

SERVICE PHONE CALL OPENINGS IN ITALIAN AS A SECOND LANGUAGE TEXTBOOKS

*Cecilia Varcasia*¹

1. INTRODUCTION

The present paper calls back Jean Wong's (2002) study on English as a second language (ELS) textbooks and investigates how textbooks for learners of Italian offer samples of service telephone conversations, especially in their opening sequences, in terms of what data they use and how they present it to the learner. Textbooks are also compared to the existing conversational studies which focus on native speakers' routines and practices (Pallotti, Varcasia, 2008). As Márquez-Reiter and Luke (2010: 103) state, «Telephone calls are arguably the second most important site of speech interaction after face-to-face conversation». It is indeed true that since the telephone has come into everyone's house, and with mobile phones in everyone's bag or pocket, people spend at least as much time on the phone as they spend on face-to-face conversations. Moreover, cross-cultural studies on this practice (Luke, Pavlidou, 2002; Thüne, Leonardi, 2003; Varcasia, 2003, 2006; Bowles, 2006; Márquez-Reiter, 2006; Pallotti, Varcasia, 2008; Márquez-Reiter, Luke, 2010, among others) highlighted how even the opening of a telephone conversation displays culture and language specific features, which are not so intuitive to transfer from one language to another. It is therefore for its being a very frequent interactional practice in people's lives and for the awareness raised by the conversational studies mentioned above that teaching and learning how to make and open a phone call in the foreign language has gained importance as dealing with other conversational practices, such as invitations and their acceptance or decline may have in a language course.

Back in 2002, Wong's study reported a mismatch between textbooks and naturally occurring language has having implications for teachers and writers of teaching material, especially if, as it is nowadays common ground for developing all teaching material, these materials are «marketed as offering authentic, natural language, or language which is true to life» (Wong, 2002: 37). The textbooks analysed here unfortunately also present such a mismatch. Details of the divergence between textbooks of Italian and naturally occurring speech will be discussed in detail in the following sections.

2. THE OPENING SEQUENCE IN TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

Telephone call openings have been widely researched both cross-culturally and interculturally. Interest in this small interactional practice lies in the relative rigidity and routine that it is made of, and in the use of the vocal channel only for communication,

¹ Free University of Bolzano-Bozen.

since traditionally participants have no access to gestures and facial expression for the interpretation of the message. The first studies on telephone conversation date back to 1967-1968 with the studies of Sacks and Schegloff (1968) study of openings in the US. This and the initial studies from a conversation analytic perspective looked especially at telephone talk for its offering interaction that is representative of any kind of naturally occurring speaking. Sacks' pioneering work on suicide prevention centers was based on telephone talk, since for him «[t]he technology of the telephone [...] served as a prism through which were refracted the practices of ordinary talk-in-interaction» (Schegloff, 2002: 321).

Seminal studies on the opening sequence (Schegloff, 1968, 1979, 1986; Hopper, 1992) identified the importance of sequence organization in these events, and four characteristic moves for the opening of a telephone call between friends: summons-answer; identification-recognition; greetings; initial enquiries (Schegloff, 1986: 116). This basic 'template' (Hopper, 1992) with the four core opening moves has then been used for describing telephone call openings in a number of studies in different languages (for a review Luke, Pavlidou, 2002; Thune, Leonardi, 2003; Márquez-Reiter, Luke, 2010). Developments of such model have been proposed, and especially for service telephone calls a fifth move has been proposed, i.e. getting down to business (Bercelli, Pallotti, 2002; Bowles, Pallotti, 2004), «to indicate those actions – typically performed by the caller, but at times co-constructed by the receiver as well – in which the reason for call is stated and oriented to» (Pallotti, Varcasia, 2008: 2). The following example (1) is representative of the opening moves of a service telephone call in Italian.

Example 1

<p>1 C ((squillo)) 2 CT >cnabuongiorno?< 3 C e-buongiorno io sono una studente di lingue di bologna (0.2) volevo delle informazioni >diciamo< su borse di studio: se il cna diciamo per laureati: (0.5) o [laurea- 4 CT [un attimo solo</p>	<p><i>Summons-Answer</i> <i>Identification</i> <i>Greetings</i> <i>Getting down to business</i></p>
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AC 17 *BO ufficio (C: Caller; CT: Call taker)

The conversation starts with the Caller's (C onwards) dialing the number and the phone ringing, that is the first part of the adjacency pair constituting the first move, the summons. The second pair part, the answer here comes with the Call Taker's (CT onwards) answering the phone and offering her/his identity with the name of the place that has been called and the CT greeting the interlocutor. In the C turn, line 3, we find the reciprocation of greetings, and the introduction of the reason for call, i.e. the getting down to the business. Openings in service encounters have been described as differing from informal telephone calls for their production of the opening moves in the first few turns, i.e. in a relatively compact format. The way in which the different moves are combined to build a turn of talk may vary from one language to the other and reflection upon the cross-cultural differences in class is one tasks teachers have in class.

