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### Closings in Russian Phone-in Programmes: a Comparison with Ordinary Telephone Conversations

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The paper investigates ways of closing a sequence and an entire interaction in Russian. It analyses linguistic forms used for this purpose and their functions in a radio phone-in programme and compares them with those found in Russian ordinary telephone conversations. This study is based on the methodology of conversation analysis. Firstly, it discusses a broad range of closings in the Russian phone-in and everyday telephone interactions. Thereafter, it focuses on a specific linguistic form 'ladna'. The analysis shows that although radio phone-in programmes share some characteristics with ordinary talk, differences exist in the organization of the conversation, linguistic forms deployed and functions they perform. Furthermore, the Russian form 'ladna' turns out to be language-specific with regard to its functions. Consequently, the research confirms the existence of language peculiarities in sequence organization.

Keywords: conversation analysis in Russian, closings in Russian, phone-ins, Russian telephone conversations, ladna.

#### Introduction

Conversations do not simply end but are brought to a close which means that they should be properly initiated by carrying out work at various points in the conversation. Closings occur within the local organization of utterances, in other words, they should fit the speaker's prior utterance. The problem of closings of ordinary conversation was discussed in the famous work by Schegloff and Sacks "Opening up Closings" (1973). Later, Schegloff discussed sequence closing thirds as a type of post-expansion in his primer in conversation analysis "Sequence Organization in Interaction" (2007).

A few papers went a step further by investigating closings in institutional talk. In particular, Martinez (2003) focused on the closing process in televised talk shows and made a comparison with news interview closings discussed by Clayman (1989). In his article Robinson (2001) described the activity of closing physician-patient encounters. Pavlidou's comparative research (1997) examined how closings are managed in Greek and German.

Some features of the closing process in institutional contexts were found to be similar to ordinary conversations, namely closing was proved to be an integral part of the organization

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ofthe entire communicative encounter. Nevertheless, there are also differences which are based on contingencies of the institutionalized context and genre-specific peculiarities within broadcast talk. One of these differences relates to the termination of the interaction. Whereas closing a conversation is an interactional process in everyday talk, broadcast talk is characterized by the unilateral termination of the call by the host (Clayman 1989, Martinez 2003). It is consequently expected that possible pre-closings will mainly occur in ordinary conversations as they offer the floor to the co-interactant and require that he or she either aligns or disaligns with the proposed closing.

Following the previous research, the current study is attempting to investigate closings in one more type of institutional talk with the focus on language-specific characteristics. Using data from a Russian radio talk show and Russian ordinary telephone conversations the aim of the present research is to find out what linguistic forms are used in the closing process and what functions they perform. This aim will be achieved by analysing linguistic forms found in a Russian phone-in programme and comparing them with those found in everyday telephone interactions.

#### Data and methodology

For the present study 30 episodes of the talk radio programme "Poekhali?" which can be translated as 'Shall we go?' from the Russian radio station "The Echo of Moscow" were studied. Conversations between the host and callers include what Hutchby (1996a) calls 'confrontation talk' as the host makes opinionated assertions and can criticize callers' comments if they are not in line with hers. Closings in the Russian radio phone-

in programme are compared with closings in ordinary telephone conversations. The database used for this comparison consists of 30 audio-recorded telephone conversations between native Russian speakers of different ages.

The data were analyzed using the methods of conversation analysis (Clayman 2010; Heritage and Clayman 2010; Hutchby 1996a; Schegloff 2007). According to this methodology, instances of closings in the radio phone-in programme and recorded telephone conversations were collected and transcribed using the conversation-analytic transcript notational conventions developed by Gail Jefferson (Schegloff 2007). Further, similarities and differences between closings in radio talk shows and everyday telephone interactions were investigated. The cases demonstrated in the paper are representative of the collected data. English translation is presented alongside the original Russian data.

