaction happens in a courtroom or a physician's office), but rather by how participants negotiate, orient to, and understand the interaction that is happening (Drew & Heritage, 1992a; Heritage & Clayman, 2010). Interactions characterized as institutional are task-oriented, and one of the participants involved presents him or herself as interacting on behalf of or as a representative of an institution. Participants in institutional interactions share orientation to carrying out particular institutional goals (Drew & Heritage, 1992b; Heritage & Clayman, 2010). For instance, callers to the 9-1-1 emergency number expect to receive assistance, and call-takers expect callers to have some sort of urgent incident; thus, their shared knowledge of the type of activity allows them to achieve the goal of receiving and dispatching the help.

Institutional interactions are also characterized by particular constraints on participation (Drew & Heritage, 1992a; Heritage & Clayman, 2010). Participants are oriented to pursuing their institution-specific goals, which are accomplished through talk-in-interaction; however, how participants accomplish these goals may differ for

professionals and non-professionals. Institutional constraints may exist that shape the interaction and the types and sequencing of allowable contributions, some of which may not be known to non-professional (Drew & Heritage, 1992a; Heritage & Clayman, 2010). For example, calling 9-1-1 to solicit information about a Nutcracker ballet show would not constitute an allowable contribution in this particular setting.

Additionally, institutional interactions may be characterized by specialized inferential frameworks, i.e., implicatures or inferences about the workings of institutions that allow participants to understand each other (Drew & Heritage, 1992b; Heritage & Clayman, 2010). In other words, the inferential frameworks relate to the institution-specific goals and the participants understand their contributions regarding these goals. For instance, an inferential framework of emergency services is that someone who dials 9-1-1 might be seeking help; thus, a call-taker might understand hanging up the phone as a request for help.

When examining institutional talk, researchers may focus on the following dimensions: the turn-taking system, overall structural organization, sequence organization, turn design, lexical choice, and practical epistemology and social relations (Drew & Heritage, 1992b; Heritage & Clayman, 2010). During some institutional interactions (e.g., in courtrooms or during interviews or debates), the *turn-taking system* (i.e., the distribution of turns among participants) may be constrained in various ways, such as by: a turn-type preallocation (as in news interviews), the use of mediator (as in formal debates), or a mix of the two (Heritage & Clayman, 2010). In other kinds of institutions (such as those involving calls for help), turn-taking is negotiated on a turn-by-turn basis, as is the case with mundane talk (Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974).

The *overall structural organization* refers to the sequence of activities that comprises the interaction (Schegloff, 2007). Excluding the opening and closing sequences of mundane talk, these conversations have a very open structural organization. However, institutional talk is constrained by interactional activity and its component tasks. In the case of emergency calls, the overall structural organization is constrained by the tasks at hand (i.e., requesting help and providing assistance) and includes a pre-beginning, a conversation opening, a request for help, an interrogative series, a response to the request, and a conversation closing (M. R. Whalen & Zimmerman, 1987; Zimmerman, 1992b).

The *sequence organization* refers to how the interaction is organized through sequences of actions (e.g., adjacency pairs) and ways in which turns are coherent with prior turns (Schegloff, 2007); for example, a turn may be understood not as responding to the prior question, but instead as launching an insert sequence. *Turn design* refers to aspects of turn composition and action formation. In institutional interaction, turn design may be shaped by the contingencies and constraints of the specialized turn-taking system, by the institutional goals (Schegloff, 2007), and by knowledge asymmetries (i.e., designing a turn for a patient vs. a medical student). Participants' *lexical choices* can show how participants evoke and orient to particular institutional identities. For example, the use of technical terms by one participant can show his or her knowledge of the terminology, and also serves as a way to enact his or her identity as a competent or knowledgeable speaker (Drew & Heritage, 1992a; Heritage & Clayman, 2010; Kitzinger & Mandelbaum, 2013).

Research on *practical epistemology* and *social relations* examines the management of knowledge, entitlement, institutional asymmetries, and participants' rights and responsibilities in relation to the institution (Drew & Heritage, 1992a; Drew & Walker, 2010; C. W. Raymond, 2014; G. Raymond & Zimmerman, 2007; K. Tracy, 1997; Zimmerman, 1992b). For example, during a 9-1-1 call, callers may account for how they became aware of the incident, which may serve as a way to display their epistemic standing in relation to the incident and to justify their request (G. Raymond & Zimmerman, 2007; Zimmerman, 1992b).

### **Conversation analytic research on emergency calls**

Callers to 9-1-1 request medical help or assistance from the police, fire department or other public safety services. Callers may present life-threatening incidents, as well as other less serious incidents or “problems of marginal urgency” (Heritage & Clayman, 2010, p. 79). Calling for help is a monotopical activity with the specific framework of dealing with one single task at hand throughout the entire call (i.e., as opposed to mundane calls, during which interactants may have one or more tasks to accomplish throughout the duration of the call). During emergency call interactions, participants negotiate the institutional requirements of call processing and the circumstances of each call (Zimmerman, 1992). Regardless of the internal organization of each call center and its technological characteristics (e.g., the use of a particular computer application, its call processing protocols, the form of the dispatched package, etc.), all call centers have the same goal of gathering the information required to assess the incident in a timely manner (Zimmerman, 1992). This goal is achieved by completing the following tasks (Zimmerman, 1992):

- a) Collecting information about the problem in order to categorize what kind of incident it is (e.g., a fire, crime, car accident, etc.) and, thus, what kind of help that is needed.
- b) Collecting information about the location of the incident; for example, if the incident occurred in a street or intersection, and whether it occurred in a house, apartment, or public area.
- c) Collecting additional information about the incident; for example, whether a suspect is armed or whether people were injured in a car accident.
- d) Gatekeeping the provision of service by analyzing whether or not the incident justifies sending assistance, given that it is a limited public resource.

These tasks, in turn, will help in the creation of the dispatch package, i.e., the information collected by the call-taker to be sent to the local emergency team that will respond to the emergency (Zimmerman, 1992b).

Telephone calls made during both mundane and institutional talk are generally understood as interactions occurring between two parties. During emergency calls, however, and depending on the institutional organization of the emergency center, more than one person might be involved in answering the telephone (J. Whalen & Zimmerman, 2005). For example, call-takers and dispatchers might share the same call room and, although call-takers are the ones who answer the call, dispatchers might have access to the information collected during the call. In other words, the emergency center is a multi-party team involved in call management (J. Whalen & Zimmerman, 2005).

Several studies of 911 calls (M. R. Whalen & Zimmerman, 1987; Zimmerman, 1992b) have examined the overall structural organization of emergency calls, which

includes: a pre-beginning, an opening, a reason for the call or a request for help, an interrogative series, a response, and a closing. Although the same phases may apply to interactions during others service encounters, such as calling an airline to reserve a ticket (Zimmerman, 1984), the particularity of emergency calls lies in the fact that help is being sought and provided. For a review of prior research on each particular phase of emergency calls, see Chapter 4 “Overall structural organization of calls to 9-1-1 Costa Rica.” For a review of research on requests during emergency calls, see Chapter 5 “Requesting help in calls to 9-1-1 Costa Rica.” For a review of research on the interrogative series regarding location formulations, see Chapter 6 “Formulating place in calls to 9-1-1 Costa Rica.” In what follows, I review prior research on gatekeeping considerations and interactional problems while managing emotions in calls to emergency numbers.

### **Research on gatekeeping considerations**

Call-takers are gatekeepers of the service and callers are held accountable for requesting help (Zimmerman, 1984). Callers may provide an account of the requested assistance. If not, call-takers solicit this type of information, as they need to assess the worthiness of the request. Additionally, callers are accountable for requesting a public safety service, contrary to requesting other types of service (Heritage & Clayman, 2010; M. R. Whalen & Zimmerman, 1987). For example, whereas shopping customers are not held accountable for buying a book, callers to a 9-1-1 service are accountable for such a request.

When assessing the incident, call-takers follow two “gatekeeping considerations” (Heritage & Clayman, 2010, p. 72): the genuineness and relevance of the incident. The

*genuineness issue* refers to verifying the veracity of the incident, as some callers may make malicious reports or report situations that appear to be incidents but turn out not to be (Heritage & Clayman, 2010); for example, someone could report a fire due to smoke on a property, when in reality the smoke is coming from a barbeque gathering. Callers display the genuineness of a situation by stating how they had physical access to the scene, their social relationship to the incident, or their practical epistemology (M. R. Whalen & Zimmerman, 1990). Callers may use chronological narratives in order to get an extended turn to describe the incident (Zimmerman, 1992b), which allows them to provide detailed information about the scene and how they became aware of the incident. While describing the incident, callers may account for their entitlement to request the service and the policeability of the situation (Meehan, 1989). However, callers may treat the questioning during the interrogative series phase as “face-threatening” acts, as they may feel that call-takers are challenging their problem presentation and trustworthiness (S. J. Tracy, 2002).

The *relevance issue* refers to whether or not the incident pertains to an emergency service (Heritage & Clayman, 2010). For example, calling to 9-1-1 to solicit information about a closed road would not be relevant to the emergency service, given that in Costa Rica, this information is directly managed by the Traffic Police. It has been found that when callers request services that do not pertain to emergency services, they preface the request with a “token of apology” (Heritage & Clayman, 2010, p. 78). Gatekeeping considerations do not only apply to the provision of the service, but also to the language used during the interaction. Another line of research (C. W. Raymond, 2014) examines how participants negotiate the language used during calls to 9-1-1 when callers do not

speak English (this particular research uses Spanish as the other language). This study shows that call-takers are not only gatekeepers of access to the emergency service, but also of access to the language.

One line of research focuses on callers' display of entitlement to the requested assistance. Callers' insufficient or null knowledge about the incident may be related to their social relationship to the incident (M. R. Whalen & Zimmerman, 1990), which in turn relates to gatekeeping issues. One study analyzes how claims of insufficient knowledge or a lack of knowledge when requesting help during emergency calls via the phrase "I don't know" hinder the granting of assistance (Fele, 2014). When callers do not have sufficient or any knowledge of the incident, it is difficult for them to ground the request for help or display entitlement.

Another line of research analyzes the use of categories in emergency calls (Berger, Kitzinger, & Ellis, 2016; Del Corona & Ostermann, 2013). For example, topics within this line of research include how a caller uses a particular category to refer to a person (e.g., a personal doctor) in order to resist the course of action initiated by the call-taker (Berger et al., 2016), or how the way in which the callers categorize the violators influences the policeability of the reported incident (Del Corona & Ostermann, 2013). Some incidents do not constitute emergencies or crimes, but rather conflicts or fights between callers and a third person; therefore, when the caller categorizes him or herself as the "victim" and the third person as the "offender," they create an opposition between themselves and the offenders that will subsequently impact the outcome of the requested assistance (Del Corona & Ostermann, 2013).

### **Research on managing emotions in emergency calls**

When a person experiences a life-threatening situation, it is expected that his or her behavior will be affected. If that person decides to call an emergency line for help, call-takers need to know how to handle the emotions displayed by callers during the interaction, or how to “take control of the call” (J. Whalen & Zimmerman, 1998, p. 153). For instance, if a caller is not able to provide a report of the incident, it will be difficult for the call-taker to dispatch the service required. Call-takers need to gather the most precise information possible from the caller in order to dispatch the correct service, such as an ambulance, a police patrol or a fire truck. Sometimes, callers are so emotionally affected by the situation that collecting this information becomes a very difficult task.

Callers may display their emotions via verbalizations and/or paralinguistic behaviors (Heritage & Clayman, 2010); for example, they may use expressions of surprise, such as “oh my God,” or they may even sob. By showing emotion during an emergency call, callers may legitimize the emergency (J. Whalen & Zimmerman, 1998). Nonetheless, emotions may hinder callers’ cooperativeness during the call, as they may not be able to provide specific information about the incident necessary to dispatch the assistance (J. Whalen & Zimmerman, 1998). In these cases, call-takers may take control of the call by summoning the callers, asking them to calm down, and/or reassuring them that the assistance is on the way.

Research shows that the display of emotion by callers is precisely placed (Kidwell, 2006; J. Whalen & Zimmerman, 1998). However, showing uncontrolled emotion (such as “hysteria”) might lead to misunderstandings, premature hang-ups, problems when gathering accurate information, and, in the worst case scenario,

someone's death (Drew & Heritage, 1992b; Heritage & Clayman, 2010; Kidwell, 2006; J. Whalen & Zimmerman, 1998). During emergency calls, a person is labeled as "hysteric" when he or she is so distressed that he or she cannot provide the necessary information (J. Whalen & Zimmerman, 1998), particularly information needed for dispatching the emergency service.

Additionally, callers may not be aware of the reasoning behind the call-takers' questionnaire (Heritage & Clayman, 2010). As a result, callers may become angry and upset during the interrogative series, which may impede the collection of crucial information necessary in order to assess if the incident is worthy of assistance. However, callers may also become angry during the opening of the call, as problems may arise when requesting the help due to different frameworks (K. Tracy, 1997); for example, someone may request medical assistance using linguistic constructions commonly used during customer services encounters. On the other hand, other problems may arise during the opening of the calls when the activity of calling for help has been "contaminated" with other activity (e.g., the infamous Dallas call in which the request for assistance became contaminated with an argument) (J. Whalen, Zimmerman, & Whalen, 1988).

Call-takers are recipients of callers' emotions (S. J. Tracy & Tracy, 1998), but their responses to callers are institutional and task-oriented, rather than personal or empathetic (Heritage & Clayman, 2010). On the other hand, call-takers may also experience distress, sadness, anger, anxiety and/or powerlessness triggered by highly emotional emergencies (S. J. Tracy & Tracy, 1998), such as cases of domestic violence, when elders and/or children are injured, life or death incidents, or in-progress incidents. Because of this, some emergency centers have guidelines for how to manage emotions.

Research found that call-takers manage their emotions via strategies such as giving advice to the caller, self-talk, joking, and/or storytelling (S. J. Tracy & Tracy, 1998). Studying emotions displayed during calls is important not only because it gives us a better understanding of how emotions are organized during talk (J. Whalen & Zimmerman, 1998), but also because it may have practical implications for emergency centers (S. J. Tracy & Tracy, 1998).

Research also focuses on examining cases that failed to achieve a positive outcome. For example, there may be misalignment problems between callers and call-takers, as examined in the “Dallas call” (J. Whalen et al., 1988). In other words, interactants may have different opinions regarding how the interaction is unfolding and/or different expectations of how it should unfold and, thus, engage in a dispute that may complicate achieving the requested help. On the other hand, some problems may arise in establishing intersubjectivity between callers and call-takers when call-takers do not properly listen and/or display their understanding regarding the callers’ incident (Svennevig, 2012); this may lead to “activity contamination” (Svennevig, 2012; K. Tracy, 1997; J. Whalen et al., 1988) and a negative outcome.

### **Conclusions**

As we can see from the conversation analytic research reviewed in this section, some phases (or constituent activities) of emergency calls have received more attention than others. For example, the opening sequence and interrogative series have been studied more than the response of assistance or the closing sequence. In addition, research on interrogative series has mainly focused on problem presentation, not on place formulation. This dissertation aims to contribute to our knowledge of interrogative series

by examining activities that participants engage in during this phase other than problem presentation, namely: place formulation and verification of callers' information. This dissertation also builds on prior research on the opening sequence and the response of assistance by drawing on linguistic and institutional practices that might explain the differences occurring in these two phases (i.e., differences existing among the findings of prior research and those of this dissertation regarding the opening sequence and the response of assistance). For example, by examining the opening sequence and paying close attention to possible differences between the opening sequence of emergency calls in the U.S. and the U.K., we learn not only about different institutional practices, but also about cultural practices that may explain the use (or lack thereof) of greetings in the opening sequence.

Most of the conversation analytic research – in general and specifically on 9-1-1 services – has been conducted in English-speaking countries, such as the U.S. and the U.K. However, little research has been conducted on other varieties of English; for instance, South African English (Penn, Koole, & Natrass, 2016; Penn, Watermeyer, & Natrass, 2016; Penn, Watermeyer, Neel, & Natrass, 2015). Nevertheless, non-English research is growing. For example, research has been conducted in France (Fele, 2006, 2014), Italy (Paoletti, 2012a, 2012b), Brazil (Del Corona & Ostermann, 2012, 2013), Sweden (Cromdal, Landqvist, Persson-Thunqvist, & Osvaldsson, 2012; Cromdal, Persson-Thunqvist, & Osvaldsson, 2012), and Denmark (Larsen, 2013). However, little conversation analytic research has been conducted in Spanish (Cashman & Raymond, 2014; C. W. Raymond, 2014, 2015, 2016a, 2016b), and this dissertation aims to contribute to extending said research to the Spanish language.

### **Chapter 3**

#### **Methodology and Data**

This chapter is organized as follows: first, I provide a methodological background for Conversation Analysis; second, I describe and explain the data; and third, I provide background information about 9-1-1 Costa Rica.

#### **Methodological backgrounds**

This study uses the methodology of Conversation Analysis (Sidnell & Stivers, 2013). As field of study, Conversation Analysis (CA) was developed in the 1960s from the work of Harvey Sacks, Emanuel Schegloff, and Gail Jefferson (Clayman & Gill, 2004; Heritage, 1984; Heritage & Clayman, 2010; Maynard, 2013). CA is rooted in two traditions of sociology: Goffman's (1983) interaction order and Garfinkel's (1967) ethnomethodology, which examines shared methods of practical reasoning. CA marked a shift in the research paradigm for approaching the study of social interaction (Maynard, 2013). The main goals of CA are to describe and explain methods used by people when interacting, and to describe the underlying mechanisms that organize social interaction (Clayman & Gill, 2004).

Four main assumptions underlie CA research. First, ordinary conversation is the foundation of social institutions (Sacks et al., 1974), as ordinary conversation is embedded in human interaction in all institutional domains (Schegloff, 1987). In other words, it is through ordinary conversation that other types of social institutions are brought to life. Second, "there is order at all points" during the interaction (Sacks, 1984, p. 22) (i.e., the activities and practices in which people engage are stable and organized

because without order, people would not be able to understand each other's behaviors).

Third, social practices are independent of participants' characteristics (Heritage & Clayman, 2010); that is, the analysis is inductive and data-driven, and the relevance of context (in a varied sense of the word) must be demonstrated rather than presumed.

Fourth, participants' turns-at-talk are contextually oriented in that they are both "context-shaped" and "context-renewing" (Heritage, 1984; Schegloff & Sacks, 1973). For instance, if Person A offers a ride to Person B, then Person B's response is shaped by the prior turn and he or she will subsequently accept or reject the offer; however, Person B's turn will also set up a slot for the next turn and determine how it will be produced and interpreted. Sequences are the foundation of intersubjectivity, as each contribution shows the speaker's understanding of the prior action and allows for a possibility for correction.

A key feature of CA is the use of naturally-occurring interaction that it is captured by audio or video recordings (Sacks, 1984). On the one hand, the usage of naturalistic data (i.e., not hypothetical scenarios or researcher-created data) captures the interaction as it happens (rather than relying on participants' reports). On the other hand, the usage of recordings serves as a resource for analyzing and reanalyzing the data (Sacks, 1984). The use of recordings in conjunction with transcripts adds validity to data analysis, as someone can reanalyze the data and/or show the data to other scholars in order to discuss the findings (Heritage, 2002; Heritage & Clayman, 2010; Peräkylä, 2004; Sidnell, 2013). Transcripts are not considered data and are not used in place of the recordings, but they do however make up a key analytic tool (Clayman & Gill, 2004; Hepburn & Bolden, 2013). The transcription system was created by Jefferson (1984) with the goal of showing

features of the produced talk (e.g., overlapping talk, volume, pitch, intonation), as well features accompanying the produced talk (e.g., laughter, crying).

CA is an inductive qualitative method primarily grounded in data (Clayman & Gill, 2004; Heritage, 2002) of naturally-occurring interactions, which range from encounters in everyday contexts to institutional contexts. CA is also a cumulative method, as it builds on previous findings (Sidnell, 2013). Its data analysis is emic (Heritage, 2002), as its analytic claims are grounded in participants' own understandings. Additionally, the data analysis is always driven by responding to the omnirelevant question "why that now?" (Schegloff, 2007; Schegloff & Sacks, 1973) that participants ask themselves in order to produce an appropriate next action. This question addresses three key analytic elements: the action which a turn-at-talk is accomplishing (i.e., the "why"), the composition of the turn (i.e., the "that"), and its sequential environment (i.e., the "now").

## **Data**

In this section, I will describe the data, collection, data analysis, and the transcription system.

### **Data collection**

The data for this study come from audio-recorded telephone calls to the 9-1-1 Emergency System in Costa Rica. The corpus consists of 7,300 audio files, totaling 71 hours. All 9-1-1 calls are routinely recorded by the Department of Service Delivery Process, which provided me with a random selection of calls recorded during the months of January, February, March, April, July, and September of 2013. The duration of the calls varies from a few seconds to several minutes. The calls represent various types of

incidents, such as domestic violence, car accidents, fires, alcohol abuse, shootings, and medical assistance. For this dissertation, I examined 634 audio files; 215 of the 634 audio files were incidents (almost 34%), and the remaining 419 audio files were either prank calls, hung-up calls, or just the automatic recording of the institutional identification message (comprising 66% of the analyzed audio files).

In addition to the recordings, I also conducted ethnographic work at the call center, which included non-participant observation in the call room, as well as interviews with staff members. I observed the call room a total of two times. One of the times, I sat next to a call-taker for a period of two hours and observed her answering calls and using the computer application in which incidents are registered. The other time, I sat in the supervisors' area, observed their work, and conducted informal interviews with two of the supervisors regarding the difficulties encountered by call-takers. For example, the supervisors explained to me the resources used by call-takers when locating landmarks in geographical areas that might be unknown to the call-takers.

I also participated in an introductory training session in the use of the computer application used to create incident logs. This application, as detailed in the next subsection (see "The computer application" section), is crucial in registering the calls. Additionally, it is necessary for a research to be familiar with its functioning in order to have a better understanding of the locational information of incidents. I also conducted an interview with the coordinator of the Delivery Service Department, during which we discussed the flow of the information (e.g., from the caller to the local responding team), the classification of requests for help (e.g., codes of each incident given by the responding institutions, the level of urgency predetermined within the description of each

incident code), the dispatch package (e.g., the information sent, the circumstances under which call-takers transfer the call to the local dispatch center), and the management of calls (e.g., granted vs. non-granted assistance).

### **Data transcription**

Following the method of Conversation Analysis (Sidnell & Stivers, 2013), calls were transcribed using its standard conventions (Hepburn & Bolden, 2013; Jefferson, 1984) and then subsequently translated into English. Transcripts follow the Leipzig glossing conventions (Comrie, Haspelmath, & Bickel, 2015), which include three lines: the first line includes the transcription in its original language (i.e., Costa Rican Spanish), the second line includes a word-by-word gloss with some grammatical information, and the third line includes an idiomatic translation into English. Excerpt 1 (see below) shows an example of how this three-line transcript appears.

#### ***Excerpt 1. (ECR-111 Deja la bebé sola / She leaves the baby alone)***

013 C: Y la muchacha yo no sé si **(first line)**  
 And the girl I no know.1SG if **(second line)**  
*And the girl I don't know if* **(third line)**

014 será menor de edad, y vieras  
 would-be.3SG minor of age and look.2SG  
*she would be a minor, and look*

015 que deja la chiquita, sola  
 that leave.3SG the little-girl alone  
*she leaves the little girl, alone*

016 con otros menores de edad,  
 with others minors of age  
*with other minors,*

In Excerpt 1 above, we see that the conversation analytic transcription symbols (e.g., intonation) are marked in the first and third lines (see the comma symbol in the transcript). In the second line, some relevant grammatical information is included, such as verb conjugations (marked for person, number, tense, and mode). For example: “*deja*” (line 15) is translated in the second line as “leave.3SG”.

The data were anonymized. All identifiable information about callers (i.e., names and telephone number) was removed (see Excerpt 2 below). Locational information was altered to prevent possible identification of participants’ places of residence. For example, if the caller explains that the incident is occurring in a white house located 200 meters north from a certain landmark, the transcript will alter the distance, the cardinal direction, and the color of the building. The landmark information remains unaltered given that it does not reveal the speaker’s identity without the other locational information and it is necessary for the purposes of this study (see Chapter 6 “Formulating place in calls to 9-1-1 Costa Rica”).

***Excerpt 2. (ECR-01 Várices / Varicose veins)***

041 CT: Cuál es su nombre señora?  
Which is your name ma’am  
*What is your name ma’am?*

042 C: NOMBRE APELLIDO APELLIDO  
NAME LAST-NAME LAST-NAME  
*NAME LAST NAME LAST NAME*

043 (5.0) ((typing sounds))

044 CT: Doña NAME (.) de qué número de  
Misses NAME (.) from what number of  
*Misses NAME (.) what telephone number*

045            teléfono me        llama?  
               telephone to-me call.2S  
               *are you calling from?*

046    C:        00 00, 00 00.

In excerpt 2 above, we see that the name of the caller is not provided (line 42). Instead, names will be recorded as “NAME” and “LAST NAME”. The transcripts only show what type of name information was provided, i.e., whether the caller provided just the first name or a full name with one or two last names<sup>1</sup> (line 42). The telephone number is represented by zeros on the transcript (line 46).

In addition, geographical names (of neighborhoods, towns, districts, counties, provinces, etc.) have a special treatment, since Chapter six examines place formulations. Geographical names are classified in the second line of the transcripts by type, that is, whether the place is a neighborhood, a county, or a province, as shown in excerpt 3:

***Excerpt 3. (ECR-87 Infección vaginal / Vaginal infection)***

005    C:        Es para ver        si nos        mandan        una  
               Is for see.INF if to-us send.2PL a/one  
               *I'm calling to see if you send us an*

006            ambulancia aquí a Dulce Nombre  
               ambulance here to NEIGHBORHOOD  
               *ambulance here in Dulce Nombre*

007            of San Isidro de Alajue:la¿  
               of DISTRICT        of COUNTY/PROVINCE  
               *of San Isidro of Alajue:la¿*

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<sup>1</sup> Latin American countries follow the Spanish tradition of having one first name, an optional middle name, and two last names (i.e., the first last name belongs to the father, and the second last name belongs to the mother).

In excerpt 3, we see that the caller has provided the neighborhood (“Dulce Nombre”; line 6), the district (“San Isidro”; line 7), and the county/province (“Alajuela”; line 7). A more detailed explanation of the transcription system is provided in appendix A, whereas appendix B describes the Leipzig Glossing Rules.

### **Data analysis**

As mentioned above, the data for this dissertation comes from telephone recordings to the 9-1-1 Emergency System in Costa Rica. Once the telephone recordings of emergency calls were obtained, the data processing began with sorting out audio recordings to determine which were real incidents and which ones were not (e.g., hang-ups, prank calls). After the corpus was built up (i.e., 215 “real incident” audio recordings out of 634 audio files), the calls were meticulously transcribed using the transcription conventions of Conversation Analysis (Hepburn & Bolden, 2013; Jefferson, 1984) (see the above subsection). The transcription process included anonymizing the transcripts and audio files, as well as translating the transcripts into English following the Leipzig Glossing Rules (Comrie et al., 2015) (see the above subsection).

The data was analyzed following conversation analytic procedures (Peräkylä, 2004; Sidnell, 2013). These procedures involve identifying particular interactional practices and examining them in detail, compiling collections of similar cases so as to describe recurrent patterns. For example, once calls were sorted out, transcribed, and translated, I examined the practice of requesting help. I closely looked at the turn design of each request and, based on the different designs, compiled collections according to the actions conveyed by each design format. Once the collections were built up, it was possible to describe the interactional patterns of this particular activity.

The ethnographic interviews and non-participant observations were used as supporting material to help in analyzing the recordings of the 9-1-1 calls. This ethnographic material allowed for me to gain a better understanding of the organizational processes involved in responding to 9-1-1 calls. For example, the ethnographic material was used in the “Background information about 9-1-1 Costa Rica” (see below) in describing the flow of information and explaining the functioning of the computer application used by call-takers when creating incident logs.

### **Background information about 9-1-1 Costa Rica**

“*El Sistema de Emergencias 9-1-1*” in Costa Rica (the 9-1-1 Emergency System, in English) was created in 1994 with the goal of constructing a unified system to respond to emergencies. The aim of the system is “to participate, timely and efficiently, in emergency care for the lives, liberty, integrity, and security of the citizens or in cases of danger to their property”<sup>2</sup> (Act of Establishing the 9-1-1 Emergency System; *Ley No. 7566 Creación del Sistema de Emergencias 9-1-1*, in Spanish). Nowadays, it coordinates the work of the Costa Rican Red Cross, Fire Department, Rural Guard, Civil Guard, Ministry of Public Safety, National Poison Center, Judiciary Investigation Bureau, Traffic Police, Association for the Deaf, Women’s Institute, Institute of Masculinity, and all of the hospitals around the country.

The system is countrywide and centralizes responses to emergencies across the country. Its headquarters – containing the administrative offices and the call center– are located in San José, the country’s capital city. 9-1-1 Costa Rica receives all telephone

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<sup>2</sup> The original text in Spanish reads “*Participar, oportuna y eficientemente, en la atención de situaciones de emergencia para la vida, libertad, integridad y seguridad de los ciudadanos o en casos de peligro para sus bienes*” (*Ley No. 7566 Creación del Sistema de Emergencias 9-1-1*).

calls from any geographical point in the country, and then transfers the information to the respective local dispatcher according to the geographical point at which the emergency is occurring. Because its purpose is to relay information to relevant dispatchers, 9-1-1 Costa Rica neither refuses nor promises to dispatch assistance; the dispatch of assistance is coordinated by each responding institution and is granted according to the availability of resources and the incident's level of priority.

9-1-1 is a network that connects all of the responding institutions. Each responding institution has a “*despacho*” (“central communication office,” in English) that contains 9-1-1's technological equipment, but is operated by officials of the responding institution. For instance, although there is a computer owned by 9-1-1 in the Fire Department's central office in the capital city, it is operated by Fire Department officials. That computer works with the same computer application as 9-1-1 and shows all of the incident logs in real time.

### **Flow of information**

As mentioned above, 9-1-1 Costa Rica is a centralized system that gathers information about incidents and transfers it to a particular responding institution (e.g., the Fire Department, the Costa Rican Red Cross). In other words, 9-1-1 is the link between callers and all responding teams. According to the interviews I conducted, the information flows as follows: (1) the callers call 9-1-1; (2) the call-takers receive calls and create an incident log using a computer application; (3) the incident log is sent automatically to staff at a particular responder's “central communication office” located in the capital of each province; staff at each provincial central communication office has a computer linked to 9-1-1's computer application system and can view the incident log

in real time; and (4) the provincial central communication offices transfer information about the incident (by internal telephone or radio) to a local (district) emergency team in charge of dispatching the assistance. Figure 1 (below) illustrates this process.

Officials in provincial central communication offices have access to the incident log, as they share the same computer application as call-takers, and they send information about the incident (i.e., a dispatch package) via radio or telephone to local dispatch centers. The dispatch package includes: (a) the location of the incident, and (b) “*información adicional*” (“additional information,” in English).

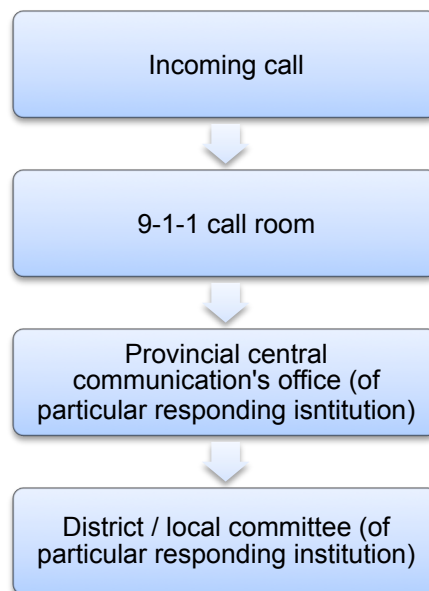


Figure 1. Information flow in 9-1-1 services dispatch.

As observed during my non-participant observation in the call center in the 9-1-1 headquarters, the system uses an enhanced computer system (Zimmerman, 1992) for gathering information about the emergencies. In other words, the system retrieves the caller’s information, which is “automatically displayed on a console in the dispatch

center when the call is answered” (p. 432). The information is retrieved from the telephone subscribers’ database, and it contains the subscriber’s name, telephone number, and address. Call-takers must verify the subscriber’s information in the database with the information provided by the caller during the call. Call-takers verify the caller’s information in order to distinguish between prank phone calls and calls reporting actual incidents. Call-takers can see the telephone number of each incoming call displayed on the screen. Even blocked and private numbers can be seen on the screen because 9-1-1 has the legal authority to unlock these numbers.

### **Call processing**

9-1-1 Costa Rica has established call-processing procedures for call-takers to follow, which are described in the “*Guía del operador*” (“Operator’s Manual,” in English). Call-takers should: (1) select an incident code, (2) gather information about the incident via a questionnaire, (3) create an incident log, and (4) verify callers’ information by soliciting the caller’s full name and telephone number. Soliciting the caller’s information is a practice that 9-1-1 implemented in order to distinguish between inappropriate calls and actual emergencies. When asked about their personal information (i.e., name and telephone number), callers tend to hang up if it is an inappropriate call. In such cases, call-takers register the call as inappropriate and a report is sent to the office in charge of processing a fine for making an inappropriate call. Fines are included in the callers’ telephone bill.

The manual identifies three phases of the call processing, namely: the reception phase, processing phase, and transferring phase. In the *reception phase*, call-takers are instructed to open the call with “*Emergencias nueve, uno, uno, ¿cuál es su emergencia?*”

(“Nine one one emergency, what is your emergency?,” in English), if the automatic recording is not activated. Call-takers are taught to contact the supervisor in the event of a glitch in ALI/ANI (i.e., the telephone subscriber’s database). Call-takers are also instructed on how to classify and treat different types of calls, including: silent calls, interrupted calls, wrong calls, unintentional calls, multiple calls reporting the same incident, dubious calls, inappropriate (i.e., obscene, insulting, or false alarm) calls, and calls in foreign languages.

During the *processing phase*, call-takers should obtain callers’ information and the location of the incident, as well as classify the incident. During this phase, callers are also asked for their name and telephone number in order to verify the call. When requesting location information, call-takers must verify the location with the information from the telephone subscribers’ database and modify it accordingly for cellphone calls or when the incident is happening at another location. Regarding the location of the incident, the Operator’s Manual (March, 2015) states that the call-taker should:

confirm with the caller the selected zone before continuing processing the incident. If the call comes from a landline and the caller is not able to provide the exact address, help the caller by reading aloud the address shown in the Telephone Operators’ database. If the call comes from a cellphone, the address shown in the database may not necessarily match the real place of the incident. For the time being, the computer application is not able to triangulate a

cellphone's location. Determining the address of the incident depends on the call-taker's ability and the information provided by the caller. (pp. 1-2)<sup>3</sup>

According to the interviews I conducted, the information about the type of incident is based on the description of incidents that each responding institution has created. The primary responding institution creates the “*código*” (“code,” in English) or the incident identification information, which includes: (1) a code number, (2) the name of the emergency, (3) the level of priority from 1 (high) to 4 (low), (4) a description (e.g., a description of the incident, as well as instructions regarding when it is mandatory to transfer the call to the local dispatch center), (5) a questionnaire to assess the nature and urgency of incidents, and (6) the responders (i.e., primary and secondary).

The *transferring phase* is the last phase identified in the manual. During this phase, call-takers may transfer the call to third parties, such as to a dispatcher or supervisor, or they may end the call. When transferring to third parties, call takers are instructed regarding how to advise the caller to stay on the line, how to contact the third party, and how to connect the caller to the third party. When ending a call, call-takers might promise assistance, mention the call-taker's code, and instruct the caller to hang up.

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<sup>3</sup> The original text in Spanish reads “*Confirme con el usuario la zona seleccionada, antes de continuar con el trámite del incidente. Si la llamada proviene de un teléfono fijo y el usuario no logra proporcionar una ubicación exacta, díctele la dirección que aparece en la base de datos de los Operadores Telefónicos para tratar de ayudar al usuario. Si la llamada proviene de un teléfono celular, no necesariamente la dirección en la base de datos corresponde al lugar actual del incidente; por el momento, la aplicación informática no es capaz de triangular una ubicación del celular, por lo que depende de la habilidad del operador y de la información que aporte el usuario para precisar la dirección del incidente.*” (Operator's Manual, 2015).

