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Margret Selting

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Emphatic speech style – with special focus on the prosodic signalling of heightened emotive involvement in conversation[☆]

Margret Selting

Institut für Germanistik, Universität Potsdam, Postfach 60 15 53, D-14415 Potsdam, Germany

Abstract

After a review of previous work on the prosody of emotional involvement, data extracts from natural conversations are analyzed in order to argue for the constitution of an ‘emphatic (speech) style’, which linguistic devices are used to signal heightened emotive involvement. Participants use prosodic cues, in co-occurrence with syntactic and lexical cues, to contextualize turn-constructive units as ‘emphatic’. Only realizations of prosodic categories that are marked in relation to surrounding uses of these categories have the power to contextualize units as displaying ‘more-than-normal involvement’. In the appropriate context, and in co-occurrence with syntactic and lexical cues and sequential position, the context-sensitive interpretation of this involvement is ‘emphasis’. Prosodic marking is used in addition to various unmarked cues that signal and constitute different activity types in conversation. Emphatic style highlights and reinforces particular conversational activities, and makes certain types of recipient responses locally relevant. In particular, switches from non-emphatic to emphatic style are used to contextualize ‘peaks of involvement’ or ‘climaxes’ in story-telling. These are shown in the paper to be ‘staged’ by speakers and treated by recipients as marked activities calling for displays of alignment with respect to the matter at hand. Signals of emphasis are deployable as techniques for locally organizing demonstrations of shared understanding and participant reciprocity in conversational interaction.

1. Introduction

From the linguistic point of view that will be adopted in this paper, ‘involvement’ is less closely linked to the notion of inner emotional states than to the notion of outward emotive performances. In keeping with this standpoint, the focus of the paper will not be on speech and emotionality but on speech and ‘displayed emotionality’.

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Displays of affect in speech must not be identical with, or even similar to, speakers' inner feelings.

In order to differentiate heuristically between different types of involvement and/or emotionality in speech, Arndt and Janney (1991: 525ff.) suggest the terms *emotional communication*, *emotive communication*, and *cognitive communication*. They locate these terms along a continuum, with emotive communication midway between the poles of emotional communication and cognitive communication. *Emotional communication*, they say, is "basically a spontaneous, unplanned, instinctive externalization of internal affect that is not under conscious control and is not necessarily intended to communicate anything concretely to anyone" (1991: 527). *Cognitive communication* refers to "a conscious, reflected, intentional activity with functional relevance for both partners" via "culturally learned symbolic activities" (1991: 528, 531). *Emotive Communication*, which largely corresponds to what other authors conceive of as the expression of *attitude* (cf. Couper-Kuhlen, 1986: 174), is "the intentional expression of feelings and attitudes via culturally learned affective displays" (Arndt and Janney, 1991: 531).¹

Linguistic analysis can deal neither with the investigation of 'real' involvement and its relation to a person's inner psychological world, nor with the inner significance or meanings of *emotions* or *emotional communication*. These are, and must remain, the tasks of psychologists and psychoanalysts. A linguist, however, can look at outward displays of emotive involvement, expressions of *attitudes*, *emotive* signalling styles and strategies, etc., as contextualization cues: that is, as conventional means of making certain interpretive frames relevant and available for the interpretation of interlocutor's talk (Gumperz, 1982, 1992a). This is the perspective taken in this paper.

'Involvement' is a fairly general, holistic, interpretive notion related to the field of emotions and attitudes; interpretations of involvement depend on the use of signalling cues in particular sequential environments (cf. Caffi, 1992). Among these signalling cues, prosody, and in particular intonation, seems to play an undisputed role: "It is an undisputed fact that intonation has an important role to play in the expression of emotions and attitudes. The linguist's task therefore is not so much to determine *whether* intonation expresses a speaker's inner states or not but rather *how much* of this expression is indeed linguistic (...)" (Couper-Kuhlen, 1986: 173). Largely open is still the question of what cues are involved in the signalling of what emotions. Within psychology and linguistics, various attempts have been made to clarify this relation; these will be summarized and briefly discussed in section 2 of this paper.

Signals of 'emphasis' or 'surprise' are important and common emotive displays in which 'more-than-normal' involvement is expressed linguistically by cues that suggest the appropriate interpretive frames. Usually, the labels 'emphasis' and 'surprise' are not used to refer to 'normal' speech and interactive behavior; rather, they refer to speech activities that speakers perform, and recipients interpret, as particular,

¹ It was Goffman (1981) who, particularly in his analysis of 'response cries', argued that quite a lot of seemingly spontaneous 'emotional' communication is socially organized and communicative in design.

noticeable, and for this reason, marked, activities, on the basis of particular linguistic cues. The main focus of this paper will be on the signalling of emphasis via emphatic speech style.² In order to constitute emphatic style, a particularly marked prosody is used in co-occurrence with particular syntactic and lexical choices, most often in particular activity-types, and in particular sequential environments in conversational interaction.

In section 3 of this paper, I shall present case studies of empirical data from natural conversations to illustrate these points. My analysis will be a linguistic analysis which makes use of ethnomethodological thinking and conversation analytic methodology. I shall start from holistically interpreted shifts or switches from non-emphatic to emphatic style in turn-constructive units and turns in conversational interaction (Sacks et al., 1974), and I shall decompose the styles as far as audibly possible, in order to isolate their constitutive prosodic and other linguistic signalling cues. The structural analysis will be supported by a sequential analysis which shows that recipients orient themselves to the identified clusters of signalling cues.

My analysis will yield the result that prosodic marking is used as a device to evoke context-sensitive interpretations of emphatic 'peaks of involvement' in climaxes in story-telling. This, in turn, makes the recipient's display of her or his own alignment to the matter at hand locally relevant. The device has important functions in the sequential organization of displays of participant reciprocity in conversation.

2. Previous research on the prosody of involvement

Research on the general field of emotion in relation to communicative interaction is carried out in several separate subdisciplines of psychology and linguistics. These are dealt with in the other contributions to this volume. The current state of psychological and linguistic research is summarized in Fiehler (1990) and Fries (1991). Overviews of phonetic-phonological research on prosody and emotion/attitude can be found in Couper-Kuhlen (1986) and Arndt and Janney (1987). In the following, I shall review recent studies within the tradition of phonetics-phonology and conversation/discourse analysis, which are, in my view, directly relevant to the analysis of the prosodic signalling of involvement in general, and to the analysis of emphatic style in particular.