The opening of a telephone conversation is not to be viewed as something which just happens or as merely the segment of the talk which is preliminary to an interaction, for indeed what the first topic of a telephone conversation

is and how it is arrived at are contingent upon, i.e. built from, earlier sequences or actions that occur in the opening segment. It takes mutual effort and alignment on the part of the interlocutors to get through the opening of an interaction and reach the place in the talk in which a first topic is proffered or “anchored” (Schegloff, 1967). If there is one overall job that openings “do” in telephone conversation, it is to work towards first topic position, the place in which topic talk officially begins (Wong, 2002: 39).

This is why it is extremely important that textbook developers and writers take into consideration the mentioned aspects when preparing dialogues for their manuals.

Telephone calls have also been used in language acquisition research. Yagi (2007) investigates 30 telephone calls in English between native speakers (the Call Taker or receiver) and three non-native speakers, i.e. a Japanese learner of English as a second language. He looked at these data from the perspective of situated learning with the aim to see how learners participate in this situated practice, the phone call, and how they change through repeated participation. Among his findings Yagi could show that ESL learners benefited of their repeated practice of telephone calls, by improving in their competence and they exhibited to learn from such a repeated practice with no explicit feedback of either the researcher or the instructor (Yagi, 2007: 33).

Thörle (2016) analysed a corpus of telephone conversations made between learners and native speakers of French, with a precise focus on turn openings and the use of discourse markers in this turn position, which are considered as critical moments where the learner has to take up the turn in order to provide her/his contribution to the conversation by maintaining the channel of communication open. Criticality is given by the fact that, as observed earlier, conversation on the phone does not offer the possibility to learners/speakers to rely on non-verbal behavior such as gesture, gaze or posture. «The analysis has shown that learners use different verbal and non-verbal resources to display the uptake of the prior turn, to demonstrate their comprehension of and their agreement with what has been said, and to design their own turn as a coherent contribution to the ongoing conversation» (Thörle, 2016: 138). Learners in Thörle’s study seemed to rely on the interlocutor’s ability to infer the meaning of the elements used from the context.

These studies show another aspect of the importance of the production of good textbook materials, since this is one of the tools learners have at their disposal to learn the social practices they will be involved in their everyday lives and start practicing them. In the next pages the opening of service telephone calls will be investigated in order to see how textbook materials in the last decade treated this interactional practice.

3. DATA AND METHODOLOGY

Data analysed are telephone call excerpts presented in textbooks for teaching Italian to adult learners published between 2005 and 2018. Textbooks taken into consideration are 29 and the calls observed for the analysis presented in this paper are only service ones, which come from 13 of those textbooks and account for 48 service telephone dialogues altogether. Table 1 in the appendix shows the list of textbooks taken into consideration that present in their materials examples of service telephone calls and how many phone calls of this kind they have. The table contains indication about the number of phone calls proposed by each textbook and indication of the competence level each

one aims at. The list of textbooks observed is of course much larger, but a restriction has been done with respect to date of publication and with respect to which textbooks presented service phone calls next to informal ones.

All excerpts have been analysed in terms of the presence of the opening moves typical of service telephone encounters, i.e. as showed in the example 1 above: summons-answer and the use of “pronto” as channel opener, identification, greetings, availability and getting down to business. At a second stage, how the different moves were combined together in the first turns of both Caller and Call Taker were also observed. The relative frequency of the presence of the different moves and of the different turn formats were also calculated. Results are also compared to those found in a corpus of 159 service phone calls in naturally occurring speaking between native speakers of Italian (cfr. Pallotti, Varcasia, 2008, their analytic tables are reported in the appendix).

4. CONVERSATIONAL MOVES IN THE OPENINGS

Following conversational studies on telephone openings the first turns of both Call Taker (CT) and Caller (C) have been observed. Analysis will look first at the production of moves typical of the opening sequence in service telephone calls in Italian (cfr. Bercelli, Pallotti, 2002; Pallotti, Varcasia, 2008) in the extracts of phone conversation proposed in the textbooks and their relative frequency. Table 1 presents an overview of the initial single moves occurred in the first turn of both participants to the interaction, i.e. the presence of a channel opener, the Italian “pronto”, self-identification of CT and that of the C, greetings exchange, for what concerns the CT, her/his showing availability with the “how may I help” move, and for what pertains the C instead, her/his getting down to the business of the call already in the first turn, and lastly her/his stopping the conversational flow to make sure to have reached the correct recipient.