## Closings in a Russian radio phone-in programme

The first common type of closing found in the radio programme is *spasiba* (*vam*) 'thank you' which is characteristic of the interaction-based genres of broadcast talk. Usually it occurs at the end of the conversation when the host thanks the caller for giving his or her opinion or sharing his or her experience. In Extract (1) the caller's failed attempt to extend the sequence after the host has said *spasiba* proves its function of closing the call. The host states that such professionals as doctors, teachers of Russian or career counsellors might be employed in migrant camps (lines 1-3) but the caller responds that all migrants he has been working with can speak Russian (lines 4-6).

(1) Migrant camps

1 Host: Tam xatja by budit vrach naprimer. ili budit [FPP] there though PRT will be doctor for example or will be

'There'll be a doctor for example or'

2 uchitel' ruskava jazyka. ili budit chelavek katoryj

teacher Russian language or will be person who

'a Russian teacher or a person who'

3 pamozhyt s trudaustroistvam. m?

will help with employment

'will help with employment.'

4 Caller: (Slushajte) skol'ka ljudej cheres mai ruki prashlo, [SPP]

listen how many people through my hands went

'Listen, I have been working with many people'

5 ni adin iz nix (.) ne skazal shto on ne panimajet

not one of them not said that he not understands

'none of them has said that he or she does not understand'

6 ruskava jazyka. ja inagda s ruskimi razgavarivaju,

Russian language I sometimes with Russians talk

'Russian. I sometimes talk to Russians,'

7 ani ne umejut razgavarivat' paruski.

they not can speak Russian

'they can't speak Russian well.'

8 Host: → Georgij, ja vas panjala, spasiba. vy reska protif=

Georgiy I you understood thanks you sharply against

 $\hbox{`Georgiy, I understood you. Thank you. You are strongly}\\$ 

against.'

9 Caller: =Padazhdite [a ftaroj ftaroj

Hold on PRT second second

'Hold on, and the second, second'

10 Host: →[Net net vsë vsë

No no all all

'No, no, that's all, that's all.'

11 spasiba Georgij

thanks Georgiy

'Thank you, Georgiy.'

my s vami davol'na dolga uzhe pagavarili

we with you enough long already talked

'We have already talked for a long time with you.'

ja vas panjala. panjala shto vy protif vot

I you understood understood that you against PRT

'I understood you. I understood that you are against'

14 takix lagerej. panjatna. kstati vot

such camps understand by the way PRT

'these camps. I see. By the way,'

s Georgiem saglasen Vladimir Shapashnikaf. eta u nas with Georgiy agrees Vladimir Shaposhnikov this at us 'Vladimir Shaposhnikov agrees with Georgiy. This is' adin iz rukavaditelej sajuza prafsajuzaf Rasii, one of leaders union labour union Russia 'one of the leaders of labour union association in Russia.'

At line 8, the host starts with the address term *Georgij* and states that she understood the caller. The use of the address term in the beginning of the host's turn (line 8) seems to perform a specific function as the radio talk show framework makes "the direction of address transparent and knowable in advance" (Clayman 2010: 161). Clayman states that address terms can be employed "in the service of a variety of other actions beyond addressing per se" (Clayman 2010: 179). For instance, in broadcast interviews address terms are used by interviewees in disalignments from prior talk, including topic shifts, nonconforming responses, and disagreements or in managing expressive actions.

Although Clayman (2010) analysed the use of address terms by interviewees, it seems that hosts in radio phone-in programmes employ them to perform similar functions. In Extract (1) the host starts her turn with the address term *Georgij* (line 8) to disalign with the current state of affairs, particularly instead of continuing the interaction, she interrupts the caller and attempts to close down the call (line 8) as the caller's response was too long (lines 4-7). She adds the linguistic form *spasiba* and summarises his opinion.

At line 9, the caller attempts to extend the sequence further, which is interrupted by the host's categorical *net net* 'no no', *vsë vsë* 'that's all, that's all' and repeat of *spasiba* (lines 10-11). The host may have undertaken this more aggressive closing move because his first attempt to terminate the interaction failed. *Net net* and *vsë vsë* deserve special attention as they present the so-called multiple sayings (Stivers 2004).

