ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Reopening Russian Conversations: The Discourse Particle –*to* and the Negotiation of Interpersonal Accountability in Closings

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*The article examines how the goals of maintaining and reaffirming interpersonal relationships are accomplished through the details of talk during closing sections of social encounters. On the basis of Russian language telephone conversations between close familiars, the article explicates ways in which interactions may be reopened and, more specifically, the role of the Russian discourse particle –*to *on utterances that raise new issues in closing environments. The analysis shows that although many kinds of new matters are commonly raised in conversation closings, only those that deal with the addressee—and only those raised by the person who initiated the closing—are marked so as to indicate the speaker's accountability for raising the matter late. This suggests that ways in which new topics are introduced in conversation closings reflect the speaker's orientation to displaying concern for and interest in the addressee.*

The goal of this article is to examine a mundane and ubiquitous social activity—leave-taking. Although the process of closing a social encounter may, at first glance, appear to be unremarkable, the article will show that people engaged in social interaction closely monitor how, exactly, the leave-taking is being accomplished. As Goffman (1971) observed, "the goodbye brings the encounter to an unambiguous close, sums up the consequence of the encounter for the relationship, and bolsters the relationship for the anticipated period of no contact" (p. 79). Leave-taking serves to project possible future encounters, and is, thereby, a practice for maintaining a continuous relationship across periods of separation (Adato, 1975; Sigman, 1991). The article examines how the goals of maintaining and reaffirming interpersonal relationships are accomplished through the details of talk during closing sections of social interactions. The focus is on how leave-taking is negotiated in Russian-language conversations.

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Prior investigations into the organization of leave-taking as an activity have identified a variety of common leave-taking behaviors as well as their sequential unfolding. Several experimental studies have examined verbal and nonverbal behaviors frequently occurring when a social encounter is being terminated. These include, for example, expressions of appreciation, summative statements, justifications for closing the encounter, breaking eye contact, and major body shifts (Albert & Kessler, 1976, 1978; Kellermann & Park, 2001; Kellermann, Reynolds, & Chen, 1991; Knapp, Hart, Friedrich, & Shulman, 1973; O'Leary & Gallois, 1985). Studies conducted within the conversation analytic framework[1] have focused on the sequencing of conversation closing moves. The classic paper "Opening up closings," by Schegloff and Sacks (1973), examines how interlocutors solve the structural issue of ending a conversation and explicates the sequential organization that enables simultaneous exit from the interaction. They describe how participants move toward closings by first terminating the discussion of the current topic, then checking into the presence of other, still unaddressed, issues, and finally ending the conversation with an exchange of goodbyes. Later research by Button (1987) explicates ways in which this progression toward the conversation's end can be halted and the interaction reopened. LeBaron and Jones (2002) extend the study of leave-taking by examining the interlocutors' deployment of nonvocal cues as well as features of the surrounding environment used in the service of closure.[2]

Investigations into leave-taking suggest that in addition to the task of ending a social encounter and discontinuing contact, closing sections are a rich site for relational management. Knapp et al. (1973) indicate that interlocutors frequently deploy cues that convey supportiveness and reinforce relationships. Such cues may be rather overt and include well-wishing statements (Albert & Kessler, 1978; Button, 1987), statements of positive affect (Albert & Kessler, 1978; Antaki, 2002), appreciations (Aston, 1995; Button, 1987; Knapp et al., 1973), and plans for future encounters (Button, 1987; Sigman, 1991). Additionally, Schegloff and Sacks (1973) demonstrate that the organization of conversation closings provides interlocutors with opportunities to negotiate what is to be discussed before the interaction is terminated. This is a vital function of closings because one of the major ways in which parties in social interaction maintain their relationship is by talking about particular subjects. In fact, researchers have found that the kinds of topics discussed (or avoided) in interaction reflect the existing relationship between participants (Afifi & Burgoon, 1998; Baxter & Wilmot, 1985; Crow, 1983; Guerrero & Afifi, 1995; Kellermann & Polomares, 2004; Maynard & Zimmerman, 1984) and that participants may raise certain topics to "enact involvement" with the other (Drew & Chilton, 2000; Morrison, 1997). Yet, from the conversation's onset, there is no guarantee that a particular matter will be addressed during any given conversation. The organization of closings—and, specifically, the sequence of preclosing moves (such as an exchange of "okays") used to initiate leave-taking—creates a structural space where unaddressed issues can be raised, ensuring that the closing

is collaboratively achieved (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973). Thus, the collaborative nature of leave-taking is an important resource for maintaining and reaffirming interpersonal relationships.

This article expands on the prior research in several ways. First, it examines conversation closings in a language where no such research yet exists.[3] By extending the study of leave-taking to a new language (and a new speech community), we can see how apparently universal tasks of conversation closings—the coordination of the simultaneous departure from a social encounter and the reinforcement of interpersonal relationships—are carried out using specific language resources available to the interlocutors. Second, the article demonstrates that interpersonal work is accomplished in closings not only through explicit displays of involvement and concern for the other (such as well wishing or expressing gratitude) but also through much less noticeable—but no less consequential—details of interlocutors' conduct. Third, the article examines not just "successful" closings—those that resulted in the actual leave-taking—but closings that were aborted, for the time being, in favor of continuing the conversation.

The aim of this article is, then, to investigate how Russian-language telephone conversations between friends and family members are closed, focusing primarily on closings that were aborted in favor of continuing the conversation. Specifically, I analyze the role of one Russian discourse particle, –to, in turns of talk that launch new topics in conversation closing environments. Generally speaking, this particle serves to mark the course of action carried out by a particular utterance as late (Bolden, 2005, in press-b), and we will see that speakers can deploy this particle strategically to convey their accountability for bringing up certain conversational matters later than appropriate or expected. The article starts with a background on the Russian particle –to, followed by a brief discussion of how Russian conversations are typically closed. We turn then to closing sections that get reopened to discuss new topics ("how are you"-type inquiries and other new matters). I will show that the precise formulation used to launch new topics in this environment—and, specifically, the use of the particle –to—is sensitive to who is accountable for the topic's late launch and to the kind of topic it is. Overall, the article demonstrates that the way in which new matters are introduced in conversation closings reflects the speaker's orientation to displaying concern for and interest in the addressee—or, *other attentiveness*.

Data and method

The data for this article are drawn from a corpus of over 60 hours of audio-recorded, everyday interactions between native Russian speakers living in Russia or the United States. Although the discussed findings are based on a subcorpus of telephone conversations, face-to-face interactions were also used in a larger project on which this paper draws (Bolden, 2005). The recorded interactions were transcribed by the author following the standard conversation analytic transcription conventions

modified, when necessary, to fit the particularities of the Russian language (see Appendix). The data were analyzed following the methodology of conversation analysis (see, e.g., Heritage, 1984) with the particular focus on conversation closing environments where new topics were introduced. Overall, from 73 examined telephone calls (51 of which were reopened at least once), 71 instances of new topics launched in closings were identified and analyzed for this article.

The Russian discourse particle –to

The Russian word *–to* belongs to a class of linguistic objects called *discourse markers* or *particles*. Some English examples of discourse markers include words and expressions like "anyway," "by the way," "y'know," "so," and "like" among many others. Discourse markers have been of substantial interest to researchers studying situated language use because of their role in demarcating discourse connections as well as their potential for indexing social relationships (see, e.g., Aijmer, 2002; Fraser, 1999; Jucker & Ziv, 1998; Lenk, 1998; Schiffrin, 1987). For example, in many languages, discourse markers have been found to index alignment and disalignment between interlocutors (e.g., Greasley, 1994; Jucker & Smith, 1998; Morita, 2005; Park, 1998; Waring, 2003; Wu, 2003) and be involved in building a variety of social and situational identities (e.g., Bolden, 2006; Fuller, 2003; Heingartner, 1996; Kleiner, 1998; Maschler, 2003; Stenström, 1998).

The Russian particle *–to* (pronounced as *ta*) has been of considerable interest to Russian-language scholars due to its somewhat mysterious nature. This particle can be attached, it would appear, to the end of almost any word, and its meaning cannot be readily expressed. In the past, researchers have focused on its cognitive rather than social functions and described the particle as marking emphasis, contrast, or "theme" (Bitextin, 1994; Bonnot, 1987, 1990; McCoy, 2001; Rathmayr, 1989; Vasilyeva, 1972). In my own work conducted in the conversation analytic tradition, I have come to characterize the particle as a marker of "delay" (Bolden, 2003, 2005, in press-b).[4] Focusing on the use of *–to* in utterances that initiate action sequences (such as topic talk, questions, requests, or offers), I have argued that the particle indicates that the action accomplished by the current turn is, in some sense, delayed relatively to where it could or should have occurred.[5] Because much of the argument presented in this article relies on this characterization of *–to*, the following will provide a very brief justification of this claim.

The default way of connecting an utterance to a prior one is by placing it immediately after the targeted utterance (Sacks, 1987, 1995). In order to tie the current turn to some other-than-last turn, the speaker has to use a special device (or a combination of devices). In Russian, one such device is the particle *–to*. The particle may be used to indicate that the current utterance (to which *–to* attaches) is misplaced within the ongoing line of talk. In other words, the action implemented by the *–to*-marked turn is not connected to the action of the immediately preceding turn, but to some prior one.