2.1. *Phonetic-phonological research*

The 'older' research on prosody/intonation and attitude is grouped into three approaches by Couper-Kuhlen (1986: 175ff.). A first approach is represented by experimental investigations of the relation between single acoustic parameters such as pitch and amplitude (and modifications, as well as combinations, thereof) and attitudes; a typical example is Lieberman and Michaels (1962). In this approach, "the working hypothesis is that the acoustic parameters of intonation relate directly to

² For an analysis of the signalling of 'surprise' or 'astonishment', see Selting (in press a,b).

certain intuitively determined 'attitudes' " (Couper-Kuhlen, 1986: 175). A second approach attempts to match motivated choices of attitudes with over-all intonational contours, again with experimental methodology; this approach is typified by the study of Uldall (1964). Both approaches provide preconceived prosodic as well as attitudinal categories, and correlate the degree of intersubjective non-chance interpretations of a link between (given, in part, synthesized/stylized) prosody and suggested categories of attitude. Both approaches can be criticized on the grounds that they ultimately only allow statements about the subjects' (forced-choice) reactions to the researchers' suggested, preconceived, and most often introspectively based, hypotheses. They do not allow any statements about subjects' and speakers' uses or interpretations of prosodic categories in natural communicative situations.

A third approach is represented by O'Connor and Arnold's (1973) attempt to empirically determine the attitudinal meanings of English 'tone groups' and 'nuclear tones' in conjunction with sentence types like *statements*, *questions*, *commands*, etc. (cf. Selting, 1992b). A summary of the labels ascribed to the use of one selected tone group is given by Couper-Kuhlen (1986: 179) as follows: "Tone group 5 (basically a falling-rising tune with optional low pre-head and tail), for instance, is said to convey the following attitudes in conjunction with *statements*: 'grudgingly admitting, reluctantly or defensively dissenting, concerned, reproachful, hurt, reserved, tentatively suggesting; (in echoes) greatly astonished' ". This approach has been criticized for its tendency to use sentences whose content is in many cases suggestive of the attitude ascribed, thus failing to single out intonation with enough clarity as the factor accountable for the interpretation (Couper-Kuhlen, 1986; cf. also Gibbon's (1981: 74) criticism of the "notional fallacy" of tonetic approaches). Also, its use of a virtually unlimited number of attitudinal categories has been criticised (Crystal, 1969: 294ff.).

More recent versions of tonetic and systemic intonation analyses (Halliday, 1967; Pheby, 1981) make a distinction between unmarked and marked choices of intonation in conjunction with sentences. These are assumed to have different consequences for the signalling of emotion and attitude: while the unmarked choices have largely grammatical meanings, only the marked choices seem to be related to emotion and attitude (cf. also Crystal, 1969: 261). For instance, in German, interrogative sentences having a question-word like the English *wh*-word type ('*W-Fragen*') are commonly said to call for falling terminal pitch in unmarked ('neutral') cases, whereas rising terminal pitch in these interrogatives is claimed to be marked and interpreted as 'polite', 'interested', 'interpersonally marked', or the like (Pheby, 1981: 875).³ Although this approach is careful to keep the lexical content of the token sentences constant when alternating their terminal intonation, interpretations such as these with respect to isolated sentences seem hard to justify.

The assumption of a close link between intonation and attitude/emotion is Bolinger's premise: "Intonation is part of a gestural complex whose primitive and

³ Cf. also von Essen (1964), Klein (1980, 1982), Kohler (1977); for summary of a similar situation in English see Arndt and Janney (1987: ch. 6). Some recent generative models of sentence intonation in German (Wunderlich, 1988), and recent experimental research on 'Satzmodus' in German (Altmann et al., 1989), are also based on this description.

still surviving function is the signalling of emotion" (1986: 195). Bolinger conceives of intonation in terms of Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) metaphors of 'up and down', which are believed to represent basic emotionally relevant dimensions. This distinguishes Bolinger's work from much traditional linguistic work (and from work of modern toneticians in particular), which in the attempt to determine the borderline between grammatical and emotional aspects of intonation, has been heavily biased towards the grammatical tradition, leaving emotional interpretations as a sort of residual category for grammatically unexplainable meanings. Bolinger reasons in the opposite direction: "though intonation is indispensable to grammar, the grammatical functions of intonation are secondary to the emotional ones; speakers *feel* differently about what they say, and the feelings manifest themselves in pitch changes that serve as clues" (Bolinger, 1986: 27). Among his intonational parameters, particularly the pitch ranges of pitch obtrusions in accent profiles are relevant for signalling emotional meanings. Whereas accentuation mainly signals a word's *semantic weight*, the local pitch range involved in the production of the accent profile, and the overall global pitch of an utterance, express emotional meanings such as the *degree of upness/emotion* (1986: 20).

What particular cues are associated with what attitudes? Couper-Kuhlen's (1986) tentative survey of intonational cues to attitude shows both agreement and disagreement in previous research: "Although the studies evaluated differ widely in experimental technique and set-up, there is a certain amount of apparent agreement. Note, however, that some results do conflict. The pitch level of 'anger', for instance, is established as high in some studies, as low in others. 'Fear' is said to have extremely narrow pitch range by some, but to have occasional high peaks by others" (1986: 180). As a result, it seems to be doubtful that a direct and one-to-one relation between attitudinal and prosodic parameters can be found.

So far, due to the use of largely preconceived notions and a failure to analyze natural everyday interaction, the existing research has produced few results which the student of natural conversational interaction might use for analytical purposes. What we need now, are detailed empirical analyses of emotive talk in natural situations of everyday conversational interaction. This might bring us a step further towards analyzing the 'display rules' (Couper-Kuhlen, 1986; Ladd, 1980) that speakers use in the signalling and contextualization of attitudes and involvement in interaction.

2.2. *Discourse and conversation analytic research*

Within conversation analysis and discourse analysis, research on topics like 'Exaltation' (Kallmeyer, 1979), 'troubles telling' (Jefferson and Lee, 1981), 'assessment sequences' (Pomerantz, 1978, 1984; Goodwin and Goodwin, 1992), 'mitigation-aggravation' (Labov and Fanshel, 1977) and 'intensity' (Labov, 1984; Bazzanella et al., 1991) touches on phenomena that, in some cases, involve the display and interactive processing of emotive signals. Most recently, there have also been new approaches to prosodic phenomena as contextualization cues for the constitution and signalling of conversational activities.

In his extensive study of communication and emotion, which combines conversation-analytical and discourse-analytical approaches, Fiehler (1990: 15) reconstructs an 'Anteilnahmemuster' (a pattern/sequence to show and instantiate 'shared involvement'). He argues that the display and processing of emotions in conversation is a patterned and sequentially organized process. "It serves the interactive processing of feeling, and has its basis in the exigencies of emotional correspondence" (1990: 151; translation M.S.). Most generally, the function of the communication of emotions, besides a particular pre-structuring of further potential activities, is to signal assessments. This implies that emotive displays in conversation share some properties with assessment sequences. Fiehler, however, restricts his analysis mainly to cases in which emotions are made lexically explicit, and he scarcely refers to prosody and intonation as signalling cues. Thus far, assessment sequences have been studied mainly only with reference to their lexical content, and only seldom and unsystematically with reference to prosody as a seemingly more subtle and implicit cue (but cf. Goodwin and Goodwin, 1992).