Each of them is repeated two times under a single intonation contour before they both come to period intonation. The host employs multiple sayings as she has already indicated her understanding of the caller's stance (line 8) and intends to close down the entire interaction. However, the caller persists in an effort to provide further clarification of his standpoint (line 9). Therefore, the multiple sayings display to the caller that the elaboration was unnecessary and the entire course of action should be halted. In other words, they address a larger course of action rather than only the just prior turn at line 9.

Furthermore, the multiple sayings may express that the host is annoyed with the caller's persistence to provide a detailed justification of his view after the host thanked him and summarised his opinion at line 8. The unwarranted perseverance of the caller's course of action is emphasised by the overlap between the caller's and the host's turns at lines 9-10. Further evidence for this is seen at lines 12-14 where the host explains that they had a long conversation and she understood the caller's stance. At lines 15-16, the host terminates the call by inviting the audience to listen to the expert's opinion.

The second way to close a sequence observed in the radio phone-in programme is to mark receipt of information. The most common turn type is panjatna / panjala 'I see' which is used to claim information receipt but does not mark the host's attitude to what has been said. The third expression that is used by the host to close a sequence is xarasho which can be translated as 'okay' or 'good'. It functions in a similar manner to 'okay' in

English, in that it displays acceptance of a second pair part and does not provide an assessment of what has been said. One more way of closing a sequence is an explicit expression of agreement with the caller. The most common formulations used by the host are <code>saglasna/saglashus</code> 'I agree', <code>da</code> 'yes', <code>pravda</code> or <code>verna</code> 'true' and words like <code>prekrasna</code> or <code>zdorava</code> 'great'.

The analysis of closings in a Russian radio phone-in programme revealed that linguistic forms spasiba 'thank you', panjatna/panjala 'I see', xarasho 'okay' or 'good' are deployed to mark the caller's second pair part as adequate and consequently close a sequence. Forms like saglasna/saglashus' 'I agree', da 'yes', pravda or verna 'true', prekrasna or zdorava 'great' are also used as sequence closures but express the host's agreement with the caller's standpoint. The words spasiba and xarasho were found to perform multiple functions by closing a sequence and an entire conversation.

## Closings in Russian ordinary telephone conversations

The linguistic form *spasiba* 'thank you' is not used in ordinary conversations as informal talk does not presuppose thanking your co-interactant

for the interaction. Some forms are replaced with synonymous expressions which are marked by the informal register. Interlocutors in ordinary phone interactions employ some linguistic forms which are not found in phone-ins, for example the long *a* which Russian speakers use to show their understanding in casual interactions. In Extract (2), where Galina and Nadezhda are talking about their plans for tomorrow, Galina uses the long *a* in third position to accept her interlocutor's response and close a sequence. At line 1, Galina starts by asking her co-interactant if she will be at home tomorrow morning.

Nadezhda says that she is leaving early tomorrow (line 2) which answers Galina's question and thus the second pair part is considered to be adequate. At line 4, Galina marks the adequacy of the response by the long *a* which performs the function of closing the sequence. Further talk confirms that the section about plans for tomorrow morning is closed because Nadezhda opens a new sequence by informing her interlocutor that she has been to the tax office today (line 5).

The analysis of closings in ordinary telephone conversations revealed both similarities and differences in linguistic forms used in ordinary conversations and radio phone-in programmes.

#### (2) Plans for tomorrow

3

1 Galina: Ty zavtra utram budish doma? [FPP]

you tomorrow morning will be home
'Will you be at home tomorrow morning?'

2 Nadezhda: Zavtra tozhe ujdu rana zavtra zhe [SPP]

 $tomorrow \ also \ \ go \ \ early \ tomorrow \ PRT$ 

'Tomorrow I am also leaving early. Tomorrow'

etat ministr (.) zamministra zhe priezhaet= this minister vice-minister PRT comes

'The minister, vice-minister is coming.'