Table 1. *Opening moves in textbooks*

Opening moves (N=48)	Call Taker (CT)	Caller (C)
“Pronto”	14,6%	33,3%
Self-identification	56,3%	45,8%
Greetings	45,8%	58,3%
How may I help	10,4%	-
Getting down to business	-	72,1%
Request for CT ID	-	14,6%
Missing CT 1 st turn	40%	-

Being service phone calls, both CT and C of the excerpts presented in the textbooks tend to use with lower frequency the Italian “pronto” which serves to the CT to open the communicative channel and which is commonly used in informal calls by both speakers at the beginning of the phone conversation (Bercelli, Pallotti, 2002) but that was found to be used by Italian CTs too in service encounters (Varcasia, 2003, Pallotti,

Varcasia, 2008). As the table shows, here the “pronto” is used in 14,6% of the excerpts taken into consideration by the CT, and twice the frequency, in 33,3% of the calls by the C. These results show a first interesting fact: the channel opener is not frequently used in textbooks, since there are other moves that can serve to open the channel in this kind of institutional talk, such as greetings and self-identification for instance, among other possible moves. What emerges here if we compare these results to what native speakers do in naturally occurring service encounters in Italy is that CT in real life tend to use this simple move more often than CT in the textbooks do, precisely twice the times, i.e. 30,5% vs. 14,6% (cfr. Pallotti, Varcasia, 2008: 25), whereas Cs use the “pronto” less often if compared to the native speakers (NS), 15% of the times altogether vs. 33,3% in textbooks. These differences in reverse proportions of the use of the “pronto” opening move are a initial sign for paying attention to what to propose to learners in order not to divert their attention to the prototypical and most frequent moves that are used by native speakers of that language in the world outside the textbooks, that is reality.

Moving to self-identification we find that CT in the textbook corpus use this move in 56,3% of the times, and Cs 46,8%. Self-identification of the CT here means most of the times identification through the name of the service being called, and sometimes also accompanied by the personal name of the CT. Only in one case, identification of the CT corresponds to the CT’s first name, as the example below shows:

Example 2

- Buonasera, sono Paolo, come posso aiutarla?
- Buonasera, vorrei il numero di un abbonato di Siena.

(Italiomania, 2009: 104)

The CT’s identification with his first name in this example is quite unusual for the kind of conversation that is being initiated here. This kind of identification, in fact, does not say anything about the service reached by the phone call. None of the participants in the real phone call corpus actually initiated the conversation in such a way. What is relevant here is the CT’s identification of the service called. Nevertheless, apparently the C here does not treat such identification as problematic, and goes on with the conversation smoothly. The only possible interpretation of this conversation really unproblematic is to suppose that before the CT picks up the phone to answer the call a registered message is displayed to the C, but nothing is said to the reader in the textbook.

Compared to NSs, the results found for CT are in line with what happens in real life communication, since in the study by Pallotti, Varcasia (2008: 25) CT identified themselves more frequently in 64,3% of the cases. If CT do not self-identify when answering the phone in real phone calls, C’s replied to such non-identification by asking confirmation about the identity being reached, and the same happens in textbooks. Request for confirmation of the Call Taker’s identity are initiated by Callers in the textbooks in 14,6% of the calls, and 16,3% of the times in real phone calls (Pallotti, Varcasia, 2008: 25). Cs, instead, tended to identify with much less frequency in service phone calls, i.e. 25,5% compared to 46,8% found in the textbooks. This is another important element to be taken into consideration while taking the examples of textbooks into teaching, since in this case what is taught is a fake tendency for NS to identify almost one time out of two in service encounters on the phone.

When it comes to greetings, CT in the textbooks greet 45,8% of the times, almost as frequent as NS in real phone calls do, in 38,2% of the cases. Again, if we look at Cs we

find bigger differences between textbooks and real calls since Cs of textbooks greet in 58,3% of the cases much less than NS in real phone calls, who do it in 90,4% of the cases, that means greetings represent for native speakers an essential move not just when they call family and friends but also when they call to a business.