In an earlier study of a particular 'exalted' type of emotive interaction constituted by utterances displaying 'heightened emotional expressivity', Kallmeyer (1979) does mention some general prosodic characteristics of speech that constitute this modality: "a way of speaking in which large pitch movements are combined with strong/powerful accentuations, elongations, and emotional coloring" (Kallmeyer, 1979: 549; translation, M.S.); he also mentions a marked rhythmicity (1979: 565). Kallmeyer concludes that 'exaltation' is a conversational modality which needs to be constituted by the speaker and recipient in a sequentially organized way, and which is used to display reciprocity and to establish social relations between participants.

The studies above show that (a) interlocutors' displays and processing of heightened emotive involvement in conversation are sequentially organized and sequentially implicative activities, which (b) have interlocutors' expectations with respect to the display and/or maintenance of emotional reciprocity as their basis, and which, as a consequence of implying assessments, (c) are in some respects similar to assessment sequences.

Both Fiehler and Kallmeyer deal mainly with sequences in which the verbally explicit display and processing of emotive involvement is the object and topic of the sequences. In many cases, however, *prosody* signals emotive involvement, e.g., emphasis, without being itself the topic. This kind of signalling of involvement adds emotive 'overtones' to other activities. There are a few recent papers which deal in a more systematic way with uses of prosody in discourse to signal heightened involvement. These studies concentrate either on intonation or on accentuation and rhythm, and are discussed in the following section.

2.2.1. *Intonational parameters and involvement in discourse*

While in general, Brazil's theory of discourse intonation is hardly concerned with the emotive aspects of intonation, his category of *key* does sometimes imply some kind of emotive connotation, especially when the use of *high key* is claimed to signal a tone group as *contrastive*. To illustrate this, Coulthard and Brazil (1982: 103), for instance, give an example from Labov and Fanshel's (1977) therapeutic

discourse between Rhoda and her therapist, in which the therapist uses *RIGHT* with *high key* as a means of signalling the evaluative meaning and intention of this item. It is meant to signal a special kind of emphasis. Labov and Fanshel's (1977) further analysis of the use of pitch in the therapeutic discourse shows that the use of markedly high pitches is interpreted as a cue to signal emphatic speech activities in both Rhoda's and the therapist's speech (cf. esp. 1977: 42ff., 45, 146ff.; cf. also Brown et al. (1980: 21ff.) on high pitch and affective meaning or attitude, and on very high pitch peaks as associated with emphasis).

In developing their notion of contextualization, Cook-Gumperz and Gumperz (1976) and Gumperz (1982, 1992a,b) draw attention to the use of prosody as a non-lexical, relational signalling cue, which triggers, and makes relevant, culturally specific interpretive frames for the constitution and interpretation of conversational activities (cf. also Auer, 1986, 1992; Müller and Selting, 1989). Following this line of reasoning, both unmarked and marked uses of prosodic features can serve as signalling cues in the management of conversational interaction and in the expression of emotive involvement. All the following studies are based on this idea.

Tannen (1984) describes the features constituting 'high-involvement style' in talk among friends on the American East coast. Here, involvement is not signalled or constituted by prosody alone, but 'expressive' prosody (Tannen's term is 'paralinguistics') is used in co-occurrence with specific sequential and activity-type specific involvement strategies. Within the parameters listed as 'expressive paralinguistics', the marked use of prosodic parameters like markedly high and low pitches, the constitution of local contrasts by the production of marked shifts in pitch and amplitude, and marked voice quality and pausing are interpreted as expressive phenomena. Tannen presupposes a 'normal' use which is not interpreted as expressive or as a constitutive feature of 'high-involvement style'.

A particular marked use of high pitch in co-occurrence with increased loudness to constitute 'surprised' or 'astonished' questions is analyzed in Selting (in press b). I looked at a particular type of contrast between question types in repair sequences that is constituted by prosodic means only: the contrast between so-called 'normal' and 'astonished' questions. Normal questions have type-constitutive signalling cues that make an answer to the respective question type conditionally relevant. If, however, particular prosodic cues are used in otherwise identical question forms, the questions are interpreted as so-called 'astonished questions', which have quite different sequential implications than their unmarked counterparts. The cues which are mostly used as prosodic marking devices are: high global pitch, *plus* increased global loudness and/or locally marked accent, the latter being constituted by greater loudness or a larger pitch range than in the surrounding accents. These marking cues are used in addition to other type-constitutive signalling cues, and can apparently override other signalling devices.

Labov and Fanshel's, Tannen's, and my own analyses suggest that the marked use of prosodic parameters, i.e. a use that is recognizable as more noticeable and salient than in the surrounding units, signals some sort of 'special' meaning. In the appropriate context, such special marked uses of prosody may be interpretable as signalling heightened involvement or emotive meaning.

2.2.2 *Accentuation and rhythm and involvement in discourse*

A few recent studies suggest that the density of accentuation or the length of accent feet are means of signalling emphasis. In her study of speech rate changes in everyday conversation, Uhmman (1992) distinguishes between two perceptually distinct phenomena: the number of syllables per unit of time (Density I), and the number of accented syllables per unit of time (Density II). The results of interest here are summarized as follows: "Certain combinations of these parameters take over certain contextualization functions:

- High Density I and low Density II serve to contextualize parenthesis, sidesequences, afterthoughts as turn-exit devices, and parts of minor relevance for the development of the speaker's argument. These passages are perceived as 'fast' or 'rapid' speech.

- Parts of major relevance are contextualized by low Density I and high Density II. Auditorily, this is perceived as 'emphatic' and 'slow'" (Uhmman, 1992: 330).

These findings corroborate analyses by Selting (1989a) and Müller (1991), who look at the functions of alternating rhythm in natural conversational interaction. In my own case study, I found that in adjacent speech, participants locally contrasted accent feet (Bolinger, 1986) of less than 0.8–1.0 seconds duration with accent feet of twice or even three times that duration for strategic purposes. Shorter accent feet marked contributions as 'foregrounded/matter-of-fact/self-conscious/energetic/important', whereas longer accent feet marked contributions as 'less foregrounded/backgrounded/less self-conscious/less energetic/less important'. The shorter the accent units, the harder the speakers tried to contextualize the foregrounded relevance and emphatic nature of their speech. A similar point is made by Müller (1991). He analyzes cases of rhythmic scansion in Italian conversation, i.e., units of speech in which the rhythm is foregrounded in order to create a saliently marked 'metrical emphasis'. Scansions are extreme cases of rhythmicity (cf. also Auer, 1988), "showing an exhaustive use of possible stress positions: every grammatically stressable syllable is actually stressed and is a constituent 'beat' in a continued pattern of 'rhythmically recurring beats'" (1991: 39). Müller's conclusion: scansions "are used to display or to 'stage' formulations as 'extreme case formulations' (...), where this 'staging' has an interpretation to be specified within the speech activity where it occurs" (1991: 39).