4 Galina: → =A::: [SCT]

5 Nadezhda: Sevodnja xadila v nalogavuju,

today went to tax office

'Today I have been to the tax office.'

## Ladna as a language-specific closing in Russian phone-ins

The linguistic form *ladna* which was found in the analysed episodes seems to have no counterpart in English. In radio phone-in programmes *ladna* can be interpreted as 'good' or 'let it be, we cannot do anything' (Dictionary of the Russian Language 2009). From the perspective of conversation analysis *ladna* with the former meaning indicates that the speaker of a first pair part claims acceptance of a second pair part and closes the sequence, the use is similar to the English 'okay'. However, in the latter

meaning the word implies that the sequence is not complete due to the inadequacy of a second pair part but nevertheless the host takes a stance that the interlocutors are done.

In Extract (3), where the topic of the programme is emigration from Russia, the host and the caller are discussing where the caller's friends are going to migrate. In this extract the host employs the linguistic form *ladna* to accept the caller's response and close a sequence. The host begins the extract by asking the caller where her friends are planning to move and thus expecting to hear names of countries.

#### (3) Emigration from Russia

1 Host: A kuda exat' sabirajutsa?

PRT where go be going

'Where are they going?'

2 Caller: Nu: mmm dumaju paka shto v

PRT think for the time being that in

'Well, I think they are moving to'

3 evrapejskuju chast', vobschem gde ta Balgarija,

European part in general where PRT Bulgaria

'the European part, somewhere in Bulgaria'

4 ili (.) Chernagorija, vot [tak (gde ta)

or Montenegro PRT so where PRT

'or Montenegro'

5 Host: [Nu nedaliko.

PRT not far

'Well, not far,'

6 [skazhim tak

say so

'so to speak.'

7 Caller: [Da nedaliko. ja dumaju

yes not far I think

'No, not far, I think'

8 Host:  $\rightarrow$  Ladna Nadezhda spasiba vam bal'shoje,

okay Nadezhda thank you big

'Okay, Nadezhda, thank you very much.'

9 telifon prjamova efira tri shest' tri

telehone direct air three six three

'The telephone number of the programme is three six three'

10 tri shest' pjat' devjat'. no: prezhde chem perexadit', three six five nine but before than cross 'three six five nine. But before turning' 11 k vashym zvankam davajte (.) to your calls let's 'to your calls let's' 12 eschë adnu nashu gostju paslushaem:, eta Nina Astanina. else one our guest listen this Nina Ostanina 'listen to one more guest, this is Nina Ostanina,' 13 diputat Gosdumy. deputy State Duma 'deputy of the State Duma.'

Following the caller's answer that her friends are going to Bulgaria or Montenegro (lines 2-4), the host's turn in third position takes the form of an assessment: *Nu nedaliko* 'Well, not far' (line 5). The caller extends the sequence by saying *da* and repeating what the host has said (line 7). The caller's response that her friends are going to Bulgaria or Montenegro which are not far away from Russia provides sufficient information in answer to the question regarding the place where her friends are planning to migrate. Having received this response, the host marks its adequacy with the linguistic form *ladna* and thanks the caller (line 8). Thereafter, she repeats the telephone

number of the programme (lines 9-10) and introduces a new guest (lines 11-13). In this extract *ladna* performs multiple functions in sequential organzation: on the one hand, the host closes the sequence by accepting the caller's answer as sufficient; on the other hand, she closes down the entire call and interaction between herself and the caller.

Whereas in Extract (3) *ladna* was used to mark the adequacy of the caller's response, Extract (4) from the same episode of the programme features a different situation when the answer does not come up to the host's expectations. The extract begins with a question about the caller's work experience in the country (lines 1-2).

#### (4) Emigration from Russia

1 Host: Rabotat' ta ni mishajut? Rashit. [FPP]
to work PRT not interfere Rashid

'Do they hinder you from your work, Rashid?'

2 vsë v parjadke s etim everything in order with this 'Is everything alright with this?'