### Call-takers' work stations

During my non-participant observation, I observed the physical setting of the call room. Call-takers' work station (see Figure 2 below) includes one desktop computer with two monitors, a set of headphones with a microphone, and a telephone with access to external (eight-digit) and internal (four-digit) numbers. The monitor on the left hand side is used to create incident logs, whereas the monitor in the right hand side has the "*herramienta facilidades*" ("facilities' tool," in English), a calendar, and other applications that call-takers may need.

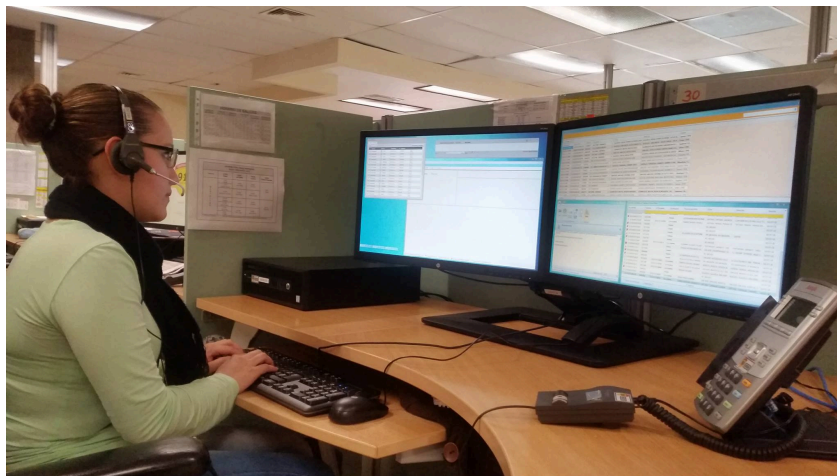


Figure 2. Photograph of a call-takers' work station at the 9-1-1 Emergency System in Costa Rica, by *Sistema de Emergencias 9-1-1 Costa Rica* Facebook profile.<sup>4</sup>

While interviewing the supervisors, I was told that 9-1-1 Costa Rica has created a set of strategies to deal with the problem of identifying the location of the incident (see

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<sup>4</sup> Retrieved from  
<https://www.facebook.com/364129593611839/photos/a.392860430738755.97952.364129593611839/1390808570943931/?type=3&theater>

Chapter 6). For example, 9-1-1 created the “*herramienta facilidades*” (“facilities tool,” in English) and its own database of landmarks with information about the provinces, counties, and districts, as well as a database of highways with a breakdown of kilometers by province, county, and district. This tool is a database that provides information about zone codes, landmarks, citizens (e.g. identification numbers), telephone directories. This information is retrieved from the databases of the “*Instituto Costarricense de Electricidad*” (“Costa Rican Institute for Electricity,” in English; i.e., the public telephone and electricity provider), the “*Tribunal Supremo de Elecciones*” (“Supreme Electoral Tribunal,” in English), and the “*Instituto Geográfico Nacional*” (“National Geographic Institute,” in English). These databases were created and are maintained by 9-1-1 call-takers, and are checked against the database of the “*Instituto Geográfico Nacional*” to assign landmark codes (according to the province, country, and district).

During my non-participant observation, I saw that each work station is numbered with signs that are placed at the center console and on the back of the chair. While interviewing the supervisors, I was told that the number of each work station is displayed on the supervisor’s monitor, along with other information, such as the call-takers’ identification number, name, and status (e.g., active, in a call, on a break, waiting), as well as time spent on the current call.

### **IPC: The computer application**

Understanding how the computer application functions is crucial, as it guides the organization of calls (see Chapter 4), and it is also used during calls. During an introductory training session, a staff member of 9-1-1 Costa Rica explained to me the

functioning of the computer application which is used to record all calls received by 9-1-1 Costa Rica.

Calls are classified as “*llamadas*” (“calls,” in English) or “*emergencias*” (“emergencies,” in English). On the one hand, “*llamadas*” are inappropriate calls, for which a “*registro de llamada*” (“call log,” in English) is created. On average, 80% of all incoming calls fall in this category. On the other hand, “*emergencias*” are calls in which some sort of help or advice is requested. For “*emergencias*,” an incident log is created. An “*incidente*” (“incident,” in English) is an electronic document that contains information related to the emergency. In order to distinguish between the two meanings of “*incidente*” (i.e., an emergency versus an electronic document), I will refer to them as “incident” and “incident log”, respectively. The information that call-takers record in the incident log is subsequently seen by officials of the responding institutions, as 9-1-1 and the responding institutions share the same computer application.

The computer application used by 9-1-1 is called “*Incidente para la contingencia*” or IPC (“Incident for Contingency,” in English). This application has three main sections into which information is entered when creating a call log or incident log. These three main sections are: (a) “*datos de la llamada*” (“call information,” in English), (b) “*tipo de incidente*” (“type of incident,” In English) or “*tipo de llamada*” (“type of call,” in English), and (c) “*información adicional*” (“additional information,” in English). A fourth section appears at the bottom of the screen, named “*hilera de incidentes y respuestas*” (“incidents and responses row,” in English), which shows all of the received calls. This particular section is used to retrieve or update a previous report, or to inform callers about the status of assistance when callers call back a second time. The “call

information” is located in the upper left hand side of the screen, the “type of incident/call” is located in the upper right hand side of the screen, the “additional information” is located in the central part of the screen, and the “incidents and responses row” is located at the bottom of the screen.

**The “*datos de la llamada*” (“call information,” in English) section.** This section is divided into two subsections: information about the caller and information about the place of the incident (see Figure 3 below). The first subsection shows the caller’s telephone number, the call number according to the 9-1-1 counting system, the date and time of the call, the caller’s identification number, and the caller’s name. This information comes from the telephone subscribers’ data located in the public telephone provider’s database.<sup>5</sup> The telephone numbers of calls made from landlines belonging to a public provider are shown on the screen once they are answered. However, if calls come from numbers belonging to private providers, then 9-1-1 cannot retrieve the call’s information.

The second subsection in the “*datos de la llamada*” (“call information,” in English) section shows the information regarding the place of the incident, which is entered into two different boxes – “*zona*” (“zone,” in English) and “*dirección*” (“location,” in English). In the “zone” box (see Figure 3 below; marked with a red box), call-takers are instructed to enter the five-digit geographical code that corresponds to the identification number of the provinces, counties, and districts according to the “*Instituto Geográfico Nacional*.” For example, the code 11303 codes for a specific province (e.g., 1

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<sup>5</sup> Until 2011, the only telephone and Internet provider in Costa Rica was the “*Instituto Costarricense de Electricidad*” (“Costa Rican Institute for Electricity,” in English). Nowadays, there are at least three private providers.

represents San José), county (e.g., 13 represents Tibás), and district (e.g., 03 represents Anselmo Llorente). Once the call-taker has entered the district, the system will automatically place the corresponding county and province. “Zone” assigns the incident to a particular dispatch center, as the code for each district encodes the information about the province, county, and district. Costa Rica is politically and administratively divided into seven provinces. Each province is subsequently divided into counties, which in turn are subdivided into districts. Additionally, each district has a code that distinguishes it from other districts that have the same name but belong to different counties or provinces. To avoid a possible mismatch, call-takers are instructed to enter the name or the code of the district into the “zone” box in the computer application.

The screenshot shows a web-based form titled "Datos de la llamada". It contains several input fields and buttons. The "Teléfono" field is partially filled with a blacked-out number. The "Nº de Llamada" field contains "2275893". The "Fecha y hora" field shows "25/09/2015 10:27:24". There is a checkbox for "Llamada Confidencial". Below these are tabs for "Ubicación" and "Llamadas". The "Identificación" field is blacked out. The "Persona que llama" field contains "SISTEMA DE EMERGENCIAS 911". The "Zona" field is highlighted with a red box and contains "SAN JOSE, TIBAS, ANSELMO LLORENTE 11303". The "Dirección" field is highlighted with a yellow box and contains "SAN JOSE TIBAS LLORENTE DE TIBAS CONTIGUO A ESCUELA ANSELMO LLORENTE EN OFICENTRO TECNOLÓGICO".

Figure 3. A screenshot of the “call information” section in the computer application *IPC*, by *Sistema de Emergencias 9-1-1 Costa Rica*.

In the “location” box (see Figure 3 above; marked with a yellow box), call-takers confirm or complete the location of the incident. When entering the information in the

“location” box, call-takers are expected to include the province, county, district, neighborhood, landmark, cardinal direction or the phrase “*hacia*” (“towards,” in English) and “*señas*” (“signs,” in English; for more details see Chapter 6). According to supervisors of the call room, when the “*Ministerio de Seguridad Pública*” (“Ministry of Public Security,” in English; i.e., the entity in charge of the Police Department) is the responding institution, the color of the house must also be solicited as part of the questionnaire. If the incident occurs in a residential development, the Police Department does not solicit house number (since the number could be too small or it could be too dark at night to see the number).

Also, during my interviews with supervisors, I was told that if a particular landmark does not show up in the landmark menu of the “*facilidades*” tool, then call-takers create the incident log with whatever information callers provide; call-takers then transfer the call to the local committee (i.e., local dispatcher) of the responding institution. If the incident is classified as priority level 1 (high) and there is no clear location, call-takers must transfer the call to the local committee (i.e., local dispatcher) of the responding institution. If callers do not know their location, call-takers should guide the callers and offer them two or three possible locations. For instance, call-takers may ask the caller “¿*Guadalupe de San José o Guadalupe de Cartago?*” (“Guadalupe in San José or Guadalupe in Cartago? ,” in English). In order to do this, call-takers use the “*facilities*” tool located on the right hand side of their computer screen.

**The “*tipo de incidente / tipo de llamada*” (“type of incident/call,” in English) section.** The second section of the IPC computer application is the classification of the call into “*tipo de llamada*” (“type of call,” in English) or “*tipo de incidente*” (“type of

incident,” in English) section. Call-takers create a log for each incoming call regardless of whether it is a call (e.g., wrong numbers, inappropriate calls) or an incident (e.g., a request for an ambulance, a report of a car accident). In the upper right hand side of the computer application, there is a “*tipo de llamada*” (“type of call,” in English) box that displays a menu with default options for classifying the call as: cancelled, wrong, inappropriate, testing system, or transfer to WEM (i.e., the “*Instituto de la Masculinidad*,” or “Institute of Masculinity,” in English). Inappropriate calls are defined as obscene calls, prank calls, or calls with sexual content; they are recorded in order to file a fine for inappropriate use of the emergency services. Such calls are transferred to WEM so that callers can speak to officials. WEM only provides telephonic advice (e.g., parental authority), as it has very limited resources and is run mainly by volunteers. Additionally, no incident logs are created for WEM calls, given that no assistance was dispatched. “*Prueba del sistema*” (“testing system,” in English) calls are made when the telephone network is under repair or when call-takers are being trained.

If the caller reports an incident, then call-takers assign the “*tipo de incidente*” (“incident type,” in English) according to the information provided by the responding institutions. This box displays a default menu with “*tipo de incidente*” (“type of incident,” in English), “*descripción*” (“description,” in English), and “*prioridad*” (“priority,” in English). The type of incident shows the code and name of the incident, the description briefly provides an explanation of the type of situations covered under the particular code, and the priority shows the level of urgency. Each responding institution assigns the information displayed in this menu.

**The “*información adicional*” (“additional information,” in English) section.**

In this section, call-takers record answers to the questionnaire. Once these annotations are made, they will appear in the “*información adicional*” (“additional information,” in English) section. The additional information box automatically records the day and time of the annotation. It also contains the annotation itself (i.e., a description of what happened), and the user (e.g., the call-taker, supervisor, or dispatcher). In this box, dispatchers add the status of the assistance (i.e., pending, dispatched, on the way, on the scene, controlled, finished, or canceled), as supervisors and dispatchers also have access to the incident log. The computer application can be accessed by call-takers, supervisors, and dispatchers. In any case, one can see the same incident log on the screen. Once the incident log has been created, supervisors and dispatchers can modify it. For example, dispatchers may include information about the number of the unit dispatched to the location.

**The “*hileras de incidentes y respuestas*” (“incidents and responses row,” in English) section.** This section is not part of the call processing, but it is also included within the computer application. At the bottom of the screen, this section lists all of the incident logs that have been created by all call-takers during the entire day. The information is organized in columns according to: incident number, date and time of the incident, caller’s telephone number, type of incident (i.e., the code number and name of the incident), priority level (e.g., incidents coded as high priority are indicated by the number “1” in red), zone of the incident (i.e., the province, county, district, and five-digit zone code), and location of the incident. This section allows call-takers to retrieve a previous incident in the event that callers call back a second time.

### Some challenges faced by 9-1-1 Costa Rica

During the interviews, officials of 9-1-1 Costa Rica agreed that some challenges are faced when responding to requests for assistance. Two of the main difficulties have to do with identifying the location of incidents and with callers lacking knowledge about the organization of the 9-1-1 service. Regarding the former, 9-1-1 officials report that callers' locations are not always updated in their telephone subscriber information within the database of the public provider's database. The 9-1-1 system does not have access to the telephone subscribers' information within the private providers' databases, and prepaid telephones can be activated with minimal personal information. In these situations, call-takers cannot retrieve locational information from the database, which may impact the provision of assistance. Furthermore, callers tend to use landmarks that no longer exist; for instance, "*del antiguo Higuerón*" ("from the former *higuerón* tree," in English). Lastly, callers tend to not know the address of where they live. 9-1-1 officials report that gathering information about incident locations is the activity that requires the most time during the call. On its website, 9-1-1 Costa Rica advises that "it is necessary to provide a location that is as accurate as possible of the place in which the emergency is happening, ideally using the province, county and district, landmarks, or names of places (for example: streets, avenues, cardinal directions, shopping malls, parks, churches, schools, hotels, etc.), so that the assistance units can reach the place as soon as possible".<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> The original text in Spanish reads "*Es necesario proporcionar una dirección lo más exacta del sitio donde está ocurriendo la emergencia, utilizando, idealmente provincia, cantón y distrito, puntos de referencia o nombres de lugares (por ejemplo: calles, avenidas, puntos cardinales, centros comerciales, parques, Iglesias, escuelas, hoteles, etc.), esto para que las unidades de ayuda puedan llegar lo antes posible.*" Retrieved from <http://www.911.go.cr/como-funciona/proceso-de-la-llamada-de-emergencia/>

The second difficulty the officials mentioned during the interviews is the lack of understanding by callers regarding who grants the assistance. As mentioned above, 9-1-1 Costa Rica does not refuse to provide assistance, but it also does not promise it either; as previously stated, each responding institution grants assistance according to the availability of resources and the priority level of each incident. According to 9-1-1 officials, this situation affects 9-1-1 because callers may not be aware that 9-1-1 is a network linking different response teams, and callers may not understand that the responding institution either does or does not grant assistance. Hence, callers complain to 9-1-1 instead of the particular responding institutions.

The difficulties expressed by officials of 9-1-1 services in Costa Rica were made apparent through data analysis. While it is true that formulating place is an organized activity – as is the case with any other interactional activity, and as discussed in Chapter 6 – and that both callers and call-takers negotiate the formulation of the place of an incident, this step seems to require some time (if compared to other location formulation processes in which an address is used, such in the U.S. or the U.K.); this is primarily due to its characteristics, as previously mentioned. Furthermore, as presented in Chapter 4, call-takers' responses to requests for assistance may be problematic for callers, as callers understand some aspects of a response as a virtual promise to provide assistance. By exploring how callers and call-takers deal with these and other challenges in actual interactions, this dissertation has a potential to improve the workings of this organization (as discussed in Chapter 7).

## Chapter 4

### Overall structural organization of calls to 9-1-1 Costa Rica

This chapter examines the overall structural organization of calls to 9-1-1. During calls to emergency numbers, there are two interactional goals: callers seek help, and call-takers gather the information needed to assess the incident and dispatch the assistance. These two activities (i.e., getting help and dispatching the assistance) are shaped by institutional constraints of the emergency system, such as the internal organization of the emergency system (M. R. Whalen & Zimmerman, 1987; Zimmerman, 1984, 1992b), how the emergency system is linked to response teams, or how the computer application organizes data collection (Del Corona & Ostermann, 2012; Larsen, 2013). This chapter explores the overall structural organization of emergency calls to the 9-1-1 Emergency System Costa Rica in light of its linguistic and institutional particularities.

Prior research on the overall structural organization of emergency calls has found that these calls consist of the following activities: a pre-beginning, an opening, a reason for the call or request for help, an interrogative series, a response, and a closing (M. R. Whalen & Zimmerman, 1987; Zimmerman, 1992a, 1992b). These activities are illustrated in the following example:

***Excerpt 1. (Whalen & Zimmerman, 1987, p. 214)***

01 911: Midcity Emergency,	Opening
02 (0.2)	
03 CLR: Um yeah (0.2)	
04 somebody just vandalized my car,	Reason for the call
05 (0.3)	Interrogative series
06 911: What's your address.	
07 CLR: Three oh one six maple	
08 911: Is this a house or an apartment.	

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09 CLR: It's a house	
10 911: (Uh-) your last name.	
11 CLR: Minsky	
12 911: How do you spell it?	
13 CLR: M I N S K Y	
14 911: We'll send someone out to see you.	Response
15 CLR: Thank you.	
16 911: Umhm bye.	Closing
17 CLR: Bye.	

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During the opening of the call, the call-taker answers the call with a categorical self-identification (line 1), and the caller acknowledges having reached the right service (line 2). Once the caller has provided the reason for the call (line 4), the call-taker moves on to the interrogative series in order to gather information about the location of the incident (lines 6-9). Once the problem has been assessed and has been deemed worthy of police assistance, the call-taker responds to the request for help by promising the assistance (lines 14-15), and then moves on to terminate the exchange (lines 16-17).

In this chapter, I examine the overall structural organization of emergency calls in the context of the 9-1-1 Emergency System in Costa Rica. Overall, my data is in line with prior research on the overall structural organization of calls to emergency services. However, the analysis also reveals some distinct aspects of calls to the Costa Rican service, particularly during call openings, the interrogative series, and responses of assistance. In the following sections, I review the literature on the overall structural organization of emergency calls, and then examine the different activities that constitute calling to emergency services.

### **Prior research on the phases of emergency calls**

Research on the organization of emergency calls has mainly been conducted in the U.S. and the U.K. (Drew & Walker, 2010; C. W. Raymond, 2014; G. Raymond &

Zimmerman, 2016; K. Tracy, 1997; M. R. Whalen & Zimmerman, 1987; Zimmerman, 1984, 1992a, 1992b), and has been limited to particular activities that have been examined in more detail than other activities. For example, the opening sequence has been the main area of study (Wakin & Zimmerman, 1999; J. Whalen et al., 1988; M. R. Whalen & Zimmerman, 1987; Zimmerman, 1984, 1992a, 1992b), whereas other activities (e.g., the interrogative series) have received less attention (Del Corona & Ostermann, 2012; Paoletti, 2012b). However, recent studies conducted in other countries have contributed to gaining a broader understanding of the constituent activities of a call to an emergency service (Cromdal, Landqvist, et al., 2012; Cromdal, Persson-Thunqvist, et al., 2012; Del Corona & Ostermann, 2012, 2013; Larsen, 2013; Paoletti, 2012b; Penn, Koole, et al., 2016; Penn et al., 2015).

Research on mundane telephone calls shows that the activity of opening a call consists of the following sequences of actions: a summons/answer, an identification/recognition, an exchange of greetings, and an exchange of “howareyou’s” (Schegloff, 1986). During emergency calls, the *opening sequence* is typically limited to a summons (i.e., the telephone ringing), an answer (i.e., the call-taker’s response), and acknowledgement by the caller (Wakin & Zimmerman, 1999; M. R. Whalen & Zimmerman, 1987; Zimmerman, 1992b). A reduction of the opening sequence promotes an early introduction of the reason for the call, which comes immediately after the alignment of the participants’ identities has been achieved (G. Raymond & Zimmerman, 2016; Zimmerman, 1984). The short opening sequences in 911 calls show participants’ orientation to seeking help from an anonymous encounter (i.e., one that does not require personal identification) and to the urgency of receiving assistance (M. R. Whalen &

Zimmerman, 1987; Zimmerman, 1984, 1992a, 1992b). During the opening of any phone call, interactants negotiate the type of conversation in which they are engaging and who they are in relation to each other (Schegloff, 1979). In other words, during the opening of the calls, interactants establish whether the call is a business call, a call between friends, or a call between family members, and they also align their identities as friends, daughter/mother, caller/call-taker, etc. In the case of emergency service calls, the type of call is established by the categorical self-identification of the call-taker, who is answering the phone on behalf of the institution, as well as by the caller's response (Zimmerman, 1984, 1992b).

One line of research focuses on how to maximize the progressivity of the interaction during the opening of calls to emergency services. For example, a study (Penn, Koole, et al., 2016) implemented an intervention to reduce the mean length of the calls by reducing the opening from a three-part sequence (i.e., consisting of the institutional identification, the operator's personal identification, and an invitation for callers to present the emergency) to a two-part sequence (i.e., consisting of a service identification and the operator's name). Another intervention (Cromdal, Landqvist, et al., 2012) was made to ensure the progressivity of the interaction: moving from a one-part opening (i.e., consisting only of an identification of the type of service) to a two-part opening (i.e., consisting of an identification of the type of service and a query about the incident). Examining reductions of the opening sequence in emergency calls is crucial because time matters when responding to an emergency (Penn, Koole, et al., 2016; J. Whalen et al., 1988). In other words, the length of the call may impact the provision of assistance, and it may also be a matter of keeping call-takers available for other incoming

calls. The above studies focus on the machinery of the opening sequence in order to ensure the progressivity of the interaction, but they do not focus on the linguistic or cultural components that may intervene during the opening sequence of emergency calls. Another line of research, however, does focus on the language used by callers during the opening of the calls, particularly on callers' entitlement to request the service in a language other than English, and on how call-takers act as gatekeepers of both the emergency service and the language (C. W. Raymond, 2014).

Research on *requests for help* has identified different formats in which the request for help is designed, namely: as requests, reports, and descriptions (M. R. Whalen & Zimmerman, 1987; Zimmerman, 1992b). Recent studies examine these formats in relation to notions of contingency/entitlement, and benefactors/beneficiaries (Drew & Walker, 2010; Heritage & Clayman, 2010; Larsen, 2013). For example, it was found that the strongest claims of entitlement by callers (such as the phrase "I must") are responded by call-takers with dispatch-relevant information, thus treating the incident as more urgent (Larsen, 2013). Descriptions have also been analyzed as formats that provide the caller's epistemic access to the incident (Larsen, 2013), and as formats that provide a sense of verisimilitude regarding the presentation of the problem (Cromdal, Osvaldsson, & Persson-Thunqvist, 2008). For a more in depth review of research on this phase, see Chapter 5 "Requesting help in calls to 9-1-1 Costa Rica."

After callers proffer the reason for the call, call-takers then proceed to the *interrogative series*. During this phase, call-takers solicit additional information about the incident through a series of questions. Specially, they aim to discover information that would be consequential for identifying what kind of help to send and dispatch the

appropriate emergency response team (e.g., an ambulance, a fire unit, or a police unit). These questions are also used by call-takers to assess the urgency of the incident and so that they can serve as gatekeepers of the service (Zimmerman, 1992b). In other words, call-takers assess whether the incident is worthy of the requested assistance (Meehan, 1989). Two main components of the interrogative series are the questions about the location of the incident, and the questions about the nature of the incident or the presentation of the problem (Zimmerman, 1984). Research on the interrogative series has been limited to an examination of place formulations (see Chapter 6 “Formulating place in calls to 9-1-1 Costa Rica”). Studies show that there may be a mismatch between institutional constraints and the practices used by callers to formulate the place of the incident. For example, the peculiar characteristics of settlements in South Africa (Penn et al., 2015) and Brazil (Del Corona & Ostermann, 2012) make it difficult for call-takers to match the address proffered by the caller with the address given by the computerized system. On the other hand, call-takers in Italy prefer place formulations that do not necessarily match the address formulated by the caller; whereas the callers first indicate the locality, the call-takers prefer to first receive the name of the municipality (Paoletti, 2012b).

Research on the *closing sequence* has determined the constituent components of closings of emergency calls (M. R. Whalen & Zimmerman, 1987; Zimmerman, 1984, 1992b). The exchange is terminated when the callers’ project of seeking help is brought to a possible completion by call-takers (G. Raymond & Zimmerman, 2016). Another line of research examines how callers and call-takers negotiate the closings of calls, and,

particularly, how participants handle a mismatch between the caller's project completion and the completion of the call (G. Raymond & Zimmerman, 2016).

As demonstrated in this literature review, some constituent activities have received more attention than others (e.g., the opening sequence has been studied more than the interrogative series or response of assistance). Although traditional literature on emergency calls serves as the foundation for any research on this topic, new research has also enriched our understanding of the various practices that interactants deploy (e.g., notions of entitlement/contingency in requests, notions of benefactor/beneficiaries roles) in order to carry out their interactional goals and tasks. This chapter aims to contribute to research on emergency calls by examining the linguistic and institutional practices of the 9-1-1 Emergency System in Costa Rica. In what follows, I will examine the overall structural organization of emergency calls, namely: the opening sequence, the reason for the call, the interrogative series, the response or promise of the assistance, and the closing sequence.

### **Opening sequence**

Similar to what has been found in calls to emergency services in other countries, a reduction of the opening sequence to a summons/answer/acknowledgement sequence is seen during the openings of 9-1-1 calls in Costa Rica. However, my dataset shows that the opening sequence during calls to the 9-1-1 service in Costa Rica also includes an exchange of greetings. In this subsection, I will only analyze the answer and acknowledgement turns of the calls, given that the audio recordings in my dataset do not include the ringing tones. In what follows, I will examine: (a) practices used by call-

takers when answering the call, and (b) practices used by callers during the first turn-at-talk (i.e., acknowledgment tokens, and pro-forma and full greetings).

### **Call-takers answering the call**

Call-takers answer the call with the categorical self-identification of the institution (M. R. Whalen & Zimmerman, 1987; Zimmerman, 1984, 1992a, 1992b). My data show that there are three ways in which this practice is accomplished: (a) via the presentation of only call-takers' categorical self-identification (Excerpt 3), (b) via the presentation of only the automatic recording (AR) of the institution (Excerpt 4), and (c) via the presentation of both (a) and (b) (Excerpt 5). Excerpts 3, 4, and 5 (below) illustrate how call-takers answer the call.

#### ***Excerpt 3. (ECR-99 Choque en Zapote)***

001 CT: Emergencias nueve uno uno;  
 Emergencies nine one one  
*Nine one one emergency;*

002 (0.7)

003 C: Eh buenas mi hermano para, reportar  
 Um good my brother for report.INF  
*Um good day man ((I'm calling)) to report*

004 un: choque;  
 a crash  
*a crash;*

#### ***Excerpt 4. (ECR-40 Denuncia por quema cerca de La Basílica)***

001 AR: Emergencias nueve uno uno;  
 Emergencies nine one one  
*Nine one one emergency;*

- 002 C: Sí buenas señor.=Yo no sé si es  
 Yes good sir I no know.1SG if be.3SG  
*Yes good day sir.=I don't know if it is*
- 003 con ustedes donde tengo que-  
 with you.PL where have.1SG that-  
*with you that I have to-*

***Excerpt 5. (ECR-165 Mi hermano se droga y me amenaza)***

- 001 AR: Emergencias nueve uno uno;  
 Emergencies nine one one  
*Nine one one emergency;*
- 002 CT: >Emergencias< nueve uno uno;  
 Emergencies nine one one  
 >*Nine one one*< *emergency;*
- 003 (0.5)
- 004 C: Buenas, (.) vea, lo que pasa  
 Good look.IMP.2SG it that happen.3SG  
*Good morning, look*
- 005 es que yo tengo un problema.  
 be.3SG that I have.1SG a problem  
*it's that I have a problem.*

Excerpts 3, 4, and 5 above show practices used by call-takers when answering the call. Additionally, these excerpts demonstrate that regardless of what form of categorical self-identification is employed (i.e., only the call-taker's categorical self-identification, only the automatic recording, or a combination of the two), callers treat any form as sufficient in order to move on to the reason of the call. The automatic recording is recorded by every call-taker and is played in the work station assigned to that particular call-taker that day. When the automatic recording is played, it is hearable to callers as an automated categorical self-identification; this may be the reason why call-takers also

produce a categorical self-identification after the automatic recording is played (i.e., in order to make the callers aware that they are not talking to a machine). All the above excerpts are in line with the standard patterns shown in traditional research regarding emergency calls (M. R. Whalen & Zimmerman, 1987; Zimmerman, 1984, 1992a, 1992b).

### **Callers' first turn-at-talk**

After the call-takers answer the call with their categorical self-identification, it is the callers' turn to acknowledge that they have reached the service that they intended to reach, or to apologize for dialing the wrong number (as shown in the Excerpt 6 below). First, the automatic recording (AR) of the institution (line 1) is played, followed by the categorical self-identification of the call-taker (line 2). After a gap (line 3), the caller apologizes for dialing the wrong number (line 4), and the call-taker subsequently accepts the apology (line 5).

#### ***Excerpt 6. (ECR-200 Ay me equivoqué-2)***

001 AR: Emergencias nueve uno uno;  
Emergencies nine one one  
*Nine one one emergency;*

002 CT: Emergencias nueve uno uno;  
Emergencies nine one one  
*Nine one one emergency;*

003 (0.5)

004 C: Ay no. Perdón.=  
Oh no Sorry  
*Whoops no. Sorry.=*

005 =Me equivoqué. >Perdón=perdón.<  
Me was-mistaken.1SG Sorry sorry  
*=I dialed the wrong number. >Sorry=sorry.<*

006 CT: No hay problema.  
 No there-is problem  
 No problem.

Excerpt 6 above shows the caller's apology for dialing the wrong number; this indicates that callers are held (as well as hold themselves) accountable for calling an emergency number (Zimmerman, 1984). This finding is in line with prior research on the opening of emergency calls (Heritage & Clayman, 2010): when callers call an emergency number and solicit unrelated services, they tend to preface the request with a "token of apology." When the caller explicitly apologizes (as seen in line 4 above), he or she initiates a new course of action in which the apology is the first pair part of an adjacency pair that makes a second pair part conditionally relevant (Robinson, 2004). In the case of explicit apologies, the preferred response includes mitigation, a rejection of the offense, or absolutions (Robinson, 2004). In Excerpt 6 above, the call-taker absolves the offense via the phrase "*No hay problema*" ("No problem," in English; line 5) after the caller's explicit apology.

To convey that the right service has been reached, callers may respond to the institutional self-identification with an acknowledgement token, such as "yeah" in English (M. R. Whalen & Zimmerman, 1987; Zimmerman, 1984, 1992a, 1992b). In my dataset, callers routinely employ the Spanish acknowledgement token "*sí*" ("yes," in English). However, callers' first turns may also contain greetings (e.g., "*buenas*," or "good day," in English) and summons (i.e., "*aló*," or "hello," in English). In what follows, I explore the use of the following practices: (a) "*sí*" as an acknowledgment token, and (b) "*buenas*" form as a pro-forma greeting or full greeting.

**“Sí” (“yes,” in English) as acknowledgment token.** Callers may acknowledge that they have reached the right service via the use of the Spanish token “sí” (“yes,” in English), as in the call entitled “The guy fainted” (Excerpt 7 below). After the playing of the automatic recording (AR) which states the institutional identification (line 1), the caller acknowledges, via the phrase “sí” (line 2), that 9-1-1 was the service that she intended to reach.

***Excerpt 7. (ECR-17 Muchacho desvanecido / The guy fainted)***

001 AR: Emergencias nueve uno uno;  
 Emergencies nine one one  
 Nine one one emergency;  
 002 C: >Sí tenemos una ef- una-<  
 Yes have.1PL a ef- a-  
 >Yes we have an ef- an<  
 003 emergencia de un muchacho,  
 emergency of a young-guy  
 emergency with a guy,

The caller not only acknowledges that she reached the correct service, via the phrase “sí” (“yes,” in English; line 2), but she also confirms it by characterizing the reason for calling as “an emergency” during the same turn (lines 2-3).

**“Buenas” (“good day”).** Callers may also include “*buenas*” (“good day,” in English) in their first turn-at-talk. “*Buenas*” stands for greetings “*buenos días*” (“good morning,” in English), “*buenas tardes*” (“good afternoon,” in English), and “*buenas noches*” (“good evening” and/or “good night,” in English). It is a short version of these greetings that can be used any time of day, evening, or night. My data show that “*buenas*” is used as: (a) a pro-forma greeting, and (b) a full greeting. A pro-forma greeting functions as an acknowledgement token (similar to “sí” or “yes,” in English) to

confirm that the reached service is the right one. However, when callers proffer “*buenas*” as a full greeting (i.e., engaging in a greeting sequence), they invite a greeting response from call-takers and present the incident as non-urgent. In this subsection, I will examine these two practices.

**“*Buenas*” (“good day,” in English) as a pro-forma greeting.** The calls entitled “Silent assault alarm” and “Something can happen” show examples of the phrase “*buenas*” (“good day”) used as a pro-forma greeting functioning as an acknowledgment token. In the “Silent assault alarm” call (Excerpt 8 below), the call is answered with a categorical self-identification produced by the call-taker (line 1). The caller then responds with the phrase “*buenas*” (“good afternoon,” in English), followed by the reason for calling (i.e., to report a silent assault alarm; lines 2-3).

***Excerpt 8. (ECR-14 Alarma de asalto silenciosa / Silent assault alarm)***

001 CT: Emergencias nueve uno uno;  
Emergencies nine one one  
*Nine one one emergency;*

002 C: Buenas. >Para< reportar  
Good For report.INF  
*Good afternoon. ((I'm calling)) >To< report*

003 una alarma- (.) de asalto silenciosa por favor;  
a alarm of assault silent for favor  
*an alarm- (.) silent assault ((alarm)) please;*

004 (4.0)

005 CT: Cuál sería la dirección exacta?  
Which would-be.3SG the address/direction exact  
*What would be the exact location?*

In the excerpt above, we see that the caller’s first slot is a multi-unit turn comprised of the form “*buenas*” (“good morning,” in English; line 2), along with the

reason for calling: to report the silent assault alarm (lines 2-3). When “*buenas*” is immediately followed by the reason for the call, it is considered a pro-forma greeting that functions as an acknowledgment token. In other words, “*buenas*” has a similar function as “*sí*,” in that they both acknowledge that the caller has reached the correct service. “*Buenas*” is a pro-forma greeting, as it conveys a different action than the greeting (i.e., the pro-forma greeting acknowledges that the service has been reached), and the caller immediately moves onto the reason for the call without waiting for the call-taker to respond to the greeting. Similarly, the call-taker in this particular case does not treat “*buenas*” as a greeting: she then solicits the location of the incident (line 5) rather than returning the greeting.

The same pattern can be seen in Excerpt 9 below: the caller packages “*buenas*” (“good evening,” in English) with the reason for calling (i.e., to report a car theft; lines 3-4), and the call-taker then responds with follow-up questions about the incident to clarify the type of theft that has occurred (line 6).

***Excerpt 9. (ECR-62 Robo de carro / Car theft)***

001 AR: Emergencias nueve uno uno;  
Emergencies nine one one  
Nine one one emergency;

002 (0.5)

003 C: Buenas muchacho, es que >es  
Good young-man be.3SG that be.3SG  
Good evening young man, it's that

004 para es para- < denunciar un robo;  
for be.3SG for denounce.INF a theft  
>((I'm calling)) to- < denounce a theft;

005 (0.5)

006 CT: Un robo a¿ Adónde¿  
 A theft to To-where  
 A theft of¿ Where¿

After the automatic categorical self-identification (line 1) and a gap (line 2), the caller packages the “*buenas*” form with the reason for the call (lines 3-4). The caller’s first turn-at-talk is a multi-unit turn that comprises the “*buenas*” (“good evening,” in English) form, the address term “*muchacho*” (“young man,” in English), and the reason for the call (i.e., “*para denunciar un robo*” or “to denounce/report a theft,” in English). “*Buenas*” is not responded to by the call-taker, who instead orients to the business at hand by soliciting information about the nature of the incident (i.e., clarification of the kind of theft being reported; line 6). By proceeding to the interrogative series, the call-taker treats “*buenas*” as a pro-forma greeting and also aligns with the institutional goals of the 9-1-1.