These previous analyses allow the following hypothesis: on the premise that speakers and recipients make and know the distinction between unmarked and marked realizations of prosodic parameters, they use and interpret marked realizations of prosody to signal and contextualize some kind of special heightened involvement. The marked use of prosody is treated like 'a knot in the handkerchief' (Levinson, cf. Müller and Selting, 1989: 176ff.): a relational cue whose interpretation depends on its co-occurrence with other activity-type constitutive cues, which varies with the activity and local context in which it is used. In the appropriate context, the interpretation of involvement is an emphatic one.

The problem with this hypothesis is its presupposed notion of 'unmarked' uses of prosodic parameters, which contrast with marked uses of prosodic parameters, in which, for example, pitch or loudness is exceptionally and noticeably increased or decreased in comparison to the surrounding uses of the same parameters.

Although the use of prosodic marking has the power to contextualize special emotive meanings and interpretive frames, it is not as verbally explicit as, for example, Fiehler's *Anteilnahmemuster*. Instead of being itself the topic of conversation, prosodically signalled heightened involvement constitutes an emotive overtone of the matter at hand. It does not necessarily initiate sequences of its own, but rather only modifies or constitutes activities *in a particular way*. If marked prosody is used as part of a cluster of cues, and if this cluster constitutes a holistic, socially or inter-actively interpreted way of speaking, it can be analyzed as a 'speech style' (cf. Hymes, 1974) that expresses heightened emotive involvement.⁴

3. A linguistic manifestation of more-than-normal involvement: 'Emphatic (speech) style'

I shall restrict most of my further discussion and analysis to emphatic speech style. I take the signalling of emphatic style to be an expression and/or manifestation of a speaker's heightened emotive involvement, which is expressed and signalled by linguistic cues, be this for reasons of high(er) contrast or unexpectedness, high(er) positive or negative emotional load, animatedness, etc. Emphatic style is used to highlight any particular activity or any particular kind of emotive expression with which it occurs. It suggests and triggers interpretive frames of 'emphasis' or 'emphatic involvement'.

The interpretation of emphasis is contextualized and induced by the speaker's choice of a style-shift within the same speech event from an unmarked 'normal' style to a contextually and sequentially 'marked' style. The change can either be a gradual shifting (alteration) or a sudden switching (alternation) of styles. As style-constitutive cues, speakers generally use clusters of linguistic features (cf. Selting, 1989b). For the signalling of emphatic speech style, prosodic, syntactic and lexico-semantic cues are most relevant.⁵ Especially with respect to prosody, only the noticeable, saliently marked, realization of prosodic cues and devices in relation to surrounding units is deployable to signal emphasis: e.g. a higher density of accented (in relation to unaccented) syllables than in the surrounding units, in co-occurrence with higher pitch peaks and/or greater loudness than in the accents in the surrounding units. Speakers use single marked prosodic devices and/or clusters of marked signalling cues which, in co-occurrence with syntactic and lexical devices, and in cer-

⁴ Cf. also Sandig's (1986) conceptualization of style as 'Gleichzeitighandlung', i.e. a concomitant aspect of an activity.

⁵ That emphasis is not constituted by single cues but by a combination of different devices was already pointed out by Coleman (1914). According to Brown et al. (1980: 73), Coleman suggested that "emphatic prominence *may* be realized by pitch height but will also be realized by 'special stress, extra loudness, extra quickness, length of word, additional words *before* the intensified word to gain attention by keeping one waiting, pauses with the same object, and other devices such as repetition' ". For the traditional definition of emphasis in classical rhetoric, which also conceives of it as a complex phenomenon that involves different kinds of devices, lexical as well as syntactic, prosodic, and kinesic, see Lausberg (1960).

tain sequential positions, constitute a marked emphatic style. This triggers the interpretive frame of 'emphasis'. In brief, I shall call the holistic style which triggers the context-sensitive interpretation of emphasis 'emphatic (speech) style'.

Although it can be shown in many cases that people produce and interpret shifts from an unmarked, unemphatic style to a marked, emphatic style or vice versa, there is a clear-cut boundary neither between unmarked and marked uses of single devices nor between unmarked, unemphatic style and marked, emphatic style. Rather, the speaker's prior style functions as an empirical *tertium comparationis* in relation to which successive styles are produced and interpreted. Thus, both unmarked, normal style and marked, emphatic style must be conceived as dynamic, relational, interactional accomplishments (Selting, 1989b). Styles are flexible entities which are used to signal interactionally relevant meanings and contextualizations like 'emphasis'.

Styles are constituted and interpreted as holistic entities, but they can be analytically decomposed into their single style-constitutive devices; successive style alter(n)ations can be described as increases or decreases of constitutive cues.⁶ If participants can be shown to orient themselves to such alter(n)ations, this is evidence of the interactive and interpretive relevance of speech styles in conversation.

Emphatic style is expectable in a few sequential environments, e.g., especially in connection with evaluations, where it can mark 'peaks' of assessment sequences or conflictive arguments, and in artful dramatizations of evaluations, and/or in climaxes in conversational story-telling. Goodwin and Goodwin (1992) have shown that assessment sequences are organized activities that participants bring to a visible apex or climax (1992: 169). "As a coherent activity, assessments have a recognizable structure, including (1) a peak of involvement that is preceded by (2) visible precursors of that peak that participants can utilize to coordinate their arrival at the peak, and (3) procedures for withdrawal from this state of heightened mutual involvement. (...) In order to co-participate in an appropriate fashion at an appropriate moment, recipients track in fine detail the unfolding structure of the speaker's utterance, paying close attention to not only the projective possibilities made available by its emerging syntactic structure (e.g. the type of unit that is **about** to occur), but also the precise way in which it is spoken (e.g. lengthening of sounds within words and intonation changes)" (1992: 181f.). Similar climaxes or 'peaks of involvement' have been shown to be a structural component of certain types of story-telling (Goodwin, 1984; cf. also the extensive literature on story-telling since Labov and Waletzky, 1967).

In my analysis, I shall show that these structurings are also signalled and contextualized prosodically for participants in conversations. On the one hand, the interpretation of emphatic climaxes of activities is triggered by the constitution of emphatic style in the respective units; on the other hand, the emphatic turn-constructive units are often prepared for and 'staged' before their actual occurrence. My analysis will be largely restricted to climaxes in story-telling.