3 Caller: Nu absaljutna net esli ty rabotaesh, [SPP]

PRT absolutely no if you work 'Well, absolutely not. If you work,'

4 [()

5Host: [Ex pavizlo vam. xarasho.

PRT had luck you good

'Well, you are lucky. Good.'

- 6 → nu ladna Rashit. xarasho. rady my za vas

  PRT okay Rashid good glad we for you

  'Well, okay, Rashid. Good. Good for you.'
- 7 v o:bschem ne dumaete vy nikuda uezhat' in general not think you nowhere go away 'In general, you are not thinking of immigration.'
- 8 nu i slava bogu. davajte telifon
  PRT and glory god let's telephone
  'Well, thank goodness! The telephone number'
- 9 prjamova efira tri shest' tri tri shest' pjat' devjat' direct air three six three three six five nine 'of the programme is three six three three six five nine.'
- 10 a vy zadumyvalis', na:t vaprosam

  PRT you were thinking above question

  'And have you thought about the question'
- uezhat' ne uezhat'? Exa Maskvy zdrastvujte.

  go away not go away Echo Moscow hello

  'whether to immigrate or not? "The Echo of Moscow", hello!

At line 3, the caller says that everything is all right and attempts to continue his response by starting the conditional clause: *Esli ty rabotaesh* 'If you work'. However, this is interrupted by the host's comment: *Ex pavizlo vam* 'Well, you are lucky' (line 5). The host's turn indicates that she did not expect this answer to her question and she views the caller's positive experience as an exception. It is interesting that having received a response which is contrary to her expectations, the host intends to terminate the call. She uses an upbeat assessment *xarasho* 'good' (line 5) and the expression *nu ladna* (line 6) to terminate the conversation.

The host in the phone-in uses the combination *nu ladna* to override any further extension on the caller's part which results from contingencies of the radio show format where the host has to bear in mind timing and the requirement to talk to a number of callers. Therefore, the caller's attempt to elaborate on his response comes into

conflict with the programme's time constraints and the host has to initiate her closing turn in an interruptive manner.

The analysis revealed that along with the function to close a sequence by accepting the cointeractant's response, the polysemic word *ladna* is also used as an indicator of the inadequacy of the second pair part and leads to termination of the call.

#### Ladna as a closing in Russian ordinary telephone conversations

Ordinary talk is marked by the frequent use of *ladna* which performs various functions compared to the more common function of closing down the interaction in phone-ins. For instance, *ladna* in telephone conversations is more often deployed as a sequence closing third. In contrast to radio phone-in programmes, *ladna* can function in a similar manner to 'okay' in English as a possible

(5) Money

1 Nastya: Ja vot tebe atdam den'gi shtoby (ty ne) [FPP]

I you will return money in order to you not 'I will return the money to you so that you'

2 Anya: Tak ty uspakojsja. uspakojsja. = [SPP]

So you calm down calm down

'Stop talking about this.'

3 Nastya: → =Ladna.

'Okay.'

4 (1.0)

5

 $6 \rightarrow$  Nu ladna ( )

PRT okay 'Well, okay.'

7 Anya: Uspakojsya Nastja. axa. nu davaj. davaj.

Calm down Nastya yes PRT let's let's

'Stop talking about this, Nastya. Well, yes, bye bye.'

8 Nastya: Paka.

'Bye.'

pre-closing. In Extract (5) Nastya is talking to her friend Anya about the money she owes her. At line 1, Nastya begins by saying that she is going to return money to her friend. After having received Anya's response to her first pair part, Nastya uses the linguistic form *ladna* to give her co-interactant an opportunity to reopen topic talk before closing down the conversation.