In both Excerpts 8 and 9 above, the callers produced a “*buenas*” (“good afternoon/evening,” in English) form, followed by the reason for calling. By putting these two components in the first turn-at-talk, the callers display an orientation to the task at hand. In both excerpts, the call-takers do not respond by greeting the callers back. By instead responding to callers’ first turn-at-talk with the solicitation of the incident’s location, the call-takers align with the institutional goals of an emergency service and move on to the interrogative series, thus promoting the progressivity of the interaction. In doing so, the call-takers show their orientations to not treating “*buenas*” as a full greeting, but rather, as pro-forma greeting.

**“*Buenas*” (“good day,” in English) as a full greeting.** In only a few cases in the current dataset do callers and call-takers engage in an exchange of greetings. In these

cases, the “*buenas*” form functions as a full greeting (i.e., engaging in a greeting sequence) that invites greeting responses, and also functions as a summons.

The call entitled “Problem in the bar” (Excerpt 10 below) shows an example of “*buenas*” used as a full greeting. After the automatic categorical self-identification (AR; line 1), and a gap (line 2), the caller acknowledges having reached the service by producing a full greeting followed by an address term (line 3). The caller’s greeting is then responded to by the call-taker (line 4).

***Excerpt 10. (ECR-43 Problema en bar / Problem in a bar)***

001 AR: Emergencias nueve uno uno;  
Emergencies nine one one  
*Nine one one emergency;*

002 (1.0)

003 C: Buenas, caballero;  
Good gentleman  
*Good evening, sir;*

004 CT: Sí buenas noches.  
Yes good nights  
*Yes good evening.*

005 C: Hablo de parte::: hablo  
Speak.1SG of part speak.1SG  
*I’m speaking on behalf::: I’m calling*

006 del bar Botella;  
of-the bar NAME  
*from the Botella bar;*

During the first turn-at-talk, the caller produces the “*buenas*” (“good evening,” in English; line 3) form, followed by the “*caballero;*” (literally meaning “gentleman,” but can be translated as “sir,” in English; line 3) formal address term. This turn is produced with a rising intonation (i.e., with an inverted question mark; line 3). This invites a

response by the call-taker (Stivers & Rossano, 2010), as the rising intonation is one of the features that has been found to mobilize a response from the recipient.

The caller's turn does get responded to with the acknowledgment token "*Si*" ("Yes," in English; line 4), followed by the full greeting "*buenas noches*" ("good evening," in English; line 4). In this segment, the caller produces a greeting turn after the automated recording (line 1) and a 1.0-second gap (line 2). The same sequential environment can be seen in the call entitled "Question or report" (Excerpt 11 below): the call is opened with the automatic recording of the institutional identification (line 1) followed by a 1.0-second gap (line 2). The caller produces a full greeting form "*Buenas noches*," ("Good evening," in English; line 3) with a slightly rising intonation (indicated by the comma sign), and the call-taker subsequently responds with a full greeting (line 4).

***Excerpt 11. (ECR-124 Consulta o reporte /Question or report)***

001 AR: Emergencias nueve uno uno;  
Emergencies nine one one  
*Nine one one emergency;*

002 (1.0)

003 C: Buenas noches,  
Good nights  
*Good evening,*

004 CT: Buenas noches señora.  
Good nights ma'am  
*Good evening ma'am.*

005 C: Este muchacho es que viera que ...  
Um young-boy be.3SG that look.2SG that  
*Um young boy look ...*

After the automated categorical self-identification (line 1) and a gap (line 2), the caller produces the first pair part of a greeting sequence using the phrase "*Buenas*

*noches*,” (“Good evening,” in English; line 3). The greeting form is delivered with a slightly rising intonation (indicated by the comma sign) that invites a response from the call-taker (Stivers & Rossano, 2010). The call-taker responds with the second pair part of the greeting, followed by an address term “*Buenas noches señora*” (“Good evening ma’am,” in English; line 4). By producing the second pair part of the greeting sequence, the call-taker is treating “*buenas noches*” as a full greeting and not as a pro-forma greeting. Although research has demonstrated that emergency calls show a reduction in the opening sequence (M. R. Whalen & Zimmerman, 1987), my dataset shows that some callers and call-takers do engage in a greeting sequence. This is in line with the research conducted on South African emergency numbers by Penn, Koole and Natrass (2016), who pointed that greeting sequences are present in some calls; however, they could not provide a pattern of use. Instead, the authors account for this phenomenon in cultural terms and in terms of the inexperience of first-time callers to an emergency service.

The two cases of “*buenas*” used as a full greeting (i.e., as a means to engage in a greeting sequence) in both Excerpts 10 and 11 above share similarities in the sequential environment. Both calls opened with the automatic self-identification recording (i.e., indicated by “AR”; line 1) followed by a gap of one second. The caller then produces the full greeting with a rising intonation, which invites a response from the call-taker (Stivers & Rossano, 2010). The call-taker then responds with a full greeting. It seems that when callers hear an automated recording, they might be unsure as to whether they can proceed with the call. After approximately a one-second gap – a “standard maximum silence” (Jefferson, 1989) – the callers set out to determine whether they can proceed via initiating

a greeting sequence. In this sense, callers seem to employ a greeting practice as a summons in order to ensure that they have reached a proper recipient.

In the 9-1-1 Costa Rica Operator's Manual, call-takers are instructed as follows: to "use terms such as sir, ma'am, gentleman. If the caller says 'good morning, good afternoon, or good evening/night,' answer the greeting fully."<sup>7</sup> Callers tend to proffer "*buenas*" as a pro-forma greeting followed by the reason for calling. In these cases, "*buenas*" functions as an acknowledgment token that confirms that the caller has reached the correct service. Callers also tend to proffer "*buenas*" as a full greeting after the automatic self-identification recording and a long gap. In these cases, callers invite a greeting response from call-takers and seem to employ the full greeting form as a practice to check whether they can proceed with the call (i.e., as a summoning practice).

**Other practices used by callers during the first turn-at-talk.** When responding to the categorical self-identification, callers employ a variety of practices, such as acknowledging the reached service via the "*si*" ("yes") token, fully greeting the call-taker via the phrase "*buenas*," or orienting to the matter at hand via the phrase "*buenas*" followed by the reason for the call. Callers may also use the phrases "*disculpe*" ("excuse me" or "sorry," in English) and "*gracias*" ("thank you," in English) during their first turn-at-talk. In the following subsection, I will describe these two practices.

**"Disculpe" ("excuse me" or "sorry," in English).** Callers may respond to the institutional identification with "*disculpe*" ("excuse me" or "sorry," in English), followed by the reason for the call. Callers use this practice when the reason for calling is

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<sup>7</sup> The original text in Spanish reads: "*Use términos como señor, señora, caballero. Si el usuario dice 'buenos días, buenas tardes o buenas noches', responda el saludo completo.*"

problematically aligned with the institutional practices; for example, they may use these phrases when trying to reach a local response team rather than reporting an emergency. This is exemplified in the calls entitled “Fever and body pain” and “Almost giving birth” (below). In the call entitled “Fever and body pain” (Excerpt 12 below), the caller presents the reason for calling (i.e., that she requires the telephone number for an ambulance [lines 4-5]) after the institutional identification (lines 1-2). The composition of the caller’s first turn-at-talk contains an address term (“*muchacha*” or “miss,” in English), an apology (“*disculpe*”; “sorry,” in English), and the reason for the call (“*el número de la ambulancia*” or “the phone number for an ambulance,” in English).

**Excerpt 12. (ECR-12 *Fiebre y dolor de cuerpo* / *Fever and body pain*)**

001 AR: Emergencias nueve uno uno¿  
 Emergencies nine one one¿  
*Nine one one emergency¿*

002 CT: .hh nueve uno uno¿  
 nine one one¿  
*.hh nine one one¿*

003 (0.7)

004 C: Eh muchacha disculpe:: =el::  
 Um young-woman excuse me/sorry the  
*Um miss excuse me/sorry=the::*

005 número de la ambulancia¿  
 number of the ambulance  
*number for an ambulance¿*

006 CT: Necesita una ambulancia?  
 Need.2SG a ambulance  
*Do you need an ambulance?*

007 C: Sí.  
 Yes  
*Yes.*

008 (0.3)

009 CT: Cuál sería la dirección?  
Which would-be.3SG the address/direction  
*What would be the location?*

After the opening of the call (lines 1-2) and the gap (line 3), the caller produces the reason for calling. This turn is designed as an “apology-prefaced question” (Robinson, 2004, p. 296). In other words, the apology is an action subordinate to the main course of action (i.e., the request for the Red Cross’s telephone number; lines 4-5). When formulated as a subordinate action (or a “token apology”), the apology is not responded to by the recipient (Robinson, 2004). After the caller proffers the reason for calling (i.e., to solicit the number of the Red Cross; lines 4-5), the call-taker solicits an explicit confirmation of whether the caller requires an ambulance (line 6). After the caller’s confirmation (line 7) of this fact, the call-taker solicits the location of the incident (line 9).

The caller’s first turn-at-talk may suggest her unfamiliarity with 9-1-1 Costa Rica, as she requests a telephone number and not an emergency service. 9-1-1 Costa Rica is a centralized system that gathers information about incidents and transfers it to the corresponding dispatch center; therefore, calling to request an ambulance is a task considered within the services of the institution. However, what does seem to be unusual is when a caller requests the telephone number of a responder (e.g., the Red Cross, Fire Department). The caller in this particular call seems to mark her reason for calling as inapposite by prefacing it with an apology token. The use of “*disculpe*” to preface the reason for calling is in line with prior research (Heritage & Clayman, 2010), as callers

tend to use a “token of apology” when requesting services that may not be emergency-related.

The call entitled “Almost giving birth” (Excerpt 13 below) is another example in which “*disculpe*” (line 5) prefaces the reason for calling: a woman is giving birth (lines 7-9), but the caller has not been able to reach the local Red Cross (lines 9-11).

***Excerpt 13. (ECR-132 A punto de mejorarse / Almost giving birth)***

001 AR: Emergencias nueve uno uno;  
Emergencies nine one one  
*Nine one one emergency;*

002 (0.3)

003 C: Buenos días joven,  
Good days young-man  
*Good morning young man,*

004 CT: Bue[nos días;  
Good days  
*Go[od morning;*

005 C: [ Discul ]pe.  
Excuse me/Sorry  
*[Excuse me/So]rry.*

006 (0.3)

007 C: .hh este bueno aquí tengo una una .hh  
um good here have.1SG a a  
*.hh um well here I have a a .hh*

008 una muchacha que está a punto de  
a young-girl that be.3SG to point of  
*a young girl that is almost*

009 mejorarse. =Estoy llamando .hh al  
improve.INF-self Be.3SG calling to-the  
*giving birth.=I am calling .hh the*

- 010 Valle de la Estrella y no me contesta  
COUNTY and no to-me answer.3SG  
*Valle de la Estrella and nobody from*
- 011 nadie de la Cruz Roja;  
nobody of the Cross Red  
*the Red Cross is answering;*
- 012 CT: Ya. Permítame.  
Already Allow.IMP.2SG-me  
*Okay. Hold on.*

After the opening of the call which states the automatic recording of the institution (line 1) and a gap (line 2), the caller produces a pro-forma greeting. The “*buenas*” form functions as an acknowledgement token that the caller has reached the right service, shown by the fact that the caller almost immediately continues with her turn (i.e., she overlaps with the call-taker’s turn; lines 4-5). The reason for calling (lines 7-11) is prefaced with the “*disculpe*” apology token (line 5). The caller accounts for calling the 9-1-1 emergency service: she called the local Red Cross, but there was no answer (lines 9-11).

As can be seen in both Excerpts 12 and 13 above, callers use the apology “*disculpe*” as a way to account for calling 9-1-1 when their reason for calling may seem to not align with the typical services offered by an emergency system (e.g., when requesting the responder team’s telephone number instead of requesting the service offered by the responder team).

“*Gracias*” (“*thank you,*” in *English*). Callers may also respond to the institutional identification with “*gracias*” (“thank you,” in English) before articulating their reason for the call. In Excerpt 14 below, after the automatic institutional identification (line 1) and a gap (line 2), both the caller and call-taker come in overlap

(lines 3-4). After another gap (line 5), the caller provides the reason for the call (lines 6-8) prefaced with “*gracias*” (line 6).

***Excerpt 14. (ECR-11 Accidente de tránsito en Zapote / Car accident in Zapote)***

- 001 AR: Emergencias nueve uno uno;  
Emergencies nine one one  
*Nine one one emergency;*
- 002 (0.5)
- 003 C: [(Gracias señori-)]  
Thank-you miss  
[(*Thank you miss-* )]
- 004 CT: [Nueve uno] uno;  
Nine one one  
[*Nine one ] one;*
- 005 (0.5)
- 006 C: Gracias señorita.=Para reportar un  
Thank-you miss For report.INF a  
*Thank you miss.=((I’m calling)) to report a*
- 007 accidente de trá:nsito y que  
accident of traffic and that  
ca:r accident and to ask for you
- 008 me envíen un oficial;  
to-me send.SUBJV.2PL an officer  
*to send me an officer;*
- 009 CT: Sí permítame.=Cuál sería  
Yes allow.IMP.2SG-me Which would-be.3SG  
*Yes hold on.=What would be*
- 010 la dirección exacta?  
the address/direction exact  
*the exact location?*

The caller’s turn begins with the phrase “thank you,” as well as with a polite and formal address term (“miss”; line 6). The caller then proceeds to report the problem with

a police-relevant label (i.e., “car accident”; lines 6-7) and to request help (i.e., “send me an officer”; lines 7-8; see Chapter 5 “Requesting help in calls to the 9-1-1 Costa Rica”).

While both the practice of apologizing and the practice of thanking during the caller’s first turn-at-talk were found in my dataset, they seem to be uncommon. Further research is needed in order to better understand these practices in the context of calls to emergency numbers.

### **Reason for the call**

After the opening of the call comes the reason for calling. In the case of emergency calls, the reason for the call is the report of the incident, which can be in the form of requests, reports, descriptions, or narratives (M. R. Whalen & Zimmerman, 1987; Zimmerman, 1992b). The reason for the call will be analyzed in detail in Chapter 5 “Requesting help in calls to the 9-1-1 Costa Rica.”

### **Interrogative series**

During the interrogative series, callers solicit information about the location of the incident and the nature of the incident (Zimmerman, 1984, 1992b). Call-takers for 9-1-1 Costa Rica also obtain and verify callers’ information (i.e., their name and telephone number) in addition to these two tasks. How the location of the incident is formulated is analyzed in detail in Chapter 6 “Formulating place in calls to the 9-1-1 Costa Rica.” In the section that follows, I will describe how callers’ contact information is verified.

Call-takers for emergency services are instructed to verify callers’ information by soliciting their name and telephone number. However, this procedure does not apply to every emergency center; in fact, most 9-1-1 calls in the United States are anonymous (Zimmerman, 1992b). Nonetheless, other emergency centers in other countries require

the callers' information for different purposes (Larsen, 2013). 9-1-1 Costa Rica receives a daily average of 2,500 calls, 20% of which are emergencies and 80% of which are classified as non-emergencies (e.g., prank phone calls, hung-up phone calls, and obscene calls). Therefore, in order to assess whether the call is an incident or a prank, 9-1-1 Costa Rica instructs call-takers to solicit callers' personal information. In most cases, the verification of the caller's information is not problematic, as shown in the call entitled "Crash in Escazú" (Excerpt 15 below). After confirming the cardinal directions as part of the incident location formulation (lines 22-24; see Chapter 6 "Formulating place in calls to 9-1-1 Costa Rica"), the call-taker solicits the caller's name (line 25) and telephone number (lines 28-29), and the caller responds to both questions (lines 27 and 31).

***Excerpt 15. (ECR-213 Choque en Escazú / Crash in Escazú)***

- 022 CT: Sur oeste;  
South west  
*Southwest;*
- 023 (0.5)
- 024 C: Sur oeste sí señora.  
South west yes ma'am  
*Southwest yes ma'am.*
- 025 CT: Okey cuál es su nombre disculpe;  
Okay which be.3SG your name excuse-me/ sorry  
*Okay what is your name excuse me/sorry;*
- 026 (0.3)
- 027 C: Yo soy NOMBRE APELLIDO.  
I am NAME LAST-NAME  
*I am FIRST NAME LAST NAME.*
- 028 CT: Número de teléfono del que  
Number of telephone of-the that  
*Telephone number from which*

029            llama        señora¿  
                  call.2SG ma'am  
                  *you're calling ma'am¿*

030            (0.5)

031    C:       Eh 00 00 00 00.  
                  Uh 00 00 00 00.

032    CT:     No hay           heridos en el accidente¿  
                  No there-is injured in the accident  
                  *No one was injured in the accident¿*

Excerpt 15 above is an example of an unproblematic verification of the caller's information. The call-taker solicits the caller's name (line 25) and telephone number (lines 28-29). Once this information has been gathered (lines 27, 31), the call-taker then proceeds to ask questions about the nature of the incident (line 32).

However, some callers do show concern about providing their personal information. This is especially evident when callers report incidents related to domestic violence or drugs, as shown in the call entitled "Potato chip factory" (Excerpt 16 below). In this call, the caller reports a domestic violence incident happening in her neighbor's house. Once the caller has presented the problem and formulated the location (data not shown), the call-taker solicits the caller's name (line 71). The caller provides her first name only (i.e., not her full name; line 73), and after a gap (line 74), asks whether the complaint can be filed anonymously (line 75).

***Excerpt 16. (ECR-100 Fábrica de papas / Potato chip factory)***

071    CT:     Cuál es su       nombre señora?  
                  Which is your name    ma'am  
                  *What is your name ma'am?*

072            (0.8)

- 073 C: E:l mío es NOMBRE.  
The mine be.3SG NAME  
*Mi:ne is FIRST NAME.*
- 074 (1.2)
- 075 C: Pero uno las puede hacer anó[minas?  
But one the can.3SG do.INF anonymous  
*But can it can be filed ano[mynously?*
- 076 CT: [La información  
The information  
*[The information*
- 077 es confidencial doña NOM[BRE.  
be.3SG confidential miss NAME  
*is confidential miss NAM[E.*
- 078 C: [Ajá.  
Uh-huh  
*[Uh huh.*
- 079 CT: Es nada más=  
Be.3SG nothing more  
*It is just=*
- 080 C: =Sí.=  
Yes  
=Yes.=
- 081 CT: =pa[ra verificar ] los datos.  
for verify.INF] the data  
=t[o verify ] the information.
- 082 C: [Para (veri-) ]  
for veri-  
*[To (veri-) ]*
- 083 C: Sí.=El mío es NOMBRE APELLIDO APELLIDO.  
Yes The mine be.3SG NAME LAST-NAME LAST-NAME  
*Yes=Mine is FIRST NAME LAST NAME LAST NAME.*
- 084 (1.5)
- 085 C: Es que como el hombre es  
Be.3SG that like the man be.3SG  
*It's just that since the man is*

086            *así me (h) °di (h) o (h) °,*  
                  *like half*  
                  *like k (i) n (d) o (f) ,*

In the excerpt above, it can be seen that in response to a name solicitation by the call-taker (line 71), the caller provides only her first name (line 73). After a 1.2-second gap (line 74), the caller solicits confirmation that the complaint can be filed anonymously (line 75); and that uncertainty may be the reason for providing only her first name instead of her full name (line 73). The call-taker then comes in overlap with the caller's turn to clarify that the information is confidential and is only used to verify the data (lines 76-77, 79, 81). Once the call-taker has explained how the caller's information will be used, the caller provides her full name (line 83). In doing so, the caller displays her understanding of the institutional requirements of this particular emergency service and complies with them. After a 1.5-second gap (line 84), the caller unpacks her concerns about providing her personal information: "*Es que como el hombre es así medio,*" ("It's just that since the man is kind of," in English; lines 85-86), thus implying that she is concerned about her safety due to the man's violent behavior.

In a few cases, call-takers account for soliciting the caller's information. Some callers may be reluctant to provide this information and refuse to answer these questions. When callers do not want to provide their name, call-takers will explicitly account for requesting that information, as shown in the call entitled "Driving lesson" (Excerpts 17a, 17b below). After soliciting details about the location of the incident (line 36), the call-taker asks for the caller's name (lines 39-40). However, the caller dismisses the question by saying "*Ah el nombre no importa*" ("Uh my name is not important," in English; line 42).

**Excerpt 17a. (ECR-172 Enseñado a manejar / Driving lesson)**

- 036 CT: [Cuál] es la dirección del lugar;  
Which be.3SG the address/direction of-the place  
*[What] is the location of the place;*
- 037 Solo ahí en la plaza.  
Only there in the plaza  
*Just there in the plaza.*
- 038 C: Sí sí. Ciudadela [Ma-]  
Yes yes Citadel NAME  
*Yes yes. Citadel [Ma-]*
- 039 CT: [Okey] cuál es su  
Okay which be.3SG your  
*[Okay] what is your*
- 040 nombre señora;  
name ma'am  
*name ma'am;*
- 041 (1.0)
- 042 C: Ah el nombre no importa eh [un-]  
Oh the name no matter.3SG uh a  
*Uh my name is not important uh [a-]*
- 043 CT: [Sí.]  
Yes  
*[Yes.]*
- 044 Sí lo necesito para confirmar la  
Yes it need.1SG for confirm.INF the  
*Yes I need it to confirm the*
- 045 veracidad de su llamada.  
truthfulness of your call  
*veracity of your call.*
- 046 (0.5)
- 047 C: Este este, somos loh del  
This this be.1PL the of-the  
*Uh uh, we are the people from the*

048            comité        de deportes.  
                  committee of sports.  
                  *sports committee.*

049            (0.5)

050    CT:    Sí. Cuál es        su        nombre;  
                  Yes Which be.3SG your name  
                  *Yes. What is your name;*

051            (1.5)

052    C:        No no no no.  
                  No no no no  
                  *No no no no.*

In light of the caller's refusal to provide her name (line 42), the call-taker explicitly accounts for soliciting this information by saying "*Sí. Si lo necesito para confirmar la veracidad de su llamada*" ("Yes. Yes I need it to confirm the veracity of your call," in English; lines 43-45). By explicitly providing grounds for the request, the call-taker informs the caller that there is an institutional reason for soliciting that information (i.e., by suggesting that the inquiry aligns with the institutional goals). Rather than accepting the account, the caller continues to resist the action trajectory by responding that she is calling on behalf of the community sports committee (line 47-48). This grounds the caller's initial response (i.e., that her name is not important; line 42), since she is calling as an institutional representative rather than as an individual. The answer is not sufficient for the call-taker, however, who again solicits the caller's name (line 50). In doing so, the call-taker is suggesting that calling on behalf of a committee and not providing ones' own name is not a sufficient response. After a 1.5-second gap (line 51), the caller again refuses to provide her name (line 52) by proffering a multiple saying of the "no" token. Multiples sayings have been found "to display the speaker's

stance against the prior speaker's perseverating course of action" (Stivers, 2004, p. 269).

In the case of line 52, the caller not only refuses to provide her name, but she also refuses to engage in the phase of verifying the caller's information (i.e., her information) that was launched by the call-taker in line 39 (Excerpt 17a above).

***Excerpt 17b. (ECR-172 Enseñado a manejar / Driving lesson)***

053 CT: Las llamadas son confidenciales señora.  
The calls be.3PL confidential ma'am  
*The calls are confidential ma'am.*

054 C: No no no.=Qué v'a  
No no no What go-to.3SG  
*No no no.=What are you going*

055 creer [no- ]  
believe.INF no  
*to think [no- ]*

056 CT: [Doña] NOMBRE es;  
Miss NAME be.3SG  
*[Miss] NAME is your name;*

057 (0.5)

058 C: Ni sí;  
Nor yes  
*Nn- yes;*

059 (0.7)

060 CT: Cuál es el número del que llama 00?  
Which be.3SG the number of-the that call.2SG 00  
*What is the number from which you are calling 00?*

061 (0.5)

062 C: Hm;  
Hm  
*Hm;*

- 063 CT: 00 el número del que llama;  
 00 the number of-the that call.2SG  
*00 the number from which you are calling;*
- 064 (1.3)
- 065 C: E::h.  
 Uh  
*U::h.*
- 066 (1.5)
- 067 C: 00 00 pero yo creo que que  
 00 00 but I believe.1SG that that  
*00 00 but I think that that*
- 068 en la de menoh cuando ya vienen  
 in the of less when already come.3PL  
*chances are that when they finally come*
- 069 ya:: ya se han ido.  
 already already self have left  
*they will have already:: already left.*
- 070 (0.3)
- 071 CT: Bueno igual se le tiene que pasar  
 Good equal self to-it have.3GS that pass.INF  
*Well the information has to be passed along*
- 072 la información.  
 the information  
*anyway.*

As seen in this example, the refusal is not accepted by the call-taker, who explains that the calls are confidential (line 53) and thus continues to pursue the required response by grounding it in the institutional goals. The caller, again, refuses to answer the question (i.e., in the first turn constructional unit or TCU “No no no.”; line 54) and dismisses the call-taker’s explanation (i.e., in the second TCU; line 54).

As seen thus far, the caller resists providing her name several times (see lines 42, 47-48, 52, and 54) and the call-taker also pursues a response from the caller several times by explaining that the information is necessary and confidential (see lines 39-40, 43-45, 50, 53). However, the caller is not aligning with the institutional goals. In light of the caller's resistant behavior, the call-taker solicits confirmation of the caller's name "*Doña NOMBRE es ¿*" ("Miss NAME is your name¿," in English; line 56). The call-taker is able to do this because 9-1-1 Costa Rica is an enhanced system (Zimmerman, 1992b) in which the computer application retrieves the caller's information from telephone subscribers' data located in the public carrier company's database. In other words, the call-taker sees the caller's information on the computer screen, but he or she has to reconfirm that information with the caller. It is at this point (i.e., when the call-taker explicitly solicits confirmation of the caller's name) that the caller responds (line 58). However, the caller's response is delayed (indicated by a 0.5-second gap; line 57) and minimal (line 58). Once the caller's name has been confirmed, the call-taker proceeds to soliciting the caller's telephone number (lines 60 and 63), and informs the caller that the information will be sent to the corresponding dispatch center (lines 71-72).

As demonstrated in Excerpts 16, 17a, and 17b above, some callers resist providing their personal information and/or explicitly raise concerns for their safety. While, in most cases, callers voluntarily comply with call-takers' solicitations, callers are sometimes reluctant to give their name. In these situations, call-takers account for their request by presenting the fact that provision of the caller's name is an institutional requirement. By explicitly providing grounds for soliciting callers' information, call-takers make the workings of the institution more transparent to callers.

### **Response to the assistance**

Once call-takers have assessed the incident as worthy (or unworthy) of the requested assistance, they respond by granting (or not granting) the assistance (Heritage & Clayman, 2010). Contrary to what has been found in other emergency calls (M. R. Whalen & Zimmerman, 1987; Zimmerman, 1984, 1992b), my dataset shows that call-takers of 9-1-1 Costa Rica do not promise assistance. This is due to the fact that 9-1-1 Costa Rica is a unified emergency system that coordinates the work of all state-funded public safety organizations. As discussed in Chapter 3, 9-1-1 Costa Rica gathers information about reported incidents and automatically sends incident logs to the appropriate dispatch center. Each dispatch center responds to the incidents depending on the level of priority coded in the incident log and the availability of resources at the time. Because of this institutional structure of 9-1-1 Costa Rica, the call-takers of this emergency service cannot promise to provide help. Instead, call-takers inform callers that the requested assistance has been processed; this can be hearable as a pre-closing move projecting the closing of the call. The response may be comprised of three components: (1) informing that the information was/will be sent to the dispatch center, (2) informing that the dispatch center is in charge of granting the help, and/or (3) informing callers to be on the alert for the response team. In the current subsection, I will describe the responding turn, its three components, and how it is hearable as a pre-closing of the interaction.

#### **The information was/will be sent**

Call-takers tend to respond to the request for assistance by informing callers that the information was or will be sent to a dispatch center. In many cases, this is the only

indication of a response of assistance before the closing of the call, as shown in the call entitled “Homeless man in front of my house” (Excerpt 18 below). The call-taker moves from the interrogative series (e.g., the information provided by the caller; lines 63-64) to the response of assistance (line 66). Lastly, the call-taker suggests that no more information is necessary in order to assess the kind of help needed for the incident.

***Excerpt 18. (ECR-34 Indigente frente a mi casa / Homeless man in front of my house)***

063 C: Ya se cobijó. Ahí' stá  
 Already self covered-up.3SG There-be.3SG  
*He already covered himself up. He's there*

064 cobijado y (echado).  
 covered-up and (lied-down)  
*with a blanket and lying down.*

065 (2.0) ((typing sounds))

066 CT: Y:a se pasa el informe.  
 Already self pass.3SG the report  
*The report is now being sent.*

067 (0.3)

068 C: Okey gracias muy amable.  
 Okay thank-you very kind  
*Okay thank you that's very kind of you.*

069 (0.2)

070 CT: Para servirle.  
 For serve.INF-to-you  
*I am here to help.*

071 C: Bue°no.°  
 Good  
*Ok°ay. °*

((end of the call))

Following the caller's description of the person about whom she is calling (lines 63-64), the call-taker enters the information in the computer application (indicated by "typing sounds," line 65) and moves on to the response of assistance (line 66). The composition of the response only includes one component: "*Ya se pasa el informe*" ("The report is now being sent," in English; line 66). The assistance was not promised, nor was the incident assessed as not being worth of police assistance; however, the assistance was suggested by informing the caller about the transfer of the information. In this sense, this component may be ambiguous for callers to interpret.

By informing the caller about the transfer of the information, the call-taker acknowledges that the information about the incident was processed, and orients to the closing of the call (i.e., this component may be hearable as a pre-closing sequence). By not promising the assistance, call-takers are orienting to the institutional constraints of 9-1-1 Costa Rica. Call-takers for this emergency service can collect information, but cannot make decisions about the provision of the service. By indicating that the information was sent to a relevant dispatch center, call-takers comply with the "Operator's Manual" guidelines of 9-1-1 Costa Rica. Call-takers are instructed to "Use the following phrases: 'The information has already been transferred to the (Fire Department, Red Cross, Police, etc.) office,' 'The (Fire Department, Red Cross, Police, etc.) office already has your information.'"<sup>8</sup>. By complying with the guidelines from the Operator's Manual, call-takers make the tasks and duties of 9-1-1 as an emergency system transparent to callers.

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<sup>8</sup> The original text in Spanish reads: "*Utilizar las siguientes frases: 'La información ya fue transferida al despacho de (Bomberos, Cruz Roja, Policía, etc.)', 'El despacho de (Bomberos, Cruz Roja, Policía, etc.) ya tiene su información'.*"

### The dispatch center is in charge of the help

Another component of the response is informing that the dispatch centers are in charge of granting the requested service. Call-takers use expressions such as “*ellos le coordinan la unidad*” (“they coordinate the unit,” in English), “*ellos se encargan de enviarle el oficial al lugar*” (“they are in charge of sending the official to the place,” in English). My dataset shows that this component typically appears along with any of the other two components, as shown in the call entitled “Fire in a slum” (Excerpt 19 below). After confirming the caller’s telephone number (line 101), the call-taker moves on to the response (lines 102-104). The call-taker then informs the caller that the information was sent to the dispatch center (i.e., to the Fire Department; lines 102-103) and that the dispatch center is in charge of coordinating the assistance (lines 103-104).

#### ***Excerpt 19. (ECR-178 Incendio en precario / Fire in a slum)***

101 C: Ah 00 00 00 00.

102 CT: Okey, ya pasamos est- este  
 Okay already sent.1PL th- this  
*Okay, we have already sent th- this*

103 dato también a lo que es Bomberos,  
 datum also to it that be.3SG Firefighters  
*information to the Fire Department as well,*

104 para que ellos coordinen la unidad.  
 for that they coordinate.3PL the unit  
*so that they coordinate the unit.*

105 (0.5)

106 C: Gracias ( ).  
 Thank-you  
*Thank you ( ).*

107 CT: Gracias. =Le atendió la operadora 00.  
 Thank-you To-you assisted.3PL the operator 00  
*Thank you.=Operator 00 served you.*

((end of the call))

The design of the call-taker's response consists of informing the caller that the information was sent to the Fire Department (lines 102-103), and informing that the Fire Department is responsible for sending the help (lines 103-104). These two components together are hearable not only as registering that the incident log was created, but also as a pre-closing move projecting the closing of the call. Both components move towards the closing of the call, since they inform the caller that no more information is required.

By informing the caller that the information was sent to the dispatch center, the call-taker acknowledges that the incident was created and processed. Furthermore, the call-taker informs that it is not the responsibility of 9-1-1 to respond to the incident by informing that the dispatch center is in charge of granting the help. Call-takers are thus presenting themselves not as gatekeepers of the service, but rather as a link in the chain of assistance. This finding is contrary to prior research on emergency calls, in which call-takers are considered gatekeepers of the service (Heritage & Clayman, 2010). On the other hand, call-takers for the 9-1-1 Costa Rica also comply with the goals of the institution as a service platform that unifies different kinds of emergency calls, and they make visible the institutional workings behind the service provided.

### ***“Estén pendientes” (“be alert,” in English)***

Another component of the response is to inform the caller to be on the lookout for the response team. My dataset shows that this component does not appear in an isolated form, but rather in combination with any of the other two components. Although call-

takers are instructed not to promise the provision of assistance, they use the expressions “*esté pendiente*” (“be alert,” in English) or “*Ojalá haya alguien afuera/esperando*” (“Hopefully there will be someone outside/waiting,” in English) in some cases.

The expression “*esté pendiente*” poses particular comprehension challenges, as Spanish is a language in which the suffix of the verb indexes the person, the number, and the mode of the verb. In other words, Spanish speakers can omit the subject of the verb because it is coded in the conjugation of the verb. For example, in the expression “*estoy pendiente*” (“be.1SG alert”), the verb conjugation indexes the first person in the singular form of the indicative mode. However, the expression “*esté pendiente*” (“be.SUB.2S/3S alert”) could either index the second person in the singular form (i.e., “*usted*” which is the formal second person singular form pronoun commonly used in Costa Rica), or the third person in the singular form (i.e., “*ella/él*”), both in the subjunctive mode. As shown in the excerpts below, the expression “*esté pendiente*” can be ambiguous, as it could be hearable as informing callers to keep an eye out for the possible assistance, or it could also be hearable as informing callers that the response team will be notified that there is an incident to which the response team must respond.

In the call entitled “Intoxicated man” (Excerpt 20 below), the call-taker both informs to the caller that the information was sent to the Police Department (lines 93-94) and uses the “*esté pendiente*” expression (lines 94-96).

***Excerpt 20. (ECR-53 Hombre alcoholizado / Intoxicated man)***

093 CT: Okey. Ya pasé la información, a la  
 Okay Already sent.1SG the information to the  
*Okay. I have already sent the information, to the*

- 094           Fuerza a la Fuerza Pública >para que  
               Force to the Force Public for that  
               *Department to the Police Department >so that*
- 095           esté<                   para que esté  
               be.SUBJV.2SG/3SG for that be.SUBJV.2SG/3SG  
               *you/they are< so that you/they are*
- 096           pendiente. De acuerdo¿  
               pending Of agreement  
               *alert. Okay¿*
- 097   C:       Gracias gracias.  
               Thank-you thank-you  
               *Thank you thank you.*
- 098   CT:     Con mucho gusto.  
               With much pleasure  
               *You're very welcome.*
- ((end of the call))

The call-taker dropped the noun of the verb in the “*esté pendiente*” (“be alert,” in English) expression. Nonetheless, according to the suffix of the verb, speakers can interpret that the verb is either conjugated in the singular form of the second person, or in singular form of the third person, both in the subjunctive mode. Drawing upon the context of the utterance, one could infer that the “*esté pendiente*” expression refers to the caller, but one could also infer that this expression refers to the Police Department (“*Fuerza Pública*”; line 94).

In some instances in the current dataset, callers treat the “be alert” response as a promise of assistance, as shown in the call entitled “Alarm activation” (Excerpts 21a, 21b below). In this call, the alarm in the caller’s warehouse went off, and the security company that monitors the property called their client (i.e., the caller) to let him know about the situation (data not shown). The call-taker informs the caller that the information

will be sent to the Police (line 86) and then produces the “*esté pendiente*” expression (lines 86-87). However, the caller treats the call-taker’s turn as a promise of assistance “*Usted cree que ellos vengan:: en, (.) >de=una vez¿<*” (“Do you think that will come:: in, (.) >right=away¿<,” in English; line 89-90).