I will illustrate this use of –*to* on just one example. In Excerpt 1, a –*to*-marked utterance functions as a clarification question that invites the narrator to explain something about an earlier part of the telling.

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Excerpt 1: Music Hall (from Kitaigorodskaia & Rosanova, 1994)⁶

Tamara, a former ballerina, is apparently leafing through a photo-
album and talking about the shows she performed in. Roza is an 8-year-
old child. (Galina and another ballerina are also present.)

(6:30)

1  ROZA:   A eta shto t^o?zhe spektakl'/
           PRT that what also  play
           This is what also a play?

2  GAL:    Da/=
           yes

3  TAM:    =Da: >detachka/= eta b- ((squeek)) etat< nazyvalsja
           yes   child     this              this    called
           Yes child/   this- this one was called

4          ''Leningr^ad pad dazhdë:m.''/
            Leningrad under  rain
           ''Leningrad in the rain''

5  TAM:    .h >Ty panima, esh</ vot eta Gastinyj dv^or tut byl/
              you understand   PRT that STORE-NAME   here was
           You see Gostinyj Dvor ((a large shopping center)) was here

6  .h      Patom on [na-
           then   he on
           then

7  ROZA:             [(Prjama) na sce?ne/
                      right   on stage
                      Right on the stage?

8  TAM:    a  na avansce^:ne .h shël nastajaschij dosch./   <-target
           PRT on proscenium   went real        rain
           and on the proscenium there was real rain

9          (1.5)

10 TAM:    B^yla sdelana tak/ eh: tam byli palozhen brez^ent >i prosta
           was   made    so      there were put    tarp     and simply
           It was made that way/ They put tarp there  and

11         lilsja  dosch./= My< ta byli [vse v kle- <-target
           poured  rain     we  PRT were all in pla(stic)
           it  was  simply pouring/ We were all wearing pla(stic)
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12 ROZA:                          [A kak zhe dosch ta tak/
                                  PRT how PRT rain PRT so
                                  How did they make rain?

13 TAM:    ↑A vot tak vot/  vada./
           PRT PRT  so  PRT water
           Like  this/  water

14         (0.5)

15 TAM:    Tak puskali ↓vod[u./
           so let-out    water
           They poured water

16 (ROZ):                   [(Mm)   ((or tape sound?))

17 TAM:    A my: byli vse v kle↓ë:nke./
           PRT we were all in plastic-cloth
           We were all wearing plastic cloth

18 TAM:    .h I dvizh^enija  on takie d- em-pastavil, /=
             and movements   he  such    choreographed
           And  he  choreographed movements that
```

Focusing on Line 12, we can see that the particle *–to* is used in a turn of talk that functions as a clarification request, asking the recipient to expand on an earlier part of the narrative. More precisely, the question targets the rather startling announcement at Line 8 (that there was "real rain" on the stage), which is then further upgraded at Line 11 (it was pouring). Note that Roza's question is delayed relatively to the target utterances and is placed after Tamara initiates a shift to a new episode (about what the actors were wearing—at Line 11). The particle is attached to the noun "rain" ("dosch")—the repeated word from the targeted part of the narrative. The particle serves to mark the current utterance as delayed relatively to where it should have been more appropriately launched—that is, immediately following its target.

In this case, the delay marked by the particle is related to the organization of the current course of action: The marked utterance returns the interlocutors to a prior point within the ongoing activity. The particle *–to* can also be used to mark delay in a variety of other structural environments, one of which—conversation closings—is to be discussed here. However, one of the most interesting properties of this particle is that the positioning of the current utterance within the ongoing conversation is only one, albeit central, factor in its deployment. As we will see, speakers deploy the particle selectively to indicate their social accountability for the lateness of the course of action being launched.

How are conversations closed in Russian?

In order to close a conversation, parties need to coordinate their simultaneous exit from the interaction. As Schegloff and Sacks (1973) demonstrated on English-language

materials, closings are accomplished through sequences of turns launched upon completion of the conversation's business. The conversation closing section ordinarily opens with a *possible preclosing* move—such as, for example, a floor offer (in English, *Okay?*) or an announcement (e.g., *I have to go*). The recipient of the preclosing move may either align with the closing (in which case, the conversation may be rapidly closed) or disalign with the proposed close (and the conversation is likely to continue). Thus, whether or not a preclosing move would lead to an actual conversation closure is an interactional matter—and, in fact, possible preclosings often do not lead to the conversation ending (hence, the name "*possible* preclosing"). One way in which parties find themselves *not* proceeding with the closing is when new matters are introduced or old matters that were previously discussed are returned to after the closing section has been initiated.[7]

My examination of conversation closing practices in Russian shows that Russian closings follow, more or less, the English pattern (Bolden, in press-a). The move into the closing section is ordinarily initiated by a preclosing, typically "(Nu) ladno" or "(Nu) xorosho" (both translated as *okay* or *all right*). Similarly to English, these closing moves indicate that the speaker is passing on the opportunity to take the floor and launch a discussion of a new matter, passing the baton, so to speak, to the other party. Given that these turns carry little propositional meaning, their functioning as possible preclosing moves almost entirely depends on their sequential placement—after the matter under discussion has been brought to a possible completion.[8] A rather typical closing initiated via "xorosho" *all right* is illustrated in the following excerpt:

```
Excerpt 2: PF-4 (Galya is the caller)

Misha and Galya are discussing travel arrangements for an upcoming picnic.

1  MISH:  Ladna/ [Reshajte s nej sami/
          okay    decide with her yourself
          Okay/ Settle this with her on your own

2  GAL:         [Voschem vot takie dela./=
                 generally PRT such things
                 So this is how things are

3 → MISH: =Panjatn'/ X^arash[o/
          understood good
          I see/ Alright

4  GAL:                      [^Okey./ Xara[sho Misha/
                              okay     good    NAME
                              Okay/ Alright Misha

5  MISH:                                     [N'ladn'/
                                              PRT okay
                                              Okay
```

```
6   MISH:  A-ga,h/=

7   GAL:   =A-g[a/  Nu paka/
                     PRT bye
            Ah-hah Bye

8   MISH:        [Nu paka/
                  PRT bye
                  Bye

9   ((disconnected))
```

The prior sequence is being closed in Lines 1–2. In Line 3, Misha first aligns with the sequence closure (with a generic sequence closing object "Panjatn'" *I see*) and then immediately initiates a possible preclosing with "X^arasho" *Alright*. Galya goes along with the closure (Line 4), and the conversation is quickly terminated.

This segment illustrates a quick path to closing a conversation. Oftentimes, however, the initiation of the possible preclosing does not immediately lead to the termination of the conversation. (In my corpus, most conversations are reopened at least once.) In the remaining sections, I examine some of the ways in which parties reopen the conversation after a move to close has been proposed, focusing on the role of the particle *–to* in this environment. The analysis will show that the particulars of turn design speakers deploy to reopen the conversation (specifically, the use of the particle *–to*) reflect parties' orientation to reaffirming interpersonal relationships before taking leave and that speakers use this discourse particle differently to highlight their responsibility for doing so late.

Delayed "how are you" inquiries in conversation closings

One type of action that can be launched in the closing section—and that has an effect of (temporarily) reopening the conversation—is a personal state inquiry in the form of a "how are you" question.[9] Typically occurring in conversation openings after an exchange of greetings (Schegloff, 1986), "how are you" inquiries launched after possible preclosing moves are late. Given that the Russian particle *–to* marks the delay of the current action, not surprisingly, a number of these late "how are you" questions are marked with *–to*, thereby showing the speaker's orientation to the delayed character of the inquiry.

"How are you" inquiries function as topic solicitations (Button & Casey, 1985, 1988/1989), inviting the recipient to bring a self-attentive matter under discussion. In conversation openings, "how are you" questions provide the interlocutors with an opportunity to introduce an issue of "joint priority concern"—something that needs to be discussed before other business is dealt with (Schegloff, 1986, p. 118). "How are you" type inquires launched late in the conversation—in closing environments— function somewhat differently. Rather than inviting the addressee to introduce a priority matter, they may serve as last checks before parties exit the conversation.[10]

Thus, "how are you" inquiries play a key role in doing relationship work in closings: On the one hand, the questioner takes the last opportunity to show herself attentive to the addressee's needs; on the other hand, the addressee is given a chance to bring up personal issues that have not yet been discussed.

Focusing on "how are you" type inquires that occur in closings, we will see that several of these late questions are marked with the particle –to. Given that this particle is a marker of delay, one might expect to find it invariably deployed on inquiries placed after the initiation of conversation closings. However, it turns out that it is *not* the case and that some "how are you" inquiries in this position are not marked with –to. The comparative analysis of marked and unmarked "how are you" inquiries will demonstrate that this particle serves not only to mark the lateness of the "how are you" inquiry by reference to its placement in the conversation but also to display the current speaker's accountability for launching this course of action late. We will see that only those "how are you" inquiries that are launched by the same person who initiated the move into closings are marked with –to, whereas those initiated by a recipient of such a move, and therefore claimably unaccountable for it, are not. We begin by examining "how are you" inquiries that contain the delay marker.

"How are you" inquiries marked with –to
"How are you" inquiries placed after the initiation of closings are delayed by reference to the overall organization of the conversation. By launching such questions after the closing has already been initiated, the speaker takes advantage of this last opportunity to inquire into the addressee's life. The use of the particle –to on such inquiries can be illustrated on the following three segments. In Excerpt 3, Victor (who is, apparently, the caller) initiates the closing section of the conversation (see the arrow), but then, several turns later, poses a "how are you" inquiry, marking it with –to.