In response to Anya's statement that she should stop talking about the money (line 2), Nastya employs the linguistic form *ladna* (line 3) and makes a long pause (line 4). Therefore, *ladna* indicates that the speaker of the first pair part has nothing else to say and offers the floor to her co-interactant to introduce a new topic. The pre-closing function of *ladna* is emphasised by the long pause Nastya makes waiting for her interlocutor's contribution. After having received no response from Anya, at line 5 Nastya repeats her warrant for closing the conversation by saying *nu ladna*. She

invites her co-interactant once again to reopen topic talk. Finally, at line 6 Anya asks her friend one more time to stop talking about the money and accepts her co-interactant's preclosing move with *axa* 'yes' which is followed by termination of the conversation. Nastya says goodbye (line 7) and the interactants hang up the phone.

The linguistic form *ladna* does not only initiate pre-closing of a conversation but can also accept it. In Extract (6) Misha is asking Nastya about her plans for the day (line 1). After Misha has closed the sequence and established a warrant to terminate the conversation, Nastya accepts his pre-closing by saying the same linguistic form *ladna*.

At lines 2-3, Nastya tells Misha that she is going to see the celebration of the university's anniversary. This response is sufficient for Misha's question about Nastya's plans and he accepts it as adequate by saying the long *a*::: (line 4) which is common in ordinary conversations.

[FPP]

[SPP]

(6) Today's plans

1 Misha: Shto ty dumaesh delat' sivodnya?

what you think do today

'What are you going to do today?'

2 Nastya: Ja schas vot pajdu u nas tam

I now PRT will go at us there

'I'm going to'

3 jubilej univera.

anniversary university

'the anniversary of the university.'

4 Misha: A::: (.) Nu ladna.

PRT okay

'Well, okay.'

5 Nastya: →Nu ladna. nu davaj.=

PRT okay well let's

'Well, okay, bye.'

6 Misha: =Nu ladna. axa. nu davaj vsivo. vsë tagda.

PRT okay yes well let's all all then

'Well, okay, well, bye.'

As this is followed by the linguistic form *nu ladna* and termination of the call, the long *a* indicates that Misha closed the sequence. After Misha's *nu ladna* (line 4) Nastya repeats the same expression (line 5). Thereafter, Nastya and Misha say their goodbyes (lines 5-6) and the call is terminated.

The analysis demonstrated that the linguistic form *ladna* is deployed in ordinary conversations to close a sequence by marking the interlocutor's response as adequate. In contrast to radio phone-in programmes *ladna* in everyday talk is not used to terminate an entire interaction but it can be employed to establish a warrant to close it. Furthermore, this linguistic form can accept a pre-closing move made in the previous turn.

#### Conclusion

The present research on closings in Russian confirmed that phone-in programmes present

a distinctive instance of institutional talk and revealed language-specific characteristics of the tokens used in talk radio shows and ordinary telephone conversations. Although phoneins have some features of ordinary telephone conversatons, they also differ from them in terms of organization of the talk, employed linguistic forms and their functions. Therefore, further research needs to be done to clarify the specificity of talk radio genre and to explore language peculiarities in sequence organization.

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# Завершение речевых секвенций в русскоязычных ток-шоу на радио: сравнение с повседневными телефонными разговорами

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В статье исследуются способы завершения отдельных речевых секвенций и всего разговора на русском языке. Анализируются языковые формы, используемые для этой цели, и их функции в ток-шоу на радио. Эти формы сравниваются с вариантами, которые применяются в обычных телефонных разговорах на русском языке. Исследование основано на методологии конверсационного анализа. В статье обсуждается ряд способов, используемых для завершения секвенций и разговора в ток-шоу и в повседневных речевых взаимодействиях на русском языке. В исследовании также анализируется языковая форма «ладно». Анализ показывает, что, несмотря на то что жанр ток-шоу имеет некоторые характеристики бытового общения, существуют и различия в организации разговора, используемых языковых формах и их функциях. Кроме того, русская форма «ладно» и ее функции отражают специфику языка. Следовательно, исследование подтверждает существование языковых особенностей в организации секвенций.

Ключевые слова: конверсационный анализ русского языка, окончание секвенций на русском языке, ток-шоу на радио, телефонные разговоры на русском языке, ладно.