**Excerpt 21a. (ECR-77 Activación de alarma / Alarm activation)**

086 CT: *Vamos a informar a la Policía para*  
*Go.1PL to inform.INF to the Police for*  
*We are going to inform the Police so that*

087 *qu'estén pendi:en°tes.°*  
*that-be.SUB.3PL pending*  
*they are alert.*

088 (0.5)

089 C: *Okey. Usted cree que ellos vengan::*  
*Okay You believe.2SG that they come.SUBJV.3PL*  
*Okay. Do you think that they will come::*

090 *en, (.) >de=una vez¿<*  
*in of a time*  
*in, (.) >right=away¿<*

The call-taker produces the “*esté pendiente*” construction, but in the plural form (line 87), which could be understood either as “*ustedes*” (i.e., “you,” in English, 2<sup>nd</sup> person) or as “*ellos*” (i.e., “they,” in English, 3<sup>rd</sup> person), both in the plural form. However, the caller did not present himself as a collectivity or as calling on behalf of an organization. Both the caller and the police are nouns in the singular form; therefore, the use of the “*esté pendiente*” construction in the plural form by the call-taker is puzzling. After a 0.5-second gap (line 88), the caller inquires when exactly the police will arrive to the place of the incident (lines 89-90). The caller’s question is designed using a noun in the plural form of “*ellos*” (i.e., “they,” in English; line 89), thus referring to “they, the

police.” However, the caller shows his understanding of the call-taker’s “esté pendiente” construction to be a possible promise to provide the help when he asks for clarification (lines 89-90) This expression, as mentioned above, may be ambiguous, as the noun of the verb tends to not be explicitly expressed. The ambiguity of this expression can be seen in the call-taker’s response: the recycling of lines 86-87 (Excerpt 21a above) in lines 91-92 (i.e., that the information was sent and the response team is in charge of granting the assistance; Excerpt 21b below).

***Excerpt 21b. (ECR-77 Activación de alarma / Alarm activation)***

- 091 CT: Ya ellos tienen el dato para que  
 Already they have.3PL the information for that  
*They already have the information so that*
- 092 le coordinen.  
 to-him coordinate.SUBJV.3PL  
*they can coordinate it.*
- 093 (1.0)
- 094 C: Okay a::hm:: (0.5) e:h llamo a la  
 Okay uhm uh call.1SG to the  
 Okay u::hm:: (0.5) u:h *should I call the*
- 095 compañía, de seguridá¿ o no hace falta¿  
 company of security or no do.3SG shortage  
*security company¿ or it is not necessary¿*
- 096 (0.5)
- 097 CT: Como usted guste. Ya eso es  
 Like you like.SUBJV.3SG Already that is  
*Whichever you prefer. That is*
- 098 opcional, ya aquí el reporte lo tienen  
 optional already here the report it have.3PL  
*optional, the officials here already have*

099           los oficiales.  
               the officials  
               the report.

100    C:    Okay bueno muchas gracias.  
               Okay good many thank-you  
               Okay good thank you very much.

101           (0.7)

102    C:    Okay.  
               Okay  
               Okay.

((end of the call))

The call-taker responds by adding another response component: “*Ya ellos tienen el dato para que le coordinen*” (“They already have the information so that they can coordinate it,” in English; lines 91-92). Informing the caller that the local police are in charge of sending the assistance conveys the message that the 9-1-1 service is not responsible for dispatching the requested help. In this sense, the call-taker’s response evades the caller’s question. After a 1.0-second gap (line 93; Excerpt 21b below), the caller solicits clarification regarding whether to call the private security company that monitors the caller’s warehouse (lines 94-95). After a 0.5-second gap, the call-taker informs that it is the caller’s decision via the utterance “*Como usted guste*” (“Whichever you prefer,” in English; line 97), given that the police already have the information about the incident (lines 98-99). The caller then acknowledges this advice and thanks the call-taker (line 100). After a 0.7-second gap (line 101) in which there is no uptake from the call-taker, the caller ends the call with the acknowledgement token “okay” (line 102).

The call entitled “Alarm activation” (Excerpts 21a, 21b above) shows that the “*esté pendiente*” response may be problematic, as callers may hear it as promising the

requested assistance. However, as previously mentioned, call-takers of 9-1-1 Costa Rica are instructed to not promise assistance, as the assistance is either granted or not granted by the relevant responding team. The call entitled “Morphine” (Excerpt 22 below) is another example in which a call-taker responds using the “*esté pendiente*” construction and it is hearable as promising to provide the help.

In the call entitled “Morphine” (Excerpt 22 below), the call-taker’s response:

- (a) informs the caller that the information will be sent to the Red Cross (lines 65-66),
- (b) produces the “*esté pendiente*” construction in the plural form (lines 66-67), and
- (c) advises the caller to wait outside for the unit (line 67-68).

***Excerpt 22. (ECR-18 Morfina / Morphine)***

065 CT: >'key<=ya se le está pasando la  
 Okay now self to-it be.3SG passing the  
 >'kay<=the information is now being passed

066 información a la Cruz Roja, estén  
information to the Cross Red be.SUBJV.2PL/3PL  
*along to the Red Cross, stay*

067 ahí pendientes de la unidad ojalá  
 there pending of the unit hopefully  
*there to wait for the unit hopefully*

068 haya alguien- esté afuera.  
 there-is.SUBJV.3SG somebody be.IMP.2SG outside  
*there will be somebody- stay outside.*

069 (.) Esperando la unidad.  
 Waiting the unit  
 (.) *To wait for the unit.*

070 C: Okey muy amable gra[cias.  
 Okay very kind thank-you  
*Okay you have been very kind thank [you.*

071 CT: [Le atendió el  
To-you assisted.3SG the  
[Operator 000

072 operador 000=a la orden.  
operator 000 to the order  
served you=at your service.

073 (0.3)

074 C: Okay.  
Okay  
Okay.

((end of the call))

The design of the call-taker's response in the excerpt above suggests that help will be sent. For example, the utterance "*ojalá haya alguien- esté afuera. (.) Esperando la unidad*" ("Hopefully there will be somebody- stay outside. (.) To wait for the unit," in English; lines 67-68) is composed of the expression "*ojalá*" ("hopefully," in English), which indexes a wish or desire. Additionally, the suggestion to the caller that someone should go wait outside seems to indicate that, in this case, the assistance has been promised.

As shown in this subsection, call-takers of 9-1-1 Costa Rica do not promise assistance. Instead, they inform callers that the requested help was processed via three components: (1) informing the caller that the information was/will be sent to the dispatch center, (2) informing the caller that the dispatch center is in charge of granting the help, and (3) informing caller to be alert for the assistance. These three components are not mutually exclusive, but rather are used in various combinations.

### **Closing sequence**

In the closing sequence, the call is brought to an end, given that no further interactional business is required from either the caller or the call-taker (Heritage & Clayman, 2010). In mundane calls, in which multiple topics may be discussed, the closing is negotiated through a coordinated sequence of moves (i.e., pre-closings) as participants check for other “mentionables” to be brought up (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973). In contrast, emergency calls are monotopical (i.e., dedicated to a single task). Once that single task is completed (i.e., once the call-taker responds to the request for help, as discussed above), interlocutors move on to the closing sequence, which quickly leads to the ending of the call.

Prior research on emergency calls in the U.S. (G. Raymond & Zimmerman, 2016; M. R. Whalen & Zimmerman, 1987; Zimmerman, 1984, 1992b) has found that once call-takers have signaled the closing of the call (i.e., by responding to the request for assistance), callers produce an expression of appreciation (e.g., the phrase “thank you”), and call-takers respond with a terminal particle (e.g., the phrase “bye”) (G. Raymond & Zimmerman, 2016). In my dataset, callers also thanked call-takers for the service (e.g., via the phrase “*gracias*” or “thank you,” in English), but call-takers ordinarily responded with the phrase “*con gusto*” (“you’re welcome,” in English), “*a la orden*” (“at your service,” in English) and/or “*para servirle*” (“I am here to help,” in English). In this section, I will describe the closing of the calls.

### **Closing the call via the operators’ identification number**

As seen in the response of assistance section (above), in the case of the calls to 9-1-1 Costa Rica, call-takers may project an imminent completion of the call by informing

callers that the incident information was/will be sent to a local dispatch center; therefore, they convey that no further details about the incident are needed. After projecting the closing, call-takers tend to close the call by providing their identification number, such as in “*Lo atendió el operador 000*” (“Operator 000 served you,” in English).

The call entitled “Shelter runaway denunciation” (Excerpt 23 below) illustrates how the call-taker’s identification number projects the closing of the call. The call-taker informs the caller that the police dispatcher has already received the information about the incident (lines 85-86), and then provides his (i.e., the call-taker’s) identification number (lines 86-87).

***Excerpt 23. (ECR-4 Denuncia de fuga de albergue / Shelter runaway denunciation)***

085 CT: El reporte ya lo recibió el compañero  
The report already it received.3SG the co-worker  
*The report has already been received by the*

086 despachador de la Policía.=Le atendió  
dispatcher of the Police To-you assisted.3SG  
*Police dispatcher.=Operator 00*

087 el operador 00 para servirle.  
the operator 00 for serve.INF-to-you  
*served you I am here to help.*

088 C: Okey gracias.  
Okay thank-you  
*Okay thank you.*

089 CT: Con gusto.  
With pleasure  
*You’re welcome.*

((end of the call))

The response to the request for help is a multi-unit turn that informs the caller that the information was already sent to the police dispatch center (i.e., in the first TCU; lines

85-86), and provides the operator's number (i.e., in the second TCU; lines 86-87). By providing their identification numbers, call-takers orient to the institutional goals and constraints that shape the interaction, as well as make visible the institutional workings of 9-1-1 Costa Rica. The call-taker manual for this institution states that: "Mentioning the operator's number at the end of the call is optional, keeping in mind that you must identify yourself (by providing your name) when requested by the caller"<sup>9</sup>. On the other hand, call-takers project the closing of the call when they provide their identification numbers, given that no further information is required from callers. It is worth mentioning that although call-takers are not required to provide their identification numbers, the closing of the call is projected when such information is provided.

### **Closing the call via "*gracias*" ("thank you," in English)**

Another practice for closing the call is thanking the call-taker for the service. Callers tend to thank for the service, even though 9-1-1 does not promise to provide assistance. The call entitled "Shelter runaway denunciation" discussed above (Excerpt 23) illustrates this practice, as well as the call entitled "Man with a machete" below. In this call, the call-taker informs the caller that the information was sent to the dispatch center (lines 43-44) and the call-taker provides his identification number (lines 45-46). The caller then thanks the call-taker (line 48), and the call-taker accepts the "thank you" (line 49).

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<sup>9</sup> The original Spanish text reads: "*Mencionar el número de operador al finalizar la llamada será opcional, tomando en cuenta que deberá identificarse (brindando el nombre) en el momento que sea solicitado por el usuario*" (Manual del Operador).

**Excerpt 24. (ECR-51 Hombre con machete y cadenas / Man with a machete)**

043 CT: Okey entonces >>yo aquí<< ya pasé la  
 Okay so I here already passed.1SG the  
*Okay so >>I<< have already sent the*

044 información, sería todo nada más.  
 information would-be.3SG all nothing more  
*information, that would be all.*

045 Le atendió el operador con  
 To-you assisted.3SG the operator with  
*Operator number*

046 el código 000.  
 the code 000  
*000 served you.*

047 (0.5)

048 C: Pura vida pa.=Gracias.  
 Pure life dad Thank-you  
*Cool man.=Thank you.*

049 CT: >>Mucho<< gusto.  
 Much pleasure  
 >>You're<< very welcome.

((end of the call))

Additionally, my dataset shows that call-takers thank callers when call-takers see themselves as beneficiaries and callers as the benefactors (Clayman & Heritage, 2014). This phenomenon was only found in calls in which callers reported a fire, as shown in the call entitled “Fire in a slum” (Excerpt 25 below). In this call, the call-taker moves from the interrogative series (line 101) to the response of assistance (lines 102-104). After the caller has thanked the call-taker for the services provided (line 106), the call-taker also thanks the caller (line 107).

**Excerpt 25. (ECR-162 Incendio en precario / Fire in a slum)**

101 C: Ah 00 00 00 00.

102 CT: Okey, ya pasamos est- este  
 Okay, already sent.1PL th- this  
*Okay, we have also already sent th- this*

103 dato también a lo que es Bomberos,  
 datum too to it that be.3SG Firefighters  
*information to the Fire Department ,*

104 para que ellos coordinen la unidad.  
 for that they coordinate.3PL the unit  
*so that they coordinate the unit.*

105 (0.5)

106 C: Gracias ( ).  
 Thank-you  
*Thank you ( ).*

107 CT: Gracias. =Le atendió la operadora 00.  
 Thank-you To-you assisted.3SG the operator 00  
*Thank you.=Operator 00 served you.*

((end of the call))

After the call-taker informs the caller that the information was sent to the Fire Department (lines 102-104), the caller initiates the closing by thanking the call-taker (lines 106). This last step also serves an indication that the caller has understood the call-taker's informing as a pre-closing sequence. The caller's "thank you" is an expression of gratitude and also a practice for initiating the closing of the call (Zimmerman & Wakin, 1995). The call-taker then thanks the caller and provides her identification number (line 107). By thanking the caller, the call-taker is positioning herself as a beneficiary of the information about the fire, and sees the caller as the benefactor of the interaction by providing the information about the fire to 9-1-1. By thanking the caller rather than

accepting the expression of gratitude (e.g., with “you’re welcome”), the call-taker also seems to resist the caller’s expression of gratitude, but she does not resist the closing of the call. It can be seen that when the call-taker provides her identification number, she is orienting to the closing of the call.

This excerpt also exemplifies that the emergency centers are reactive in nature (Meehan, 1989). In other words, the emergency services depend on callers’ reports to respond to emergencies. In this call, the call-taker relies on the caller’s report in order to transfer the information to the Fire Department, which, in turn, will be the entity responsible for dispatching the assistance to the place of the fire.

### **Closing the call via the “*para servirle*” (“I am here to help,” in English) constructions**

Call-takers may terminate the call using “service” constructions; for example “*con gusto*” (“you’re welcome,” in English), “*a la orden*” (“at your service,” in English), or “*para servirle*” (“I am here to help,” in English). These constructions inform callers of the immediate closing of the call, and are proffered by the call-taker after the caller’s “thank you.”

In the call entitled “Intoxicated man” (Excerpt 26 below), the call-taker terminates the exchange with “*con mucho gusto*” (“you’re very welcome,” in English). After indicating that the information was sent to the police (lines 93-94) and advising the caller to keep an eye out for the unit (lines 94-95), the caller thanks the call-taker (line 96). Lastly, the call-taker accepts the thank you via the phrase “*con mucho gusto*” (“you’re very welcome”; line 97).

**Excerpt 26. (ECR-53 Hombre alcoholizado / Intoxicated man)**

093 CT: Okey. Ya pasé la información, a la  
 Okay Already sent.1SG the information to the  
*Okay. I already sent the information, to the*

094 Fuerza a la Fuerza Pública para que  
 Force to the Force Public for that  
*Department to the Police Department for you to*

095 estén pendientes. De acuerdo;  
 be.3PL aware Of agreement  
*be aware. Okay;*

096 C: Gracias gracias.  
 Thank-you thank-you  
*Thank you thank you.*

097 CT: Con mucho gusto.  
 With much pleasure  
*You're very welcome.*

((end of the call))

Call-takers tend to close the calls using the phrase “*con gusto*” (“you’re welcome,” in English) and its variations with intensifiers, such as “*con mucho gusto*” (“you’re very welcome,” in English; Excerpt 25 above). Another closing used by call-takers is “*para servirle*”, as shown in the call entitled “Homeless man in front of my house” (Excerpt 27 below; also used as excerpt 18 when examining the response of help section). After the call-taker informs that the information will be sent to the dispatch center (line 66), the caller acknowledges the service provided (via the phrase “okay”; line 68) and shows her appreciation for the service: “*gracias muy amable*” (“thank you that’s very kind of you,” in English; line 68). The call-taker then brings the call to an end by producing the reciprocal terminal phrase “*para servirle*” (“I am here to help,” in English;

line 70), which is responded to by the caller with the receipt token “bueno” (“*okay*,” in English; line 71).

***Excerpt 27. (ECR-34 Indigente frente a mi casa / Homeless man in front of my house)***

066 CT: Y:a se pasa el informe.  
 Already self pass.3SG the report  
*The report is now being sent.*

067 (0.3)

068 C: Okey gracias muy amable.  
 Okay thank-you very kind  
*Okay thank you that's very kind of you.*

069 (0.2)

070 CT: Para servirle.  
 For serve.INF-to-you  
*I am here to help*

071 C: Bue°no.°  
 Good  
*Okay.*

((end of the call))

Besides closing the call with “*con gusto*” (“you’re welcome”) and “*para servirle*” (“I am here to help”), call-takers also may use “*a la orden*” (“at your service,” in English), as shown in the call entitled “Audible robbery alarm” (Excerpt 28 below). After the call-taker informed that the information will be sent to the dispatch center (line 44) and provided his identification number (line 45), the caller acknowledges the service by thanking the call-taker (line 47) and the call-taker brings the call to an end via the “*a la orden*” (“at your service,” in English) construction (line 48).

**Excerpt 28. (ECR-38 Alarma audible de robo / Audible robbery alarm)**

044 CT: >Ya se le pasa la información  
 Already self to-them pass.3SG the information  
 >We will send the information

045 le atendió el operador número 000.<  
 to-you assisted.3SG the operator number 000  
 operator number 000 served you.<

046 (1.0)

047 C: °°'chas gracias.°°  
 Many thank-you  
 °°Thanks very much.°°

048 CT: A la orden.  
 To the order  
 At your service.

((end of the call))

As shown in this call, call-takers bring the call to an end using constructions that suggest the acceptance of the gratitude in callers' "thank you's," such as "*con gusto*" ("you're welcome"), "*a la orden*" ("at your service"), and/or "*para servirle*" ("I am here to help"). By using these constructions, call-takers are complying with the Operator's Manual guidelines, in which it is stated that: "The following special considerations should be taken into account: a) Be kind and polite (yes sir, yes ma'am, you're very welcome, I am here to help)".<sup>10</sup> By using such constructions to bring the call to an end, call-takers also make the workings of the institution more transparent to callers. In addition, it should be noted that callers and call-takers do not tend to close the call via "bye's."

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<sup>10</sup> The original Spanish text reads: "*Se debe tomar en cuenta las siguientes consideraciones especiales: a) Ser amable y cortés (sí señor, sí señora, con mucho gusto, para servirle)*" (Operator's Manual).

### Summary of findings

In this chapter, I have examined the overall structural organization of emergency calls to 9-1-1 Costa Rica. Although my data are in line with the prior research findings regarding the overall structural organization of calls to emergency services (G. Raymond & Zimmerman, 2016; M. R. Whalen & Zimmerman, 1987; Zimmerman, 1984, 1992a, 1992b), there are some linguistic, cultural, and institutional practices that distinguish 9-1-1 calls in Costa Rica.

During the *opening sequence*, callers may also use the “*buenas*” (“good day,” in English) practice in the first turn-at-talk, in addition to the acknowledgment token “*sí*” (“yes,” in English). The form “*buenas*” is a greeting that can be treated, both by callers and call-takers, as: (a) a pro-forma greeting, when it is immediately followed by the reason for the call; or (b) a full greeting, when it is used as a greeting by the call-taker. In the first case, callers seem to be orienting to the matter at hand and the progressivity of the interaction by using “*buenas*” together with the reason for the call (i.e., the pro-forma greeting works as an acknowledgment token). In the second case, callers invite a response from call-takers, as callers are checking whether to proceed with the call (i.e., the full greeting form functions as a summons).

During the *interrogative series*, call-takers gather information pertaining to the location and nature of the incident. In calls to 9-1-1 Costa Rica, the interrogative series also includes a verification of the caller’s information (i.e., soliciting his or her name and telephone number). Call-takers are instructed to do so as a way to distinguish between real incident reports and prank phone calls. Including the verification of the caller’s

information within the interrogative series shapes the interaction, as it makes the workings of the institution more transparent to callers.

Ordinarily, *responses to callers' requests for assistance* convey whether the service will be granted. However, call-takers of 9-1-1 Costa Rica are instructed not to promise assistance, as the emergency center is a service platform that simply gathers information about incidents and transfers it to the appropriate local dispatch centers. This is an institutional constraint that shapes the interaction and outcome of the call, given that the assistance is granted by the dispatch center according to the priority of the incident and the availability of resources. Instead of promising the assistance, call-takers of 9-1-1 Costa Rica respond by using three components that may be combined together: (1) informing the caller that the information was/will be sent to the dispatch center, (2) informing the caller that a particular dispatch center is in charge of granting the help, and (3) suggesting for the caller to keep an eye out for the response team. The latter of these response components is often treated by callers as a virtual promise to provide assistance.

During the *closing* of the call, the conversation is terminated. My dataset found three practices for closing the call: (a) call-takers providing their identification numbers, (b) callers and/or call-takers saying “thank you’s,” and (c) call-takers accepting the “thank you’s” via “at your service” constructions. First, call-takers tend to inform callers that the call is coming to an end by providing their (i.e., the call-takers’) identification numbers. In response to the call-taker’s identification number, callers tend to thank and/or accept the informing of the service (vs. a promise of assistance). Second, call-takers may also close the call by thanking callers for providing the information. My dataset show that these cases only happen when callers reported a fire. By thanking

callers, call-takers are presenting themselves as beneficiaries of receiving the information, and callers as benefactors of the public service. Third, call-takers may also close the call by accepting the callers' "thank you's" via a service construction, such as "*con gusto*" ("you're welcome," in English), "*a la orden*" ("at your service," in English), "*para servirle*" ("I am here to help," in English).

The overall structural organization of calls to 9-1-1 Costa Rica shows the interactional workings behind a countrywide emergency center. Through the examination of the overall structural organization, it can be seen how institutional constraints shape the interactions and how tasks and goals are accomplished through talk-in-interaction.

## Chapter 5

### Requesting help in calls to 9-1-1 Costa Rica

This chapter examines how callers give their reason for calling 9-1-1. When requesting help, callers draw upon various practices to convey information about the incident and the type of assistance that may be required. In this chapter, I examine three main formats used by callers when requesting help: explicit requests, reports, and descriptions. I analyze how callers display an orientation to the contingencies involved in the provision of help and their entitlement to making the request. While the problem of requesting help from an emergency service is a generic one, the interactional solutions are culture and language specific. Therefore, in this chapter, I examine some language and culture specific resources that callers use when designing their requests, as well as the interactional circumstances in which particular request forms are deployed.

#### Prior research on requests in 9-1-1 calls and other settings

Prior research on 9-1-1 calls has found three formats used by callers to request help: requests, reports, and descriptions (M. R. Whalen & Zimmerman, 1987; Zimmerman, 1984, 1992b). *Requests* are explicit requests for a particular service (e.g., an ambulance, a fire truck, or a police patrol car), *reports* use a “report” verb followed by a policeable label that categorizes the incident (e.g., a break-in, fire, car accident), and *descriptions* are extended tellings in which callers provide some information about the incident without necessarily labeling it (e.g., by saying that a woman has just been attacked with a machete) (M. R. Whalen & Zimmerman, 1987; Zimmerman, 1992b). Other research has considered how descriptions are deployed by callers as a way to detail

their epistemic access to the incident (Larsen, 2013) and to support the veracity of the report.

Prior research on requests across social contexts found that requesting is an action embedded in the fabric of social life. By asking others to do something for us (e.g., to pass the salt, borrow a car, take us to the hospital), we enlist them in our projects (Drew & Couper-Kuhlen, 2014a). A variety of social actions can be used to enlist others, such as directives, invitations, offers, suggestions, advice, or requests (Craven & Potter, 2010; Drew & Couper-Kuhlen, 2014b).

When speakers get someone to do something for them, they design their actions with an orientation to a range of issues. The design of a request displays the speaker's orientation to his or her entitlement to the requested action (i.e., the speaker's rights to ask for something) and to the contingencies involved in fulfilling the request (i.e., external factors beyond the requester's control that are associated with granting the request) (Curl & Drew, 2008). Research shows that request designs are on a continuum from low entitlement/high contingency to high entitlement/low contingency. In English, modal verb constructions (e.g., "Can you?") convey speakers' high entitlement to the request, whereas other constructions (e.g., "I wonder if") display less entitlement (Curl & Drew, 2008). In terms of requesting assistance from 9-1-1 services, research shows that this activity incorporates the notions of entitlement and contingency. For example, Curl and Drew (2008) examined the practices of requesting help from the police and found that almost 80% of requests were designed as reports of incidents and that less than 20% of requests were designed as explicit requests for assistance. Larsen (2013) analyzed how requests designs containing stronger claims of entitlement by the caller will be responded

to by call-takers with dispatch-relevant information (i.e., the incident is treated as being more urgent).

The notions of benefactive stance and status have been examined in research on requests, as requesting is an action that implies benefits for particular interactants and/or can place some sort of imposition on other interactants (Clayman & Heritage, 2014; Drew & Couper-Kuhlen, 2014a). For example, requesting for someone to pass the salt (a simple practical action) is less imposing than requesting a ride or for an ambulance to be dispatched (which constitute “high cost” actions). Requests are actions in which the addressee is the agent of the requested action (i.e., the benefactor) and the other speaker (i.e., the requester) is the beneficiary (Clayman & Heritage, 2014; Couper-Kuhlen, 2014). Additionally, requests are also actions that show a congruence between the benefactive stance and status (Clayman & Heritage, 2014). In other words, requesting is an action that shows congruency between the intended action (i.e., the benefactive stance) and the conditions that may affect the action being granting (i.e., the benefactive status). Research on requesting assistance from 9-1-1 services, however, has not yet incorporated the notions of benefactive stance and benefactive status into their analyses.

In this chapter, I will examine how callers orient to issues of entitlement, contingency, and benefactive status in designing their requests for help. The analysis will be organized into three main sections: explicit requests, reports of incidents, and descriptions of incidents. The *explicit requests* section will analyze practices that show an orientation to the contingencies of the requested outcome via the phrase “*para ver si*” (“to see if,” in English), and practices that display an orientation to less entitlement via “favor” and “*amabilidad*” (“kindness,” in English) constructions. The *reports* section will

analyze practices that present the problem as being self-evident via the verbs “*reportar*” (“to report,” in English) and “*denunciar*” (“to denounce,” in English), and how these practices relate to the notion of benefactors and beneficiaries. Lastly, the *descriptions* section will analyze practices that present the problem as being self-evident via policeable labels or a problem that needs to be unpacked via prospective indexicals.

### **Explicit requests**

Traditional literature on emergency calls (M. R. Whalen & Zimmerman, 1987; Zimmerman, 1992b) defines requests as actions that solicit emergency assistance without specifying the nature of the problem or incident (e.g., the phrases “I need the paramedics please?,” “Would you send the police please?,” or “Could you have the police come out?”; Zimmerman, 1992, p. 436). As seen in these examples, the callers explicitly request a particular service, such as the paramedics or the police. In this section, I will analyze different request designs found in my dataset and examine how callers orient to contingencies and entitlement. Specifically, the analysis will focus on: (a) the phrase “*para ver si*” (“to see if,” in English), in which the caller orients to the contingencies involved in receiving the requested service; and (b) “favor” and “*amabilidad*” (“kindness,” in English) constructions, in which the caller orients to having low entitlement to the requested service.

### **Practices orienting to contingencies involved in receiving the assistance**

The data show that the linguistic construction “*para ver si*” (“to see if,” in English) is commonly used in requests for help in 9-1-1 Costa Rica. This construction poses a translation challenge because, although it is grammatically correct and pragmatically accepted in Spanish, it does not constitute an idiomatic expression when

directly translated into English (i.e., “to see if,” in English). In order for it to be an idiomatic expression in English, the words “I’m calling” must be added in order to make the phrase “I’m calling to see if.” However, it is necessary to note that the words “I’m calling” do not appear in the original Spanish request. On the other hand, the conditional “*si*” (“if,” in English) is embedded in the grammatical composition of the Spanish phrase “*para ver si*”; that is, “*si*” cannot be removed because otherwise the phrase would not be comprehensible. The conditional “if” encodes, in the grammatical construction itself, the fact that contingencies exist in terms of receiving the requested assistance.

In a majority of cases constructed with “*para ver si*,” the caller explicitly requests a particular service. For example, “*para ver si me puede enviar una ambulancia aquí en Atenas*” (“[[I’m calling]] to see if you can send me an ambulance here in Atenas,” in English), “*para ver si puede mandar una patrulla aquí a La Mirta de Heredia por favor*” (“[[I’m calling]] to see if you could send a patrol car here to La Mirta of Heredia please,” in English), or “*es para ver si mandan unos bomberos a Hatillo 5*” (“[[I’m calling]] to see if you could send some firefighters to Hatillo 5,” in English). In this subsection, I will show: (a) that the grammatical construction “*para ver si*” orients to the contingencies involved in receiving the assistance, and (b) that the “favor” and “kindness” constructions included in the caller’s turn orient to the caller’s low entitlement to the request. The data show that callers tend to use these practices when the incidents are not life threatening, such as for car accidents where there is only material damage or for when homeless people are bothering clients in stores. Requests containing these practices are also used to solicit ambulance services for non-life-threatening medical incidents, such as for infections, problems relating to asthma, painful pregnancies, or continuous convulsions.

Whatever the incident, these practices are used to convey the speaker's low entitlement to the request, as well as the contingencies involved in receiving the assistance (i.e., the possibility exists that the requested help may not be granted).

In the call entitled "Paint studio" (Excerpt 1 below), the caller designs her request in a way that conveys a high contingencies involved in providing the service (Curl & Drew, 2008). In this call, the caller requests an ambulance for her father, who is suffering from tachycardia, is nauseous and weak, and is experiencing difficulty walking (data not shown). After the opening of the call (lines 1-4), the caller explicitly requests help via the phrase "*Es para ver si me pueden mandar una uni- una ambulancia*" ("[[I'm calling]] to see if you can send me a uni- an ambulance," in English"; lines 6-7) and then includes her location in the same TCU (lines 7-8).

***Excerpt 1. (ECR-05 Taller de pinturas / Paint studio)***

- 001 AR: Emergencias nueve uno uno;  
Emergency nine one one  
*Nine one one emergency;*
- 002 (0.2)
- 003 CT: Nueve uno uno buenas;  
Nine one one good  
*Nine one one good morning;*
- 004 C: Buenas muchacha,  
Good miss  
*Good morning miss,*
- 005 (0.3)
- 006 C: Es para ver si me pueden mandar  
Be.3SG for see.INF if to-me can.2PL send.INF  
*((I'm calling)) to see if you can send me*

- 007            una (uni)- una ambulancia aquí a  
                  a     uni- an ambulance here to  
                  a (uni)- an ambulance here to
- 008            La Victoria de Juan Viñas;  
                  NEIGHBORHOOD of DISTRICT  
                  *La Victoria of Juan Viñas;*
- 009            (1.0)
- 010    CT:    Permítame.  
                  Allow.IMP.2SG-me  
                  *Hold on.*
- 011            (3.0) ((typing sounds))
- 012    CT:    En barrio            La Victoria adónde?  
                  In neighborhood NEIGHBORHOOD to-where  
                  *In La Victoria neighborhood where?*

The request design conveys her uncertainty about receiving the assistance via the grammaticalized phrase “*para ver si*” (“to see if,” in English) and the modal verb “*pueden*” (“can,” in English). By requesting the help using the structure “*para ver si*,” the caller orients to the possibility that the assistance might not be provided (i.e., it is a high contingency request) and, possibly, to her low entitlement to make the request. The high contingency orientation can be conveyed by the conditional “*si*” (“if,” in English), as it is embedded in the request design. There is a different way in which the request could have been designed, for instance, by directly asking for the service: “*necesito una ambulancia*” (“I need an ambulance,” in English) or “*manden una ambulancia*” (“send an ambulance,” in English). Instead, the composition of the request includes the grammaticalized phrase “*para ver si*,” with the embedded conditional element, and the modal verb “*pueden*” (“can,” in English). The present tense of the modal verb “*pueden*” (“can.2PL”) expresses a high probability of receiving the assistance (vs. “*podrían*,” or “could,” in English;

“could.2PL”); however, by introducing the request with the conditional phrase “*para ver si*,” the caller orients to the possibility that the request might not be granted. Nonetheless, by providing the location as part of her request turn, the caller seems to convey a high expectation that the help would be granted. In lines 10-12, the call-taker begins to record the exact location of the incident (i.e., first by typing, and then by soliciting additional details), thereby treating the request as a legitimate one.

The call entitled “Asthmatic man” (Excerpt 2 below) is another example of a request for help in which the caller orients to the contingencies involved in receiving the assistance by introducing the request with the grammaticalized construction “*para ver si*” (“to see if,” in English). The caller solicits an ambulance for his neighbor, who is an asthmatic man and is not feeling well (lines 11-12). After the opening of the call (lines 1-5), the caller requests the help: “*E::h caballero era para ver si tal vez e::h, (.) podían mandar una unidad por acá en Santa Clara, (0.3) para un señor que es asmático y está’hi un poco fregadillo*” (“U::m sir [[I was calling]] to see if may:be u::m, (.) you could send a unit around here in Santa Clara, (0.3) for an asthmatic man who is a little under the weather; lines 6-12).

***Excerpt 2. (ECR-49 Señor asmático / Asthmatic man)***

- 001 CT:    Emergencias nueve uno uno¿  
               Emergencies nine one one  
               *Nine one one emergency¿*
- 002           (0.5)
- 003 C1:    Sí. Buenas.  
               Yes good  
               *Yes. Good evening.*
- 004           (0.2)

- 005 CT: Sí buenas?  
Yes good  
*Yes good evening?*
- 006 C1: E::h caballero era para ver  
U::m sir was.3SG for see.INF  
*U::m sir ((I was calling)) to see*
- 007 si tal ve:z e::h, (.) podían  
if maybe um could.2PL  
*if may:be u::m, (.) you could*
- 008 mandar una unidad  
send.INF a unit  
*send a unit*
- 009 por acá en Santa Clara,  
for here in NEIGHBORHOOD  
*around here in Santa Clara,*
- 010 (0.3)
- 011 C: Para un señor que es asmático y  
For a man that be.3SG asthmatic and  
*For an asthmatic man and*
- 012 está'hi un poco fregadillo.  
be.3SG-there a little complicated.DIM  
*who is a little under the weather.*
- 013 (0.3)
- 014 CT: (Enton-) usted quiere el: la la  
Then you want.2SG the the the  
*(S-) do you want the: the the*
- 015 unidad de la Cruz Roja.  
unit of the Cross Red  
*Red Cross unit.*

This request design includes several mitigation devices that downgrade the certainty of the requested outcome being fulfilled. For example, the past verb “*era*” (“was”) and the conditional word “*si*” (“if,” in English) in the phrase “*era para ver si*”

indexes the caller's doubt. In this particular excerpt, the phrase "*para ver si*" is prefaced by the verb "*era*" ("was.3SG") conjugated in the past tense. The use of the past tense in the request may display the caller's orientation to the contingencies of the outcome (i.e., not receiving the requested assistance). The adverb "*tal vez*" ("maybe," in English) and the modal verb "*podían*" ("could.2PL") both convey an even greater uncertainty of receiving the requested assistance. Interactionally, these devices show the caller's orientation to the possible contingencies involved that may lead to not receiving the help and, in turn, show the caller's orientations to her low entitlement to request the assistance. The caller does not explicitly request a type of service, but he does use the generic term "unit" (line 8), which seems to convey a sense of uncertainty about the service required. The caller then formulates the place where the assistance is needed using a geographical formulation (i.e., by stating "Santa Clara," which is a district in Costa Rica; line 9). After a pause (line 10), the caller presents the problem – that the requested unit is for an asthmatic man who is feeling a little under the weather (lines 11-12). The presentation of the problem provides a description of the patient's current status (i.e., of the reason that prompted the call), as opposed to the patient's general illness. In other words, the patient's illness is asthma (i.e., he is "*un señor asmático*" or "an asthmatic man," in English; line 11), but the patient's current status is that he is "*un poco fregadillo*" ("a little under the weather," in English; line 12). The patient's current status seems to be a weak reason for requesting the assistance, which, in turn, explains the caller's use of various mitigation devices in the design of the request. Furthermore, this also relates to the caller's low entitlement to the request. The call-taker then clarifies what kind of "unit" the caller is requesting: "*(Enton-) usted quiere el: la la unidad de la*

*Cruz Roja*” (“[S-] do you want the Red Cross unit,” in English; lines 14-15). By doing so, the caller-taker is making sure that the unit requested is a Red Cross unit.