```
Excerpt 3: HM11-2

Victor has been describing his job interview experiences to his
daughter.

(7:00)

1  VIC:   °Takie dela°/
          such things
          That's how things are

2              (1.5)

3  VIC:   .hhh Tak/(.) Tan'ka = mne schas: (.) budet v desjat' ⇐
              so    NAME  me   now         will at 10
          Okay/Tanya now they'll be calling me at 10
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4          chasof zvanit' [(  ) iz Grand Rapi]ds./
           o'clock  call  from  Grand Rapids
           from  Grand Rapids

5  TAN:                    [A::          O k e j/]
                            oh             okay

6             (0.5)

7  TAN:   Okej/
           Okay

8  VIC:   Tak shto ja schas u tebja atkljuchu,s'/=
           so  that  I now  with you  disconnect
           So I'll now disconnect from you

9  TAN:   =Nu xarasho/=
            PRT  good
           All right

10 VIC:   =T'do?ma vabsche/da,/
           you home  generally yes
           You're home  right

11 TAN:   Hm-m:_:/
           Yes

12 VIC:   {.hhhh}/(1.0)

13 VIC:   Chë u vas ta/ = nichë?/ = Na-navastej ni[kadix (net)/
           what with you PRT nothing news  no       none
           What's happening  with you?  Nothing? No news?

14 TAN:                                        [N:_:_: Krome tavo shto
                                                PRT   aside that that
                                                Well aside from

15          rebë,nak baleet/heh-heh
            child    is-sick
            the child being sick

16 VIC:   Ribë?nak baleet/
           child    is-sick
           The  child is sick?

17 TAN:   N:da/ hh  .hhh
           yes

18 VIC:   Eta v't- mama gavarila sho ana nakanune ne spala/=
           PRT PRT  mom  said    that she the-day-before not slept
           That- mom said that   she wasn't sleeping the night before

((continue about the illness))
```

Having closed the prior topic at Line 1, Victor initiates the conversation closing at Lines 3–4. This possible preclosing (done as an announcement of the intent to hang up) is aligned with (Lines 5, 7, and 9). After inquiring into Tanya's immediate whereabouts (apparently on the way to suggest that he'll call back afterward), Victor launches a "how are you" type inquiry (at Line 13), which allows for the reopening of the conversation. Victor's question is marked with –*to*, employed here to show the action's delayed placement in the conversation—after the initiation of closings. Note that the "how are you" inquiry is incrementally designed in such a way as to receive a no-news response that would allow the parties to proceed with the closing. Thus, it functions as a quick check before the termination of the conversation. As it turns out, however, Tanya does have some news to report (Lines 14–15), and the conversation is reopened.

Excerpt 4 presents another case in which a "how are you" question is placed after the initiation of closings. Greg calls to talk to his friend but the phone is answered by the friend's wife, Zina.

```
Excerpt 4: RP-2 (Greg is the caller)

1   RECORDING:  A T an T

2           ((2 rings))

3           ZINA: Alë/
                 Hello

4           GREG: Zi:na,/
                 NAME

5           (0.5)

6           GREG: [Pri-   Prive:t/
                           hi

7           ZINA: [(Da:l')/
                     yes

8           (0.2)

9           ZINA: ↑Prive:t Gr↓eg/
                    Hi      NAME

10          GREG: A:a:

11              Kak dela:/
                How things
                How are things

12          ZINA: Da nichevo/= Schas minu:tachku/=        ⇐
                  Yes nothing  now  munute
                  Fine/Just a  minute
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13        GREG: =Davaj/
                Give
                okay

14        ZINA: Ka:k tam: sam ta/ nichevo?/
                How there yourself PRT  nothing
                How  are you/ Fine?

15        GREG: Vsë narma:l'na/
                All  normal
                Everything  is fine

16              (0.2)

17              Vsë narmal'na/=
                All  normal
                Everything is fine

18        ZINA: =Nu slava bogu/= Schas daju/ s-schas trubachku/
                 PRT thank god   now  give   not     receiver
                 Thank god/Now I am passing the phone

19        GREG: A-ha,/
```

After greetings, Greg initiates a "how are you" inquiry (Line 11). Zina responds but instead of doing a reciprocal "how are you" (which would be typical of conversation openings), she announces her intent to pass the phone to her husband (*Just a minute* in Line 12). This announcement serves as a possible closing move because it projects an impending conversation closure once the interlocutor aligns. Greg's acceptance of the announcement (Line 13) can, in fact, be the last turn in this conversation. Instead of getting off the phone, however, Zina launches a reciprocal "how are you" inquiry (note the emphasis on "sam" *yourself*). In this context—after the likely last turn in the conversation—the question is obviously delayed even though it occurs soon after the conversation's start. Similar to the previous example (Excerpt 3), Zina's "how are you" inquiry is designed in such a way as to receive a minimal response (and thus not derail the closing): The open-ended "how are you" inquiry is immediately followed by an offer of a candidate nonnewsworthy response ("nichevo" *fine* in Line 15). Greg's answer claims absence of tellable news, and the conversation is promptly terminated (Lines 18–19). This example shows that even a "how are you" inquiry that occurs relatively early in terms of its temporal placement can still be *–to* marked to index its structurally delayed position.

In the two segments above, the closing section was initiated overtly—via an announcement or an offer to close the conversation. *–To*-marked "how are you" questions can, however, follow possible preclosing moves that are less overt—those done via a floor-offering move, such as a version of "(Nu) ladno" (*okay*), as can be seen in Excerpt 5.

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Excerpt 5: NG4-17 (Boris is the caller)
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Boris called to talk to Marsha's husband, who is not home. After Marsha accounts for her husband's whereabouts, Boris asks about the play Marsha went to the day before. The excerpt starts in the end of that discussion.

```
(1:40) ((Marsha's apparently eating—chewing sounds are audible))

1   BOR:    Tak [shto vot/
             so  what   PRT
             That's that

2   MAR:        [Nu::/
                 PRT

3              (0.2)

4   BOR:    °Shto eta°/
             what that

5   MAR:    .hhh

6              (1.2)

7   BOR:    Nu akej/                                          ⇐
             PRT okay
             Okay then

8              (1.2)

9   BOR:    Kak u tebja na rabote ta/
             how with you at work   PRT
             So how are things at  work

10             (0.5)