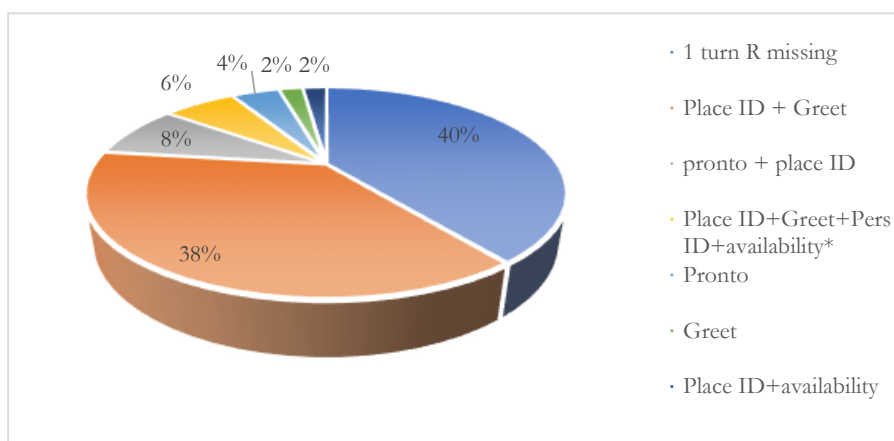
Another move found in the textbook calls by CT is their offer of an availability with the *how can I help* move in 10,4% of the cases. In the study of real phone calls between native speakers this move was found not be used by the Italian small service providers taken into consideration for the Pallotti, Varcasia (2008) study. The use of such move is more common in the English-speaking countries, where even small services are trained in the way to answer the phone, being often part of commercial chains. In this case, we can suppose that given the stronger influence of English and the fact that most call centres now train their employees in opening the call by also using such a move, that books might represent here a mixed strategy.

The last move to be discussed is finally the Cs' getting down to business or starting to present the business and reason for call. Cs in textbooks and real-life service calls do introduce the reason for call in their first turn quite often, respectively in 72,1% and 62,1% of the times (cfr. Pallotti, Varcasia, 2008: 25).

5. CT FIRST TURN COMPOSITION

Single moves in a turn tell us only some information, what a learner needs to also know is how s/he should put the different moves and words one after the other to take the turn and start successfully the conversation with an unknown person in the case of service encounters. The analysis in this and the next paragraph will therefore focus on the first turn composition of both Call Takers and Callers of the phone calls in the textbooks. Chart 1 below summarises the different turn formats found in the first turns of CTs in the textbooks analysed.

Chart 1. *Moves in the first turn of Call Taker – Italian textbooks.*



Textbook CTs seem to have altogether six ways to compose the first turn: more often they do it by presenting the identification of the place being called, followed by greetings, in 38% of the times. Ex. 3 is an example of such turn composition.

Example 3

- Buongiorno, Ristorante il Castello!
- Buongiorno, vorrei prenotare un tavolo.

(Arrivederci, 2011: 62)

Unfortunately a great part of the phone calls presented in the textbooks, 40%, were observed as missing the CT's uptake and first turn in the call, and this is mostly due to the fact that examples proposed in the textbooks do not respect the natural sequential order of speaker alternation and let the C start speaking instead of the CT, as it usually happens in real life. This is what happens in the following examples, ex. 4 and 5.

Example 4

Zheng: Pronto, con chi parlo?

Segretaria: Pronto, ufficio informazioni Telecom, che cosa desidera?

(In piazza, 2012: 145)

Example 5

- Buongiorno, mi chiamo Irene Codori e cerco un appartamento in affitto.
- Che tipo di appartamento cerca?

(Spazio Italia, 2011: 101)

Ex. 4 is very clear in switching the natural sequential order of speakers, in Hopper's words «the answerer must speak first» (Hopper, 1992: 58). This tells us a lot about the kind of materials still being used in redacting textbooks, and it is a weak point for teaching pragmatic routines to learners of Italian, since it is not productive to show learners fake and unreal examples to learn. Ex. 5 instead can be doubtful, in the sense that one could also imagine that something happening before that point is omitted in the book, i.e. the C's phone ring and the CT uptake. None of these moves is actually signaled in all the examples analysed, none of the excerpts present the C's initiation of the call with the display of the phone ringing in the first line of the transcript. In ex. 5, the doubtful interpretation given could be corroborated by the fact that in the second line, i.e. the CT's turn, s/he responds to the C's request by initiating a sequence to tailor the initial general request of the C. Both cases have in any case had to be considered as missing the CT's first turn.

The remaining 22% of the cases out of the just discussed formats with CT first turn missing, or composed by the place identification and greetings, is made of a few different turn formats:

- The use of “pronto”, followed by the place identification, 8% of the times;
- Place identification, followed by greetings, then the personal identification of the CT and finally the offer of availability, 6% of the times;
- Just “pronto”, 4% of the times;
- Just the CT's greetings, 2% of the times;
- The identification of the service called followed by the “how can I help” move the remaining 2% of the times.