⁶ Speech style is a narrower concept than Gumperz' (1982) 'contextualization device'. While speech style is used as a contextualization device, and each style-constitutive cue is a contextualization cue, not every contextualization device/cue belongs to a style. Style is constituted by a cluster of socially or interactionally interpreted cues (cf. Auer, 1989; Hinnenkamp and Selting, 1989).

In the following, I shall combine a structural and a sequential analysis of some conversational extracts exhibiting switches to, or from, emphatic speech styles in conversational story-telling. I want to demonstrate the following points:

First, participants use the prosodic marking cue 'higher density of accented syllables than in surrounding units' in co-occurrence with particular syntactic and lexical devices to constitute an 'emphatic style' and to make the activity which is interpreted as emphatic stand off saliently from the surrounding units.⁷ The co-occurrence of such prosodically marked cues with explicit lexical intensity cues (Labov, 1984) can be taken as evidence for the interpretation of the prosodic cues (cf. Wootton, 1989).

Second, emphatic style is a marked contextualization device that is used in, and designated for, particular sequential positions only. Speakers switch to an emphatic style in order to contextualize climaxes in story-telling which are locally produced, but in many cases are more globally 'staged' and built up to. The restriction of marking devices to the constitution of particular activities only can be looked upon as evidence of their interpretive relevance.

Third, 'emphatic units' can be shown to be treated by recipients as units which call for responses. A speaker's display of emphatic involvement seems to make the recipient's display or his/her own alignment to the matter talked about locally relevant. The reconstruction of these recipient reactions warrants the analysis of emphatic style as an interpretively relevant notion to which recipients react and orientate themselves.

As the analysis of single so-called 'emphatic accents' in conversational turns presents serious methodological problems from the standpoint of assigning emotive emphasis, I shall restrict my analysis here to cases in which cues clearly accumulate, constituting saliently marked speech styles that signal emphasis.⁸

3.1. The data and their notation

The following data extracts are taken from informal conversations in the sound-studio at the University of Oldenburg. I asked several groups of three participants – students, friends and/or colleagues of mine who volunteered their participation – to have their after-dinner cup of coffee and chat in the sound-studio instead of in the cafeteria.

The transcription symbols used in the following extracts are given in the Appendix. Some of the conventions most important for my analysis will be explained now.

The prosodic parameters that are used to signal emphatic speech style concern global pitch and loudness, as well as local pitch accent movements and modifications. 'Global pitch and/or loudness' refers to the pitch movement and/or loudness within the turn-constructive unit or accent sequence as a whole, or large parts thereof. It is a prosodically cohesive unit with mostly one global direction of pitch movement, the length of

⁷ As high density of accented syllables in a unit, in most cases, co-occurs with low density of syllables per unit, which are often lengthened and produced with slow tempo, my notion of density corresponds to Uhmann's (1992) combination of low Density I plus high Density II (see above); in most cases, however, I shall not measure and calculate exact ratios.

⁸ On the types of evidence in conversation analytic methodology cf. especially Wootton (1989).

which is denoted by “()” in the transcripts. ‘Local pitch and/or loudness and/or duration’ is used to constitute accentuation. ‘Pitch accent movement’ refers to the pitch movement starting in accented syllables and, in general, continuing in the following unaccented syllables of the ‘accent unit’ until the next accented syllable. I differentiate between five different accent (proto-) types, which are listed and explained in the Appendix. The temporal organization of accentuation constitutes relatively regular ‘isochronous’ or irregular ‘unisochronous’ accent rhythms (cf. Bolinger, 1986: 63ff.), with shorter or longer ‘accent units’ or ‘cadences’ (Couper-Kuhlen and Auer, 1988).

The prosodic parameters needed for the description of the ‘prosodic marking’ constitutive of emphatic style are:

- (1) For the constitution of ‘dense accentuation’ and ‘marked rhythm’: the comparison of the number and length of accented syllables in relation to unaccented syllables in emphatic versus non-emphatic units. This will in many cases suffice; when, however, a rhythmical notation is needed, this will be introduced in the appropriate place.
- (2) For the constitution of global pitch and loudness variations:
 - high or higher global pitch than in the surrounding units, denoted by ‘H()’ in the prosody line of transcripts; and
 - increased global loudness in relation to the surrounding units, denoted by ‘<f f>’.
- (3) For the constitution of locally marked accent variants:
 - local large pitch range for the constitution of an accent with an extra high or low pitch peak, denoted by ‘↑’, ‘↓’ before the symbol denoting the pitch movement in and after the accented syllable; and
 - local increase of loudness for the constitution of an extra loud and strong accent, denoted by ‘<f>’ beneath an accented syllable;
 - marked additional elongation of vowels, denoted by ‘:’ in the text line.

The boundary between normal and marked realizations of prosodic categories is rather fuzzy. But even if these notions are absolutely relational, and the borderline between unmarked and marked uses is difficult to pin down, recipients, in most cases, seem to be able to perceive and interpret the difference without difficulty (cf. Selting, 1988). This does not preclude the possibility of cases in which speakers make use of this fuzzy borderline and produce unclear forms whose interpretations are open to interactive negotiation.

3.2. *Some examples of switches to emphatic style in shorter segments and single turn-constructive units*

Extracts (1) through (4) present fragments of conversational data in which speakers formulate units with switches to emphatic style. The emphatic units occur with climaxes in story-telling.

(1) K2: (Laufnr. 283ff.)

587 Ron: geNAUso sich SELber im FERNsehn zu sehn =
M(\ \ \ ↑\)

- 589 Ron: = ich bin einmal **HIER** drin gewesen (0.6)
 < all > M(\)
I was once in here
- 590 Ron: hab ein semiNAR mitgemacht äh: was **HIER** dann LIEF so (0.6)
 M(\) ↑ \ /)
participated in a seminar eh which was done here
- 591 Ron: äh: (0.4) wo: immer mit video **AUF**gezeichnet wurdn
 F(\)
 <all all
eh where always videos were made of
- 592 Ron: [die UNterrichtsstundn dann nich= die man dann :
 \ /) all>
the lessons then you know which one then
- 593 Ida: [mhm
 \ /)
mhm
- 594 Ron: [also JEder war geHALtn: SELber eine zu MAchen
 M(\) \ \ \ \ /)
so everybody should teach one himself
- 595 Ida: [jaa
 \
 yea
 (0.9)
- 596 Ron: * [sich dann da zu SE: HN das is toTA::L BLÖ:de
 H[(\) F(\ \)]
 < f >
 <| |>
to watch oneself there that's absolutely silly
- 597 Ida: [((laughs quietly))
 (1.0)
- 598 Ron: ECHT
 M(\)
 really
 (1.1)
- 599 Nat: nhn
 \ /

In extract (1), the speaker Ron tells a story in evidence of his general argument that although one feels horrible when listening to oneself on a tape recording, or watching oneself in a video recording for the first time, one can get used to it. Ron's story begins with a normal density of accentuation, in which one accented syllable is followed in most accent units by three to five unaccented syllables. In line 594, however, the density becomes a little higher; in the successive accent units, one accented syllable is followed by three, one, four, and one unaccented syllables respectively.