11  MAR:    tkl = Na rabote nichevo/
                  at work   nothing
                  At work   fine

12  BOR:    Vsë nar[ma,l'na/
             all normal
             Everything's okay

13  MAR:          [tkl

14  MAR:    .hh Da/u menja vsë narmal'na na rabote,/
                yes with me all normal at work
                Yes everthing is okay at work
```

((Marsha tells a story about hitting another car in the parking lot))

Given that Boris called to talk not to Marsha but to her husband, the closure of the topic talk (about the play—not shown) in Lines 1–2 creates a closing implicative

environment (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973). In Line 4, Boris appears to search for a new topic but faced with Marsha's silence (Lines 5–6), initiates a preclosing move ("Nu akej" *okay then* in Line 7). In response, Marsha can either align with the proposed conversation closure (producing, e.g., some version of "ladno" *okay*) or introduce a new topic. When neither is forthcoming, Boris ventures another topic, a variant of a "how are you" question (Line 9), and marks it with *–to*. After a pause, the question receives a trouble-premonitory response (Jefferson, 1980) in Line 11: By eliminating work as a problem site, it suggests that something else *is* a problem. Boris pursues this response till Marsha finally launches a story (not shown).[11]

The *–to*-marking on the "how are you" question in Line 9 indicates that it is delayed. Although, in this case, the closing section was not initiated by an overt announcement or an offer to terminate the conversation, the less overt practice of passing the rights to the floor in a closure implicative environment is also treated by the participants as a possible move into closings, and the presence of *–to* attests to that.

To summarize, we have seen that "how are you" inquiries launched after a move to close the interaction has been made can contain the particle *–to* to indicate their delayed placement in the conversation. It turns out, however, that *not* all "how are you" inquiries placed after closing initiations are *–to*-marked. The presence of unmarked "how are you" questions in this position suggests that something other than purely structural considerations may be at work.

Delayed "how are you" inquiries without *–to*

The analysis of unmarked delayed "how are you" inquiries presented in this section will demonstrate that the particle is deployed for reasons that go beyond marking structural relationships between turns at talk. I would like to propose that the particle *–to* can be used not only to mark the structural delay of a particular turn but also to index broader issues of social accountability and relationship maintenance. In fact, the very presence of unmarked "how are you" inquiries in closings suggests that speakers use the particle selectively, that it is not simply a required grammatical object. A comparative analysis of marked and unmarked "how are you" type questions in conversation closings argues for an interactional function of this marker as an index of social accountability.

Let us begin by returning to the segments presented in the previous section. We noticed that "how are you" type inquiries in closings are last opportunities to invite the addressee to initiate a personal topic in a given conversation. Although these questions are typically designed to obtain a no-news response that would allow the parties to proceed with the closing, these inquiries still provide for an occasion to introduce new matters—and their recipients do, at times, take advantage of this opportunity (as in Excerpt 3 and Excerpt 5 above). A reexamination of the above segments reveals that the parties who launched these late inquires may be the ones responsible for their late placement because it was they who moved the conversation into closings. Additionally, it appears that the delayed questions occur in contexts where some interpersonal misalignment is evident.

In the conversation from which Excerpt 3 is taken, for example, Victor discusses his job interview and then requests to get off the phone (Lines 3–4), thereby initiating closings. Only after the conversation is well into closings, does he inquire about any newsworthy events in the addressee's life—apparently for the first time in this conversation. In Excerpt 4, Zina initiates the conversation closing (Line 12) immediately after responding to Greg's "how are you" question, and does so in place of launching the expected reciprocal inquiry (e.g., "and you?"). By offering to immediately pass the phone to her husband, Zina acts as a "switchboard operator" rather than a proper recipient of Greg's call (Schegloff, 1986). This role does not, however, mesh with the kind of interpersonal relationship proposed by Greg's initial "how are you" question (Line 11). With closings now under way, Zina chooses to reestablish, albeit belatedly, the proper recipiency by reciprocating the inquiry. In the conversation from which Excerpt 5 is taken, the task of reaffirming a personal relationship falls onto Boris, who calls Marsha's husband (who is not home). The conversation starts with Boris complaining about the husband's failure to return his prior call (not shown in the excerpt). Thus, the beginning of the call displays Boris's orientation to Marsha as "a spouse" responsible for her husband's actions—rather than an individual with whom Boris has an independent relationship. Having launched the closing (at Line 7) and faced with Marsha's withholding of a response (Line 8), Boris now prompts Marsha to introduce newsworthy events in *her* life (Line 9), thereby reaffirming the personal connection between the two as individuals.

In these examples, speakers choose to mark their "how are you" inquiries as late with the marker of delay –*to*. By doing so, they show not only their orientation to the structural lateness of the inquiry but also their recognition that they moved to end the conversation before fulfilling their responsibility (associated with their role as a friend or a family member) to inquire into the well-being of the other party.[12] It turns out that "how are you" inquiries that follow closing moves initiated by the *other* party are not marked with –*to*. In such contexts, the "how are you" questioner is, claimably, not responsible for placing the inquiry after the closing has been launched because it is the other party who initiated the closing. The following two segments illustrate these observations.

In Excerpt 6, Inna poses a "how are you" inquiry after Misha initiates the conversation closing. (In the very beginning of this interaction, Misha indicates that the conversation is going to be short as he is waiting for his wife, Shura, to get ready to go out.)

```
Excerpt 6: PF-10 (Misha is the caller)

(7:20) ((about Inna's passport issues))

1  MISH:  Pazvani v konsul'stvo/=i vsë/=v rassijskaje/=i
          call    to consulate  and all  to russian     and
          Call the consulate and that's it/to the Russian one
```

```
2            [sprasi/ .hh [Tak/= Innachka/=                        ⇐
             ask         so   Name
             and ask/   Okay/Inna

3    INNA:   [^Nu da/   uzn[aju/
              PRT yes      find-out
             Yes I'll  find   out

4    MISH:   =Ja dolzhen bezha,t'/ [Uzhe Shura gatova/ |Zhdët menja/
              I must      run        already NAME ready  wait    me
             I must run/ Shura is already  ready/Waiting for  me

5    INNA:                        [(Nu lad-)/ U vas vsë  |narma?l'na/
                                   PRT ok-  with you all   normal
                                  (Alright)/ Is everything fine with you

6    MISH:   Da, / .h[hh
             yes

7    INNA:          [U vas vsë oke?y/
                     with you all okay
                    Is  everything okay with you

8    MISH:   Da/ Shura na novaj rabo,te/ uzhe imejut dastojnuju
             yes  NAME on new   job      already have solid
             Yes Shura has a new job/ She already has a decent

9            z- rabo,tu/= I dastojnuju zarplatu./
             s- job      and solid     salary
             s- job  and a decent salary
```

In Lines 2/4, Misha initiates a move into closing with an explicit announcement (*I must run*). Inna first appears to align with the move (beginning of Line 5) but then reopens the conversation with a "how are you" type question. Given the inquiry's positioning, it is structurally delayed. The absence of *–to*-marking may be explained by the fact that it is the other party who initiated the conversation closing. By leaving the question in its basic form (i.e., without the particle), the speaker apparently treats the late placement of the inquiry as incidental and herself as unaccountable for the question's lateness.

The same is true of the next segment taken from a conversation between a mother (Kira) and her adult daughter (Marina). Just prior to this excerpt, they discuss Marina's children's reaction to the summer school. Kira quickly terminates the discussion (not shown) and then initiates the conversation closing (Line 1):

```
Excerpt 7: HM8-14 (Kira is the caller)

(2:40)

1    KIRA:   Nu vsë/<[Celuju tebja/                              ⇐
             PRT all   kiss   you
             That's it/  I kiss you
```

```
 2  MAR:              [(Nu pasmotrim [ )
                         PRT will-see
                         We'll see

 3  KIRA:                            [Vsë budet dochen'ka/
                                       all will-be daughter
                                       It'll  be   fine daughter

 4  MAR:    Nu [vsë (     )  vsë  narmal'na/
            PRT  all          all   fine
            Everything  (       ) everything's fine

 5  KIRA:     [Nichevo ne  perezhivaj/
              nothing   not   worry
              Don't  worry

 6  MAR:    Da/=
            yes

 7  KIRA:   =D[a/
            yes

 8  MAR:     [Vsë narmal'na/ Ja xarasho daexala/
             all  normal    I well     arrived
             Everthing's fine/ The drive was  good

 9  KIRA:   Nu slava boghu/
            PRT thank god
            Thank god

10  KIRA:   [Nu paka/
            PRT bye
            Bye

11  MAR:    [(  )

12  MAR:    A ty kak/
            PRT you how
            How are you

13  KIRA:   tkl .h Ja narmal'na/ Papa tam pavël eh: Anechku/
                   I normal     dad there took   NAME
                I'm fine/  Dad took Anya
```

At Line 1, Kira moves to close the conversation with a summative (*that's it*), followed by a typical Russian closing solicitude (translated as *I kiss you* or *My love to you*). At Line 2, instead of aligning with the conversation closing move, Marina proceeds to deal with the prior sequence. After the sequence is terminated (Lines 6–7), Marina returns to Kira's reason for calling (about Marina's drive; Line 8). After a brief receipt (Line 9), Kira immediately issues a goodbye (Line 10). Rather than responding with a bye, Marina reopens the conversation with a reciprocal "how are you" inquiry

(note the emphasis on "ty" *you* in Line 12). Even though this inquiry is placed very late—after a first goodbye—it is not –*to*-marked, suggesting that its speaker does not consider herself responsible for the delay. Given that the closing section was initiated by the other party (and rather abruptly) and given that the other party moved to the goodbyes before the alignment with the preclosing move has been secured, the lack of –*to* is indicative of the speaker's lack of accountability for the delayed character of the question. Note also that the design of the question invites an expanded response (rather rare in closings), which suggests the speaker's continuing resistance to the conversation closing trajectory enacted by the other party.

To summarize, we have seen that –*to*-marking is indicative of a rather delicate checking and balancing the parties engage in at the time the conversation is about to close. On the one hand, there are structural considerations that have to do with the positioning of the "how are you" inquiry relative to the launch of the closing section. On the other hand, there are interactional issues involved in building and maintaining a particular kind of social relationship—a relationship in which inquiries into each other's state of being are expected on a particular interactional occasion. When it comes to –*to* marking, the parties appear to be sensitive not only to the placement of the inquiries but also to the distribution of interactional roles and responsibilities in the conversation. More specifically, the particle –*to* marks "how are you" inquiries as late and indexes the speaker's accountability for closing the conversation prematurely, having failed to invite the addressee to talk about his/her life. Given the availability of this index, it is notable that interlocutors choose not to use it on delayed "how are you" inquiries when it is the other party who initiated the closing, thereby not marking themselves as responsible for the question's late placement.

Thus, the analysis so far suggests that launching late "how are you" inquiries is a practice interlocutors deploy in order to reaffirm a particular state of relationship before taking leave of each other. By using the particle –*to* on such inquiries, the speaker indicates her accountability for the question's late placement, thereby conveying her orientation to properly fulfilling her interactional responsibilities as a friend or a family member. The following section will expand this analysis to other types of matters that can be launched in closings, demonstrating again that issues of social accountability involved in relationship maintenance are central to how these topics get launched.

Other matters launched in closings

"How are you" inquiries are, of course, not the only type of actions that can be launched in conversation closings. This section will look at how other kinds of new matters get launched in closing environments via both –*to*-marked and unmarked utterances.[13] Unlike "how are you" inquiries, which properly belong to conversation openings and routinely occur there, other kinds of action trajectories do not have a clearly defined proper place in a conversation.[14] Moreover, expectations (if any) about what issues might (or should) be discussed on a particular interactional

occasion vary widely depending on what is going on at the time of the conversation, the relationship between the participants, the parties' interactional history, and the like. So a failure to launch a particular course of action in a conversation may or may not be an accountable interactional event. Yet, just like delayed "how are you" inquiries, other action trajectories may be treated as structurally late when they are placed after the initiation of conversation closings, receiving –*to* marking. However, not all of them contain this discourse particle. Why might that be the case? Before answering this question, let's look at some cases where new topic initiators are marked with –*to*.

In the following conversation between a mother (Olga) and a daughter (Tanya), the matter launched after the closing is an inquiry about Tanya's young child.