Ex. 6 shows the first of those turn formats, i.e. the most frequent among these listed.

Example 6

RISPONDITORE AUTOMATICO - Le nostre linee sono momentaneamente occupate, restate in attesa per non perdere il turno

- Pronto, Studio Moretti.
- Buonasera, mi passa il Dottor Moretti per favore.

(Nuovo Espresso 3, p. 49)

This example is a virtuous one, since although no mention is done about the C's phone ring, transcription and audio sample start with the recorded voice before the CT's holding of the phone. When he comes to answer the call, the CT here does it through the "pronto" and then identifying the place called.

Table 2 below shows the frequency of different production of the formats of CT's first turns in the textbook corpus compared to that found in the really occurred telephone calls analysed in Pallotti, Varcasia (2008). The table shows a first big difference between the textbooks and real phone calls in the Other section where the 40% of textbook calls that do not present the first turn of the CT, influencing therefore on the one hand the overall analysis and providing the reader/learner of those extracts with a partial and incomplete view of what really occurs in a service encounter on the phone.

Table 2. *Call Taker's first turn composition: textbook vs real phone calls*

Format	CT first turn composition	Textbooks N=48	Real phone calls N=159
1	Channel opener "pronto"	4.0%	30.5%
2	"Pronto" + place id	8.0%	11.5%
3	Place id	-	14.6%
4	Place id + greet	38.0%	28.0%
5	Greet + place id	-	1.2%
6	Place id + greet + R id	6.0%	9.0%
7	Other (missing in textbooks) or doubtful	40.0%	5.2%
8	Place id + availability	2.0%	-
9	Greet	2.0%	-

Overall, CTs in textbooks and real calls use both seven turn formats in their first turns, with some differences. Whereas native speakers reach 60% of the cases with two main formats, i.e. the use of the channel opener, 30.5% (n. 1) and the format with the identification of the place called followed by greetings, 28% (n. 4), extracts in textbooks reach almost 80% partially with the format n. 4 in 38% of the cases, and another 40% is represented in these calls by the format n.7, that is we are unable to say what happened in these conversations because textbooks omitted the CT's first turn.

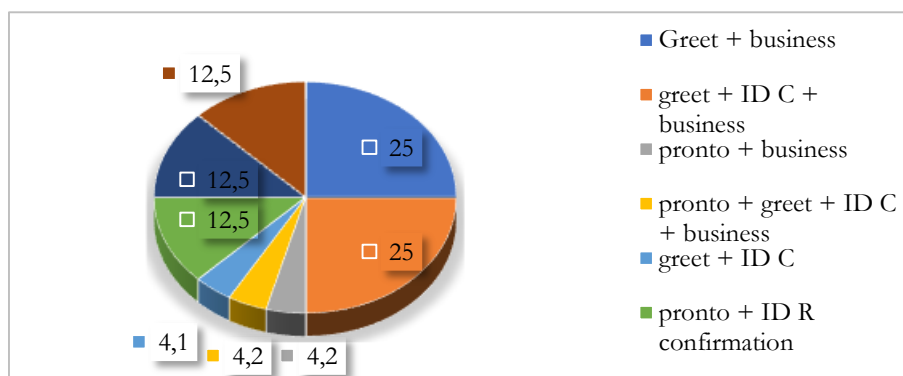
The differences have to do with opening the conversation just with an identification of the place being called, that native speakers used in 14.6% whereas textbook CT never

use it as a single move in a turn but they produce it always together with another move: followed by greetings in 38% of the cases, 10% more than CT in real phone calls do (28%), or prefaced by the “pronto” (8%), or followed by the offer of availability (2%). Providing the identification of the place is nevertheless the outstanding move to do if you are a CT while you pick up the phone and the observation of the native speakers’ corpus here tells us that native speakers provide this move on its own or in combination with other moves with some variability. The format place identification plus greetings stands out as being a central combination of moves that textbook rightly report as we have seen. But the identification of the place is used also as a single move in the turn of talk (format n.3) in 14.6% of the cases, accompanied by the CT’s identification (format n. 6) in 9% of the cases, of prefaced by the channel opener “pronto” (format n. 2) in 11.5% of the cases, or by greeting before providing the name of the place being called (format n. 5) in 1.2% of the cases. Overall then, textbooks, despite the discussed amount of calls with missing first turns of the CT, seem to show here the prototypical combinations of moves in a turn of talk.