Both Excerpts 1 and 2 illustrate a practice of requesting help in which the composition of the request shows the callers’ acknowledgment of the contingencies involved in the granting of such assistance by the emergency team, as well as their acknowledgement of their low entitlement to request the assistance. These excerpts showed that the basic request form “*para ver si*” (“to see if,” in English) can be modified to further downgrade the caller’s certainty about receiving the requested service. Additionally, there are a few cases in which the request for help conveys an orientation to even lower entitlement via “favor” and “*amabilidad*” (“kindness,” in English) constructions; these practices are precisely what I will examine in the next subsection.

### **Practices orienting to low entitlement**

Callers may formulate their requests as someone doing a favor for them by implementing the “favor” construction along with the conditional phrase “*para ver si*” (“to see if,” in English), as seen in the phrase “*me puede hacer el favor de*” (“can you do me the favor of,” in English). In such cases, the request appears to be designed to acknowledge the caller’s low entitlement to the assistance by soliciting the help as “a favor.” The “*para ver si*” phrase in conjunction with the “favor” construction tends to be used for non-life-threatening incidents, such as for medical cases of hypertension or asthma, police cases of assault with no physical harm to the victim, or car accidents with only material damages. In my dataset, both the “favor” and the “*amabilidad*” (“kindness,” in English) constructions were used by callers who called on behalf of the victims. In these cases, the callers presented themselves as benefactors (Clayman &

Heritage, 2014) of the help. In this subsection, I will show how callers orient to their low entitlement via: (a) the “favor” construction, and (b) the “*amabilidad*” construction.

### **The “favor” construction**

The “favor” construction is one practice that callers use to request help and is one that orients to both to the contingencies involved in the granting of the requested help and to the caller’s low entitlement to the request. This practice seems to be used when requesting medical services for non-life-threatening incidents in which callers call on behalf of the patient. Callers tend to use this practice in second calls to the emergency service, after having not received assistance from their first call. In this subsection, I will show that callers’ use of the “favor” construction functions to pursue a response from the emergency service after a prior lack of response.

The call entitled “Papaya colored house” (Excerpts 3a, 3b below) is one such case. The caller requests the ambulance for her mother, who suffers from high blood pressure and chronic asthma (data not shown). After the opening of the call (lines 1-3; Excerpt 3a below), the caller requests help via the phrase: “=*Para ver si usted me puede hacer el favor de mandarme una ambula:ncia?*” (“[[I’m calling]] to see if you can do me the favor of sending an ambulance to me?” in English; lines 3-5), and the call-taker then verifies the caller’s information (line 7).

#### ***Excerpt 3a. (ECR-02 Casa color papaya / Papaya colored house)***

001 CT: Emergencias nueve uno uno;  
           Emergencies nine one one  
           *Nine one one emergency;*

002           (0.5)

003 C: Sí buenas muchacho.=Para ver si  
 Yes good young-man For see.INF if  
*Yes good morning sir.=((I'm calling)) to see if*

004 usted me puede hacer el favor de  
 you to-me can.2SG do.INF the favor of  
*you can do me the favor of*

005 mandarme una ambula:ncia?  
 send.INF-to-me an ambulance  
*sending an ambulance to me?*

006 (0.7)

007 CT: >Cuál es su nombre?<  
 Which be.3SG your name  
 >What is your name?<

The requested assistance is presented as “a favor,” which shows the caller’s orientation to low entitlement to the request and the high contingencies involved in receiving the assistance. The contingencies are displayed via the modal verb “*me puede*” (“can you [[to me]],” in English; line 4), as well as via the phrase “*el favor*” (“the favor,” in English; line 4). Designing the request as a favor presents the caller as the recipient of the favor/help (i.e., as the beneficiary), and the call-taker as the benefactor.

The call-taker then moves on to the interrogative series, which in 9-1-1 Costa Rica includes a verification of the caller’s information (i.e., her full name and telephone number; line 7). Next, the call-taker solicits the location of the incident (data not shown), and proceeds to determine what the incident is (line 52; Excerpt 3b below). In her response, the caller presents the problem: “*mi mamá está enferma desde el día de ayer*” (“my mom has been sick since yesterday,” in English; lines 53-54). After a micropause (line 55), the caller accounts for her call to 9-1-1: “*Ayer [se hizo un llama]do a la==Cruz Roja pero no llegó*” (“Yesterday [a call was mad]e to the==Red Cross but they didn't

come,” in English; lines 56 and 58).

***Excerpt 3b. (ECR-02 Casa color papaya / Papaya colored house)***

- 052 CT: NOMBRE qué- qué qué le puedo servir?  
 NAME what what what to-you can.1SG serve.INF  
 NAME how- how how can I help you?
- 053 C: .hh este:: es que mi mamá  
 hh um be.3SG that my mom  
 .hh um:: it's that my mom
- 054 está enferma desde el día de ayer,  
 be.3Sg sick since the day of yesterday  
*has been sick since yesterday,*
- 055 (.)
- 056 C: Ayer [se hizo un llama]do a la=  
 Yesterday self did.3SG a call to the  
*Yesterday [a call was made]e to the=*
- 057 CT: [Qué edad tiene? ]  
 What age have.3SG  
 [ How old is she? ]
- 058 C: =Cruz Roja pero no llegó.  
 Cross Red but no came.3SG  
*=Red Cross but they didn't come.*
- 059 CT: Qué edad tiene ella?  
 What age have.3SG she  
*How old is she?*

The caller had called the Red Cross the day before, but they did not dispatch an ambulance (lines 56 and 58; Excerpt 3b above). The excerpt above shows the context in which the “favor” construction was found in my dataset (i.e., after a lack of response from the emergency services). In other words, the caller is pursuing a response after a prior failed attempt at receiving the help. By using the “favor” construction, the caller is acknowledging the possibility of also not receiving the assistance in the second call.

However, more research is needed, as there were only a few instances of the “favor” construction in my dataset.

### **The “*amabilidad*” (“kindness,” in English) construction**

The “*amabilidad*” (“kindness,” in English) construction is another practice that callers use to request help. Furthermore, it displays orientations to both the contingencies involved in granting the requested help and to the caller’s low entitlement to the request. This construction includes phrases such as “*sería tan amable*” or “*si tuviera la amabilidad*” (both translated as “would you be so kind,” in English). This practice seems to be used for non-life-threatening incidents (e.g., an assault or a car accident, both without physical harm) in which callers present themselves as the benefactors, given that they are calling on behalf of the victims. In this subsection, I will show that by using the “*amabilidad*” construction, callers pursue a response after a prior lack of response.

The call entitled “Her blood sugar dropped” (Excerpt 4 below) is an example of a request for help using the “*amabilidad*” (“kindness,” in English) construction. In this call, a husband requests an ambulance for his wife, whose blood sugar has dropped (data not shown). After the opening of the call (lines 1-4), the caller requests an ambulance using the “*amabilidad*” construction: “*sería tan amable de mandarme una: ambulancia aquí*” (“would you be so kind and send an: ambulance here”; lines 5-6). The caller also includes the location of the incident (lines 6-7) in the same turn, and the call-taker initiates repair to clarify the location of the incident (line 9).

#### ***Excerpt 4. (ECR-131 Se le bajó el azúcar / Her blood sugar dropped)***

001 AR: Emergencias nueve uno uno¿  
 Emergencies nine one one  
 Nine one one emergency¿

- 002 CT: Nueve uno uno;  
 Nine one one  
*Nine one one;*
- 003 C: B- b- b- buenas noches.  
 G- g- g- good nights  
*G- g- g- good evening.*
- 004 CT: >Buenas noches;<  
 Good nights  
 >Good evening;<
- 005 C: .Hh sería tan amable de  
 Hh would-be.2SG so kind of  
*.Hh would you be so kind and*
- 006 mandarme una: ambulancia aquí a  
 send.INF-to-me a ambulance here to  
*send an: ambulance here to*
- 007 Dioley de Matina;  
 TOWN of COUNTY/CENTRAL DISTRICT  
*Dioley of Matina;*
- 008 (0.5)
- 009 CT: Belei;  
 TOWN  
*Belei;*

The composition of the request (lines 5-7) includes the modal verb “*sería*” (“would-be.2SG”), the intensifier “*tan*” (“so,” in English), and the positive assessment “*amable*” (“kind,” in English). These three devices together all characterize the call-taker as the benefactor of the help (i.e., as a kind person who controls the help), given that if the call-taker “were not kind enough,” he would not dispatch the requested help to the caller.

As seen in this section, *request* formats are explicit requests for help in which callers solicit a particular type of emergency service. My dataset found two practices used

in explicit requests for help: (a) practices orienting to the contingencies involved in receiving the assistance via the grammaticalized form “*para ver si*” (“to see if,” in English), and (b) practices orienting to low entitlement to the requested help via the “favor” and the “*amabilidad*” (“kindness,” in English) constructions. The findings show that both practices use mitigation devices (e.g., conditionals, modal verbs, and the “do me a favor/be kind” construction) that suggest that the incident is less urgent or less life-threatening.

### **Report forms**

Reports use a “report” frame to identify the incident and the nature of the problem with a clear police-relevant category, such as, as an accident or a break in; for example, the phrase “I want to report a real bad accident” (Zimmerman, 1992, p. 437) would constitute a report. During my non-participant observation of the 9-1-1 call center, I observed that incidents are classified according to the type of incident; for instance, as a “*fuego*” (“fire,” in English), “*fuga*” (“runaway,” in English) or “*disputa familiar*” (“family,” in English). Therefore, by including a police-relevant category in their report, callers present the incident as being self-evidently policeable. By designing their request for help as a report, callers orient to low contingencies of the desired outcome, given that providing an incident category may facilitate placing the incident into a predetermined category. When using a report frame, callers may be reporting an incident on behalf of the victim (i.e., as a third party; Zimmerman, 1992b). In such cases, callers present themselves as the benefactors of the interaction (Clayman & Heritage, 2014) and as “Good Samaritans” for informing the emergency services about the incident. However, callers may also call on behalf of themselves to report an incident.

My dataset shows that two verbs are used for reporting: “*reportar*” (“to report,” in English) and “*denunciar*” (“to denounce,” in English). The verb “*reportar*” is broader in a semantic sense and may refer to reporting any incident, whereas “*denunciar*” implies communicating a wrongdoing. Interactionally, however, there does not seem to be a clear difference in terms of how these two verbs are used, as shown in this section. When using either “*reportar*” or “*denunciar*,” callers may be presenting themselves as “Good Samaritans” in letting the emergency services know about the incident and providing information for others/third parties; on the other hand, they may be calling on behalf of an institution. In this section, I will show how callers orient to self-evident incidents via: (a) the “*reportar*” (“to report,” in English) frame and (b) the “*denunciar*” (“to denounce,” in English) frame.

### **Using the verb “*reportar*” (“to report,” in English)**

In Spanish, the verb “*reportar*” (“to report,” in English) means “to transmit, to communicate, to inform.”<sup>11</sup> This meaning is also shared with the verb “*denunciar*” (“to denounce,” in English). In this subsection, I will show how reports that use the verb “*reportar*” followed by a policeable label are built up as being self-evident incidents.

The call entitled “Forest fire in Heredia” (Excerpt 5 below) is an example of how callers design their requests for help using the “*reportar*” verb. In this call, the automatic recording (“AR”) opens the call (line 1) and the caller reports a forest fire (lines 2-3). The call-taker then solicits the location of the incident (line 5).

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<sup>11</sup> The original text in Spanish reads “*Transmitir, comunicar, dar noticia.*” (RAE, 2014b).

**Excerpt 5. (ECR-209 Incendio forestal en Heredia / Forest fire in Heredia)**

001 AR: Emergencias nueve uno uno;  
 Emergencies nine one one;  
*Nine one one emergency;*

002 C: Sí buenas para reportar  
 Yes good for report.INF  
*Yes good afternoon ((I'm calling)) to report*

003 un incendio forestaa::l;  
 a fire forest  
*a forest fi::re;*

004 (0.2)

005 CT: Sí señor en dónde sería?  
 Yes sir in where would-be.3G  
*Yes sir where would that be?*

The caller's first turn-at-talk is a multi-unit turn that includes an acknowledgment token (line 2), a pro-forma greeting (line 2), a report frame (line 2), and the incident (line 3). As discussed in Chapter 4 "Overall structural organization of calls to 9-1-1 Costa Rica," callers may acknowledge having reached the correct service and/or proffer a greeting form during the first turn-at-talk. In the case of Excerpt 5 (above), the caller proffers both components: the acknowledgment token "Sí" ("Yes," in English; line 2) and the "*buenas*" greeting form ("good afternoon," in English; line 2). The "*buenas*" form is a pro-forma greeting that does not initiate a greeting sequence, but instead shows the caller's orientation to proceeding to the reason for the call. Following the pro-forma greeting, the caller formulates the reason for the call: "*para reportar un incendio foresta::l;*" ("[[I'm calling]] to report a forest fi::re;" in English; lines 2-3). The request is designed using a report frame followed by a police-relevant category (i.e., "*incendio foresta::l*" or "forest fi::re," in English; line 3).

The relation of the caller to the incident (M. R. Whalen & Zimmerman, 1990) is unclear. The only evidence provided by the caller appears later in the call, when he informs that “*no se puede respirar*” (“it is hard to breathe,” in English; data not shown). This shows some sort of access to the incident (i.e., the caller is close enough the fire to experience its negative effects).

The call entitled “Reporting a runaway from a shelter” (Excerpt 6 below) is another example of requesting the help via the verb “*reportar*” (“to report,” in English). After the opening of the call (lines 1-5), the caller reports that two teenagers have run away from the shelter (lines 5-6 and lines 9-10). The call-taker then solicits further information about the shelter (lines 11-12).

***Excerpt 6. (ECR-93 Reporte de fuga de albergue / Reporting a runaway from a shelter)***

001 AR: Emergencias nueve uno uno;  
Emergencies nine one one  
Nine one one emergency;

002 (0.3)

003 C: [Bue-  
Goo-  
[Goo-

004 CT: [Nueve uno uno;  
Nine one one  
[Nine one one;

005 C: Bue::na::s, .hh es para  
Good be.3SG for  
Good:: afternoon::n, .hh ((I'm calling))

006 reportar este la::,  
report.INF um the  
to report um the::,

007 (0.3)

- 008 CT: Sí señora?  
Yes ma'am  
Yes ma'am?
- 009 C: La fuga de dos chicos de acá del  
The escape of two boys of here of-the  
The runaway of two boys here from the
- 010 albergue La Torre, en Guadalupe.  
Shelter NAME in DISTRICT  
La Torre shelter, in Guadalupe.
- 011 CT: Permítame- es el albergue  
Allow.IMP.2SG-me- be.3SG the shelter  
Hold on- is it the PANI
- 012 del PANI  
of-the NAME  
shelter?

The composition of the request for help is comprised of a report frame that uses the verb “*reportar*” (“to report,” in English; line 6), followed by the categorization of the incident with the label “*fuga*” (“runaway,” in English; line 9). By using a policeable label, the caller presents the incident as being self-evidently policeable, and thus strengthens the case by providing a concise category that may be an identifiable incident code. This report shows the caller’s practical epistemology (M. R. Whalen & Zimmerman, 1990), as it details the information about the incident: the people involved (“*dos chicos*” or “two boys,”; line 9) and the place of the incident: “*del albergue La Torre, en Guadalupe*” (“from the La Torre shelter, in Guadalupe,” in English; lines 9-10). It is possible that the caller is a staff member of the shelter, as she indexes her location as being within the shelter itself by using the deictic “*acá*” (“here,” in English; line 9). After the caller has reported the runaway, the call-taker solicits clarification regarding what

kind of shelter it is: “*es el albergue del PANI*”<sup>12</sup> (“is it the PANI shelter?” in English; lines 11-12). In doing so, the call-taker is treating the incident as being worthy of police assistance.

As seen in this subsection, the verb “*reportar*” is used to communicate an incident, followed by a police-relevant category; therefore, the policeability of the incident is evident and not questionable. Callers reporting incidents via the “*reportar*” verb may be presenting themselves either as “Good Samaritans” (e.g., the caller reporting a forest fire; Excerpt 5), or as calling on behalf of an institution (e.g., the caller reporting the runaway; Excerpt 6). In the case of callers calling on behalf of an institution, the report frame seems to be related to their status as institutional representatives.

#### **Using the verb “*denunciar*” (“to denounce,” in English)**

In Spanish, the verb “*denunciar*” (“to denounce,” in English) shares its meaning with “*reportar*” (“to report”) in the sense that both verbs communicate news. However, “*denunciar*” also has the connotation of communicating a wrongdoing to the respective authorities: “to report or inform the judicial or administrative authorities of an illegal act or an abnormal event,”<sup>13</sup> in English (RAE, 2014a). Nonetheless, there seems to be no difference in how these two verbs, “*reportar*” and “*denunciar*,” are used in this context. In this section, I will show how reports of incidents that use the “*denunciar*” verb followed by a policeable label are built up as being self-evident incidents.

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<sup>12</sup> *PANI* stands for “*Patronato Nacional de la Infancia*,” which is the National Child Welfare Agency in Costa Rica. Therefore, a *PANI* shelter is a state-funded shelter run by this agency.

<sup>13</sup> The original text in Spanish reads “*dar a la autoridad judicial o administrativa parte o noticia de una actuación ilícita o de un suceso irregular*” (RAE, 2014a).

The call entitled “Shelter runaway denunciation” (Excerpt 7 below) is an example of designing the request for help via the verb “*denunciar*” (“to denounce,” in English). In this call, the caller seems to work in a state-funded children/youth shelter, and calls to inform about a teenager who has run away from the shelter. After the opening of the call (lines 1-3), the caller presents the reason for calling: “*Para denunciar una fuga; (0.3) Del albergue NAME;*” (“[[I’m calling]] to report a runaway; (0.3) From the NAME shelter;” in English; lines 5-7). The call-taker then solicits the location of the shelter (line 9).

***Excerpt 7. (ECR-04 Denuncia de fuga de albergue / Shelter runaway denunciation)***

001 CT: Emergencias nueve uno uno;  
Emergencies nine one one  
*Nine one one emergency;*

002 (.)

003 C: Buenas;  
Good  
*Good morning;*

004 (0.3)

005 C: Para denunciar una fuga;  
For denounce.INF a escape;  
*((I’m calling)) to report a runaway;*

006 (0.3)

007 C: Del albergue NAME;  
From-the shelter NAME;  
*From the NAME shelter;*

008 (2.0)

009 CT: Qué dirección tiene el albergue;  
What address/direction have.3SG the shelter;  
*What is the location of the shelter;*

In this call, the call-taker treats the problem as being policeable by soliciting the location of the shelter (line 9). By providing the label of “*fuga*” (“runaway,” in English; line 5) for the incident, the caller presents the problem as being self-evidently policeable. In both Excerpts 6 and 7, the callers report the runaway of teenagers from state-funded shelters, and they also provide the name of the shelters with some indication of their location. However, the verbs used in each case are different (i.e., “*reportar*” and “*denunciar*,” respectively). Excerpts 6 and 7 show that the two verbs are used in similar circumstances, suggesting that there might not be a difference in how they are deployed in this setting.

The call entitled “Car theft” (Excerpt 8 below) is another example of a request for help designed with the verb “*denunciar*” (“to denounce,” in English). After the opening of the call (lines 1-3), the caller presents the reason for calling: “*es para denunciar un robo*” (“[[I’m calling]] to denounce a theft” in English; lines 3-4). The only information provided in the reason for the call is theft, which is a broad category, given that it can include the theft of small items (such as a wallet or a book) or of bigger items (such as luggage or a car). In response, the call-taker initiates repair to specify what kind of theft it is by soliciting “*Un robo a*” (“A theft of” in English; line 6), and specifies the place of the incident: “*Adónde*” (“Where” in English; line 6). Once the incident has been clarified (lines 9-15), the call-taker solicits the location of the incident (line 17).

***Excerpt 8. (ECR-62 Robo de carro / Stolen car)***

001 AR: Emergencias nueve uno uno;  
Emergencies nine one one;  
Nine one one emergency;

002 (0.5)

- 003 C: Buenas muchacho es que es para es  
 Good young-man be.3SG that be.3SG for be.3SG  
*Good evening young man it's that it's that*
- 004 para denunciar un robo;  
 for denounce.INF a theft;  
*((I'm calling)) to denounce a theft;*
- 005 (0.5)
- 006 CT: Un robo a; Adónde;  
 A theft to; To-where;  
*A theft of; Where;*
- 007 C: A- a un carro.  
 To- to a car.  
*Of- of a car.*
- 008 (1.0)
- 009 CT: Qué- qué fue; El- o sea fue  
 What- what was.3SG The- or be.SUBJV.3SG was.3SG  
*What- what was it; The- I mean was it*
- 010 robo del carro o  
 theft of-the car or  
*a theft of a car or*
- 011 fue robo dentro del carro;  
 was.3SG theft inside of-the car;  
*was it a theft inside the car;*
- 012 (0.7)
- 013 C: Fue eh- no- o- robo de-  
 Was.3SG um- no- or- theft of-  
*It was um- no- or- a theft of-*
- 014 robo del carro. Estamos aquí afuera  
 theft of-the car Were.1PL here outside  
*a theft of the car. We are here outside*
- 015 y y se- nos lo acaban de robar;  
 and and self- to-us it end.3PL of steal.INF;  
*and and it was just stolen from us;*
- 016 (0.5)

017 CT: Al carro okay adónde sería eso;  
 To-the car okay to-where would-be.3SG that;  
*Of the car okay where would that be;*

The caller's response "*a un carro*" ("of a car," in English; line 7) is still unclear to the call-taker, who initiates repair again: "*fue robo del carro o fue robo dentro del carro*" ("was it a theft of a car or was it a theft inside the car," in English; lines 9-11). The caller clarifies that it was a "*robo del carro*" ("theft of the car," in English; line 14), and then displays how she learned about the theft, or practical her epistemology (M. R. Whalen & Zimmerman, 1990): because they are "*aquí afuera*" ("here outside," in English; line 14) and "*nos lo acaban de robar*" ("it was just stolen from us," in English; line 15). By repairing (lines 6, 9-11), the call-taker is narrowing down the possible meanings of the word "*robo*" ("theft," in English), but he may also be sorting out what code should be assigned to the incident according to the type of reported problem (i.e., because different kinds of thefts are assigned different codes and priority levels).

The composition of the turn in lines 14-15 sheds some light on the time of the incident and the caller's perception of her agency regarding the incident. The utterance "*Estamos aquí afuera*" ("We are here outside," in English; line 14) implies that the caller is not by herself (i.e., she uses the first person plural form of the verb conjugation) and that the car was somewhere outside in the street (e.g., the car was not in the caller's garage or in a parking garage). The formulation of how the car was stolen via the utterance "*se- nos lo acaban de robar*" ("it was just stolen from us," in English; line 15) shows an abandoned "*se-*," which possibly indicates "*se lo robaron*" ("it was stolen," in English). In Spanish, "*se lo robaron*" is a passive grammatical construction that removes the subject from the action taking place. In this particular instance, this passive

construction also removes any attachment of the caller to the car. The reformulation of the possible abandoned turn into “*nos lo acaban de robar*” (“it was just stolen from us” in English; line 15) indicates that the person does have some attachment to the object. That attachment is seen in the reflexive pronoun “*nos*” (“us,” in English); that is, the car was stolen “from us,” which implies the caller’s attachment to the car. Additionally, the use of the phrase “*acaban de*” (“just,” in English) indicates the time of the incident; it did not happen yesterday or five hours ago, but it just happened shortly before the caller made the call. The call-taker’s response to the caller’s clarification of the type of theft (line 17) is made up of three TCUs: (1) the acknowledgement of the stolen object via the phrase “*Al carro*” (“To the car,” in English), (2) the acknowledgement of the incident (i.e., via the phrase “okay”), and (3) the solicitation of the place of the incident: “*adónde sería eso*” (“where would that be” in English). By soliciting the place of the incident, the call-taker closes the presentation of the problem and moves on to the interrogative series. In doing so, the call-taker is also therefore treating the incident as policeable.

As shown in this section, the *report* format deploys a report frame in which callers label the incident using a policeable category. My dataset shows two verbs used in the reports of incidents: (a) the verb “*reportar*” (“to report,” in English), and (b) the verb “*denunciar*” (“to denounce,” in English). Although there is a semantic difference between the verbs, there seems to be no particular interactional difference (i.e., both verbs communicate information about an incident to the authorities). The findings show that requests for help designed as reports of policeable incidents present the incidents as being self-evident (i.e., the provision of appropriate assistance is not in question).

Furthermore, callers who are not directly involved in the incident (e.g., but rather, as victims) tend to design the request for help using a report frame.

### **Descriptions**

*Descriptions* are declarative statements that provide some sort of information about the incident. For example, “In thuh YWCA parking lot there uh bunchuh teenagers right now vandalizing my ca:r,” (Zimmerman, 1992, p. 438). As seen in this example, descriptions are not prefaced with any type of frame, as it is the case with explicit requests (i.e., “*para ver si*”, “[I’m calling]] to see if,” in English) or reports (i.e., “[I’m calling]] to report/denounce”). Commonly, descriptions are multi-unit turns in which callers describe the incident to call-takers. In the descriptions, callers do not explicitly request a type of service. However, descriptions are understood as requests for help in this institutional context (Drew & Walker, 2010; M. R. Whalen & Zimmerman, 1987).

My dataset shows two practices that callers use when describing the incident: (a) descriptions that include a police-relevant category and thereby display the caller’s orientation to low contingencies involved in receiving assistance, and (b) descriptions that use prospective indexicals that project an extended telling about the incident and thereby display the caller’s orientation to high contingencies of receiving the requested outcome. In this section, I will examine the two aforementioned practices and also show how descriptions of incidents are treated by call-takers as requests for help.

#### **Describing self- evident incidents (using policeable labels)**

Description of self-evident incidents using a policeable label is a practice for requesting help in which callers orient to low contingencies of receiving the assistance. In these descriptions, callers not only provide some information about the incident, but they

also name the incident with a policeable label (e.g., a fire, an accident, or a gunshot). These descriptions do not request a particular type of assistance and are commonly delivered in a single TCU. In this subsection, I will show that descriptions using a policeable label: (a) are self-evident as they describe the incident, and (b) display an orientation to the low contingencies involved in receiving the assistance due to its self-evident policeability.

The call entitled “Harassing two young girls” (Excerpt 9 below) is an example of a request for help in which the problem is described using a police-relevant category. We can hear the caller yelling at a third party (“TP” on the transcript) on the caller’s side about a young girl (lines 1-2), even before the automatic institutional recording is activated (line 3). After the automatic institutional recording is activated, the caller describes that there is an old man harassing two young girls (lines 4-8). Then the caller then solicits confirmation of the place of the incident (line 10).

***Excerpt 9. (ECR-168 Acosando a dos chiquitas / Harassing two young girls)***

- 001 C: ES UNA CHIQUITA MAE? ((to TP))  
 Be.3SG a young-girl dude  
*SHE IS A YOUNG GIRL DUDE? ((to TP))*
- 002 C: No [está- ((to TP))  
 No be.3SG  
*No [she/he/it is- ((to TP))*
- 003 AR: [Emergencias nueve uno uno;  
 Emergencies nine one one  
*[Nine one one emergency;*
- 004 C: Mae hay un roco aquí de-  
 Buddy there-is an old-man here of-  
*Buddy there is an old man here of-*

- 005            hay            un roco            aquí en el  
                  there-is an old-man here in the  
                  *there is an old man here at the*
- 006            parque de Barva            acosando a  
                  park    of DĪSCTRĪCT harassing to  
                  *park in Barva harassing*
- 007            dos mu- a    dos muchachas    de colegio.  
                  two gi- to two young-girls of high-school  
                  *two gi- two young high school girls.*
- 008    C:    Un viejo.  
                  An old  
                  An old man.
- 009            (1.0)
- 010    CT:    Heredia Barva;  
                  PROVINCE DISTRICT  
                  *Heredia Barva;*

The caller's practical epistemology (M. R. Whalen & Zimmerman, 1990) to the incident is included in his description of the incident in which he articulates how he became aware of the incident: he is "*aquí en el parque de Barva*" ("here at the park in Barva," in English; lines 5-6). The deictic "*aquí*" ("here," in English; lines 4, 5) indexes the caller's proximity to the incident. While describing the offender's conduct, the caller categorizes it as "*acosando*" ("harassing," in English; line 6). By using a police-relevant category, the caller may be strengthening his case, as this category may be recognizable for the call-taker as an existing code for classifying an incident.

This request for help is designed as a description, since the caller provides information about the context: the offender is "*un roco*" ("an old man," in English; lines 4-5), the location of the incident is "*en el parque de Barva*" ("at the park in Barva," in English; lines 5-6), the incident of "*acosando*" ("harassing," in English; line 6), and the

victims are “*dos muchachas de colegio*” (“two young high school girls,” in English; line 7). The composition of the request for help displays the caller’s orientations to the low contingencies involved in receiving the assistance, since the caller provides the evidence that builds up the incident as being self-evidently policeable. By providing the contextual information of the incident in the form of descriptions, callers show their epistemic access to the incident (Larsen, 2013). Additionally, the caller is not suggesting the type of assistance that the incident requires by requesting help in the form of a descriptions; instead, he leaves it up to the call-taker to decide what type of help is needed in the particular circumstances of the incident. In doing so, the caller is building a case as a self-evidently policeable incident. This excerpt also illustrates that descriptions of incidents are accepted by call-takers as requests for help, a finding that is in line with prior research (Drew & Walker, 2010; M. R. Whalen & Zimmerman, 1990).

The call entitled “Forest fire in Los Chiles” (Excerpt 10 below) is another example of a request for help designed as a description that includes a police-relevant category. In this case, the caller informs the call-taker about a forest fire. After the opening of the call (lines 1-3), the caller introduces himself with his name (line 3) and the place from which he is calling: “*yo le hablo aquí de Los Chiles*” (“I’m calling from Los Chiles,” in English; line 4). In doing so, the caller legitimizes that the call is real (i.e., is not a prank). Additionally, the caller provides this information without being prompted by the call-taker – which is a routine activity in 9-1-1 Costa Rica (i.e., as a way to distinguish between pranks and actual incidents; see Chapter 3 “Methodology and Data”). In doing so, the caller is displaying an understanding of how the emergency system functions (Paoletti, 2012b). After a gap (line 5) and a go-ahead from the call-taker (line

6), the caller describes the incident: there is a forest fire (lines 7-10). The call-taker then solicits the location of the incident (line 11).

***Excerpt 10. (ECR-84 Incendio forestal en Los Chiles / Forest fire in Los Chiles)***

001 CT: Emergencias nueve uno uno;  
Emergencies nine one one  
*Nine one one emergency;*

002 (0.5)

003 C: Buenas ( ) mi nombre es NOMBRE APELLIDO,  
Good my name be.3SG NAME LAST-NAME  
*Good morning ( ) my name is NAME LASTNAME,*

004 yo le hablo aquí de Los Chiles;  
I to-you speak.1SG here of COUNTY/DISTRICT  
*I'm calling from Los Chiles;*

005 (1.0)

006 CT: Sí señor;  
Yes sir  
*Yes sir;*

007 C: Estoy- estoy de la escuela del Jobo, dos  
Be.1SG be.1SG of the school of-the TOWN dos  
*I am- I am located from the Jobo school, two*

008 kilómetros carretera=a Caño Negro.  
kilometers road to DISTRICT/WILDLIFE REFUGE  
*kilometers on the way to Caño Negro.*

009 Es que tenemos un incendio forestal  
Be.3SG that have.1PL a fire forest  
*It's that there is a forest fire*

010 sobre- [sobre la vía.]  
over over the road/way  
*along- [along the road.]*

011 CT: [Dónde es esto] perdón?  
Where be.3SG this pardon  
*[Where is it] pardon?*

The presentation of the problem consists of a person presentation (lines 3-4), a place formulation (lines 4, 7-8, 10), and an identification of the incident (lines 9-10). The composition of the request shows the caller's practical epistemology (M. R. Whalen & Zimmerman, 1990) in relation to the incident. The verb "*estoy*" ("I am," in English; line 7) indexes that the caller is at the place of the incident, and, because of this, he is able to provide information about the place: "*de la escuela del Jobo, dos kilómetros carretera=a Caño Negro*" ("from the Jobo school, two kilometers on the way to Caño Negro," in English; lines 7-8). Additionally, he is also able to provide a more granular place formulation of the incident: "*sobre- [sobre la vía]*" ("along- [along the road]," in English; line 10). The incident is described as an "*incendio forestal*" ("forest fire," in English, line 9), which, in turn, reinforces the claim that the caller's description shows his practical epistemology in relation to the incident (i.e., since he is able to articulate a granular description of the fire by providing a particular kind of fire, a "forest fire"). Again, this shows that descriptions provide evidence of callers' epistemic access to the incident (Larsen, 2013).

Once the caller has labeled the problem as a "forest fire" (line 9), the call-taker comes in right away in overlap (line 11). This overlap shows the call-taker's acceptance of the caller's description of the incident as sufficient. The caller presents the problem using the verb "*tenemos*" ("have.1PL"; line 9), which may be interpreted as calling on behalf of an organization. Nonetheless, there is no evidence throughout the call that this is the case. Instead, it may be the case that the caller is aggregating himself (Lerner & Kitinger, 2007) as part of the Caño Negro community where the wildlife refuge a refuge where caimans spawn – is located. In doing so, the caller may be adding legitimacy to the

call, which can be added to the caller's self-identification (e.g., his name and geographical location) in the opening of the call. The caller presents himself as a benefactor (Clayman & Heritage, 2014) and as a Good Samaritan, as he informs 9-1-1 about the fire; however, he also presents himself as a beneficiary, as he seems to consider himself to be a part of the community in which the incident is happening.

In both the call entitled "Harassing two young girls" (Excerpt 9 above) and the call entitled "Forest fire in Los Chiles" (Excerpt 10 above), callers formulate the incident as a description. In doing so, they display their epistemic access to the incident. In these calls, the callers do not solicit a particular service or explicitly request help given that the incident is self-evident; therefore, the callers leave it up to the call-takers to decide what kind of assistance is required given the circumstances described by the callers. In producing these descriptions, callers are requesting help by simply providing evidence for the call-taker to consider the incident as worthy of police assistance. On the other hand, describing the incident with policeable labels is a practice that not only presents the incident as self-evident, but also orients to low contingencies involved in receiving the assistance. The low contingency is displayed via the design of the request with a policeable label (e.g., a fire or a car accident), as well as via other elements of description. These additional elements (e.g., the type of fire, the affected area by the fire, or the health condition of the victim in a car accident) provide further grounds for why the assistance is needed.

### **Describing incidents that are difficult to categorize (using prospective indexicals)**

Describing incidents that are difficult to categorize using prospective indexicals is a practice for requesting help that orients to high contingencies in receiving the

assistance. In this type of descriptions, the caller introduces the incident using a prospective indexical (Goodwin, 1996), which is an expression that projects a multi-unit turn to explain to what the speaker is referring. Describing incidents using prospective indexicals is a practice that callers use in order to get an extended turn to explain the incident. While an incident reported in this way may be worthy of police assistance, it may not be easy to categorize or the policeability might be questionable. In describing such incidents, callers may need an extended turn to explain the incident and show its policeability. Additionally, callers may unpack prospective indexicals in their initial turn or in response to call-takers' solicitations. Some of the prospective indexicals found in my dataset are the words "*problema*" ("problem," in English), "*emergencia*" ("emergency," in English), "*caso*" ("case," in English), or "*asunto*" ("matter/issue," in English).

These descriptions might be combined with explicit requests for an ambulance or a police car, or with a request for help in which the caller solicits general "help" (i.e., not a particular service). In this subsection, I will show that descriptions with prospective indexicals: (a) are used to obtain an extended turn that allows callers to describe an incident that is difficult to categorize, (b) are used in cases in which the policeability of the incident might be questionable, and (c) orient to high contingencies in receiving the assistance, as callers may not know what kind of assistance may be possible to receive due to the particularity of the incident.

The call entitled "My brother does drugs and threatens me" (Excerpt 11 below) is an example of a request for help in which the caller describes the incident and introduces the problem with a prospective indexical. In this call, the caller informs that her brother,

who does drugs, is always threatening her. After the opening of the call (lines 1-2), the caller presents the problem (lines 4-15). The composition of the problem presentation includes: the prospective indexical “*un problema*” (“a problem,” in English; line 5), contextual information about the incident (lines 5-6), the person involved (line 7), the problem (lines 7-8), the current state of affairs (lines 9-10), the caller’s account for not being able to file a formal criminal complaint before calling (lines 11-12), and an explicit request for help (lines 12-15).