But a salient change in accent density and length finally occurs in Ron's assessment in line 596, when in the last two accent units, *toTA::L BLÖ:de*, there is no intervening unaccented syllable between the two accented syllables. Furthermore, the first accented syllable has additional loudness, and both accents exhibit additional marked elongations.

Two immediately adjacent accented syllables, like those in *toTA::L BLÖde*, are looked upon as a marked structure in prosodic phonology. Generally, in prosodically

unmarked structures, there is an alternation between stressed/accented syllables and unstressed/unaccented syllables. Assuming that regular stress/accent shifts may be used to achieve such unmarked structures, we can analyze structures with two immediately adjacent accented syllables as marked instances of 'stress/accent clash' (cf. Liberman and Prince, 1977; Couper-Kuhlen, 1992). In conversation, prosodically marked accent clashes are one means of signalling emphatic style.

The change in the density and the local marking of accentuation at this point in Ron's narrative, and the additional intensifying lexical item *total*, contextualize the evaluative climax of the story. The climax is also prepared for sequentially. Before it, there is a 0.9 second silence, after which Ron repeats the words *sich zu seh'n* (from line 587), which directly 'stage' the emphatic evaluative climax. The climax is recognized by Ida, who simultaneously laughs. Hence, in this instance, prosodic marking in co-occurrence with lexical intensification, and after sequential staging, appears to be interpreted as a signal of an emphatic climax, to which laughter is one possible means of displaying the recipient's alignment.

Extract (2) provides another example of a style switch that signals an emphatic climax in a narrative:

(2) KO: (Laufnr. ca. 170ff.)

457 Mia: = ich hab heute **MORGN** schon halbe **PAnik** gekriegt weil ich im

M(\ \ /)

I got this morning into half a panic because I got

458 Mia: im **HALS** son **KRATzn** gekricht hab ((clears throat)

M(\ \ /)

such a rough throat

459 Mia: und **GLEICH**zeitig ähm . **AN**gefangn bin zu **NIEßn**

M(\ \ \ /)

and at the same time eh I started to sneeze

460 Mia: [u nd **ICH** das **IS** vielleicht . du wirs jetz **KRANK**

M[(-) (/) (\)]

<all> <all>

and I thought that is perhaps you are falling ill

461: Dor: ((grinning noisily))

463: Mia: du kriegs jetz **IR**gendwie sone: er**KÄL**tung oder sowas

M(/ \)

you are now somehow catching a cold or such a thing

464 Mia: . ich find das **FÜRCH**terlich

H(↑ \)

<all all>

I think that's dreadful

465 Mia: wenn ich **EIN** tach im **BETT** verbringn muß .

\ \ ↑ \)

when I have to spend a day in bed

- 466 Mia: **FÜRCH:TER:LICH=**
 * F(↑\ \ \)
 <f >
dreadful
- 467 Dor/ STIMMT
 M(\)
 <p p>
right
- 468 Eli: = wenn du **RICHTig** KRANK bist jetzt mein ich
 T,F(\ \)
 <all>
when you are really ill I mean, now
- 469 Dor: kann ICH AU nich
 F(/ \)
I can't stand that either

In (2), the most emphatic unit occurs in line 466: *FÜRCH:TER:LICH* is produced with a pitch accent on each syllable, two lengthened syllables, and a marked local pitch moving to a very high pitch peak and extra loudness in the first syllable. The dense accentuation contrasts with the density of accents in the preceding and following units. In the preceding units (lines 457–465), an accented syllable is, in most cases, followed by three to five unaccented syllables; in the following unit (line 468), it is followed by one and four unaccented syllables. The item *fürchterlich* is itself repeated from line 464, and is also clearly evaluative. This item, and the item *BETT*, were produced with marked pitch in the prior units, where they already signalled more-than-neutral involvement. Hence, the repetition of *FÜRCH:TER:LICH* in a syntactically elliptical unit, with the additional marking by dense accentuation, is a salient escalation that triggers a clearly emphatic interpretation.

Yet, the situation here is complicated, as Mia produces an entire turn, and the emphatic assessment *FÜRCH:TER:LICH* is not a first assessment, but an escalation of a prior assessment. In lines 457–465, Mia already rejected a statement made by Eli about enjoying being ill. This first reaction ends in lines 464–465 (*ich find das FÜRCH:ter:lich wenn ich EIN tach im BETT verbringn muß*). The final culmination occurs in Mia's emphatic *FÜRCH:TER:LICH* in line 466. This display of emphatic involvement constitutes the peak or climax of the assessment sequence within the story-telling.

Immediately upon Mia's repetition, Dor signals her alignment by uttering *STIMMT*, in early achieved overlap, and later, *kann ICH AU nich* in line 469. Eli, too, tries to minimize the disagreement in order to be more in alignment with Mia's assessment. She reacts to Mia's emphatic rejection by downgrading her own prior positive evaluation of the general state of *being ill* to the more restricted state of *being really ill*.

In both cases so far, the switch to emphatic style contextualizes the peak or climax of an evaluation within story-telling.

The next extract (3) shows that emphatic style is not restricted to occurring with evaluative lexical items.

(3) K5: (Laufnr. 235ff.)

(After Cis has already told her interlocutors that, in the incident talked about here, she and her fellow students had severe difficulties communicating with one of their teachers.)

582 Cis: [und . JA: und . dann ham wir ver SUCHT das zu erKLÄRN

M(\ M, F(\ \)

and yea and then we tried to explain it

583 Lea: [mhm ((clears throat))

\ /

584 Cis: **STUN:DEN:LANK**

* F(\ \ \)

hours and hours

585 Cis: [un: also: ... also

— —

an so so

586 Lea: [hmm:

\

587 Eli: [bei **WEM WARN** das

H(/ \ \)

with whom was that

In extract (3), line 584, the speaker Cis produces maximal possible density of accentuation in the word *stundenlang*: each syllable is accented. Furthermore, the first two syllables have elongated vowels, and the last syllable is pronounced with an extra final /k/ in addition to the normal velar nasal /ŋ/. This accentuation contrasts with the prior units, in which accented syllables are followed by a higher number of unaccented syllables.