6. C FIRST TURN COMPOSITION

Callers in the textbook corpus display all together eight ways to organise their first turns of talk in the service phone calls. Chart 2 summarises the combination of moves in the Cs’ first turn in the textbooks analysed.

Chart 2. *Moves in the first turns of Caller – Italian textbook*



There are two most used turn formats, i.e. the Caller greets his recipient and introduces immediately the business of the call, or adds to the greetings her/his personal identification before getting into the business of the call, such as the participants to the call in the next examples do.

Example 7

Impiegata: Agenzia Prontocasa, buongiorno.

Carlo: Buongiorno, telefono per l’annuncio dell’appartamento in zona universitaria. È per una mia amica. Vorrei avere delle informazioni

Impiegata: Sì, senz’altro. Allora, sono circa 75 metri quadrati, due camere con soggiorno, bagno e cucinotto.

(Caffè Italia, 2005: 201)

Example 8

- Agix, buongiorno.
- Buongiorno. Mi chiamo Giorgio Maglioni, chiamo per l'annuncio che avete messo su *La Repubblica* e volevo farle un paio di domande ...
- Certo, prego! Stavo proprio per rimettere l'annuncio sul giornale.

(Arrivederci 2, 2011: 82)

Both examples are those types of calls to services in which the self-identification of the Caller is not necessary for the purpose of the conversation, at least in an initial phase of the conversation in which no booking or no personal commitment is involved, but rather, information is only sought. We can therefore see how the C in ex.7 seeks for information without providing her/his identification but by telling the recipient towards the end of his turn that the request is not for himself directly. The C in ex. 8 does provide his identity, as many of the Cs in textbook do.

As said at the beginning of this paragraph, these two are the most frequent formats displayed in the textbooks, they take 25% of the cases each and make half of the conversations in the textbook corpus. Next to these two formats we find some variation, i.e. either Cs skip all opening moves and get directly to the business of the call, eventually prefacing the request with an excuse, or they build their first turn by saying “pronto” and requesting for the CT confirmation of the identity, in those cases in which CTs didn't provide one, or finally they say “pronto”, they provide again their identification and then introduce the reason for call. These other three formats account for 12.5% of the cases each, and together with the other two formats discussed above make altogether 87,5% of the calls in the corpus analysed. The following example 9 displays how Cs in the textbooks introduce the reason for call, with no other preceding move.

Example 9

Impiegata: Agenzia di viaggi, buongiorno!

Paolo: vorrei prenotare un volo lowcost per Milano per venerdì 20.

(Italiamania, 2009: 237)

The C's getting down to business in this case results quite awkward, despite the use of the conditional for the request, because it goes directly to the point as people normally would not do. In the corpus observed by Pallotti and Varcasia (2008) such format was found as being used only once (0.6%) by native speakers of Italian.

Example 10 below displays instead the second format among the last three described, in which the C builds her turn by uttering “pronto”, then greeting the interlocutor and subsequently providing a categorisation of her ID, i.e. “sono la segretaria dell'ingegner Calvi”; here follows then a short pause, signalled in the transcription with the three dots, and right after such a pause, with no uptake by the CT so far, continues introducing an apparently problematic issue regarding a meeting being previously fixed. The transcript of the call shows again that the first starting to speak in the call is the Caller, and not the Receiver, since the CT turn is missing here.

Example 10

Segretaria: Pronto, buongiorno, sono la segretaria dell'ingegner Calvi... Credo che la mia collega le abbia fissato un appuntamento per giovedì alle 9.30...

Sig. Biva: Sì, esatto. Ci sono problemi?

Segretaria: No, no; Le telefono per confermare l'appuntamento e per dirle che l'ingegnere la prega di portare anche la pratica Pozzi, ci sono alcune cose da discutere al riguardo. Non so esattamente di che cosa si tratti, ma pare che sia di estrema importanza.

(Italienisch Komplettkurs, 2009: 247)

The issue and pre- that introduces the reason for call here seems to be taken as potentially problematic by the interlocutor. The CT, in fact, confirms on the one hand date and time of the meeting and then asks if there are some problems about that appointment. In the following C's turn, such problematicity is solved ("no, no") and the details of the meeting are confirmed and some extra information is given, i.e. bringing some papers for the discussion. This is the most complex turn format that is displayed in the C's first turns in the textbook corpus.

The remaining 12,5% of the cases is made of other three formats: the use of the opening signal, "pronto" followed by the getting down to the business (4.2%), or greeting and then providing the C's identification (4.2%), or "pronto" followed by greetings, then by the C identification and finally getting down to the business (4.1%).