```
Excerpt 8: HM7-6 (Olga is the caller)

(7:25)

1  OLG:   °Hm-mm°/

2              (0.8)

3  OLG:   tkl Nu lˇa:dna/ Tanj[ushka/ Ja tebja atvlekaju,/       ⇐
           PRT okay    NAME       I  you    distract
           Okay/ Tanya/ I am distracting you

4  TAN:                    [Menjaesh:
                            change
                            You change ((re: prior discussion))

5              (.)

6  OLG:   Kak tam Ellachka °ta°/= Chevo ana g- (.) rasskazyvaet/
           how there NAME  PRT   what  she t-     tells
           How is  Ella/ What does she  sa- talk about

7              (0.5)

8  TAN:   °Nu° (.) ne znaju/hh-hh ((silent laugh))
           PRT      not know
           I don't know

9          .hh[h

10 OLG:      [Pesenki paë,t/
             songs    sing
             Does she sing songs

11             (1.0)

12 TAN:   Pesenki paët/ da/hhh
           songs    sing yes
           She does/ yes
```

After the prior sequence (not shown) is closed, Olga moves to terminate the conversation (at Line 3). However, she soon reopens the interaction with a new topic proffer (Line 6). This inquiry is *–to* marked to reflect its placement in the conversation closing section, and it has the effect of reopening the conversation.

In the next segment (Excerpt 9), Dusja (the caller) initiates a move to close the conversation but then reopens it with a proffer of a new topic (Line 7). The excerpt follows a discussion of a televised soap opera.

```
Excerpt 9: GM-3 (Dusja is the caller)

(0:45) ((about a soap opera))

1  DUS:    .hSchas uzhe razvarachivaeca shtota tam/ Niochen' jasna nu
            now   already developing   something there not-very clear PRT
            Now something is already developing there/ Not very clear but

2          .hh shtota razvara:chivaeca/
            something developing
            something is developing

3  DUS:    .hh[h  |↑Nu xarasho = /                                    ⇐
                   PRT well
                   All right

4  RACH:       [°(M|:)

5          =↓ladnen'[ka =/= Nu: sho pakˇa/=
            okay          PRT  what bye
            okay          Bye

6  RACH:            [(Nu paka)
                     PRT bye
                      Bye

7  DUS:    =<.hTy- kuru ta kupi?la/
              you chicken PRT bought
            <Did you buy the chicken

8  RACH:   Da:/
            yes

9  DUS:    Nu nichevo?/ xaro,shaja/=
            well nothing  good
            Well is it pretty good?

10 RACH:   =^Da/ Xarasho/
             yes   good
```

In Line 3, Dusja initiates a move to close the conversation with "nu xarasho" *all right* followed by "ladnen'ka" *okay* at Line 5. These are heard by Rachil as conversation closers, and both women produce their goodbyes almost simultaneously (Lines 5–6). Dusja, however, rushes to reopen the conversation with a topic proffer

in the form of a –*to*-marked interrogative (Line 7). This question is obviously delayed as it is produced after an exchange of "byes."

These examples show that utterances that bring up new issues after the conversation has moved into closure can be marked with the delay particle –*to*. By marking such utterances as delayed, speakers indicate that they had meant to introduce the particular matter earlier. In other words, by deploying the particle, speakers show their understanding that a particular inquiry should have been raised during the conversation, rendering its sheer absence into an interactional "event." Returning to the segments, we can observe that in Excerpt 8, the course of action being launched is an inquiry about the addressee's young daughter (the speaker's granddaughter)— a topic that might be reasonably expected to come up during a conversation between these interlocutors and, therefore, can be treated as noticeably absent when it did not occur. In Excerpt 9, the delayed inquiry is a request for an update on a particular situation both interlocutors know about (and know each other to know about). (In fact, the addressee's immediate response [Line 8] suggests no trouble with the question, even though it comes latched on to the goodbyes with no transition and is rather elliptical in form.) Thus, the deployment of the particle –*to* on these late inquiries may reveal not only the speakers' orientation to the placement of these courses of action within conversation closing sections but also their understanding that these inquiries should have been properly launched earlier.

These observations are supported by the fact that *not* all new topic initiations in this position in conversation receive –*to* marking (which is not surprising given what we discovered about various "how are you" inquiries). As the examination of the last two segments suggest, the decision to deploy (or not to deploy) the particle may go beyond the structural placement of these turns. An analysis of a variety of new topic initiators launched in conversation closings has identified two additional factors: (a) the identity of the person who initiated the closing section and (b) the type of action being launched after the closing. The use of the particle depends on whether the action is other- or self-attentive and whether the conversation is reopened by the same person who initiated closings. As it turns out, *–to marking is used on other-attentive courses of action launched by the same party who initiated the closing section* (see Table 1).[15] This generalization is in line with the observations about "how are you" type inquiries made in the previous section because "how are you" questions are a particular kind of an other-attentive action.

Table 1 The Use of the Particle –*to* in Conversation Closing Sections

A Initiates New Topic	Topic is Other Attentive	Topic is Self-Attentive
Same person (*A*) initiated closing	Quadrant I –*to* marked (12 cases)	Quadrant III unmarked (7 cases)
Interlocutor (*B*) initiated closing	Quadrant II unmarked (15 cases)	Quadrant IV unmarked (14 cases)

Returning to Excerpt 8 and Excerpt 9, we note that the speakers who launched the closing section (Olga and Dusja) are the ones who posed the *–to*-marked questions. This is consistent with the findings regarding the "how are you" inquiries launched in conversation closing environments discussed earlier. At that time, we noted that *–to* marking on such questions suggests that the speaker is taking the responsibility for initiating conversation closure before the affairs of the other person have been adequately discussed. It appears that similar dynamics are at play here. By marking their inquiries with *–to*, the speakers (Olga and Dusja) index their responsibility for introducing the matter late in the conversation. Additionally, the topics raised by the *–to*-marked interrogatives are other-attentive (the way "how are you" inquiries are other-attentive) as they show the speakers' interest in the affairs of their addressees. (In other words, both Excerpts 8 and 9, as well as the "how are you" in Excerpts 3 through 5, belong to Quadrant I of Table 1.) These observations support the argument that the particle *–to* marks speakers' accountability for launching a particular course of action late (and that it was noticeably absent earlier) and conveys interlocutors' orientation to displaying other attentiveness.

The two above examples (Excerpt 8 and Excerpt 9) contrast with the following excerpt in which a question placed within the closing section is left unmarked. Here, the questioner (Ann) is not the same person who initiated the conversation's closure (Quadrant II of Table 1).

```
Excerpt 10: HM2-7 (Kira is the caller)

(2:35) ((about some bookshelves))

1  ANN:   Ja xachu shtonibut' takoe/
           I want   something   such
           I want something like that

2          (0.8)

3  KIRA:  N^u okej/Ladna/Zanimajsja tam/Ne budu dolga gavarit' ⇐
           PRT okay okay   work      there not will long talk
           Alright/ Okay/ Take care  of things/ I won't talk long

4          na seli tam eta
           on  cell there PRT
           on a cell phone

5  ANN:   Ladna/
           okay

6  KIRA:  ↑Ladna/Nu celuju radnaj[a/
           okay  PRT  kiss    dear
           Okay/ I kiss you my dear

7  ANN:                          [Nu ladna mamachka/
                                  PRT okay  mom
                                  Okay mom
```

```
 8  KIRA:   Paka/=
             bye

 9  ANN:    =Ty astarozhna/=
              you careful
             Be careful

10  KIRA:   =Da [milen'kaja/
              yes honey

11  ANN:        [Ty xarasho? daexala/
                 you well    arrived
               Was your ride good?

12  KIRA:   .h Da ochen'/
               yes very

13  ANN:    [A

14  KIRA:   [By:stra/ Ah-hah,/
             fast
            It was fast/ Ah-hah/

15             (0.2)

16  ANN:    N[u paka
            PRT bye
            Bye then

17  KIRA:    [Nu celuju tebja/
              PRT kiss you
              I kiss you

18  KIRA:   [Ah-hah/

19  ANN:    [Ah-hah

20  ((disconnected))
```

In this segment, the move to close the conversation is initiated by Kira (at Line 3). Ann initially aligns with the proposed closure (Lines 5 and 7), but then, after Kira initiates a terminal exchange of goodbyes (Line 8), Ann suspends the closing by launching a new conversational matter (Line 11).[16] Ann's inquiry is other-attentive, asking for an update on Kira's morning ride to work. In spite of its placement in the closing section of the conversation, the question is unmarked, unlike the similarly positioned inquiries in Excerpt 8 and Excerpt 9. The comparison between these cases suggests that the identity of the closing initiator is relevant for –to marking. By not marking this inquiry with –to, the speaker appears to indicate that she does not treat herself as accountable for its late placement given that she was not the one who initiated the closing before such an inquiry could be launched.

The argument for *–to* marking as an indicator of social accountability is further supported by the fact that late inquiries that launch *self*-attentive courses of action are not marked with *–to* unlike those that are other attentive (see Quadrants III and IV of Table 1). In the following segment (Excerpt 11), the matter raised in the closing section is not only self-attentive but also potentially delicate—and is left unmarked (Line 5). Misha calls to make arrangements about car repairs. In an early conversation, Greg had apparently asked Misha to spread the word about a meeting in support of Israel.