***Excerpt 11. (ECR-165 Mi hermano se droga y me amenaza / My brother does drugs and threatens me)***

- 001 AR: Emergencias nueve uno uno¿  
Emergencies nine one one  
*Nine one one emergency¿*
- 002 CT: >Emergencias< nueve uno uno¿  
Emergencies nine one one  
>Nine< one one emergency¿
- 003 (0.5)
- 004 C: Buenas, (.) vea, lo que pasa  
Good look.IMP.2SG it that happen.3SG  
*Good morning, (.) look,*
- 005 es que yo tengo un problema.=Yo ahora  
be.3SG that I have.1SG a problem I now  
*it's that I have a problem.=I just now*
- 006 tuve que llamar .hh temprano porque  
had.1SG that call.INF early because  
*had to call .hh earlier because*
- 007 tengo un hermano que se droga, .hh y  
have.1SG a brother that self drug.3SG and  
*I have a brother that does drugs, .hh and*

- 008        siempre me        está    amenazando.=Ahorita  
 always   to-me be.3SG threatening Now.DIM  
*he is always threatening me.=Right now*
- 009        acaba    de llegar    del        trabajo y    está  
 end.3SG of come.INF of-the work    and be.3SG  
*he just got back from work and is*
- 010        insultándome .hh y    diciendo que  
 insulting-me        and saying    that  
*insulting me .hh and saying*
- 011        llame                a    la    Policía, yo no he  
 call.SUBJV.1SG to the Police    I    no have.1SG  
*to call the Police, I haven't*
- 012        podido salir        a    poner    la    demanda.=A  
 could go-out.INF to put.INF the lawsuit To  
*been able to go out and file a lawsuit.=((I'm*
- 013        ver        si pueden mandar    alguna patrulla  
 see.INF if can.2PL send.INF some    patrol-car  
*calling)) to see if you can send a patrol car*
- 014        o    hacer algo porque ya  
 or do.INF something because already  
 or do something because
- 015        no sé        qué    hacer.  
 no now.1SG what do.INF  
*I don't know what to do anymore.*
- 016    CT:    Y    es        la    misma dirección  
 And be.3SG the same    address/direction  
*And is it the same location*
- 017        que    brindó                en la    mañana¿=  
 that provided.2SG in the morning  
*that you provided this morning¿=*

The use of the prospective indexical “*un problema*” (“a problem,” in English; line 5) projects that there are more TCUs to come (Goodwin, 1996), since this word must be unpacked in order to understand to what it is referring. During the caller’s first turn-at-

talk in this call, she unpacks the prospective indexical and presents details of the incident. The caller sets up her incident presentation by providing contextual information about the incident (i.e., “*Yo ahora tuve que llamar .hh temprano*” [“I just now had to call .hh earlier,” in English; lines 5-6]). This information seems to be relevant in building the case, since it provides the basis for the second request for help that the caller is asking for in this call. By setting up this call as a follow up call, the caller is pursuing a response from the emergency services after a prior request for assistance.

The incident presentation also includes a reference to the person involved in the problem (i.e., the caller’s brother; line 7), and provides information about that person (i.e., “[he] does drugs, .hh and he is always threatening me”; lines 7-8). By including this information about her brother, the caller is framing him as a problematic and/or dangerous person, thus making visible that the “*problema*” has to do with him. In doing so, the caller is presenting herself as the victim of the incident and as a beneficiary (Clayman & Heritage, 2014) of the assistance. The composition of the brother’s characteristics indexes a recurrent pattern of behavior that ends up constituting the problem. In other words, by framing her brother as a person that “*se droga*” and “*siempre me está amenazando*” (“does drugs” and “is always threatening me,” in English; lines 7-8), the caller is informing that these behaviors have happened not only today, but that they are recurrent and that she frequently deals with them. The brother’s recurrent behaviors (lines 7-8) plus the current state of affairs (i.e., “*Ahorita acaba de llegar del trabajo*” [“Right now he just got back from work,” in English; lines 8-9]) set up the incident of the call: “*está insultándome*” (“[he] is insulting me,” in English; lines 9-10). The caller also accounts for not solving the problem earlier with “*yo no he podido salir a*

*poner la demanda*” (“I haven’t been able to go out and file a lawsuit,” in English; lines 11-12). The word “*demanda*” (“lawsuit,” in English) might indicate that the problem has escalated to the point that the caller is willing to take legal action against her brother, thus indicating that this incident is a serious problem for the caller. The final TCU in the description of the incident is an explicit request for help: “*A ver si pueden mandar alguna patrulla o hacer algo porque ya no sé qué hacer*” (“I’m calling to see if you can send a patrol car or do something because I don’t know what to do anymore,” in English; lines 12-15). As discussed above, the use of the grammaticalized form “*para ver si*” (“[I’m calling] to see if,” in English) frames the request as high in the contingency of receiving the assistance. The call-taker then treats the incident as policeable by soliciting confirmation of the location given by the caller in the first call during the morning: “*Y es la misma dirección que brindó en la mañana¿*” (“And is it the same location that you provided this morning¿”; lines 16-17).

Excerpt 11 (above) is an example of designing the reason for the call as a description. In the description, the caller provided her grounds for calling. However, she also made visible that she does not know what kind of help could be provided for her particular request. Descriptions including prospective indexicals seem to be a practice used by callers when they do not know what service to request or when there does not seem to be a clear category for labeling the incident.

The call entitled “She leaves the baby home alone” (Excerpts 12a, 12b below) is another example in which an incident is described using a prospective indexical (i.e., file a complaint”; line 6 of Excerpt 12a). The caller reports that the neighbor, who is a teenager, leaves the baby with other teenagers and that the baby cries continuously. The

opening of the call (i.e., Excerpt 12a below) includes the automatic recording with the institutional identification (line 1), the repetition of the identification by the call-taker (line 2), and the repair initiation “*Aló?*” (“Hello,” in English; line 3) by the caller that prompts the reformulation of the opening by the call-taker (line 4). The reformulation of the opening in line 4 includes the greeting “*Buenas noches*” (“Good evening,” in English), and an explicit solicitation of the reason for the call “*cuál es su emergencia?*” (“what is your emergency,” in English). This explicit solicitation shows that the call-taker assumes that the call is an emergency. As is the case with emergency services (i.e., according to the specialized inferential frameworks of the emergency calls), all calls are treated as requests for help. In response, the caller presents her reason for calling: she wants to “*hace:r .hhh este una denuncia*” (“fil:e .hhh um a complaint,” in English; lines 5-6). In this case, the words “*denuncia*” (“complaint,” in English; line 6) is the prospective indexical. Immediately after the reason for calling, the caller builds her case (lines 6-16). The first information that the caller provides is that she lives “*en unas casitas de alquiler*” (“in some little rental units,” in English; lines 7-8), which indexes the socioeconomic level of the caller (i.e., this implies that the caller does not own the place and that is small). The description of the caller’s house seems to be an explanation of how she was able to hear the baby crying and how she became aware of the problem.

***Excerpt 12a. (ECR-111 Deja bebé sola / She leaves the baby home alone)***

001 AR: Emergencias nueve uno uno¿  
 Emergencies nine one one  
 Nine one one emergency¿

002 CT: Emergencias nueve uno uno¿  
 Emergencies nine one one  
 Nine one one emergency¿

- 003 C: Aló?  
Hello  
*Hello?*
- 004 CT: Buenas noches cuál es su emergencia?  
Good nights which be.3SG your emergency  
*Good evening what is your emergency?*
- 005 C: Joven disculpe,= es para hace:r  
Miss excuse-me.IMP.2SG be.3SG for do.INF  
*Miss excuse me,=((I'm calling)) to file:*
- 006 .hhh este una denuncia, =es que  
hhh um a denunciation be.3SG that  
*.hhh um a complaint,=*
- 007 vieras que, (0.5) este yo vivo en unas  
look.2SG that um I live.1SG in some  
*look, (0.5) um I live in some*
- 008 casitas de alquiler;  
houses.DIM of renting  
*little rental units;*
- 009 CT: Hm.

After a minimal receipt token from the call-taker (“Hm”; line 9; Excerpt 12a above), the caller continues building the case and provides evidence for the problem (lines 10-11, 13-19; Excerpt 12b below. This evidence includes an ongoing event starting “*de hace tiempo para acá*,” (“a little while ago here,” in English; line 10) and the people involved in the event (“*la muchacha tiene una bebé pequeña*,” [“the young woman had a little baby,” in English; line 11]). At this point in the call, we do not yet know what the incident is; however, the caller has provided evidence to ground her concern as policeable: the incident, whatever it is, involves a woman and a baby and seems to have been happening for a while. The call-taker responds with a continuer (“Hm”; line 12). In doing so, the caller-taker is letting the caller know that she (i.e. the call-taker) is listening,

but that the incident description is not yet complete (Schegloff, 1982). The caller continues to build the case: (a) by providing details about the people involved: “*Y la muchacha yo no sé si será menor de edad*,” (“And the young woman I don’t know if she is a minor,” in English; lines 13-14), and (b) by introducing the problem: “*y vieras que deja la chiquita, sola con otros menores de edad*” (“and look she leaves the little girl, alone with other minors,” in English; lines 14-16).

**Excerpt 12b. (ECR-111 Deja bebé sola / She leaves the baby home alone)**

- 010 C: Y vieras que, de hace tiempo para acá,  
And look.2SG that of do.3SG time for here  
*And look, a little while ago here,*
- 011 la muchacha tiene una bebé pequeña,  
the young-woman have.3SG a baby little.DIM  
*the young woman had a little baby,*
- 012 CT: Hm.
- 013 C: Y la muchacha yo no sé si  
And the young-woman I no know.1SG if  
*And the young woman I don’t know if she*
- 014 será menor de edad, y vieras que  
be.FUT.3SG minor of age and look.2SG that  
*is a minor, and look*
- 015 deja la chiquita, sola con otros  
leave.3SG the little-girl alone with others  
*she leaves the little girl, alone with other*
- 016 C: menores de edad,  
minors of age  
*minors,*
- 017 (0.7)
- 018 C: Y vieras que la chiquita lleva  
And look.2SG that the little-girl bring.3SG  
*And look the little girl has*

- 019            *horas de estar llore y llore y llore,*  
                  hours of be.INF cry.3SG and cry.3SG and cry.3SG  
                  *been crying and crying and crying for hours,*
- 020            (0.3)
- 021    C:        [Y  
                  And  
                  [And
- 022    CT:       [Ella es            vecina suya?  
                  She be.3SG neighbor yours  
                  [Is she your neighbor?
- 023            (0.3) ((typing sounds))
- 024    C:        Sí. Y vieras que yo creo que la-  
                  Yes And look.2SG that I think.1SG that the-  
                  Yes. And look I think that the-

The reported problem is that a baby is left without adult supervision (lines 14-16). The caller presents herself as the benefactor (Clayman & Heritage, 2014) who informs 9-1-1 about an incident in which a baby is heard crying for a long time during the early morning (i.e., the call was registered at 2:28AM) without proper adult supervision (i.e., no parents or close family members seem to be in charge of the baby). The problem does not seem worthy of police assistance to the call-taker, who does not provide any uptake (see the gap in line 17) to the problem just presented by the caller. The caller then adds that “*la chiquita lleva horas de estar llore y llore y llore*” (“the little girl has been crying and crying and crying for hours,” in English; lines 18-19). By providing this information, the caller is showing her practical epistemology (M. R. Whalen & Zimmerman, 1990) or how she became aware of the problem. Additionally, by informing that she can hear the baby crying, the caller also upgrades the incident (i.e., the baby is not only crying, but has been crying continuously). The auditory evidence (lines 18-19) and the time reference of

*“lleva horas”* (“for hours,” in English; lines 18-19) indicate that the baby has been unhappy for long time, which seems to be enough reason for the caller to request help. However, the call-taker seems to not be completely sure about the policeability of the problem at this point in the call, as evidenced by her minimal (lines 9 and 12) or no uptake (lines 17 and 20). There is another gap (line 20) after which both the caller and the call-taker begin speaking in overlap (lines 21-22). The call-taker then solicits the relationship of the caller to the incident (M. R. Whalen & Zimmerman, 1990) by asking if the young woman is the caller’s neighbor (*“es vecina suya?”*; line 22). The caller subsequently confirms (*“Sí,”* or “Yes,” in English; line 24).

The call entitled “She leaves the baby home alone” (Excerpts 12a, 12b above) is an example of a request for help designed as a description. It seems that callers use descriptions of incidents in which a prospective indexical is unpacked, when the incident is questionable. In this particular call, the call-taker seemed doubtful about the policeability of the incident.

Both the call entitled “My brother does drugs and threatens me” and the call entitled “She leaves the baby home alone” (Excerpts 11 and 12a, 12b above) illustrate that using prospective indexicals to describe the incident allows the caller to get an extended turn during which he or she can provide details of the reported incident. Both of these calls also illustrate that prospective indexicals may be used when the incident is difficult to describe or categorize with a label. Descriptions are not explicit requests for help (i.e., the callers do not request a particular service); however, descriptions are requests not only because of the specialized inferential frameworks of emergency calls (i.e., call-takers are instructed to treat every call as a request for help), but also because

they provide evidence of the problem. Requesting help via descriptions with prospective indexicals is accepted by call-takers as a legitimated practice to request assistance.

### Summary of findings

In this chapter, I have examined the activity of requesting help in calls to the 9-1-1 service in Costa Rica. As noted by traditional research on emergency calls in the U.S. (M. R. Whalen & Zimmerman, 1987, 1990; Zimmerman, 1992a, 1992b), requests for help can be designed as requests, reports, or descriptions. I have analyzed these formats in relation to the notions of entitlement and contingency (Curl & Drew, 2008), the notion of benefactors and beneficiaries (Clayman & Heritage, 2014), and the linguistic choices that callers make when requesting help. In what follows, I summarize the findings about each request form, as shown in Figure 4 (below).

Reasons for calling designed as *explicit requests* are turns in which callers solicit a particular service (e.g., a patrol car or an ambulance). The findings show two practices for explicit requests: (a) practices orienting to contingencies in receiving the assistance via the grammaticalized form “*para ver si*” (“to see if,” in English), and (b) practices orienting to low entitlement to the requested service via the “favor” and “*amabilidad*” (“kindness,” in English) constructions. Callers may design their requests with mitigation devices (e.g., conditionals, modals, “do me the favor/be kind” constructions) to further downgrade the urgency of the incident and present it as non-life-threatening.

Reasons for calling designed as *reports* include police- and/or emergency service-relevant categories, such as a break-in, a car accident, or a fire. By using an easily recognizable category to label the incident, callers present the incident as being self-evident. Reporting incidents can be designed via two verbs: “*reportar*” (“to report,” in

English) and “*denunciar*” (“to denounce,” in English). Although both verbs share the meaning of communicating news to the authorities, “*denunciar*” (“to denounce,” in English) has an extra component for communicating a wrongdoing. Despite this semantic difference, the findings do not show interactional differences between the two verbs. Requests for help designed as reports are typically used by benefactors (e.g., people not directly involved in the incident).

<b>Requesting help</b>	Request formats	Practices displaying orientations to contingencies of the outcome	Via the grammaticalized form “ <i>para ver si</i> ” (“to see if,” in English)
		Practices displaying orientations to low entitlement to the request	Via the “favor” construction  Via the “ <i>amabilidad</i> ” (“kindness,” in English) construction
	Report formats	Practices displaying orientations to self-evident incidents	Via the verb “ <i>reportar</i> ” (“to report,” in English)
			Via the verb “ <i>denunciar</i> ” (“to denounce,” in English)
	Description formats	Practices displaying orientations to self-evident incidents	Via policeable labels
		Practices displaying orientations to the difficulty in labeling the incident	Via prospective indexicals

Figure 4. Summary of practices used by callers when requesting help.

Reasons for calling designed as *descriptions* provide some sort of information about the nature of the incident. On the one hand, descriptions can be designed as single-unit turns that display an orientation to low contingencies of receiving the assistance, as the policeability of the incident is presented as being self-evident (via the use of policeable labels). On the other hand, descriptions can also be designed as multi-unit turns that display an orientation to high contingencies of receiving the assistance, as the incident may be difficult to categorize and its policeability may be questionable.

When designing the request for help as descriptions, callers may not explicitly request a particular type of service. Instead, they leave it up to call-takers to assess the type of assistance needed according to the circumstances of each particular incident. When designing the request for help as descriptions, callers may not even request help, at least not explicitly. However, descriptions are considered acceptable as a practice for requesting help to emergency services. In other words, descriptions are understood by call-takers as requests for help, and therefore, are institutionally acceptable due to the specialized inferential frameworks of emergency calls.

## Chapter 6

### Formulating place in calls to 9-1-1 Costa Rica

This chapter examines the interactional activity of formulating place in calls to 9-1-1. When formulating place, interactants face the problem of communicating the location to the recipient within the context of the practical tasks and activities that they might be carrying out (e.g., arranging meeting up with one another, giving directions, etc.). When formulating place, interactants draw upon various interactional practices, which may vary both linguistically and culturally. In other words, while the problem of formulating place is a generic one, the interactional solutions are culture and language specific. In the case of calls to emergency services, callers need to identify the location of the incident and formulate the location for the call-taker in a way that will enable the provision of help. This chapter explores how exactly interactants formulate place in the context of the 9-1-1 Emergency System in Costa Rica.

Little prior research on emergency calls has focused on place formulations (Del Corona & Ostermann, 2012; Paoletti, 2012b; Penn et al., 2015). Most studies assume that “there are such matters as streets and houses and highways with numbers, etc.” (Psathas, 1986b, p. 83), and that these identifiers are readily available to the callers (G. Raymond & Zimmerman, 2007; M. R. Whalen & Zimmerman, 1987; Zimmerman, 1992a, 1992b). For instance, Excerpt 1, derived from a 9-1-1 call in the U.S., shows an unproblematic location formulation via the provision of an address, which includes a building number (“Three oh one six”; line 7) and a street name (“Maple”; line 7).

***Excerpt 1. (Whalen & Zimmerman, 1987, p. 214)***

06 911: What's your address.  
 07 CLR: Three oh one six Maple  
 08 911: Is this a house or an apartment.  
 09 CLR: It's a house

In Costa Rica, few houses have a number and not every street has a sign displaying the street name or the building/house number. Although house numbers may be common in some urban areas, a common practice for formulating place in Costa Rica is to use the name of the geographical place, in conjunction with the landmarks and a very detailed description of the place or surroundings. For example, in Excerpt 2 below, the caller reports that a teenager has run away from the shelter that she manages (data not shown). The call-taker then solicits the location of the shelter (line 9), and the caller formulates the place by providing the distance and direction of the incident from a landmark (lines 10-11).

***Excerpt 2. (ECR-04 Reporte de fuga de albergue / Shelter runaway report)***

009 CT: Qué dirección tiene el albergue;  
 What address/direction have.3SG the shelter  
*What is the location of the shelter;*

010 C: Cien metros, noreste: del  
 One-hundred meters northeast from-the  
*One hundred meters, northea:st from the*

011 parque Vargas Araya.  
 park NAME  
*Vargas Araya park.*

012 (4.0) ((typing sounds))

013 CT: Con quién hablo?  
 With who speak.1SG  
*With whom am I speaking?*

In line 9, the call-taker solicits the location of the shelter. In lines 10-11, the caller responds by formulating the location using a distance and the direction of movement “*Cien metros, noreste:*” (“One hundred meters, northeast,” in English; line 10) from the landmark “*parque Vargas Araya*” (“Vargas Araya park,” in English; line 11). As seen in this excerpt, this formulation is considered to be institutionally sufficient for the call-taker. By moving on to the verification of the caller’s information (i.e., name; line 13), the call-taker is orienting to closing the location formulation sequence.

In this chapter, I examine three practices that people use to formulate locations in 9-1-1 calls according to the resources available in their communities, namely: geographical formulations, landmark formulations, and “*otras señas*” (“other signs,” in English) formulations. The analysis suggests that these formulations correspond to different levels of granularity (i.e., from less granular to more granular descriptions; illustrated in Figure 5 below).

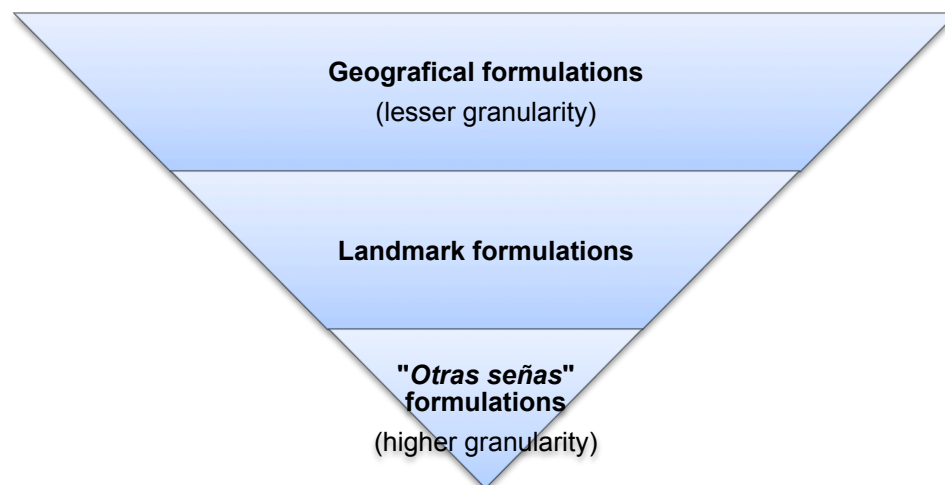


Figure 5. Levels of granularity of place formulations.

The analysis suggests that geographical formulations together with landmark formulations: (a) are considered to be institutionally sufficient in terms of formulating the place of the incident, and (b) are pursued by call-takers; on the other hand, “*otras señas*” (“other signs,” in English) formulations are optional, and they may either be provided by callers or solicited by call-takers. In the following section, I review existing literature on place formulation.

### **Prior research on place formulation**

The activity of formulating place has been examined in countries like South Africa, Brazil Italy, the U.S., and the U.K. (Del Corona & Ostermann, 2012; Heritage, 2007; Kitzinger et al., 2013; Paoletti, 2012b; Penn et al., 2015; Schegloff, 1972). However, little is known about how places are formulated in Costa Rica. The issue is sometimes mentioned in the mass media (Mayorga, 1997; Oviedo, 2006; Villegas, 2009, 2010), and it has also been discussed in popular culture via cartoons (see Figure 6 below) or short video clips. This chapter aims to build upon our understanding of the activity of formulating place by examining it in the context of emergency calls to 9-1-1 Costa Rica.

Research on place formulations examines how places are formulated in conversation (Schegloff, 1972) according to the specific communicative goals of the interaction and the participants’ lexical choices (Enfield, 2013; Schegloff, 1972). Through their lexical choices, participants show the analytic processes involved in formulating place. For instance, the phrase “let’s meet at Marie’s place” shows the location analysis (i.e., the analysis that the speaker must carry out in order to produce a place reference), the membership analysis (i.e., the categories to which participants belong, given that the speaker examines his or her own categories and those of the hearer

in order to produce a relevant place formulation that is specifically designed for the recipient), as well as the topic analysis (i.e., the selection of the formulation). According to Schegloff (1972), topic analysis (also known as activity analysis) includes a collection of five types of place formulations: (1) geographical formulations, such as “123 Main Street” (2) formulations in relation to members, which refer to places belonging to a member, such as “at Marie’s house”; (3) formulations in relation to a landmark, such as “behind the library”; (4) course of action formulations, which are analyzable in terms of what happens at that place, such as “where there was an accident a couple of years ago”; and (5) place name formulations, which include the name of the place, such as “New York.” This list of formulations, however, is not exhaustive, and other languages may use different typologies for place formulations (see Levinson & Wilkins, 2006).



Figure 6. "Costa Rican GPS" by Clay Jones.

Used with the permission of Clay Jones, [www.claytoonz.com](http://www.claytoonz.com)

Other research on place formulation examines the relationship between intersubjectivity and the progressivity of interactions (Heritage, 2007), as well as how place is reformulated in repair (Kitzinger et al., 2013). Other research on place formulations deals with giving directions (Psathas, 1986a, 1986b, 1990; Psathas & Kozloff, 1976), an activity that requires a shared knowledge by all speakers involved of both the physical and geographical environments (i.e., so that the direction-giver is able to provide the directions and that the direction-seeker is able to follow said directions).

Recent research has examined the activity of formulating place in emergency calls, calls during which obtaining the precise location of the incident is a key task. Studies conducted in Brazil, Italy, and South Africa have identified a mismatch between institutional constraints of emergency services and callers' practices for providing locational information. For instance, a study of South Africa (Penn, Watermeyer, Neel, & Naltrass, 2015) analyzes the difficulties that call-takers encounter when trying to match the address formulated by the caller with the address given by the computerized system. In this country, call-takers use a computerized system that locates the address of the incident. However, some of the problems that call-takers encounter are due to peculiar characteristics of the country: large surfaces, informal settlements, as well as dense rural and urban areas. In Brazil (Del Corona & Ostermann, 2012), call-takers use a software which contains an electronic form that requires them to enter a street name and number that already exists in the software; however, in many cases, callers call from settlements that do not possess such information. In Italy (Paoletti, 2012b), research shows that call-takers show a preference for a certain type of place formulation that does not necessarily

match up with the address that callers formulate. The study shows that call-takers prefer a formulation that includes: (1) the municipality; (2) the locality; and (3) lastly, the specific address. This goes against how callers routinely formulate place in Italy, in which they use only the specific address (i.e., because they assume that call-takers are familiar with the area of the incident). These three studies show a mismatch that exist between institutional constraints of emergency services and place formulation practices used by callers.

In what follows, I examine the practices of formulating place via geographical formulations, landmark formulations, and “*otras señas*” (“other signs,” in English) formulations.

### **Geographical formulations**

Geographical formulations are place formulations that indicate the territorial divisions of the country (i.e., into districts, counties, and provinces, as well as into towns and neighborhoods). For example, the formulation “San Juan of Santa Barbara of Heredia” informs the district, county, and province of the place. In this section, I will show that: (a) callers tend to provide some sort of geographical formulation packed with the request for help, and (b) call-takers solicit geographical formulations when such information is not offered by callers during the request for help.

#### **Callers tend to provide geographical formulations**

When requesting help, callers tend to provide some sort of geographical formulation. In these cases, callers design the request for help to include some kind of geographical information regarding where the incident is occurring, as shown in Excerpts 3 and 4 below. In Excerpt 3, the caller requests an ambulance and identifies a district and

a county (“*Villafranca >>de Guácimo¿<<*” or “*Villafranca >>of Guácimo¿<<*” in English; line 16). In Excerpt 4, the caller packs the presentation of the problem with the district and the province (“Liberia Guanacaste”; lines 7-8).

***Excerpt 3. (ECR-61 Detrás del marco / Behind the soccer goal post)***

014 C: Sí: es para >>ver una emergencia  
 Yes be.3SG for see.INF a emergency  
*Yes: ((I'm calling)) >>to see an emergency*

015 a ver si tienen una ambulancia<<  
 to see.INF if have.2PL a ambulance  
*to see if you have an ambulance<<*

016 aquí en Villafranca >>de Guácimo¿<<  
 here in DISTRICT of COUNTY  
*here in Villafranca >>of Guácimo¿<<*

***Excerpt 4. (ECR-76 Antiguo matadero / Former slaughterhouse)***

005 C: El asunto es el siguiente.=Tengo  
 The issue be.3SG the following Have.1SG  
*The thing is.=I have*

006 a=un señor, (1.0) al frente del  
 a one sir to-the front of-the  
*=a man, (1.0) in front of*

007 puesto donde yo trabajo en Liberia  
 workstation where I work.1SG in DISTRICT  
*the place where I work in Liberia*

008 Guanacaste, aquí en, TIENDA.  
 PROVINCE here in STORE  
*Guanacaste, here at, STORE.*

The 9-1-1 service in Costa Rica uses a computer application that requires the caller to enter the district of the incident. Once the district has been entered, the system will automatically input the corresponding county and province for that district (see

Figure 5 in Chapter 3 “Methodology and Data”). Therefore, the first information required by the call-taker, due to the institutional constraint of the computer application, is the geographical formulation (i.e., the district, county, and province). As seen in Excerpts 3 and 4 above, callers might provide some sort of geographical information (e.g., the district and the county, or the district and the province) during their request for help. However, not all callers formulate the location using the district, county, and province. Some callers formulate the location using only the neighborhood without any other indication of where the place is located. This can be problematic, given that 9-1-1 Costa Rica: (a) is a centralized system that receives calls from all around the country, (b) call-takers may not know where the location to which the caller is referring is located, and (c) the same name of the location may be used for several neighborhoods in different parts of the country. In the call entitled “Asthmatic man” (Excerpts 5a, 5b below), the caller requests an ambulance for an asthmatic neighbor who is experiencing breathing problems. This call shows a formulation of the location using only the name of the neighborhood: “*por acá en Santa Clara*” (“around here in Santa Clara,” in English; line 9).

***Excerpt 5a. (ECR-49 Señor asmático / Asthmatic man)***

006 C1: E::h caballero era para ver  
 Um gentleman was.3SG for see.INF  
*U::m sir ((I was calling)) to see*

007 si tal vez e::h, (.) podían  
 if such time um could.2PL  
*if maybe u::m, (.) you could*

008 C1: mandar una unidad  
 send.INF a unit  
*send a unit*

- 009            por acá en Santa Clara, (.) .hh para  
                  by here in NEIGHBORHOOD            for  
                  around here in Santa Clara, (.) .hh for
- 010    C1:    un señor que es        asmático  
                  a man    that be.3SG asthmatic  
                  an *asthmatic man*
- 011            y    está    ahí    un poco    fregadillo.  
                  and be.3SG there a little complicated.DIM  
                  who is a little under the weather.

The caller refers to the location using only the name of the neighborhood (i.e., “Santa Clara”; line 9), and this formulation does not include information regarding where the place is located within the political administrative division of Costa Rica. Although the caller used a geographical formulation (i.e., by indicating the Santa Clara neighborhood), this formulation does not provide enough information about the location of the emergency (i.e., the district, county, or province). Call-takers need information about the political administrative division of Costa Rica when entering the location of the incident into the computer application used to create the incident log. As a result, the call-taker then offers a candidate location (Excerpt 5b below). This information was retrieved by the call-taker from the telephone subscribers’ database, which contains the subscriber’s name, telephone number, and address. Call-takers are able to offer candidate locations because 9-1-1 is an enhanced system (Zimmerman, 1992) that retrieves callers’ information from the telephone subscribers’ database.

***Excerpt 5b. (ECR-49 Señor asmático / Asthmatic man)***

- 018    CT:    U-    usted quiere    la    unidad de la Cruz Roja.  
                  Yo- you    want.2SG the unit    of the Cross Red  
                  Do- do you want the Red Cross unit.

- 019 C1: E::h sí.  
Um yes  
U::m yes.
- 020 CT: Usted vive en lo que es Alajuela  
You live.2SG in it that be.3SG PROVINCE  
*Do you live in Alajuela*
- 021 San Ramón, en en en lo que es Ángeles?  
COUNTY in in in it that be.3SG DISTRICT  
*San Ramón, in in in Ángeles?*
- 022 (0.2)
- 023 CT: Barrio Rodríguez? Sería así?  
Neighborhood NEIGHBORHOOD Would-be.3SG so?  
*Rodríguez neighborhood? Would it be that?*
- 024 C1: No. Sería Santa Clara de San Carlos.  
No Would-be.3SG NEIGHBORHOOD of COUNTY  
*No. It would be Santa Clara of San Carlos.*

The candidate location is formulated according to the territorial division of the country: Alajuela is the province, San Ramón is the county, Ángeles is the district, and Rodríguez is the neighborhood (lines 20-21, 23). However, the caller rejects this candidate location, and subsequently reformulates it (line 24). In this reformulation, the caller aligns with the formulation previously used by the call-taker (i.e., the caller follows the same formulation pattern used by the call-taker when building the components of the location). Thus the caller provides the neighborhood (i.e., Santa Clara) and the county (i.e., San Carlos; line 24).

The call entitled “Asthmatic man” (Excerpts 5a, 5b above) showed the caller’s orientation to align with the institutional needs of the emergency system by providing some sort of geographical formulation packed with the request for help. However, it is also true that callers sometimes request help without offering the location information in

the same TCU. In those cases, the call-takers solicit the location of the incident, as shown in the following section.

### **Call-takers solicit geographical formulations when not provided by callers**

Callers might not offer geographical information in their request turn. If that is the case, call-takers will solicit the location of the incident by pursuing geographical formulations so as to complete the institutional tasks (i.e., filling out the incident log in the computer application) of the emergency service. In the calls entitled “Fight between daughters” and “Morphine,” the call-takers solicit the geographical location when it is not offered by the callers. Also seen in these calls are the callers’ orientation to align with the institutional goals (i.e., responding with some geographical information) of the emergency service.

The call entitled “Fight between daughters” (Excerpt 7 below) is an example of an interaction in which the call-taker solicits the locational information, as well as one in which the caller orients to providing some geographical information. Contrary to Excerpts 3, 4, 5a (above), the caller in this call does not provide any geographical formulation during the request for a patrol car (i.e., which is solicited by the caller due to a fight between neighbors; lines 6-7). When the call-taker solicits where the incident is taking place (line 9), the caller provides the name of the neighborhood (line 11). The call-taker then seeks a more detailed geographical formulation (line 12).

#### ***Excerpt 6. (ECR-10 Pleito entre hijas / Fight between daughters)***

006 C: Buenas me puede llamar una,  
 Good to-me can.2SG call.INF a  
*Good morning can you send me a,*

007           #una patrulla aquí#  
               a    patrol    here  
               #a patrol car here#

008           (1.0)

009   CT:   Aquí adónde    señora?  
               Here to-where ma'am  
               *Here where ma'am?*

010           (0.3)

011   C:    #A   Los Laureles.#  
               To NEIGHBORHOOD  
               #*To Los Laureles.*#

012   CT:   Y    eso   dónde queda?  
               And that where remain.3SG  
               *And where is that?*

013           (0.3)

014   C:    #Aquí en Siquirres.#  
               Here in COUNTY/DISTRICT  
               #*Here in Siquirres.*#

015           (1.3) ((C is breathing loudly))

016   CT:   Qué   es       Laureles       una urbanización?  
               What be.3SG NEIGHBORHOOD a   urbanization  
               *What is Laureles a residential area?*

017   C:    Un:: #un barrio.#  
               A       a neighborhood  
               A:: #a neighborhood.#

018           (0.5)

019   C:    #De Siquirres.#  
               Of COUNTY/DISTRICT  
               #*Of Siquirres.*#

020           (1.5)

021   CT:   En Siquirres?  
               In COUNTY/DISTRICT  
               *In Siquirres?*

022 C: Sí.  
Yes  
Yes.

023 (2.3) ((loud voices in the background))

024 CT: Qué es lo que sucede ahí?  
What be.3SG it that happen.3SG there  
*What is that is happening there?*

In the excerpt above, the caller requests a patrol car: “*me puede llamar una, #una patrulla aquí#*” (“can you send me a patrol car here#,” in English; lines 6-7). The only locational information provided in the request is the deictic “here.” While the deictic does show the caller’s proximity to the incident (M. R. Whalen & Zimmerman, 1990), it does not offer any geographical information. After a 1.0-second gap (line 8), the call-taker initiates repair and solicits clarification of where exactly “here” is: “*Aquí adónde señora?*” (“Here where ma’am?” in English; line 9). The caller responds with a geographical formulation (i.e., Los Laureles is the neighborhood; line 11), but this is not sufficient because it lacks the district. The call-taker initiates another repair: “*Y eso dónde queda?*” (“And where is that?” in English; line 12). This shows that the caller’s formulation has failed because it is not recognizable to the call-taker, who then initiates repair to clarify the location of the incident within the country. The caller responds with another geographical formulation, the name of the county: “*Aquí en Siquirres*” (“Here in Siquirres,” in English; line 14). In this TCU, the caller uses the deictic “here” to index her proximity to the incident. After a gap, during which the caller breathes loudly (line 15), the call-taker solicits confirmation of whether Los Laureles is a residential area (line 16). The caller disconfirms by responding that it is a neighborhood (line 17), and then adds the name of the county/district (line 19). After another round of reconfirming the county

(lines 21-22), the call-taker solicits information about the incident (line 24). Later on in the call, the call-taker solicits where exactly in the neighborhood the incident is occurring (data not shown).