When we get to compare the different formats of first turns of Callers in textbooks with what native speakers in real life do, one finds out that in real life callers displayed altogether 13 different formats, that is they seem to have five extra formats to build the first turn in a service call. Table 3 shows the comparison of frequencies of the different formats used by Callers in the textbooks for learning Italian and in real telephone conversations.

Table 3. *Callers first turns: textbooks vs real phone calls*

Format	Moves	Textbooks	Real phone calls
1	"Pronto"	-	0.6
2	"Pronto" + greet + business	-	7.5
3	"Pronto" + greet + id C + business	4.2	-
4	"Pronto" + business	4.2	-
5	"Pronto" + id C + business	12.5	-
6	"Pronto" + greet + id R conf	-	2.5
7	"Pronto" + id R conf	12.5	2.5
8	"Pronto" + greet	-	1.9
9	Greet	-	5.0
10	Greet + business	25	46.5
11	Greet + id C + business	25	7.5
12	Greet + id R conf	-	9.4
13	Greet + id C	4.1	10.1
14	Id conf R	-	1.9
15	Business	12.5	0.6
16	Other	-	3.8

At a closer look one also finds out that five of the formats found in textbooks coincide with what native speakers do, whereas three formats are only typical of textbooks, i.e. the format with "pronto", providing the C's identification, and getting

down to business, the one with “pronto” and getting down to business and the most complex format described above with “pronto”, greetings, C’s identification or categorization and the reason for call. These formats that seem to appear only in textbooks bring the issue of what is really possible and plausible for native speakers and learners to do at the beginning of service phone calls. The main point, as it has already been stressed, is due to the fact that textbook authors gave emphasis to the self-identification of Cs in such kind of communication, which is not so common to do for native speakers. This is an element to be taken into consideration for teaching. Ideally textbooks should not just reproduce the formats identified to be used by native speakers, but also reproduce the relative frequency of each format. In this line, it is positive to find that one of the two most common formats of Cs coincide with the most common format used by native speakers (n. 10): greeting followed by the reason for calling, found in 25% of the cases in textbooks and in 46,5% of the cases in authentic calls between native speakers (cfr. Pallotti, Varcasia, 2008: 25). If identification was omitted by Cs in the textbooks the formats would be much more homogeneous, since 50% of the cases would fall in this most common format, and the frequency of format n. 3 (4.2%), with the largest number of moves in a turn would be similar to that of format n. 2 in real phone calls (7.5%), made of “pronto” plus greetings and the getting down to the business of the conversation.

7. CONCLUSION

The discussion of the results and examples taken from textbooks and compared to those found in real telephone service encounters has shed light in similarities and divergences between the two corpora. At the beginning of the paper I stressed, together with Wong (2002), about the importance of a matching between the results in the two corpora, since if textbooks are conceived as presenting authentic and natural language, the kind of language found in textbooks should coincide at most with prototypical interactional patterns.

Two big threats were encountered in the analysis of the textbook material, which are related to one another: the inability to analyse a consistent part of the CT’s first turns because they are not showed by authors, and the way extracts are presented to the reader in terms of layout. The reader might have noted that extracts discussed above present different layouts: some explicit the names of the speakers before each turn of talk, some others just use bullet points to indicate the turn exchange, none present an indication of the telephone ring, indicating that the initiator of the call is the C and the first to speak is the CT. These two factors influence the interpretation of the data and complicate their readability and correct comprehension not just to the researcher in question here, but to all textbook readers, i.e. mainly learners.

The analysis has also showed that, despite the initial threat of the missing turns, textbook seem to show convergence with real phone calls in presenting the prototypical formats of CTs turns and their relative frequency, whereas when we get to observe C’s first turns much many differences were found.

Implications from this study go in different directions: on the one hand to textbook authors and developers, and on the other to issues of language learning and teaching. If textbook authors take into consideration the results of this study and rely on conversational and pragmatic studies when considering the examples to offer in their materials, their products can certainly benefit in terms of authenticity. This can be done

starting from surface issues such as the layout in which materials are presented, as discussed above, to more detailed issues, that is trying to represent the relative frequency in the real conversations as well as their variability. Another aspect with respect to authors of textbooks has to do with the possibility to introduce some explicit sections for making explicit what the various interactional dynamics are and helping students reflect on the conversational practices, specifically on how to deal a telephone service encounter in a foreign language, rather than just using as examples of spoken interaction telephone conversations, without explaining the distinguishing features of this kind of talk.