```
Excerpt 11: NG4-3 (Misha is the caller; returning Greg's call)

(1:00) ((car repair arrangements))

1  GREG:   bes desti pjat'/= da(vaj)/
           of ten   five   give
           Ten to five/ (okay)

2  MISH:   °Daghavari[lis'°/
            agreed

3  GREG:            [°Ladna°/(°Sa[ljut°)/                    ⇐
                     okay     salute
                     Okay     Bye

4  MISH:                         [Xarasho
                                  good

5  GREG:   Paka/<.h↑Ty kamunit' gavari?↓/Ty Marku gavari,↓/
           bye     you anybody told     you NAME told
           Bye/Did  you tell anybody /Did  you tell Mark

6          (2.0)

7  MISH:   Ne:t/
           no

8          (0.2)

9  MISH:   Nu shto on paed^et kudata/  [°daleko°/
           PRT what he will-go somewhere  far
           He wouldn't go somewhere/ far

10 GREG:                                [Nu vot vidish/
                                         PRT PRT see
                                         You see ((= there you go))

11         eh[(ja)
              I

12 MISH:   [(Vsë zhe) (.) dazhe (.) udivilsja za te[bja/
            all PRT       even     surprised by  you
            You even surprised me
```

```
13 GREG:                                      [Nda/Nu j^a tozhe
                                              yes PRT I too
                                              Yes/ I think the same

14          dumaju/ da/
            think yes
            thing/ right
```

At Lines 3–5, Greg initiates the conversation closing and quickly moves to "byes" but then rushes to raise a new topic at Line 5. Given the position of Greg's questions, –to marking is expected; yet they are left unmarked. Unlike the previous examples, the new sequence is self- rather than other-attentive (Quadrant III of Table 1). Even though this question requests information about the interlocutor, it is self-interested (and, thus, self-attentive) as it deals with the recipient's obligation. In fact, Greg is checking up on the status of his earlier request, which is a rather delicate, self-regarding action because it holds the recipient accountable to a prior commitment. The use of –to here would have suggested that the speaker had meant to or should have raised the matter earlier. Instead, the absence of –to prevents such understanding, and the question's late placement suggests that the issue is just an afterthought. This, in effect, downgrades the importance of this course of action to the speaker and the gravity of a possible negative response.

Given the above observations regarding conditions on –to marking in conversation closing environments, it is perhaps unsurprising that self-attentive courses of action placed after the closing launched by the another party would not be –to marked (see Quadrant IV of Table 1). Excerpt 12 provides a case in point. The two women are discussing their adult children, and then Dusja moves to close the conversation (Line 4).

```
Excerpt 12: GM-19 (Masha is the caller)

(9:05) ((about providing children with food))

1  DUS:   N^u nevazmozhna/= N'ne beru:t ani nichë/.hhh Vse xudejut/
           PRT impossible PRT  not take they nothing all lose-weight
           Impossible/ They don't take anything/ Everybody's losing
           weight

2               (.)

3  MSH:   [Nda/
            yes

4  DUS:   [.h tk! [tk! La:dna Masha/ Pashli kinu stmatret'/= sch[as/ ⇐
                      okay  NAME   let's   movie watch    now
                    Okay Masha/ Let's go watch the film/  Now

5  MSH:        [(Ja)
                   I
```

```
 6  MSH:                                                [Uzhe
                                                         already
                                                         Already

 7          kino/<Padazhi:(t')/
            movie   wait
            the film   is starting/ Wait

 8  DUS:    V sem' chasov/ Da/
            at sevel hours yes
            At seven o'clock/ right

 9  MSH:    A/ Net eschë bes pjat[i/<Xatite Ja xachu dva slova =
            oh no  yet without five    want   I want    two words
            Oh/ No it's still five   minutes to/You  want- I want to

10  DUS:                          [Ah:

11  MSH:    =[(sprasit')/
              ask
            ask you a couple of words¹⁷


12  DUS:    [Nu: davaj
             PRT go-ahead
             Go ahead

13  MSH:    Dusja Mo:zhet byt' takoe shto v't v dectve u menja byl
            NAME  may     be   such that PRT in childhood with me was
            Dusja is it possible that during my childhood I had

14          nastajaschij perelo,m/ .h i pastepena vot eta ruka vsja
            real         fracture   and gradually PRT that arm all
            a real  fracture/ and gradually my entire arm

15          ana mne chëta (.) takaja stala strashnaja eta (uzhe)
            it  me something   such became scary      that already
            it became sort  of ugly it's all swollen

16          opuxal'/
            swelling
```

At Line 4, Dusja launches the conversation closing. Masha objects and initiates a new topic at Lines 9/11, justifying the launch of this topic by reference to the fact that they still have time before their show starts. This new topic is self-attentive as Masha is on the way to ask for some medical advice (see Lines 13–16). The self-attentive character of the inquiry and its placement after a closing initiated by the other person contribute to the lack of –to marking.

To summarize, we have observed that when new issues are launched in conversation closing contexts, only other-attentive inquiries posed by the person who launched the closing are –to marked. Given the status of these questions as "last

opportunities" to inquire into the affairs of the other person, the presence of *–to* marking is indicative of the speaker's orientation to broader issues related to maintaining and negotiating interpersonal relationships. By marking the question with *–to*, the speaker shows that she should have asked the question earlier or that she had meant to ask it earlier, rendering its earlier absence into an accountable interactional event. The lack of *–to* marking, on the other hand, indicates the speaker's lack of responsibility for the delay and/or renders the issue as an afterthought.

It should be emphasized that the decision to mark a particular new topic initiation as delayed—and, therefore, notably absent earlier—is not a formulaic one but sensitive to a variety of social, situational, and interactional contingencies. The flexible nature of this linguistic resource can be illustrated in the following case that appears to deviate from the general distribution presented in Table 1. (See also Note 15.) This is a short conversation between two women who do not know each other. The caller (Kira) calls a friend of hers, Nina, whose mother (Liz) is visiting from out of town. When the phone is answered by Liz, Kira recognizes who the answerer is but Liz does not know who is calling.

```
Excerpt 13: HM8-1 (Kira is the caller)

((dialing))

1  KIRA:  -obrae utra/
          good morning

2  LIZ:   Dobrae utra/
          good morning

3         (.)

4  KIRA:  S priezdam vas/
          with arrival you
          Welcome!

5  LIZ:   Spasiba/Kto (eta)
          thanks   who  that
          Thank you/ Who is it

6         (0.2)

7  KIRA:  Eta Kira/A Niny [ne?tu/
          this NAME  PRT NAME not-home
          This is Kira/ Nina is not home?

8  LIZ:                  [A:/ A/ Dimina zhena?/
                          oh  oh  NAME's wife
                         Oh oh Dima's  wife?

9         (0.5)

10 KIRA:  Ne:t/ net/
          no    no
```

```
11          (.)

12 LIZ:     Ne,t/ Niny net/ Nina na rabotu pashla/
            no    NAME no   NAME to  work    went
            No,/ Nina is not home/ Nina went to work

13 KIRA:    A:/ Xarasho/ Ladna/                              ⇐
            oh   well    okay
            Oh alright/ Okay

14          (.)

15 KIRA:    .hAna k ve?ch- ve?cheram budet/da,/
             she at eve-   evening   will-be yes
            She'll be home at night right

16 LIZ:     N^u da/ Kadanibut' vecheram/
            PRT yes sometime    evening
            Yes/ Sometime at night

17          (0.2)

18 KIRA:    Hm-mm,/ Nu spasiba/ La[dna/                      ⇐
                    PRT thanks  okay
                    Thank you/  Okay




19 LIZ:                             [Xar- Xarasho/[Kira,/
                                         well NAME
                                       Alright/Kira,

20 KIRA:                                           [Dasvidan'ja/
                                                    goodbye

21 LIZ:     D[asvidan'ja/
             goodbye

22 KIRA:                                  [A Rozik vsë v parja?dke/
                                           PRT NAME all in order
                                           Is Rozi good?