The emphatic *STUN:DEN:LANK* is produced in a syntactically elliptical unit after Cis has already told her interlocutors that she and her fellow students had severe trouble obtaining credit for an unusual paper from one of their teachers. Thus, here again, the emphatic unit seems to constitute an expressive climax in story-telling. Although the lexical item *stundenlang* is not evaluative by itself, its prosody, in co-occurrence with its use in the present story, suggest it as the negatively evaluated climax of Cis' story. This is also Lea's and Eli's understanding. Lea signals alignment in shared disapproval by providing *hmm*: with falling pitch, and Eli initiates a side sequence to ask for the name of the unwilling teacher, presumably in order to check Cis' experience against her own.

In extract (4):193, we find another token of the use of prosody to constitute emphatic style. This time, however, emphasis does not reinforce or peak an assessment, but signals unexpectedness, i.e. a contradiction between the speaker's expectations and her experienced reality:

(4) K2: (Laufnr. 093ff.)

(Topic: Ida's tattoos)

192 Nat: un WAS sacht deine MAma dazu

T, S(/ /)

<all>

and what does your mum say to that

193 Ida: (1.2) die hat da noch **NIE**: WAS ZU geSAGT
 * < all > M,F (↑ \ \ \ \)
 <f >
 <l >

she never ever said a word to that

(0.5)
 194 Nat: **EHR**lich NICH
 H, F (↑ \ /)
really not
 195 Ida: no nich **EIN** WORT
 F(↑ \ \)
 <all all><f>
not even one word

(0.5)
 196 Nat: **IS** ja W ITzich=
 T, F(\ \)
 <p p>
that's funny
 197 Ida: =mhm
 \ /

Again, we find extreme density of accented syllables in relation to unaccented syllables in the segment **NIE**: WAS ZU geSAGT. Ida has just told her interlocutors how she got tattoos on her forearm as an adolescent. After Nat's question about her mother's reaction, Ida seems to 'stage' her answer by leaving a 1.2-second silence before giving her answer in emphatic style. The dense accentuation in the utterance in which she tells her listeners that her mother never said a word about her tattoos emphasizes her surprise about her mother's unexpected non-reaction. In addition to the dense accentuation, Ida further emphasizes the adverb **NIE**, giving it an elongation and a marked local pitch movement which goes to a very high pitch peak.

In this case, the recipient Nat reacts with an astonished question, in which high global pitch and a locally marked pitch movement to a very high pitch peak in the check question are used to comment about the content of Ida's prior turn (Selting, in press b). This utterance can be interpreted as signalling a different kind of heightened emotive involvement, namely astonishment or surprise. Both kinds of involvement, i.e., emphasis and astonishment/surprise, are signalled via the use of marked prosodic signalling cues. The exact interpretation of the involvement, however, depends on the relation of the utterance to the preceding conversational sequences.

In extract (4), once more, the speaker's use of emphatic style is responded to by the recipient's display of her/his own alignment: in this case, the first speaker's contextualization of her information as 'unexpected' is responded to by the recipients' signalling of 'surprise' or 'astonishment'.

After Nat's astonished question, Ida confirms her prior statement, again using dense accentuation in *no nich EIN WORT* as a signal of emphasis, and Nat reacts with another confirmation that this is indeed not expectable.

The results attained from the analysis so far can be summarized as follows: In the extracts, the following prosodic and lexical cues were used to switch to an emphatic style in single turn-constructional units:

- [+ markedly high density of accented syllables]
- [± prosodically marked pitch accents with '↑', '<f>' and/or ':']
- [± intensifying and/or evaluative lexical items]
- [± syntactically elliptical units]

In all the above cases, the high density of accented syllables constitutes accent units in the respective segments which have markedly fewer syllables, or are markedly shorter, than the accent units in the surrounding turn-constructional units. But neither the emphatic units nor the surrounding units participate in the constitution of rhythmically integrated sequences. Dense accentuation often co-occurs with further prosodic marking, intensifying lexical expressions (cf. Labov, 1984; Bazzanella et al., 1991), and/or the use of items in syntactically elliptical units.

In general, there is a tendency for the number and salience of co-occurring cues in turn-constructional units to influence emotive interpretations of these units: the more cues are used, and the more salient the single cues are, the greater the likelihood will be that the unit will be interpreted as emphatic.

Switches to emphatic style often signal a climax that is the peak of some escalating evaluation. In most cases, the emphatic unit is not presented out of the blue, but is prepared for: it is a prospectively oriented to climax that peaks-out the prior presentation. The speaker's display of emphatic involvement is completed, in a sense, by the recipient's display of her/his own reaction, orientation, or alignment to it. The alignments, however, do not always have to correspond in intensity. The preferred recipient response seems to be an aligning reaction implicative of agreement or shared feelings or understandings. But recipients generally perform just those activities that are made relevant by the previous activity anyway. In any case, emphatic style is used to reinforce, and to add displays of heightened involvement to, other activities. It makes climaxes recognizable and interpretable *as* climaxes, and makes specific recipient reactions locally relevant. In extracts (1) and (2), the responses are produced in achieved overlap with the emphatic units, in extracts (3) and (4), they are produced shortly afterwards.

3.3. *Rhythmic organization and emphatic speech style*

In extract (5), a whole sequence of units is produced in emphatic style. Its climax is constituted by maximally dense accentuation, in co-occurrence with other prosodic and segmental cues. In the further elaboration of the climax, the rhythmically salient organization of list-like units also plays an important role in the constitution of an emphatic style.

By combining my notation of prosody and intonation with a rhythmic notation like that developed by Couper-Kuhlen and Auer (1988), the rhythmically salient

units in lines 10–53 can be visually represented;⁹ the length of successive cadences, as measured by a stop-watch, is given in parentheses.¹⁰

Mia tells the story of her friend's change from a woman wearing sloppy and scruffy clothes to a woman wearing very chic, fashionable clothes. After the elaboration of the pre-change story, the actual point of change (the friend's returning from France very chic), is told in lines 31ff. in emphatic style:

(5) KO: 862–897, S. 73–76 (Laufnr. 373ff.)

(After the participants have been talking about the tendency of German students to wear scruffy clothes, while Italian and French students prefer stylish clothes.)