This last point is close to the other strain of practical implications for language learning and teaching more in general. In her 2002 study Wong suggested two ways to improve student's interactional competence that I would like to stress: asking them to transcribe and discuss their telephone conversation in classroom, in order to draw their attention to the fine mechanisms and details of those interactions; and offering them more opportunities to systematically interact in and reflect on real-life situations, both with native and nonnative speakers. These opportunities of communication with more competent participants offer learners implicit feedback for their language use, as the studies by Yagi (2007) and Thörle (2016) also show. Finally, teachers should pay more attention to the kinds of materials that textbook propose, especially when it comes to interactional practices such as the one considered here, and they can reflect on their own experience in terms of: who talks first? What does each participant say and how what s/he says can be said (differently). The same kind of questions can be used in class in guiding students' reflection and therefore raising their awareness about the interactional practices.

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APPENDIX

Table 1. *Textbooks analysed that present examples of service telephone calls*

	Textbook	CEFR Level	Year of publication	Number of service phone calls presented
1	Italiano plus A1-A2	A1-A2	2015	N = 2
2	Nuovo Espresso 3	B1	2015	N = 5
3	Capito? Comprendere l'italiano in Svizzera.	A2-B1	2014	N = 2
4	In piazza	A1	2012	N = 1
5	Arrivederci 2	A2	2011	N = 3
6	La lingua dell'arte	B1	2011	N = 1
7	Spazio Italia	A1	2011	N = 5
8	Italienisch Komplettkurs	B1	2009	N = 9
9	Italiamaania	B1-B2	2009	N = 11
10	Ci vuole orecchio 1	A1-A2	2009	N = 1
11	Ciao ragazzi!	A2-B1	2008	N = 4
12	Allegro 3	B1	2005	N = 1
13	Caffè Italia 1	A1-A2	2005	N = 3
	Total		-	N = 48

Table 2. *Receiver's first turn formats in different languages (percentages).*

	Receiver's first turn	French (N= 59)	Italian (N= 159)	Spanish (N= 63)	German (N= 44)	English (N= 56)
1	Channel openers: fr. <i>allô/oui</i> , it. <i>pronto</i> , sp. <i>sí/diga/dígame</i> , eng. <i>Hello</i>	27.2	30.5	36.5	2.3	0.0
2	Channel opener + place identity	0.0	11.5	0.0	0.0	14.3
3	Place identity	0.0	14.6	23.8	25.0	7.1
4	Greetings	0.0	0.0	1.6	9.1	0.0
5a	Place identity + greetings	62.7	28.0	9.5	25.0	3.6
5b	Greetings + place identity	0.0	1.2	1.6	4.5	16.2
6a	Greetings + place identity + availability	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	12.5
6b	Place identity + greetings + availability	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	7.1
7a	Place identity + greetings + R identity	0.0	9.0	6.3	0.0	1.8
7b	Place identity + R identity + greetings	5.0	0.0	0.0	9.1	0.0
7c	Greetings + place identity + R identity	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.8	5.4
8	Place identity + sp. <i>dígame</i>	0.0	0.0	11.1	0.0	0.0
9	Place identity + R identity	0.0	0.0	1.6	4.5	1.8
10	Other formats and/or doubtful	5.1	5.2	8.0	13.7	30.2

Table 3. *Caller's first turn formats in different languages (percentages).*

	Caller's first turn	French (N = 59)	Italian (N=159)	Spanish (N= 63)	German (N = 53)	English (N= 56)
1	Channel opener: fr. <i>allô</i> , it. <i>Pronto</i>	3.4	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.0
2	Channel opener + greet + getting down to business	30.5	7.5	0.0	0.0	0.0
2a	<i>Hola / bello</i> + greet + getting down to business	0.0	0.0	25.4	0.0	3.6
3	Channel opener + greet + confirmation of R id	8.5	2.5	0.0	0.0	0.0
4	Channel opener + confirmation of R id	0.0	2.5	0.0	0.0	0.0
5	Channel opener + greet	8.5	1.9	0.0	0.0	0.0
6	Greetings	1.7	5.0	6.3	1.9	3.6
6a	<i>Hola</i> + greetings	0.0	0.0	50.8	0.0	0.0
7	Greet + getting down to business	44.1	46.5	6.3	9.4	82.1
8	Greet + id C + getting down to business	0.0	7.5	0.0	64.2	0.0
9	Greet + confirmation of R id	3.4	9.4	0.0	0.0	0.0
10	Greet + id C	0.0	10.1	0.0	5.7	0.0
11	Id C + greet + (id place C) + getting down to business	0.0	0.0	0.0	11.3	0.0
12	Id-conf R	0.0	1.9	6.3	1.9	0.0
13	Getting down to business	0.0	0.6	1.6	0.0	8.9
14	Other moves	0.0	3.8	3.2	5.7	1.8