The call entitled “Morphine” (Excerpt 7 below) is another example of a call in which the call-taker solicits a geographical formulation of the incident. In this call, the caller informs the call-taker that a woman suffering from cancer has run out of morphine, is in severe pain, and has fainted (data not shown). In the request for help, the caller does not offer any geographical formulation about the incident; therefore, the call-taker solicits the location of the incident: “*Eso dónde es?*” (“Where is that?” in English; line 14). The caller responds with a geographical formulation (i.e., the neighborhood and the county; line 16), and the call-taker then solicits confirmation of the district (line 23) and the exact location (lines 26-27).

***Excerpt 7. (ECR-18 Morfina / Morphine)***

- 014 CT: Eso dónde es?  
That where be.3SG  
*Where is that?*
- 015 (0.3)
- 016 C: Esto es aquí en La Aurora de Alajuelita.  
This be.3SG here in NEIGHBORHOOD of COUNTY  
*It is here in La Aurora of Alajuelita.*
- 017 (1.3)
- 018 CT: Deme un segundo.  
Give.IMP.2SG-me a second  
*Give me a moment.*
- 019 C: Sí señor.  
Yes sir  
*Yes sir.*

020 (2.0) ((typing sounds))

021 C: °Que ya venía, (.) que NAME  
That already come.3SG that NAME  
°That (he) is coming, (.) NAME

022 lo llamó.° ((off line))  
it called.3SG  
called him.° ((off line))

023 CT: San Felipe sería esto?  
DISTRICT would-be.3SG this  
San Felipe would this be?

024 C: Sí señor.  
Yes sir  
Yes sir.

025 (4.0) ((baby sounds, typing sounds))

026 CT: Y ahí cuál sería la  
And there which would-be.3SG the  
And there what would be the

027 dirección en La Aurora?  
address/direction in NEIGHBORHOOD  
location in La Aurora?

The call-taker solicits the location of the incident (line 14; Excerpt 7 above), and the caller responds with a geographical formulation that includes the neighborhood and the county: “*La Aurora de Alajuelita*” (“La Aurora of Alajuelita,” in English; line 16). The call-taker subsequently solicits confirmation of the district by asking “*San Felipe sería esto?*” (“San Felipe would this be?” in English; line 23), which constitutes an institutionally required piece of information that must be entered into the incident log. Additionally, entering the wrong district into the incident log would affect the outcome of the call, given that the district information is used for sending the dispatch package to the corresponding local dispatch center. After the caller has confirmed the district (line 24),

the call-taker then solicits more details about where exactly in the neighborhood the help is needed (lines 26-27). By soliciting “*Y ahí cuál sería la dirección en La Aurora?*” (“And there what would be the location in La Aurora?” in English; lines 26-27), the call-taker is moving on to another level of granularity in the location formulation. Additionally, by soliciting this information, the call-taker indicates that the geographical formulation is complete. Although a geographical formulation is necessary, it is not sufficient by itself; thus, more locational information is required.

This section shows that geographical formulations are one type of location formulation used by callers and call-takers. Although this type of formulation is necessary for building up the location of an incident, it is not sufficient by itself. In the section entitled “When is a location institutionally sufficient?”, I will discuss what constitutes an institutionally sufficient place formulation. Callers tend to provide some sort of geographical formulation during their request turn. In doing so, they are showing their understanding of how the emergency system works (Paoletti, 2012b), as well as aligning with the institutional goals of the emergency system. On the other hand, call-takers pursue geographical formulations in order to pursue institutional goals, since they are instructed to enter the location of the incident in the “zone” section of computer application. Once call-takers have entered the district name, the system will automatically input the corresponding county and province, and will also assign the incident to the corresponding local dispatch center. After the geographical formulation has been secured, the call-takers can then enter the exact location, which is formulated by callers using landmark formulations (see next section).

### Landmark formulations

Landmark formulations are place formulations which anchor the location to a particular landmark. These formulations are made up of three basic elements: the landmark, the distance of the incident from the landmark, and the “*sentido*” (“direction,” in English) of movement. For example, in the formulation “*de la escuela de San Pablo 200 metros sur*” (“from the San Pablo school 200 meters south,” in English), the San Pablo school is the landmark, 200 meters is the distance from the landmark, and south is the “*sentido*” (“direction,” in English) of movement. *Landmarks* are salient places used as starting points from which the locations are formulated; for instance, examples of landmarks include churches, schools, bridges, gas stations, well-known stores, etc. The *distance* from the landmark can be expressed in metric units (e.g., “five hundred meters,” “two kilometers”), or by providing the side of the landmark (e.g., “in front of,” “behind”). The “*sentido*” of movement can be expressed either in cardinal directions (e.g., “north”), or by referencing the incident’s location in relation to a town or another landmark (e.g., “towards El Llano” or “towards the bridge”). In this section, I will show: (a) that these three formulations (i.e., landmarks, distance, and “*sentido*”) make up a complete package; and (b) that the “*sentido*” (“direction,” in English) of movement can be expressed using cardinal directions when the incident is located inside (e.g., in a house or a store), or by referencing the incident’s location in relation to another landmark or town when the incident is located outside (e.g., in the street or on a highway).

### Landmark formulations are a complete package

As previously mentioned, landmark formulations are made up of three components: the landmark, the distance from the landmark, and the “*sentido*”

(“direction,” in English) of movement (see Figure 7 below). These three elements are a complete package; in other words, participants orient to using landmarks in conjunction with the distance and “direction” when formulating place, as showed in the calls entitled “Bus blocking” and “Papaya colored house” (below).

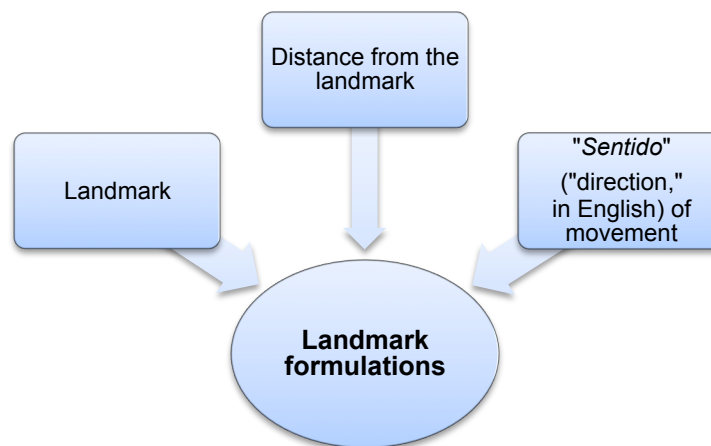


Figure 7. Basic components of landmark formulations.

In the call entitled “Bus blocking” (Excerpt 8 below), the caller reports that a bus is blocking the street that leads to her neighborhood (data not shown) after the opening of the call. The call-taker then solicits the place: “*Dónde es eso?*” (“Where is it?” in English; line 10), and the caller provides a geographical formulation: “*San Juan de Dios de Desamparados*” (i.e., San Juan de Dios is the district and Desamparados is the county; line 12).

**Excerpt 8. (ECR-86 Autobús obstaculizando / Bus blocking)**

010 CT: Dónde es eso?  
Where be.3SG that  
Where is it?

- 011 (0.7)
- 012 C: San Juan de Dios de Desamparados.  
DISTRICT of COUNTY  
*San Juan de Dios of Desamparados.*
- 013 (1.3)
- 014 CT: Dirección exacta?  
Address/direction exact  
*Exact location?*
- 015 (1.0)
- 016 C: E::h doscientos setenta y cinco: o  
Um two-hundred seventy and five or  
*U::m two hundred seventy-five: or*
- 017 trescientos suroeste de la Guardia  
three-hundred southwest of the Guard  
*three hundred ((meters)) southwest of the Rural*
- 018 Rural de San Juan de Dios de Desamparados.  
Rural of DISTRICT of COUNTY  
*Guard of San Juan de Dios of Desamparados.*
- 019 (4.3)
- 020 CT: Número de teléfono del que llama;  
Number of telephone of-the that call.2SG  
*Telephone number from which you are calling;*

When call-takers pursue a place formulation from callers, just a geographical formulation is not institutionally sufficient. Therefore, more details are required and the call-taker solicits the “*dirección exacta*” (“exact location,” in English; line 14) in this call. The caller’s response contains a landmark formulation: it includes the distance of “*doscientos setenta y cinco: o trescientos*” (“two hundred seventy-five: or three hundred ((meters)),” in English; lines 16-17), the “*sentido*” of movement “*suroeste*” (“southwest,” in English; line 17), and the landmark “*Guardia Rural*” (“Rural Guard,” in English; line

17) which serves as the starting point of the place formulation. The caller then repeats the geographical formulation (line 18) after the landmark formulation. After a gap of 4.3 seconds (line 19), the call-taker moves on to verify the caller's information (i.e., by soliciting the caller's telephone number; line 20). This final question indicates that the location formulation provided by the caller is institutionally sufficient.

The call entitled "Papaya colored house" (Excerpt 9 below) also shows an instance in which the landmark, the distance, and the "*sentido*" ("direction," in English) of movement are packaged together. Prior to the lines included in this excerpt, the caller has already formulated the place using a geographical formulation (data not shown). In this excerpt, the caller selects a school in the neighborhood as a landmark (line 36; Excerpt 9 below). The caller also offers a landmark formulation (lines 35-36) that lacks the direction of moment; this information is subsequently repaired by the call-taker (lines 40-41).

***Excerpt 9. (ECR-02 Casa color papaya / Papaya colored house)***

- 035 C: La dirección es cien  
The address/direction be.3SG one-hundred  
*The location is one hundred*
- 036 metros de la escuela La Esperanza,  
meters of the school NEIGHBORHOOD  
*meters from La Esperanza school,*
- 037 (0.7)
- 038 C: A la segunda casa color papaya.  
To the second house color papaya  
*The second house papaya colored.*
- 039 (0.5)

- 040 CT: Y los cien metros hacia  
And the one-hundred meters towards  
And one hundred meters
- 041 dónde? >norte sur [este oeste? ]<  
where north south east west  
where? >north south [east west? ]<
- 042 C: >[Hacia el sur.]<  
Towards the south  
>[South.]<

The caller attempts to formulate the location using a landmark formulation, but she only refers to the distance of the incident from the school without including the “*sentido*” (lines 35-36) of movement. After no uptake from the call-taker (line 37), the caller continues to formulate the location using “*otras señas*” (“other signs,” in English; see next section), such as the color of the house (line 38). After a gap (line 39), the call-taker explicitly solicits the “*sentido*” (“direction,” in English) of movement (lines 40-41). In overlap with the call-taker’s list of candidate directions, the caller responds by providing the cardinal point (line 42). This excerpt shows that the three components of landmark formulations are packaged together and are pursued by call-takers. When callers do not offer all three components, call-takers will initiate repair to solicit the missing component (i.e., in order to receive the complete landmark formulation). This excerpt also shows that possibly complete and institutionally adequate location formulations occur at different points during the call for callers and call-takers. For example, after providing the distance of the incident from the landmark (lines 35-36), the caller offers the color of the house (line 38). However, line 38 is sequentially deleted by the call-taker, who then solicits the exact “*sentido*” (“direction,” in English) of movement (i.e., “and one hundred meters where?”; lines 40-41). The “*sentido*” of movement was

originally missing from the location formulated by the caller (i.e., “one hundred meters from La Esperanza school”; lines 35-36); therefore, this shows that when using landmark formulations, the distance and the “*sentido*” are also pursued by the call-taker in order for the location to be considered institutionally sufficient.

### **“*Sentido*” (“direction,” in English) of movement**

When formulating place, participants select a landmark as a starting point from which they construct the location of the incident. Additionally, as previously mentioned, landmarks are packaged with the distance and the “*sentido*” (“direction,” in English) of movement. Callers tend to express the “*sentido*” of movement using cardinal directions (i.e., north, south, east, west) when the incident is located inside, or by referencing the incident’s location in relation to another landmark or a town (e.g., “towards the bridge,” “towards El Llano”) when the incident is located outside (see Figure 8 below). In what follows, I will show two calls in which callers express the “*sentido*” of movement differently. These differences arise from the fact that different locations provide callers with different resources with which to formulate place. For example, when the caller is a passerby (i.e., a person who is not very familiar with the place), the resources available to the person with which to formulate the location may be limited. On the other hand, if the incident occurs in an urban area or inside of a building, the caller may have more resources available to use when formulating place.

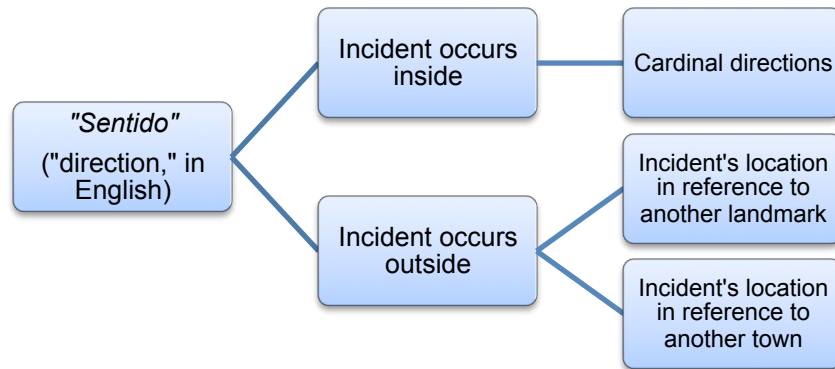


Figure 8. "*Sentido*" ("direction," in English) of movement in landmark formulations.

The calls entitled “Attacked by a machete” and “Audible burglary alarm” (below) are examples of landmark formulations in which the “*sentido*” (“direction,” in English) of movement is expressed using cardinal directions (i.e., because the incident is occurring inside of a building). During the call entitled “Attacked by a machete” (Excerpt 10 below), the caller informs the call-taker that a woman has been attacked by her husband with a machete. Upon the call-taker’s solicitation, the caller formulates the location using a geographical formulation. Once the call-taker has gathered the geographical information, the caller increases the granularity of the place formulation by offering a landmark formulation: “*Es aquí en la entrada de La Bellota*” (“Is it here in the entrance of La Bellota”, in English; data not shown). The call-taker then solicits where exactly in the neighborhood (i.e., where exactly in La Carlota) the incident is occurring by soliciting “*De la entrada cuánto?*” (“From the entrance how far away?” in English; line 67). Next, the caller provides the distance and the direction of movement from the landmark (lines 69-70, 74, 76).

**Excerpt 10. (ECR-25 Macheteada / Attacked by a machete)**

067 CT: De la entrada cuánto?  
Of the entrance how-much  
*From the entrance how far away?*

068 (0.7)

069 C2: En en la entrada son:: (1.0) e::h  
In in the entrance be.3PL um  
*In in the entrance it is:: (1.0) u::m*

070 trescientos al:: oeste¿  
three-hundred to-the west  
*three hundred ((meters::)) west¿*

071 (0.5)

072 CT: Sí?  
Yes  
Yes?

073 (1.2)

074 C2: Y: e::h, (1.0) trescientos al oeste,  
And um three-hundred to-the west  
*And u::m, (1.0) three hundred ((meters)) west,*

075 CT: Mh?=  
=y ciento cincuenta al sur.  
and one-hundred fifty to-the south  
*=and one hundred and fifty ((meters)) south.*

077 (2.0) ((typing sounds))

078 CT: En una casa de qué color?  
In a house of what color  
*What color is the house?*

The call-taker solicits where exactly within the neighborhood the incident occurred (line 67), and the caller responds with a landmark formulation (lines 69-70, 74 76). The caller's response includes "*la entrada*" ("the entrance," in English) of the

neighborhood as the landmark (line 69), “*trescientos*” (“three hundred ((meters)),” in English; line 70) as the distance of the location of the incident from the landmark, and the cardinal point “*oeste*” (“west,” in English; line 70) as the “*sentido*.” After a gap (line 71) and the call-taker’s continuer (line 72), the caller repeats part of the previous formulation (line 74) and completes it by adding “*y ciento cincuenta al sur*” (“and one hundred and fifty ((meters)) south”; line 76). After another gap (line 77), the call-taker solicits the color of the house by asking “*En una casa de qué color?*” (“What color is the house?” in English; line 78). In doing so, the call-taker is indicating that the landmark formulation is complete, given that it includes the landmark, the distance of the incident’s location in relation to the landmark, and the “direction” of movement. By soliciting the color of the house, the call-taker is also making another kind of place formulation institutionally relevant. This particular type of place formulation will be described in detail in the section entitled “Otras señas (“other signs,” in English) formulations” (i.e., in the next section).

The call entitled “Audible burglary alarm” (Excerpt 11 below) is another example of a call in which the “*sentido*” of movement is expressed using cardinal directions (i.e., because the incident is occurring inside). In this call, the caller, who works for a security company that installs alarms and monitors places, requests a patrol car because an audible burglary alarm has gone off in a drugstore. In the beginning of this excerpt, the caller packs the request for help with some geographical information (line 11). The call-taker then solicits more details about the geographical formulation (line 12) and also solicits where exactly within the district the incident is occurring (lines 17-18). Next, the caller responds to this question with a landmark formulation (lines 19-20).

**Excerpt 11. (ECR-38 Alarma audible de robo / Audible burglary alarm)**

011 C: °°( ) una patrulla en Limón.°°  
                   a patrol in DISTRICT/COUNTY  
                   °°( ) a patrol car in Limón.°°

012 CT: Eso adónde?  
           That to-where  
           Where is it?

013 (0.3)

014 C: °°(Limón centro).°°  
           DISTRICT center  
           °°(in the center of Limón).°°

015 CT: Limón::?  
           DISTRICT  
           Limón::?

016 (4.7) ((typing sounds))

017 CT: Okay Limón centro y de ahí  
           Okay DISTRICT center and of there  
           Okay then center of Limón and from there

018 cuál es la dirección?  
           which be.3SG the address/direction  
           what is the location?

019 C: De la entrada principal del  
           Of the entrance principal of-the  
           From the main entrance of the

020 hospital Tony Facio,  
           hospital NAME  
           Tony Facio hospital,

021 (1.3)

022 C: °Trescientos al este.°  
           Three-hundred to-the east  
           °Three hundred ((meters)) east.°

023 (3.0) ((typing sounds))

- 024 CT: Trescientos al este?  
 Three-hundred to-the east  
*Three hundred ((meters)) east?*
- 025 C: °Correcto, a mano izquierda:,  
 Correct to hand left  
 °Correct, on the left-hand side:,
- 026 farmacia El Almendro.°  
 drugstore NAME  
*El Almendro drugstore°*
- 027 (1.0)
- 028 C: Tenemos señal de robo  
 Have.1PL signal of theft  
*We received a signal from an*
- 029 audible.  
 audible  
*audible burglary alarm.*

The caller packs the request with the geographical formulation: “*una patrulla en Limón*” (“a patrol car in Limón,” in English; line 11). Although the caller’s place formulation is made up of a geographical formulation, this seems to not be sufficient for the call-taker, who solicits clarification of where exactly in Limón the incident is taking place. Furthermore, using Limón in a place formulation could be problematic, given that “Limón” is the name of a province, a county, a district, and the center of a district in Costa Rica. Thus, the caller responds by narrowing the options down to the center of the district (line 14). The call-taker then solicits confirmation of the place and, after a 4.7 second gap (line 16), solicits where exactly in the district the incident is occurring (lines 17-18). By soliciting the exact location (“*Okay Limón centro y de ahí cuál es la dirección?*” or “Okay the center of Limón and from there what is the location?” in English; lines 17-18), the call-taker is indicating that while the geographical formulation

is complete, it is still institutionally insufficient by itself. In other words, while a geographical formulation is necessary, additional information is also required; for this reason, the call-taker solicits the exact location. The call-taker's question is responded to with a landmark formulation (lines 19-22) that includes the main entrance of a hospital as a landmark ("*De la entrada principal del hospital Tony Facio*" or "From the main entrance of the Tony Facio hospital," in English; lines 19-20), "*trescientos*" as the distance ("three hundred ((meters))," in English; line 22), and "*este*" ("east," in English; line 22) as the "*sentido*" of movement. Next, the call-taker solicits confirmation of the "direction" (see the emphasis placed on the cardinal point in the transcript, which is marked by an underline; line 24), which the caller confirms (line 25). The caller also offers an "other signs" formulation (i.e., "on the left-hand side"; line 25), as well as the exact place of the incident: a drugstore (line 26).

The calls entitled "Attacked by a machete" and "Audible burglary alarm" (both above) illustrate that the "*sentido*" ("direction," in English) of movement can be expressed using cardinal directions when the incident occurs inside (e.g., in a house or store). On the other hand, the calls entitled "Huacas" and "Party in the middle of the street" (below) are examples of landmark formulations in which the "*sentido*" of movement is expressed by referencing the incident's location in relation to another landmark or town, given that the incident is occurring outside (e.g., in a street or on a highway).

In the call entitled "Huacas" (Excerpt 12 below), the caller packs the presentation of the problem ("*Para reportar un accidente*" or "((I'm calling)) to report an accident," in English; lines 4-5) and the location of the emergency ("*en la cuesta de Huacas*" or "on

the hill in Huacas,” in English; line 5). Later in the call, the call-taker learns that the incident is a car-motorcycle accident and that the victim is lying against a raised shoulder in the street (data not shown).

**Excerpt 12. (ECR-98 Huacas)**

- 004 C: Sí buenas¿=Para reportar  
Yes good For report.INF  
*Yes good afternoon¿=((I'm calling)) to report*
- 005 un accidente aquí en la cuesta de Huacas?  
an accident here in the hill of NEIGHBORHOOD  
*an accident here on the hill in Huacas?*
- 006 CT: En la cuesta [de,?  
In the hill of  
*On the hill [in,?*
- 007 C: [E:s, Huacas de  
[Be.3SG NEIGHBORHOOD of  
*[It: is, Huacas of*
- 008 Santa Cruz.  
COUNTY/DISTRICT  
*Santa Cruz.*
- 009 (0.3)
- 010 CT: Un momento por favor¿  
A moment for favor  
One momento please¿
- 011 (.)
- 012 CT: Propiamente en la cuesta. De Huacas?  
Exactly in the hill Of NEIGHBORHOOD  
*Exactly on the hill. In Huacas?*
- 013 (0.3)
- 014 C: Sí e::h de Huacas hacia hacia::::  
Yes um from TOWN towards towards  
*Yes u::m in Huacas towards towards::::*

015           E:l Llano: eh subiendo.  
               TOWN           um going-up  
               E:l Llano: eh uphill.

This call is an example of expressing the “*sentido*” (“direction,” in English) of movement by referencing an incident’s location in relation to a town. The incident is occurring outside (i.e., in the street, since it is a car-motorcycle accident). The location is formulated using a hill as a landmark, followed by a geographical formulation (i.e., informing that “Huacas” is the name of the town). Huacas is a town located in the Guanacaste province near the beach that has a relatively flat surface. Therefore, a hill would be very noticeable in that area’s geography, and therefore, is a salient place for the inhabitants of that town. The call-taker initiates repair (line 6), and the caller then reformulates the location: “*E:s, Huacas de Santa Cruz*” (“It: is, Huacas of Santa Cruz,” in English; lines 7-8). The caller packs the name of the town with the name of the county (i.e., Santa Cruz). In doing so, she treats the call-taker’s repair initiation as an indication of an understanding problem rather than a hearing problem. By adding the name of the county, the caller shows her understanding of the possibility that the call-taker might not be familiar with the geographical area. The caller has reported the incident and formulated the location by using a landmark (i.e., “the hill in Huacas”; line 5) followed by a geographical formulation (i.e., “It: is, Huacas of Santa Cruz”; lines 7-8). The call-taker subsequently inquires if the emergency is occurring right on the hill in Huacas: “*Propiamente en la cuesta. De Huacas?*” (“Exactly on the hill. In Huacas?”; line 12). The caller then responds not with a cardinal direction, but rather with the location of the incident in relation to its direction towards the nearest town (i.e., “towards El Llano going uphill”; lines 14-15).

The call entitled “Party in the middle of the street” (Excerpt 13 below) is an example of expressing the “*sentido*” of movement by referencing the incident’s location in relation to another landmark (i.e., the incident is occurring outside). In this call, the caller informs the call-taker about a party happening in the middle of the street. The caller thinks it is dangerous because a driver could potentially hit the young boys who are partying. In the beginning of this call, the geographical formulation is gathered (data not shown). The call-taker then solicits where exactly in the district the party is taking place (line 16). Next, the caller offers a candidate formulation (lines 18-19), but the call-taker still solicits a more precise place formulation (lines 21-22). The caller then formulates the location of the incident using a complete landmark formulation (lines 24, 28-29).

***Excerpt 13. (ECR-75 Fiesta en media calle / Party in the middle of the street)***

016 CT: Santa Ana Pozos      adónde;  
          COUNTY      DISTRICT to-where  
          Santa Ana Pozos where;

017            (0.7)

018 C: E::h es            en la vía:: al:, (0.5)  
          Um   be.3SG in the way   to-the  
          U::m it is on the street leading:: to:, (0.5)

019            condominio Valle del Sol.  
          condominium NAME  
          Valle del Sol condominium.

020            (0.7)

021 CT: Pero cuál sería            la dirección  
          But which would-be.3SG the address/direction  
          But what would the location be

022            caballero;  
          gentleman  
          sir;

023 (0.5)

024 C: De:l:: HSBC¿  
Of-the BANK  
*From: the:: HSBC¿*

025 (2.0) ((typing sounds))

026 CT: Sí¿  
Yes  
*Yes¿*

027 (0.3)

028 C: Un kilómetro en dirección hacia el  
One kilometer in direction towards the  
*One kilometer towards the*

029 condominio Valle del Sol.  
condominium NAME  
*Valle del Sol condominium.*

030 (1.2)

031 C: Bueno ahí ya no es el HSBC es  
Well there already no be.3SG the BANK be.3SG  
*Well it is not called HSBC anymore it is*

032 Davivienda creo que es- ese, (0.5) ese  
BANK think.1SG that th- that that  
*Davivienda I think that th- that, (0.5) that*

033 banco cambió de nombre.  
bank changed.3SG of name  
*bank changed its name.*

The geographical information provided by the caller included the names of the county and the district (data not shown); however, the call-taker still solicits where exactly the party is taking place (line 16). By repeating the county and the district while also soliciting a more exact formulation of the location (i.e., “Santa Ana Pozos where¿” in English; line 16), the call-taker indicates that although the geographical formulation is

complete, it is institutionally insufficient by itself. In doing so, the call-taker makes relevant another type of place formulation – a landmark formulation. The caller formulates the place with a landmark (i.e., the Valle del Sol condominium), but does not provide the distance-related information. Instead, the caller provides only a vague indication of the direction of movement (lines 18-19), given that it is possible to access that landmark from different directions. Next, the call-taker solicits the location: “*Pero cuál sería la dirección caballero¿*” (“But what would the location be sir¿” in English; lines 21-22), thus indicating that the caller’s previous formulation was unclear or insufficient. The caller then makes a second attempt and reformulates the place of the party (lines 24, 28-29), but this time with a complete landmark formulation that includes: (a) a bank as a landmark (“*De:l: HSBC¿*” or “From: the:: HSBC¿” in English; line 24), (b) a distance from the landmark (“*Un kilómetro*” or “One kilometer,” in English; line 28), and (c) the “direction” of movement (“*en dirección hacia el condominio Valle del Sol*” or “towards the Valle del Sol condominium,” in English; lines 28-29). This reformulated landmark formulation expresses the direction of movement by referencing the incident’s location in relation to another landmark (i.e., the direction of movement from a bank to a condominium).

As seen in this section, once the geographical formulation has been gathered, call-takers solicit where exactly the incident is occurring. By soliciting additional details, the call-takers are making landmark formulations institutionally relevant. Landmark formulations include three components: the landmark, the distance of the incident from the landmark, and the “*sentido*” (“direction,” in English) of movement. Both callers and call-takers orient to these three components as one single interactional activity when

formulating place. The data show that participants tend to express the “*sentido*” of movement by using cardinal directions when the incident occurs inside (e.g., in a house or store), or by referencing the incident’s location in relation to another landmark or town when the incident occurs outside (e.g., in the street or on a highway). It could be argued that this difference in expressing the direction according to the area in which the incident occurs (i.e., by indicating cardinal direction if the incident occurs inside or by referencing the incident’s location in relation to a landmark or town if the incident occurs outside) shows the caller’s epistemology to the incident.

### **“*Otras señas*” (“other signs,” in English) formulations**

“*Otras señas*” (“other signs,” in English) formulations are place formulations that describe the details or physical characteristics of places. These descriptions increase the granularity of the formulation by zooming in on particular features of the location and its environment. “*Otras señas*” (“other signs,” in English) formulations may include the materials from which buildings are constructed and/or the color of buildings. When the Police Department is the first responder to the incident, 9-1-1 Costa Rica instructs for call-takers to solicit the color of the house as part of the location formulation. Each responder submits to 9-1-1 Costa Rica a set of questions to ask callers according to each type of incident. In the case of the Police Department, this entity requires 9-1-1 to solicit the color of the house, among other details. This is an institutional constraint that shapes the interaction between callers and call-takers when co-constructing the location formulation. Although call-takers of 9-1-1 Costa Rica are explicitly instructed to solicit the color of the house when the incident is transferred to the Police Department, call-takers may also solicit this information when the incident is responded to by another

responder (i.e., by another responder other than the Police Department) Furthermore, callers sometimes offer this information as part of their location formulations without a solicitation from call-takers. In this section, I will show that “other signs” formulations may either be offered by callers or solicited by call-takers.

When calling emergency services, callers may provide the visual attributes of places when formulating the location of the incident. In other words, they may choose to describe particular features of the place depending on the resources available in their environment. For instance, callers may provide the color or construction material of the place if the incident occurs inside (e.g., in a house or store), or they may describe their surroundings if the incident occurs outside (e.g., in the street or on a highway). In the call entitled “Papaya colored house” (Excerpt 14 below; also analyzed as Excerpt 9 above), the caller formulates the place using a landmark formulation (i.e., “The location is one hundred meters from the La Esperanza school”; lines 35-36) and an “other signs” formulation (“The second house papaya colored”; line 38).

***Excerpt 14. (ECR-02 Casa color papaya / Papaya colored house)***

035 C: La dirección es cien  
The address/direction be.3SG one-hundred  
*The location is one hundred*

036 metros de la escuela La Esperanza,  
meters of the school NEIGHBORHOOD  
*meters from the La Esperanza school,*

037 (0.7)

038 C: A la segunda casa color papaya.  
To the second house color papaya  
*The second house papaya colored.*

The caller offers the color of the house and, in doing so, increases the granularity of the formulation. In other words, it is not just any house located one hundred meters from the school, but rather the second house that is also papaya colored.

Call-takers may also solicit “other signs” formulations as part of the location formulation. In the call entitled “Her blood sugar dropped” (Excerpt 15 below), the geographical information is gathered (data not shown). Next, the call-taker solicits where exactly the incident is occurring (line 17). The caller then provides a landmark formulation (i.e., “from the catholic church um five hundred meters west”; lines 18-19). After a pause, the call-taker solicits the building material of the house: “*Casa de ceme:nto:::, casa de madera::?*” (“Cement hou:se:::, wooden house::? in English; line 21). The caller subsequently responds by providing the building material and adding the color of the house as “*azul claro*” (“light blue,” in English; line 22).

***Excerpt 15. (ECR-131 Se le bajó el azúcar / Her blood sugar dropped)***

- 017 CT: >Exactamente< en qué parte de B-Line?  
 Exactly in what part of NEIGHBORHOOD  
 >In< exactly what part of B-Line?
- 018 C: .Hhhhhhh ((suspiro)) de la iglesia católica  
 of the church catholic  
 .Hhhhhhh ((sigh)) from the catholic church
- 019 eh quinientos metros oeste.  
 um five-hundred meters west  
 um five hundred meters west.
- 020 (0.5)
- 021 CT: Casa de ceme:nto:::, casa de madera::?  
 House of cement house of wood  
 Cement hou:se:::, wooden house::?

022 C: Casa de cemento, azul claro.  
 House of cement blue light  
*Cement house, light blue.*

The two calls above show that “*otras señas*” (“other signs,” in English) formulations may either be offered by callers (e.g., in the call entitled “Papaya colored house”; Excerpt 14 above) or solicited by call-takers (e.g., in the call entitled “Her blood sugar dropped”; Excerpt 15 above). The level of granularity in the place formulation that is considered to be sufficient may be negotiated by the caller and the call-taker, since there are many details regarding the location that may be considered “other signs.”

The call entitled “Potato chip factory” (Excerpts 16a, 16b below) shows how “*otras señas*” (“other signs,” in English) are considered to be part of a place formulation. The call is a report of domestic violence – the caller hears that her neighbor is being attacked by her husband (i.e., the neighbor’s husband). When asked about the location of the incident, the caller formulates the place via a landmark formulation and the call-taker initiates repair in order to solicit the geographical formulation (data not shown). After the geographical formulation has been gathered, the call-taker solicits additional details of the location, incorporating into said solicitation the landmark provided by the caller (line 36 below). The caller then responds with an “other signs” formulation (lines 37-41) that includes a mention of a public telephone, a description of a street, and a descriptions of what is found in the surroundings (i.e., a clay house and a marble workshop).

***Excerpt 16a. (ECR-100 Fábrica de papas / Potato chip factory)***

036 CT: De la fábrica La Marianita?  
 Of the factory NAME  
*From La Marianita factory?*

- 037 C: .Hh ajá .hh este:: (.) eh:: (0.3) donde está  
uh-huh um um where be.3SG  
.Hh uh huh .hh um:: (.) um:: (0.3) from the
- 038 el teléfono público hay una entrada  
the telephone public there-is a entrance.DIM  
*public telephone there is a little entrance*
- 039 d- de una casa de adobe y una marmolería,  
o- of a house of clay and a marble-workshop  
o- of a clay house and a marble workshop,
- 040 (0.7)
- 041 C: Es una callecita angosta,  
Be.3SG a street.DIM narrow  
*It is a little narrow street,*

The call-taker solicits confirmation of the location: “*De la fábrica La Marianita*” (“From La Marianita factory?”; line 36). The caller then formulates the place by providing a public telephone as another landmark (“from the public telephone”; lines 37-38). Next, the caller provides an “other signs” formulation, thus increasing the granularity of the place. The “other signs” formulation includes the descriptions “*hay una entrada*” (“there is a little entrance,” in English; line 38), “*una casa de adobe y una marmolería*” (“a clay house and a marble workshop,” in English; line 39), and “*es una callecita angosta*” (“it is a little narrow street,” in English; line 41). Later in the call (Excerpt 16b below), the call-taker solicits the color of the building and the caller offers the construction material.

***Excerpt 16b. (ECR-100 Fábrica de papas / Potato chip factory)***

- 057 C: .hh en esa entrada la quinta casa. La  
in that entrance.DIM the fifth house The  
.hh in that little entrance the fifth house. The

- 058           muchacha       se   llama       NOMBRE.  
               young-woman self call.3SG NAME  
               *young woman's name is NAME.*
- 059           (6.5) ((CT typing))
- 060   CT:   La   casa   de qué   color es?  
               The house of what color be.3SG  
               *The house what color is it?*
- 061           (0.5)
- 062   C:    Eh:: no. (.) No está    pintada. E:s  
               Um    no           No be.3SG painted   Be.3SG  
               *Um:: no. (.) It is not painted. It i:s*
- 063           de block.  
               of block  
               *made of blocks.*
- 064           (1.3) ((CT typing))
- 065   C:    La   puerta es       negra, y:: el   portón  
               The door   be.3SG black   and the gate  
               *The door is black, a::nd the gate*
- 066           es amarillo.  
               be.3SG yellow  
               *is yellow.*

The caller has already formulated the location using a public telephone as a landmark (Excerpt 16a above) and has explained that the location is the fifth house in a little entrance (line 57; Excerpt 16b above). The call-taker then solicits further details about the house, such as the color: “*la casa de qué color es?*” (“the house what color is it?,” in English; line 60). The design of the question shows a syntactic fronting of the subject (“*la casa*” or “the house,” in English), as it has been topicalized (C. W. Raymond, 2015). The solicitation of the color of the house makes relevant the formulation of the location using “other signs” as an appropriate institutional formulation. Additionally, this

solicitation shows the call-taker's institutional orientation to obtaining the description. The caller hesitates to respond; however, since the house "*no está pintada*" ("[it] is not painted," in English; line 62), she responds by describing the construction ("*e:s de block*" or "it i:s made of blocks," in English; line 62-63), in addition to providing the color of the door ("black"; line 65) and the gate ("yellow"; line 66).