23 LIZ:     Eh n^u da/ pachti/
               PRT yes almost
               Yes/ sort of

24          (0.5)
```

```
25 KIRA:   >Da/a shto< ana bal'na? byla/ne,t/=
            yes PRT what she sick   was not
           Yes/  What is it  she was sick? no?

           ((conversation ends 6 lines later))
```

It is evident that there are quite a few problems with how the call unfolds that appear to do with Kira's inconsistent treatment of Liz as either a "switchboard operator" or a legitimate recipient of the call. Shortly after the beginning of the call, Kira seems to abandon her attempt to treat Liz as a call recipient (which she did at Line 4 with a *welcome*), and after learning that her intended recipient (Nina) is not home, initiates conversation closure with the preclosing token "ladna" *okay* (first at Line 13 and then again at line 18). The two interlocutors quickly move to the exchange of goodbyes (Lines 20–21); however, immediately following her goodbye, Kira reopens the conversation with an inquiry about Liz's granddaughter (now again treating Liz as a legitimate call recipient). Given what we have observed about the use of the particle –*to*, we may expect that this other-attentive inquiry launched by the person who first initiated closings will be –*to* marked. Why is it not? The issue here appears to be in the kind of relationship—or, as a case may be, a nonrelationship—between the two interlocutors. I have argued that the particle indexes the speaker's understanding that there was an expectation (or a shared expectation) for a particular course of action to occur during the conversation and that the expectation was breached. By reference to that expectation, the actual launching of the matter is delayed. In this case, however, the two interlocutors do not share a personal relationship, and the call answerer does not even recognize in what relationship the caller stands to her or her family, so there is hardly an expectation that any inquiry into Liz's family will in fact take place. So when Kira does pose the question, the initiated course of action is not presented as having been missing and now delayed. We might even say that it is not "other-attentive" given the impersonal, incidental nature of the relationship between the caller and the person who answered the phone.

The analysis of this deviant case illustrates how local interactional contingencies might impinge on the speaker's decision to mark a particular inquiry as delayed. Although the general pattern is for the speaker to mark as delayed other-attentive courses of actions whose late placement is attributable to him/her, the decisions about what constitutes a "late" course of action and what constitutes an "other-attentive" course of action are local ones, reflexive of the kind of relationship inter-locutors are constructing on a particular interactional occasion.

Conclusions

This article has examined conversation closings in Russian, focusing on how interlocutors may choose to avert the impeding ending of a social encounter by introducing new topics into discussion. We have seen that speakers may mark these new topics with a discourse particle that indexes the current action's late placement and that this marking

is indicative of the speaker's orientation to displaying attentiveness to the addressee's lifeworld. So while many kinds of new matters are commonly raised in conversation closings, only those that deal with the addressee—and only those raised by the person who initiated the closing—are especially marked so as to suggest the speaker's accountability for their late placement. Because conversation closings are last possible opportunities for raising a particular matter in *this* conversation, stakes are high for doing it in ways that would not undermine the current state of the relationship. The Russian particle –*to* is one resource interlocutors can use to achieve the delicate checking and balancing— "who asked what when"—that goes on in the environments of leave-taking.

Although prior research into the role of topical talk in the construction of interpersonal relationships has focused primarily on identifying topics that constitute different types of relationships, the findings presented here suggest that it is not only important *what* is discussed but also *how* and *when* various matters are brought into the conversation, thus advancing our knowledge of the repertoire of discursive practices deployed in relationship work (e.g., Bolden, 2006; Lerner, 1992; Mandelbaum, 1987; Maynard & Zimmerman, 1984). We saw that discourse markers—often dismissed by communication scholars as purely grammatical objects—are, in fact, instrumental both in the moment-by-moment construction of interpersonal relationships and in bridging discrete social encounters across periods of separation. The article indicates that interpersonal work can be accomplished not only through readily identifiable behavior (e.g., well wishing or saying "hi" to the addressee's family members) but also through less easily noticeable, yet consequential, details of talk—which need, therefore, to be examined as part of the meaningful communicative behavior. Overall, the article highlights the importance of detailed analyses of actual talk-in-interaction for understanding interpersonal dynamics. Although each particular instance of failing to (timely) inquire into the life of the other person might appear insignificant for a long-term development of a relationship, a close analysis of relevant episodes shows that parties carefully track just such small infractions and take active measures to remedy their impact.

Acknowledgments

Notes

1   Introductory discussions of conversation analysis can be found, for example, in Goodwin and Heritage (1990) and Heritage (1984, 1995).
2   Other conversation analytic work into closings includes Antaki (2002), Button (1990), Davidson (1978), Goldberg (2004), and Jefferson (1973). In addition to ordinary

settings, research has also been conducted on closings in a variety of professional contexts, such as health consultations (Heath, 1985, 1986; Robinson, 2001), television news interviews (Clayman, 1989; Clayman & Zimmerman, 1987), and academic advising sessions (Hartford & Bardovi-Harlig, 1992).

3   There has been some research into the organization of conversation closings in a number of languages other than English (e.g., Auer, Couper-Kuhlen, & Müller, 1999; Fitch, 1990/1991; Pavlidou, 1997, 2002; Placencia, 1997).

4   This particle is a particular type of a "misplacement marker"—a marker that suggests that the current utterance is in some way misplaced (e.g., Jefferson, 1978; Jucker & Ziv, 1998; Lenk, 1998; Mazeland & Huiskes, 2001; Owen, 1985; Schiffrin, 1987).

5   In conversation analytic terms, I am focusing on first pair parts of adjacency pair sequences and argue that the particle marks the delay or misplacement of the current turn constructional unit (Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974). For convenience, I will refer to turn constructional units as utterances or turns at talk.

6   This excerpt is from the audiotape that came with the book by Kitaigorodskaia and Rozanova (1994), but it has been retranscribed.

7   For English conversations, these issues are discussed in Button (1987, 1990) and Schegloff and Sacks (1973).

8   Additionally, there may be a constellation of prosodic characteristics—especially a relatively high pitch onset and the preceding in-breath—that suggests their functioning as new activity initiators (cf. Auer et al., 1999; Bolden, in press-a; Couper-Kuhlen, 2004; Goldberg, 2004).

9   The term "how are you" inquiry is meant as a cover for a number of related, though consequentially different, questions, such as "how are you doing?", "how are you feeling?", "are you okay?", and the like (Schegloff, 1986). The default form of a "how are you" question in Russian is "kak dela?" (literally, *how are things?*). As in English, many other permutations exist.

10 For a discussion of some late "how are you" inquiries in English, see Schegloff (2002).

11 The reason for Marsha's reticence in responding to the "how are you" question has to do with the proper ordering of news telling. When Boris called, she had not had a chance to tell her husband the news about the car. Conveying news to a more distant relation before a close intimate can be problematic (Sacks, 1995).

12 I am not claiming that the other person never had a chance to raise an issue of concern to them (as they could, most likely, have done it unilaterally at an earlier point in the conversation), only that their interlocutor has not provided them with that opportunity via an inquiry into their state of being. The difference is important because certain personal relationships may be characterized by an obligation to inquire about the other—whether or not there is anything important enough to discuss.

13 In addition to launching new matters, interlocutors may return to some prior course of action after the initiation of closing, but in the interests of space, such cases will not be examined here.

14 It should be noted, however, that some action trajectories have been identified as conversation closure implicative. These especially include arrangements of various sorts (Button, 1987; Schegloff & Sacks, 1973). See also Note 15, where it is suggested that future-oriented courses of action are treated quite differently from others as far as the particle –to is concerned.

15   A number of cases of *un*marked topic initiators that may, at first glance, contradict this
     generalization have been found (i.e., potentially belonging to Quadrant I of Table 1);
     yet, on further examination, they were excluded from consideration. Two environ-
     ments deserve particular mention. First, there are cases where the new topic initiations
     come in closing *relevant* environments but not in the closing sections. Typically, the
     speaker would rush to introduce a new topic after hearably gearing up for a closing.
     Here is one example (see Line 4).

```
RP 23 (4:00) ((about Misha's job schedule))


1   RIMA:   .h Nu zamechatel'na/ Ochen' xarasho/
                PRT wonderful    very   good
                 Excellent/ Very good

2           (.)


3   MISH:   [nDa,/
              yes

4   RIMA:   [.hh >Nu jasna/Kak< vy- vchera iskupalis'/hh
                 PRT clear  how   you yesterday swam
                 I see/How did your swim go yesterday?
```

Here, Rima's topic summatives (Lines 1 and beginning of 4) can be heard as clearing up
a way for the conversation closing, yet they do not in themselves initiate the conver-
sation's closure (Bolden, in press-a). The rushed launch of a new topic is an alternative
to a closing initiation and a way to avoid moving into a closing.
   Second, there are cases in which new topics initiated in closing sections are *ordinarily*
launched in closing environments and, therefore, not delayed in the same way other
inquiries launched in this position are. Specifically, these are future-oriented topics that
have to do with the addressee's plans (cf. Button, 1987). Here is one instance.