As discussed in this section, "other signs" formulations include salient physical characteristics (such as colors and the materials of buildings) of the location being formulated. Furthermore, these descriptions increase the granularity of the formulation. Contrary to geographical formulations and landmark formulations, "*otras señas*" ("other signs," in English) formulations do not seem to be made up of basic components, since their descriptions could include any salient feature (or features) of the location or its surroundings. Additionally, "other signs" formulations may either be offered by callers or solicited by call-takers. As will be shown in the section entitled "When is a location institutionally sufficient?", "other signs" formulations are institutionally relevant, but not institutionally mandatory, when building up an institutionally sufficient location formulation.

### **Assembling a location formulation**

In the previous sections, it has been shown that participants formulate the location of the incident by using the three different formulations with differing levels of granularity: geographical formulations, landmark formulations, and "*otras señas*" ("other signs," in English) formulations. In this section, it will be shown how these three practices are combined when formulating place in calls to 9-1-1; that is, how the callers and call-takers negotiate the location according to their perspectives on what constitutes a

sufficient location formulation, as well as according to the attributes of the places (e.g., inside vs. outside).

The call entitled “Varicose veins” call illustrates a location formulation that is assembled using geographical formulations, landmark formulations, and “other signs” formulations (i.e., the incident occurs inside of a building). The call is presented in three separate excerpts (Excerpts 17a, 17b, 17c below) in order to easily illustrate the formulation of the location. At the start of Excerpt 17a below, the greeting of the caller (line 3) is followed by her locational identification using a geographical formulation (i.e., San Pablo is the district and Barva is the county; line 4).

***Excerpt 17a. (ECR-01 Várices / Varicose veins)***

003 C: Buenos días (.) este eh:: l- le hablo  
 Good days um um:: l- to-you speak.1SG  
 Good morning (.) hm um:: I'm calling

004 aquí de San Pablo de Barva?  
 here of DISTRICT of COUNTY  
 from San Pablo of Barva?

After the opening of the call (Excerpt 17a above), the call-taker solicits the reason for calling. The caller then presents the problem: her mother suffers from varicose veins, some of which have burst and her mother is bleeding (data not shown). When asked about the location of the incident (line 16; Excerpt 17b below), the caller provides a landmark formulation in which the direction of movement is expressed by referencing the incident's location in relation to another landmark.

**Excerpt 17b. (ECR-01 Várices / Varicose veins)**

- 016 CT: =En San Pablo qué dirección?  
In DISTRICT what address/direction  
=In San Pablo what location?
- 017 C: >San Pablo de Barva< de la  
DISTRICT of COUNTY of the  
>San Pablo of Barva< from
- 018 escuela en San Pablo,  
school in DISTRICT  
school in San Pablo,
- 019 CT: Sí?  
Yes  
Yes?
- 020 C: Doscientos setenta y cinco=  
Two-hundred seventy and five  
Two hundred and seventy-five ((meters))=
- 021 =saliendo hacia el puente,  
leaving towards the bridge  
=exiting towards the bridge,
- 022 (0.7)
- 023 C: >Sureste es< dosciento- de la  
Southeast be.3SG two-hundre- of the  
>Southeast it is< two-hundre- ((meters)) from the
- 024 escuela, (0.7) saliendo hacia  
school leaving towards  
school, (0.7) exiting towards
- 025 el puente.  
the bridge  
the bridge.

Once the call-taker has secured the geographical formulation (i.e., “in San Pablo”; line 16), he solicits the location: “in San Pablo what location?” (line 16). The caller then responds by providing the location using landmarks (i.e., the school and the bridge), and

the distance of the incident from said landmarks (lines 20, 23). In line 17, the caller responds by geographically formulating the location (i.e., “>San Pablo of Barva<”), and then adds a landmark in lines 17 to 18 (i.e., “from the school in San Pablo”). Next, the caller provides the distance from the landmark (i.e., “two hundred and seventy five ((meters))”; line 20) and the direction of movement by referencing another landmark (i.e., the bridge; line 21). After no uptake from the call-taker (see the gap in line 22), the caller repairs and provides the direction of movement using a cardinal direction (i.e., “southeast”; line 23) as an alternative formulation. The caller reformulates the location, provides the direction of movement, and also adds the direction in relation to a landmark (lines 23-25).

The call-taker solicits confirmation of the landmark formulation (lines 26-27; Excerpt 17c below). After confirming (i.e., “yes”; line 28), the caller offers a granular description of the surroundings of the place (lines 28-35), including the mention of stores and a person working at a furniture workshop.

***Excerpt 17c. (ECR-01 Várices / Varicose veins)***

026 CT: De de la escuela doscientos  
Of of the school two-hundred  
*From from the school two hundred*

027 setenta y cinco metros sur este.  
seventy and five meters south east.  
*seventy-five meters southeast.*

028 C: Sí. Ah:: oh:: eh:: al lado abajito  
Yes Ah oh um to-the side down.DIM  
*Yes. Ah:: oh:: um:: slightly downwards*

029 del taller Las Espinas,  
of-the workshop NAME  
*from the Las Espinas workshop,*

- 030 (0.7)
- 031 C: Ahí hay una mueblería:  
 There there-is a furniture-workshop  
*There is a furniture workshop there:*
- 032 eh un:: .hh un nego- este  
 uh a hh a sho- um  
*uh a:: .hh a sho- um*
- 033 al puro frente .hh casi de  
 to-the right front hh almost of  
*almost directly .hh in front of*
- 034 mi casa .hh hay un señor que  
 my house hh there-is a man that  
*my house .hh there is a man that*
- 035 está trabajando con muebles,  
 be.3SG working with furniture  
*is working with furniture,*
- 036 (0.5)
- 037 C: Eh:  
 Um  
*Um:*
- 038 (0.3)
- 039 CT: Cuál es su nombre señora?  
 Which be.3SG your name ma'am  
*What is your name ma'am?*

The call-taker requests confirmation of the location given thus far (i.e., “from the school two hundred seventy-five meters southeast”; lines 26-27), which the caller subsequently confirms (i.e., via “yes.”; line 28). Next, the caller adds another landmark to the location formulation: “the Las Espinas workshop” (line 29). After a gap (line 30), during which there is no uptake from the call-taker, the caller produces a more granular location formulation (i.e. by adding “furniture workshop;” line 31). The caller then

abandons the reference to the shop (line 32) and instead explains that there is a man working with furniture right in front of her house (lines 33-35). In line 39, the call-taker moves on to solicit the name of the caller; this shows that the location provided by the caller is considered to be sufficient by the call-taker.

The call entitled “Varicose veins” shows that geographical formulations and landmark formulations are necessary when building up an institutionally sufficient location formulation. While there are “other signs” formulations in this call, this is not the case in the call entitled “Huacas” (Excerpt 12). The absence of “other signs” formulations in the call entitled “Huacas” suggests that such formulations are not mandatory when assembling an institutionally sufficient location formulation, which is precisely what will be discussed in the next section.

### **When is a location institutionally sufficient?**

The practices that callers use to formulate location when calling 9-1-1 (practices which have been shown thus far in the data), are: geographical formulations, landmark formulations, and “*otras señas*” (or “other signs,” in English) formulations. These three practices are used together when formulating place and are institutionally relevant in the co-construction of the location of incidents. However, geographical formulations and landmark formulations specifically are the two practices that call-takers accept as those that constitute an institutionally sufficient location formulation. On the other hand, “other signs” formulations tend to be optional when building up an institutionally sufficient location formulation. When offered by callers, “other signs” formulations are accepted by call-takers (as seen in Excerpts 14, 16a, 17c above). Sometimes, but not always, call-takers solicit “other signs” formulations when they are not offered by the callers (as seen

in Excerpts 15, 16b above). In this section, I will show that a location formulation may be institutionally sufficient when it includes only geographical and landmark formulations (i.e., when it does not also include “other sign” formulations).

The call entitled “Small collision” (Excerpt 18 below) shows that both geographical and landmark formulations are required. In this call, the caller does not offer any location information during the presentation of the problem (data not shown). When asked about the location of the incident (line 8), the caller responds with a landmark formulation (line 10), but does not offer a geographical formulation.

***Excerpt 18. (ECR-73 Pequeña colisión / Small collision)***

008 CT: En dónde sería?  
In where would-be.3SG  
*Where would it be?*

009 (1.0)

010 C: Es de la contraloría,  
Be.3SG of the government-accountability-office  
*By the government accountability office,*

011 (1.3) ((typing sounds))

012 CT: De la contraloría de dónde?  
Of the government-accountability-office of where  
*By the government accountability office of where?*

013 (1.0)

014 C: N::::acional de la república  
National of the republic  
*N::::ational of the republic.*

015 en Sabana Sur.  
in NEIGHBORHOOD  
*in Sabana Sur.*

016 (1.3) ((typing sounds))

- 017 CT: Sí;  
Yes  
Yes;
- 018 C: Son trescientos cin::cuenta  
Be.3PL three-hundred fifty  
*It is three hundred fif::ty*
- 019 metros al norte,  
meters to-the north  
*meters north,*
- 020 (0.7)
- 021 CT: Sí;  
Yes  
Yes;
- 022 C: Y cincuenta al oeste.  
And fifty to-the west  
*And fifty west.*
- 023 (6.7) ((typing sounds))
- 024 CT: Número de teléfono del que llama;  
Number of telephone of-which that call.2SG  
*Telephone number from which you are calling;*

The caller's response is a landmark formulation that only includes one of the three components of place formulations: the landmark "*Es de la contraloría*" ("By the government accountability office," in English; line 10). There is a 1.3-second long gap (line 11), in which typing sounds can be heard on the call-taker's side. Next, the call-taker solicits clarification of the landmark: "*De la contraloría de dónde?*" ("By the government accountability office of where?" in English; line 12). By soliciting clarification of the landmark, the call-taker not only indicates that the place formulated by the caller is incomplete (i.e., it lacks institutionally relevant geographical formulation), but he also shows his orientation to fulfilling the institutional task of entering the district

into the computer application. The caller then provides the full name of the landmark and adds the name of the neighborhood (i.e., a geographical formulation) in which the incident is located (lines 14-15). After a go-ahead from the call-taker (line 17), the caller provides the remaining components of the landmark formulation: the distance (lines 18, 22) and direction of movement (lines 19, 22). After a 6.7-second gap in which typing sounds can be heard (line 23), the call-taker then moves on to verifying the caller's information (i.e., telephone number; line 24). This particular call that call-takers consider both geographical and landmark formulations as being institutionally required and, in this case, as a sufficient way to formulate place.

The call entitled "Vaginal infection" (Excerpt 19 below) is another example of a location formulation in which geographical and landmark formulations are treated as institutionally sufficient. The caller designs the request for help to include a complete geographical formulation (lines 5-7). After the call-taker's solicitation of a more precise location (line 9), the caller then provides a complete landmark formulation (lines 13-16).

***Excerpt 19. (ECR-87 Infección vaginal / Vaginal infection)***

005 C: Es para ver si nos mandan una  
Be.3SG for see.INF if to-us send.2PL an  
(*I'm calling*) to see if you can send us an

006 ambulancia aquí a Dulce Nombre  
ambulance here to NEIGHBORHOOD  
*ambulance here in Dulce Nombre*

007 of San Isidro de Alajue:la¿  
of DISTRICT of COUNTY/PROVINCE  
*of San Isidro of Alajue:la¿*

008 (3.7) ((typing sounds))

- 009 CT: Y la dirección exacta?  
And the address/direction exact  
*And the exact location?*
- 010 (1.0)
- 011 C: Este:: la dirección exacta  
Um the address/direction exact  
*U:m:: the exact location*
- 012 chiquillas; [°(qué )° ((to TP))  
girls.DIM what  
*girls; °[ (what )° ((to TP))*
- 013 TP: [Quinientos oeste de  
Five-hundred west of  
*[Five hundred ((meters)) west of*
- 014 la iglesia católica.  
the church Catholic  
*the Catholic church.*
- 015 C: Quinientos oeste de la iglesia  
Five-hundred west from the church  
*Five hundred ((meters)) west of the Catholic*
- 016 católica;  
Catholic  
Church;
- 017 (5.0) ((typing sounds))
- 018 CT: Número de teléfono que llama?  
Number of telephone that call.2SG  
*Telephone number you are calling from;*

During her first turn-at-talk, the caller includes a geographical place formulation:

*“Es para ver si nos mandan una ambulancia aquí a Dulce Nombre de San Isidro de*

*Alajuela;*” (“((I’m calling)) to see if you can send us an ambulance here in Dulce

Nombre of San Isidro of Alajuela;” in English; lines 5-7). In these lines, the caller offers

a complete geographical formulation that includes the neighborhood, district, and

county/province. After 3.7-second gap, in which typing sounds can be heard (line 8), the call-taker solicits the exact location of the incident: “*Y la dirección exacta?*” (“And the exact location?” in English; line 9). Next, the caller is heard offline asking a third person (“TP”) for the location (lines 11-12), and the third person then responds (lines 13-14). The caller then formulates the place using a landmark formulation: “*Quinientos oeste de la iglesia católica*” (“Five hundred ((meters)) west of the Catholic church<sub>i</sub>” in English; lines 15-16). Thus, the landmark formulation is complete, since it includes the church as the landmark, the distance of the incident from the landmark, and the direction of movement expressed using cardinal directions. After a 5.0-second gap (line 17), the call-taker moves on to verifying the caller’s information (i.e., telephone number; line 18). This indicates that the call-taker has accepted the caller’s location formulation and considers it to be institutionally sufficient.

These data show that institutionally sufficient location formulations must – at the very least – include both geographical formulations and landmark formulations (as shown in Excerpts 8, 11, 13 above). On the other hand, “other signs” formulations are not always mandatory, but these formulations may be offered by callers (Excerpt 15 above) or may (or may not) be solicited by call-takers (Excerpts 14, 16a, 17c above).

### **Summary of findings**

In this chapter, I have examined the interactional activity of formulating place in calls to 9-1-1. The data show that interactants rely on the resources available in the community and that they use three different practices when formulating the locations of incidents: geographical formulations, landmark formulations, and “*otras señas*” (“other signs,” in English) formulations (see Figure 9 below).

Formulating Place	Geographical formulations	Province, county & district (mandatory)
		Town and/or neighborhood (optional)
	Landmark formulations	Landmark + distance + "sentido" ("direction," in English) of movement
		"Sentido" of movement (incident occurring inside): cardinal directions
		"Sentido" of movement (incident occurring outside): landmark or town
	"Otras señas" ("other signs," in English) formulations	Granular descriptions
		Sorroundings

Figure 9. Summary of practices used by participants when formulating place.

*Geographical formulations* are place formulations that use the territorial divisions of the country and are made up of three basic components: provinces, counties, and districts. Additionally, two additional components may also be included in geographical formulations: towns and neighborhoods. Callers tend to provide some kind of geographical information in their requests for help; however, when this information is not offered by callers, it will be solicited by call-takers.

*Landmark formulations* are place formulations that anchor the location to a particular landmark. These formulations are comprised of three basic components: the landmark, the distance of the incident from the landmark, and the “*sentido*” (“direction,” in English) of movement. Landmarks are salient places in the community (e.g., churches, parks, stores) that are used as the starting point for the location. The distance of the incident from the landmark can be expressed using metric units (e.g., meters or kilometers) or by using a side of the landmark (e.g., behind, in front of). The direction of movement can be expressed using cardinal directions when the incident occurs inside (e.g., in a building, a store, a house), or by referencing the incident’s location in relation to another landmark or town when the incident occurs outside (e.g., in a street or on a highway). These three components of landmark formulations (i.e., the landmark, the distance of the incident from the landmark, and the direction of movement) are all required elements in the landmark formulations.

*Otras señas* (“other signs,” in English) formulations are descriptions of places that can include the color and construction material of buildings, the physical characteristics of the places, or descriptions of the surroundings. These formulations increase the granularity of the place formulation by zooming in on particular features of the places. Additionally, these formulations may be offered by callers or solicited by call-takers.

Given that 9-1-1 Costa Rica is a centralized system, geographical formulations are required in order to be able to assign the incident to the corresponding local dispatch center. This type of place formulation shows a level of low granularity. By pursuing geographical formulations, call-takers align with the needs of the institution (i.e., call-

takers are required to enter the district into the computer application in order for the system to automatically input the corresponding county and province). Once this information has been entered, call-takers proceed to enter the exact location, which callers tend to formulate by means of landmark formulations (i.e., a type of place formulation with a middle level of granularity) and “other signs” formulations (i.e., a type of place formulation with a high level of granularity). Once the call-taker moves on to verifying the caller’s information, he or she (i.e., the call-taker) indicates that the location formulation is institutionally sufficient.

Lastly, callers and call-takers have different perspectives regarding what constitutes a sufficient location formulation. These differences in perspectives may be due to the institutional needs of a nation-wide emergency system and the constraints of the computer application used by call-takers to enter the information about the call. Additionally, callers might assume that call-takers are located in the same geographical area as them and, therefore, might only provide landmark formulations. The data showed that call-takers consider a location to be institutionally sufficient when it consists of both geographical and landmark formulations. Call-takers may solicit “other signs” formulations and accept them when they are offered by the callers; however, these formulations are not mandatory in order for a place formulation to be considered institutionally sufficient by call-takers. Thus, callers and call-takers work together to build a location formulation that would make dispatching help possible.

## Chapter 7

### Conclusions and Implications

This dissertation examined interactions during calls to the 9-1-1 Emergency System in Costa Rica. The aim of this dissertation was threefold. First, I explored the overall structural organization of the calls in light of linguistic and institutional peculiarities of the 9-1-1 system in Costa Rica. Second, I examined how callers design their reason for calling the service. Third, I analyzed how incident locations are formulated in this context. In what follows, I summarize the findings of the dissertation and then discuss some implications of this research.

#### Overall structural organization of emergency calls

The overall structural organization of emergency calls is comprised of the following constituent activities: an opening sequence, a reason for calling, an interrogative series, a response of assistance, and a closing sequence. Overall, the findings are in line with prior research. However, there are some linguistic and institutional differences that seem to be particular to the dataset at hand. During the *opening sequence*, call-takers open the call with a self-identifying statement, whereas callers acknowledge having reached the service. Besides the acknowledgment token “*si*” (“yes,” in English), callers may also use the greeting form “*buenas*” (“good day”). In their first turn-at-talk, callers may use a “*buenas*” pro-forma greeting, followed by the reason for calling the service. In such a sequential environment, the pro-forma greeting operates as an acknowledgment token, similar to “*si*” (“yes,” in English), given that it orients to the matter at hand. During their first turn-at-talk, callers may also use a full

greeting form with a rising intonation that invites a response from call-takers. In this sequential environment, the full greeting form works as a summons, with callers seeming to orient to check whether they can proceed with the call. In addition to the aforementioned practices, callers may respond the call by apologizing (i.e., “*disculpe*,” or “sorry,” in English) for calling and by thanking (i.e., “*gracias*,” or “thank you” in English). Explicit apologies seem to preface a request that is not relevant to or in accordance with the services offered by 9-1-1. More research is needed in order to better understand the practice of initiating an emergency call via the phrase “thank you.”

During the *interrogative series*, call-takers collect information about the location of the incident and nature of the problem. In addition, 9-1-1 Costa Rica instructs call-takers to verify the caller’s contact information (i.e., name and telephone number), as a way to distinguish between prank calls and real incidents.

During the *response of assistance*, call-takers of 9-1-1 Costa Rica are instructed not to promise help. This is in accordance with the nature of the emergency system (i.e., it serves as the linking organization for the responding organizations). In other words, call-takers do not grant the assistance because that is the local dispatchers’ responsibility. As call-takers cannot grant the assistance, they instead use a combination of any of the following three components: (a) informing the caller that the information was/will be sent to a dispatch center, (b) informing the caller that the dispatch center is in charge of granting the assistance, and/or (c) instructing the caller to await the assistance.

During the *closing sequence*, callers and call-takers bring the call to an end. Call-takers initiate the closing of the call by providing their identification number. Callers tend to thank call-takers for the service and, in doing so, orient to the closing of the call. Call-

takers may accept callers' "thank you" by using an expression of service, such as "*con gusto*" ("you're welcome," in English), "*para servirle*" ("I'm here to help," in English), or "*a la orden*" ("at your service," in English).

### **Requesting help in calls to 9-1-1**

The reason that individuals call 9-1-1 is to receive some sort of assistance. Callers are found to use the following three forms in their reason for the call turns: explicit requests, reports, and descriptions. The particular request design sheds some light on callers' orientations to their entitlement to the requested service and on the contingencies involved in receiving the help.

*Explicit requests* solicit a particular service, such as a fire truck or an ambulance. In designing their requests, callers may use: (a) practices that orient to the contingencies involved in receiving the assistance, and/or (b) practices that orient to low entitlement to the request. The grammatical form employed in the requests that contain the phrase "*para ver si*" ("to see if," in English) conveys the contingent nature of receiving the assistance granted via the conditional nature (i.e., the use of the word "if") of the phrase. The request may also use "*favor*" and "*amabilidad*" ("kindness," in English) constructions, which present the caller as perceiving him or herself to have low entitlement to the service. Additionally, the request turns may also include a variety of mitigating devices (e.g., conditionals, modals). This typically happens when the incident is non-life-threatening. These mitigating devices may downgrade the urgency of the incident and present the outcome of the request as even more uncertain.

The reason for calling may be designed as a *report*, which uses a report-style frame in combination with a police-relevant category that clearly classifies the incident

(e.g., as a fire, a car accident, an assault). By using a police-relevant category, callers orient to the self-evident policeability of the reported incident. Callers who design the request for help using a report-style frame present themselves as benefactors, or people not directly involved in the incident. The findings show that reporting an incident can be designed via the verbs “*reportar*” (“to report,” in English) and “*denunciar*” (“to denounce,” in English), both of which share the meaning of communicating news and seem to be used in similar interactional circumstances.

*Descriptions* are tellings that provide some kind of detailed information about the nature of the incident. The findings show that there are two practices used by callers when designing the request as a description: (a) practices orienting to low contingencies in receiving the assistance, and (b) practices orienting to high contingencies of receiving the assistance. In the first case, descriptions are designed as single-unit turns in which the policeability of the incident is presented as being self-evident (i.e., via the use of police-relevant categories). In the second case, descriptions are commonly designed as multi-unit turns that provide detailed information about the incident without labeling it in a police-relevant way. In such cases, callers use prospective indexicals (e.g., the phrase “a problem”) and then explain the situation via an extended telling.

### **Formulating place in calls to 9-1-1**

Formulating the place of the incident is a fundamental activity during calls to 9-1-1, as the assistance needs to be dispatched to a particular place. The findings show that three practices of place formulation exist: (a) geographical formulations, (b) landmark formulations, and (c) “*otras señas*” (“other signs,” in English) formulations. These practices correspond to different levels of granularity in the description of the place.

*Geographical formulations* mention the territorial divisions of Costa Rica. Three mandatory components of this particular type of formulation were found: the province, county, and district. Additionally, two optional components were also discovered: the neighborhood and town. Callers tend to provide some sort of geographical formulation in their requests for help. When this information is not offered by callers, call-takers will solicit these formulations, as they are necessary in order to redirect the incident log to the corresponding dispatch center.

*Landmark formulations* associate the location of the incident with a landmark. The basic components of these formulations are: the landmark, the distance from the landmark, and the “*sentido*” (“direction,” in English) of movement. Landmarks are the starting point of the formulation, and they tend to be salient places in the community (e.g., schools, churches, gas stations). The distance from the landmark can be expressed using metric units (e.g., kilometers or meters), or by stating the side of the landmark (e.g., in front of, behind) in reference to something else. The direction of movement can be expressed using cardinal directions if the incident happens inside (e.g., in a house or building), or by referencing another town or landmark if the incident happens outside (e.g., on a highway or street). Both callers and call-takers orient to deliver these three basic components as a complete package.

“*Otras señas*” (“other signs,” in English) *formulations* are descriptions of places that zoom in on particular features of the location. These formulations tend to include the color and/or material of buildings, but they may also be descriptions of the surroundings or physical characteristics of places. These formulations may be proffered by callers or solicited by call-takers. Finally, a place formulation is institutionally sufficient when it

includes geographical formulations and landmark formulations. “Otras señas” formulations, on the other hand, are optional.

By examining the activity of formulating place in the context of emergency calls in Costa Rica, one is able to gain insight into how cultures organize their social world. For instance, one learns about what a community considers to be a culturally salient place, given that people make sense of places in different ways according to the cultural practices of their community. For example, schools, churches, parks, bars, and town halls are significant landmarks for Costa Ricans. These places index the Spanish heritage implicated in the construction of settlements, given that the majority of the cities conquered by Spain have the same urban configuration: a symmetrical block layout, in which religious, civic, and entertainment establishments are either situated next to each other or built around a football field.

By examining place formulations, one is able to gain access to a community’s collective memory and social history. For example, some location formulations found in the dataset referenced a “*casa de abode*” (“clay house,” in English) or a “*pulpería*” (“small traditional grocery store,” in English). These are not only buildings – but also social institutions – that tell us about the social history of Costa Rica in its early independent life, as they take us back to the point in history in which clay houses and “*pulperías*” were widespread throughout the country. Besides these two social institutions, flora and the color of buildings are also salient in place formulations. For instance, trees are commonly used as landmarks, and call-takers might solicit the color of houses. Houses in neighborhoods may not have a number, but it is, however, very likely that they are painted a certain color. Thus, it is common practice in Costa Rican

communities to use the color of the building as a way to locate a given place. By examining place formulation in a Costa Rican context, one learns about other practices that this community uses. It would be beneficial to extend this type of research to place formulations within other linguistic and cultural communities around the world, since little is currently known about how places are referred to when addresses are not readily available.

### **Implications**

This research contributes to this particular field of study in three different ways. First, the dissertation contributes to Conversation Analysis and, particularly, to our understanding of such conversational activities (e.g., requests and place formulations). By exploring the activity of requesting help, this dissertation sheds light on the design of the request in relation to the urgency of the incident. Using Costa Rican Spanish as a case study, this dissertation demonstrated that the certainty/uncertainty of the requested assistance may be already encoded in the language used. For example, I showed how the grammaticalized phrase “*para ver si*” (“to see if,” in English) displays the caller’s orientations to the uncertainty of receiving the requested help.

Furthermore, by examining the activity of formulating place, this dissertation contributes to gaining a better understanding of how exactly participants formulate place, as well as what practices are used by callers according to cultural and institutional differences. Although the practice of using landmarks to formulate place is not exclusive to Costa Rica, given that other communities might use similar practices, little research has been conducted on place formulation from a conversation analytic perspective. Using Costa Rica as a case study, I was able to identify and describe other practices (i.e., those

which entail formulating place in ways other than using an address) and the interactional resources employed by participants. For example, describing the practice of formulating place via landmark formulations informs us about the basic components of a landmark formulation (i.e., the landmark, the distance from the landmark, and the direction of movement), and about how participants orient to deliver those components as a complete package. This dissertation sheds light on the practice of formulating place in a general sense, and in the particular institutional context of calls to 9-1-1 services.

In addition, this dissertation contributes to Conversation Analysis by extending research to languages other than English, (i.e., to Spanish in this particular case). While it is true that prior research has examined interactional phenomena in Spanish (e.g., identity negotiation via pronoun distinction, and bilingual and monolingual question design), most of the conversation analytic research has been conducted in English-speaking countries (e.g., the U.S. and the U.K.), and little research has been conducted in Spanish in the context of emergency services. Examining interaction in other languages besides English can identify new interactional phenomena specific to a particular culture, as well as give us a more nuanced understanding of interactional phenomena that had only previously been analyzed in English.

This dissertation also sheds light on the similarities among different kinds of formulations, such as place formulation and person reference. Describing the activity of place formulation in Costa Rica has the potential to inform about how person recognition is secured. For example, Costa Rican place formulations highlight the importance of recipient design in that the speaker has to select easily-identifiable landmarks in order to secure place recognition. A similar process may apply to person references, as the

speaker has to select, out of a variety of possible references, the one best suited for recognition by the addressee.

Second, this research extends one's understanding of interaction on emergency phone services. By analyzing the overall structural organization of emergency calls, this dissertation serves to advance our understanding of all of the constituent activities in light of cultural, linguistic, and institutional differences. For instance, we can witness cultural differences in the use of greetings during the opening sequence. A linguistic difference can be seen in the expression of uncertainty regarding the requested help via the grammaticalized phrase "*para ver si*" ("to see if," in English). Institutional differences can also be seen in at least two constituent activities of calls: the interrogative series and promise of assistance.

For example, the 9-1-1 service in Costa Rica instructs call-takers to verify callers' information (i.e., name and telephone number) as a way to distinguish between prank calls and real incidents; however, in several emergency centers in other countries, callers remain anonymous. Additionally, call-takers from emergency centers in other countries function as gatekeepers of the service who either do or do not grant the requested assistance. On the other hand, call-takers of the 9-1-1 service in Costa Rica cannot promise to provide assistance, as the system is a network that simply links callers to responding teams. In addition, by examining the overall structural organization of calls and by using the 9-1-1 service in Costa Rica as a case study, one gains a better understanding of how other emergency centers are organized (e.g., as a linking network), and how their goals are made visible to callers through talk-in-interaction (e.g., by verifying callers' information).

Third, in practical terms, this dissertation has the potential to inform, and possibly improve, four main areas of the emergency service: the opening of the call, the request for help, the formulation of place, and the promise of assistance. It was found that, after the automatic recording which states the institutional identification during the *opening of the call*, callers may initiate a repair in order to check whether to proceed with the call. Opening the call with just the automatic recording (i.e., not followed by a categorical self-identification from a human call-taker) seems to be problematic for callers, as they are not sure whether they are talking to a human. By opening the call with both the automatic recording and the categorical self-identification from a human call-taker, this situation may be avoided and the progressivity of the interaction might not be halted to check on the connection. Additionally, an alternative could be to not use the automatic recording at all.

During the *request for help* phase, it was found that the request design is related to the urgency of the reported incident. For example, via the grammaticalized phrase “*para ver si*” (“to see if,” in English), callers display their orientations to the uncertainty of receiving the assistance. Callers tend to use this phrase when reporting non-life-threatening incidents, such as when requesting an ambulance for an asthmatic patient or requesting a patrol car to check on a loud party at night. Requests for help for incidents of “marginal urgency” tend to be designed using linguistic constructions that already encode the uncertainty regarding receiving the assistance. This practice informs us about the urgency of the incident; thus, it may also be helpful for call-takers when classifying the incident in the incident log.

During the *interrogative series*, the location of the incident, as well as other type of information, is gathered. Place formulation in Costa Rica is commonly seen as chaotic; however, it was found that, in the context of emergency calls and as is the case with any other interactional activity, it is an organized activity. This is because callers tend to provide some sort of geographical formulation along with the reason for calling, followed by landmark formulations. This research informs us about practices used by callers and call-takers when co-constructing the location of the incident, as well as about when a place formulation is institutionally sufficient in the context of 9-1-1 services in Costa Rica.

In the *promise of assistance* phase, call-takers of 9-1-1 services in Costa Rica cannot grant the assistance, as the system simply serves as the link between callers and the responding teams. Instead, call-takers use a combination of components to inform callers that the responding team has received the information and that the team will be in charge of either granting or not granting the assistance. One of these components employed by call-takers is the “*está pendiente*” construction, the meaning of which is ambiguous. On the one hand, it could mean that the caller should “keep an eye out for the assistance,” or, on the other hand, that the response team should “be alert for the incident log.” It was found that this particular component was flagged by call-takers, as it could be hearable as a virtual promise of assistance. This creates false expectations among callers regarding receiving the service and assistance, and it also negatively impacts the institutional image of 9-1-1 services in Costa Rica. The latter was mentioned by 9-1-1 officials during the interviews. Therefore, when call-takers avoid using the “*está*

*pendiente*” construction, callers may not hear a virtual promise of help, and the emergency service thus avoids receiving complaints from callers.

The findings of this dissertation might be used to design training workshops for 9-1-1 Costa Rica in order to address some of the common problems that participants experience during calls to the emergency service. Training materials could also be developed in order to address issues such as: how to ensure the progressivity of the interaction during the opening of the call; how callers might request help and how the design of the request may relate to the urgency of the call; how to navigate place formulations to ensure to collect adequate locational information; and how to promise assistance, keeping in mind the institutional constraints of the Costa Rican emergency service.

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## Appendix A

### Conversation Analytic Transcription Conventions

The dissertation uses the conversation analytic transcription system developed by Jefferson (Jefferson, 1984). All transcript lines are numbered. Participants are identified as call-takers (CT), callers (C), supervisors (SP), dispatch center (DC), and third parties (TP). The following conventions were used throughout this dissertation (for a complete description, see Hepburn and Bolden 2013):

[     ]	Square brackets: overlapping talk
a=a	Equal sign: latching or no hearable silence between turns
(0.5)	Numbers in parentheses: silence measured in seconds
(.)	Period in parentheses: a micropause
.	Period: falling intonation
?	Question mark: strong rising intonation
,	Comma sign: slightly rising intonation
¿	Inverted question mark: rising intonation that is stronger than the comma sign, but not as strong as the question mark sign
<u>aaa</u>	Underlining: emphasis in one particular element of the word

AA	Upper-case letters: high volume or loud talk
°a°	Degree signs: quiet talk
°°a°°	Double degree signs: very quiet talk, whispering
>a<	Greater-than and less-than symbols: rushed talk
<a>	Less-than and greater-than symbols: slow talk
a:	Colon: elongation of a sound
a-	Hyphen: cut-off in the production of a sound
#aa#	Number sign: creaky voice
((a))	Double parentheses: annotations of events
(    )	Single parentheses: uncertain hearing
a/b	Slash: two possible hearings
.hhh	period and "h" letter: aspiration or in-breath
hhh	outbreath

## Appendix B

### Leipzig Glossing Rules

The glossing system used in the interlinear transcription is based on the Leipzig Glossing Rules (Comrie et al., 2015). However, this dissertation does not strictly follow all the conventions. Due to this dissertation's objectives, some modifications have been made and they will be clearly layout out. As mentioned in Chapter three "Methodology and Data", this dissertation uses a three-line transcript: the first line is the object-language (i.e., Costa Rican Spanish), the second line is the meta language (i.e., a gloss with some grammatical information), and the third line is an idiomatic translation into English.

Excerpt 1 (below) shows how this three-line transcript works:

#### ***(1) ECR-172 Driving lesson***

002	CT:	Emergencias nueve uno uno¿	<b>(first line)</b>
		Emergencies nine one one¿	<b>(second line)</b>
		Nine one one emergency¿	<b>(third line)</b>

In what follows I will describe the Leipzig Glossing Rules used in this dissertation.

**Rule 1: Word-by-word alignment.** The object-language (i.e., Costa Rican Spanish) and the metalanguage (i.e., the gloss) are aligned word-by-word. It is a vertical and left-alignment that only applies to the first and second lines of the transcript.

#### ***(2) ECR-215 Crash in the Escazú park***

025	CT:	Okey   cuál   es   su   nombre   disculpe¿	
		Okay   which   is   your   name   pardon.3SG	
		Okay what is your name please¿	

**Rule 2: Word-by-word correspondence.** According to the Leipzig Glossing Rules, the gloss is a morpheme-by-morpheme correspondence between the object-language and the metalanguage. However, due to the objectives of this dissertation, this rule has been modified and morphemes have not been marked in Spanish. In this dissertation, the correspondence between Spanish and the metalanguage is a word-by-word glossing.

**(3) ECR-172 Driving lesson**

037 C: Solo ahí en la plaza.  
 Only there in the plaza  
*Just there in the plaza.*

**Rule 3: Grammatical category labels.** The gloss will mark some relevant grammatical categories following the standard abbreviations. The abbreviations used in this dissertation are:

1	first person
2	second person
3	third person
COND	conditional
DIM	diminutive
FUT	future
INF	infinitive
IMP	imperative
IND	indicative (default mode, therefore, not marked in the gloss)
PL	plural

SUBJV       subjunctive

SG           singular

**(4) ECR-178 Fire in a slum**

019 CT: Permítame            señor.  
         Allow.IMP.2SG-me sir  
         *Hold on sir.*