```
GM 7 (2:50)


1   DUS:    .hhh Nu xarasho/La:dna/
                 PRT good   okay
                 Alright/ Okay

2   DUS:    Nu ^ladn[a
            PRT okay
            Okay

3   LEN:           [Ladna/ [Ja pazvanju/
                    okay    I  will-call
                    Okay/ I'll call
```

```
4   DUS:              [Zavtra ty tyda? edesh/
                       tomorrow you there go
                       You are going there tomorrow?
```

Dusya's question at Line 4 deals with the addressee's plans for the next day, and closing implicative contexts are common places where such issues are raised.

Cases like these demonstrate that the deployment of the particle –to is sensitive both to the positioning of the new topic initiator by reference to the conversation closing move and to the kind of topic being raised.

16   Ann's solicitude *be careful* (Line 9), while not a proper response to Kira's *bye* (Line 8), is in line with the conversation closing trajectory usually resulting in only a minimal expansion of the closing section (Button, 1987).

17   This is a blend of "ask you a couple of things" and "tell you a couple of words."

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Appendix

Transcription conventions

The transcripts are based on conversation analytic transcription conventions developed by Gail Jefferson (see, e.g., Ochs, Schegloff, & Thompson, 1996, pp. 461–465). Instead of the standard ways in which unit boundary intonation is transcribed in English, the following modifications to the conventions are made to account for the particulars of Russian intonation:

, ? placed after the syllable carrying the distinct intonation contour (comma or questioning intonation) that will be actualized at the unit boundary

/ unit boundary. If no intonation symbol (such as ?) is placed in the preceding unit, it marks default, somewhat falling pitch contour

./ marks final pitch drop that is larger that the default, unmarked pitch drop

Additional intonation symbols

w^ord marks a distinct pitch peak on the following syllable or vowel (higher than <u>underline</u> and shorter than ↑arrow)

w^<u>o</u>rd marks a dip in pitch on the following stressed vowel (as opposed to the common rise on the stressed vowel)

   The article uses a unique transliteration system that was designed to transcribe Russian-language materials in the conversation analytic tradition. Table 2 shows the correspondences between the employed system (in the "Transcript" columns) and other standard ways of representing Russian: Russian Cyrillic alphabet, Library of Congress transliteration symbols (without diacritics), and standard international phonetic alphabet symbols. The first line of the transcript represents Russian data using the conventions shown in Table 2. The second line is a word-for-word translation into English (PRT stands for "particle"). The third line is idiomatic translation (with minimal information on sound production).

Table A1 Correspondences Between Russian Cyrillic Alphabet, Library of Congress (LoC) Cyrillic Transliteration Conventions, the IPA, and the Symbols Used in the Transcripts

Cyrillic	LoC	IPA	Transcript
a	a	a	a
б	b	b	b
в	v	v	v
Г	g	g	g
д	d	d	d
е	e	jɛ/ɛ	e
ё	e	jɔ/ɔ	ë
ж	zh	ž	zh
з	z	z	z
и	i	i	i
й	i	j	j
к	k	k	k
л	l	l	l
м	m	m	m
н	n	n	n
O	o	ɔ	o
П	p	p	p
р	r	r	r
с	s	s	s
T	t	t	t
у	u	u	u
ф	f	f	f
X	kh	x	x
ц	ts	ts	c
ч	ch	tʃʲ	ch
ш	sh	ʃ	sh
щ	shch	tʃʲ	sch
ъ			''
ы	e	ɨ	y
ь	'	ʲ	'
э	y	ɛ	e
ю	iu	ʲu	ju
я	ia	ʲa	ja
a/o (unstressed)		ɔ	a
Г (dialectical)		ɣ	gh
nonstandard reduced deleted vowel(s)			`

Note: IPA = international phonetic alphabet.

Rouvrir les conversations russes : La particule discursive *–to* et la négociation de la responsabilité interpersonnelle des conclusions

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Résumé

L'article examine la façon dont les objectifs de maintien et de confirmation des relations interpersonnelles sont accomplis par les détails verbaux lors des sections conclusives de rencontres sociales. Sur la base de conversations téléphoniques en russe entre des intimes, l'article explique les façons dont les interactions peuvent être rouvertes et, plus particulièrement, le rôle de la particule discursive russe *–to* dans les énoncés qui soulèvent de nouveaux sujets dans des contextes conclusifs. L'analyse démontre que bien que plusieurs types de nouveaux sujets soient couramment soulevés dans les conclusions de conversations, seuls ceux traitant du destinataire (et seuls ceux soulevés par la personne ayant initié la conclusion) sont marqués de façon à indiquer la responsabilité du locuteur dans l'invocation tardive du sujet. Ceci suggère que les façons dont de nouveaux sujets sont abordés dans les conclusions de conversations reflètent l'orientation du locuteur à afficher une préoccupation pour le destinataire et de l'intérêt envers lui.

Die Wiederbelebung russischer Unterhaltungen: Das Diskursteilchen *-to* und die Aushandlung interpersonaler Verantwortlichkeit beim Beschließen von Unterhaltungen

Der Artikel untersucht, wie das Ziel der Aufrechterhaltung und Beteuerung bei interpersonalen Beziehungen durch Rededetails während der Endphase sozialer Annäherung erreicht wird. Auf der Basis von Telefongesprächen mit eng vertrauten Personen in russischer Sprache werden Möglichkeiten aufgezeigt, wie eine Interaktion wieder eröffnet werden kann, genauer welche Rolle der russische Diskurspartikel *-to* bei Aussagen spielt, die zum Zeitpunkt des Konversationsendes neue Themen anstoßen sollen. Die Analyse zeigt, dass zwar viele neue Themen am Ende von Gesprächen eingeführt werden, aber nur diejenigen, die den Adressat betreffen und nur jene, die von der Person angebracht werden, die das Ende des Gesprächs initiiert hatte, entsprechend markiert werden, um zu verdeutlichen, dass es in der Verantwortung des Sprechers liegt, diesen Aspekt so spät in der Unterhaltung angesprochen zu haben. Dies verdeutlicht, dass die Art und Weise wie eine neue Thematik am Ende der Unterhaltung eingeführt wird, das Anliegen des Sprechers widerspiegelt, sein Interesse am Adressaten darzustellen.

Reabriendo las Conversaciones Rusas: El Discurso de la Partícula –*to* y la Negociación de la Responsabilidad Interpersonal en los Cierres

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Resumen

Este artículo examina cómo los objetivos de mantenimiento y reafirmación de las relaciones interpersonales son llevados a cabo a través de los detalles en las charlas durante el cierre de los encuentros sociales. Sobre la base de conversaciones telefónicas en idioma Ruso entre familiares cercanos, este artículo explica las formas en las que las interacciones pueden ser reabiertas y, más específicamente, el rol de la partícula de discurso -*to* del idioma Ruso sobre las palabras que brindan nuevos asuntos en los ambientes de cierre. El análisis muestra que mientras muchas formas de nuevos asuntos emergen al cierre de las conversaciones, sólo aquellas que tratan sobre el destinatario y sólo aquellos asuntos planteados por la persona que inició el cierre – son marcados de manera tal que indican la responsabilidad del interlocutor por haber planteado la cuestión más tarde. Esto sugiere que las formas en las que estos nuevos temas son introducidos en el cierre de las conversaciones reflejan la orientación del hablante mostrando consideración e interés por el destinatario.

重开俄国会话：话语虚词 - to 和结束时人际责任的安排

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摘要

本文检验维护和确认人际关系的目标是如何在社交结束时通过谈话细节来达成的。 我们利用知交之间的俄语电话谈话剖析互动再现的方式。我们具体分析了俄语话语虚词 - to 在社交结束时提出新的问题时所扮演的角色。分析表明，尽管许多新事在交谈结束时被提起，只有那些与题及人相关的和由话题人引发的内容才会被注意，以便表明话者最后提起该问题的责任。 这表明在会话结束时才提起新题目能显示话者对对方关心和感兴趣。

러시안 대화의 재 개시: 대화시 사용되는 담화소사 –*to*와 대화종료시 개인적 책임감의 협상

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요약

본 논문은 개인적관계를 유지하고 재확인하려는 목표들이 어떻게 사회적 만남의 마지막 단계에서의 대화의 세부사항을 통해 성취되는가를 연구한 것이다. 가까운 가족들간 러시아어를 사용한 전화 통화에 기초하여, 본 본문은 어떻게 대화들이 재개방되는지, 더욱 세부적으로, 대화를 끝내는 상황에서 새로운 이슈를 끄집어내는 러시아 담화 소사 -*to*에 대한 연구이다. 본 연구의 분석은 여러 종류의 새로운 문제들이 대화종료시 나타나지만, 오직 수신인을 다루는 문제들과, 대화 종료를 이끌어 내는 사람에 의해 제기된 문제들만이 기록되며, 이렇게 함으로서 그문제를 뒤늦게 제기하는 대화자의 책임성을 강조한다는 것을 보여주고 있다. 이러한 결과는 대화의 마지막에 소개되는 새로운 주제들은 수신자를 위한 관심이나 수신자에 대한 관심을 나타내기 위한 대화자의 경향을 반영하는 것이라고 추측하게 된다.