- 1 Mia: ne FREUNdin von mir . die: .
 S(/) -
 <l I
- 2 Mia: m: mit der hab ich lange zuSAMMgewohnt
 S(... /)
 l I
m with whom I shared a flat for a long time
- 3 Mia: die: is: . toTAL SCHMUDelig immer so RUMgelaufen
 F(\ \ \ /)
 l >
- 4 Mia: und *m die hat sich halb kaPUTTgelacht
 F(↑ \)
and m she nearly killed herself laughing
- 5 Mia: als ICH mir das erste mal
 \
when I for the first time
- 6 Mia: was ANDres als JEANS und TIE:shörts gekauft hab .
 \ \ \)
 <l >
- 7 Mia: hat dann irngwie gemeint das wär do wohl irgndwie n
 T(...)
said somehow then that that was somehow a
- 8 Mia: [bißchen KOmisch und höhöhöhöhö *hihiHIhehehe .
 \) <laughs for ca 1 sec.>
bit funny and <imitates laughter>
- 9 D&E: [((laugh quietly))

⁹ In this notation, lefthand slashes are placed in front of the accented syllables which constitute a beat in the recurring rhythmic pattern. Righthand slashes are placed to indicate the length or duration of the cadence between the rhythmic beats. If slashes are placed underneath each other, this indicates a perceptually equal duration of the cadences, i.e., isochronous time intervals between rhythmic beats; deviations from such a pattern, as well as less isochronous patterns, are indicated by a respective shifting of the slashes.

¹⁰ For the measurement of the length of a cadence, I tried to capture, as best as I manually could, the time interval from the salience points of one accent peak to the following accent peak. If several measurements resulted in different results, the time given is a mean time in tenths of seconds.

((...))

- 10 Mia undähm: dann is die
andehm then has she
- 11 / NA:CH ihm Studium n / (1.2)
M(↑
after her studies for
- 12 / HALbes Jahr nach / (1.0)
\
half a year to
- 13 / FRANKreich ge / (0.7)
↑
France
- 14 / GANgn / (1.0)
/)
gone
- 15 / HATE vorher schon so / (1.1)
T, F(\
had before already had a
- 16 / GAN:Z etwas Ten / (0.9)
↓\
tiny bit of such
- 17 / DENzen=die / (0.6)
↓\
tendencies she
- 18 / IS zum Beispiel mit / (0.6)
T(\
<all all>
did for instance with
- 19 / U:DO und mir mal / (0.9)
\
Udo and me once
- 20 / EINkaufn gegangen=und / (1.1)
\
shopping go and
- 21 Dor: mhm
\
/
- 22 Mia: / WIR mußtn mit ne / (0.8)
T, F(\
we had to help choose a
- 23 / JACKe für sie aussuchn so / (1.2)
\
jacket for her so
- 24 / daß ihr das auch noch / (0.9)
that it still for her
- 25 / PAßT /
\
fit
- 26 / ((clears throat)) . un / (1.1)
<all>
and

- 27 / DANN isse n halbes Jahr nach / (1.1)
H(↑
then did she for half a year to
- 28 / **FRANK**reich gegangen / (1.2)
↓ /
France go
- 29 Mia: / **KAM** / (0.4)
F(\
came
- 30 / **WIE**der / (0.4)
/)
back
- 31 Mia: / **TO:D** / (0.4)
H, F (↑\
dead
- 32 / **SCHICK** / (0.6)
\
chic
- 33 Eli: ((hh)) / (0.6)
- 34 Mia: / / (0.6)
- 35 Eli: [((laughs quietly))
- 36 Mia: [/ **TO:D** / (0.7)
H(↑-
<f
dead
- 37 Eli: ((laughs quietly))
- 38 Mia: / **SCHICK** / (0.6)
-)
f>
chic
- 39 Mia: / **HAT** nur noch / (0.5)
H,S(\
put from then on
- 40 / **RÖCKE** / (0.5)
/
skirts
- 41 / . getragn / (0.8)
)
- 42 Eli: [*only on*
((laughs quietly))
- 43 Mia: / . hatte / (0.8)
- 44 / **THÄSCH**chen an / (0.9)
H, S(/)
small handbag on
- 45 / . hatte / (0.8)
- 46 / **PÖMS** an / (0.8)
H,S (/)
pumps on

- 47 Dor: / . tjaa / / (0.9)
 / \
- 48 Mia: / . to / (0.8)
 abso
- 49 / **TAL** . / (0.9)
 F(\
- 50 / **UM**gedreht / (0.7)
 \)
 opposite
- 51 / . und die is / (0.5)
 <all all>
 and she has
- 52 / **SO** b ge / (0.5)
 M(/
- 53 / **BLIEBM** /
 \)
 stayed
- 54 Eli: . mhm GUT
 \ / H(\)
 <p> <p>
 good
- 55 Mia: [((laughs quietly for ca. 1 sec.))
 56 Eli: [((laughs quietly))
 57 Dor: [((laughs quietly))
- 58 Mia: Eli und ICH müssn ja AU mal nach **DÜS**seldorf fahrn=
 T,F(\ \ \ \)
 Eli and I also have to go to Düsseldorf one day
- 59 Eli: =wir wolln **EIN**kaufn fahrn ..
 T(\)
 we want to go shopping

In the following, I shall analyze the constitution and alter(n)ation of styles. I shall describe and compare the style-constitutive parameters taken from the (a) prosodic, (b) syntactic, (c) lexico-semantic and (d) other linguistic sub-systems; within prosody, I shall differentiate between density of accentuation/rhythm and intonation.

The extract starts with Mia's introducing the main character of her story in lines 1–3, and her telling a pre-story to her main story. This pre-story ends in a first climax in lines 8–9. In the pre-story, we just find a temporarily dense accentuation in the words *toTAL SCHMUDdelig* in line 3, the emphatic verb *kaPUTTgelacht*, and the stylized quotation of a laugh, *höhöhöhöhö*, as noteworthy stylistic features. As the accents do not follow each other in rhythmic intervals, these units are not presented in rhythmic notation.

In lines 10–14, Mia announces her main story, but in lines 15–25, she inserts a 'backflash' to her pre-story in order to heighten the recipient's suspense. Then she repeats the announcement of her main story in lines 26–28, using her own prior

words *n halbes jahr nach frankreich gegangen* again. The units in lines 10–28 exhibit a relatively unmarked, non-emphatic style. Yet they prospectively prepare for the climax. At least prosodically, this part of Mia's story-telling becomes more interesting. In these units, from a prosodic point of view, we see a low density of accented, as opposed to unaccented, syllables; most cadences have a length of about 1.0 ± 0.2 seconds. They constitute a moderately rhythmic sequence, although the two shorter cadences of 0.6 seconds in lines 17 and 18 break this rhythm, and, as a consequence, the second cadence is heard as being added 'early' or 'hastily'. After this, the old rhythm is re-established.

Intonation is used to contribute to the later emphatic climax, which by no means comes unexpectedly. In particular, it is used to contextualize relations between those units in which Mia's friend's pre- and post-France attitudes and appearances are contrasted. The turn-construction units that deal with Mia's friend's thinking before her visit to France (especially the utterances in lines 15–25) have low global pitch. In direct contrast to this, all the later units that deal with Mia's friend's changed appearance after her visit to France (both the emphatic evaluations and the units elaborating this evaluation in lines 31–46) have high global pitch. The contrast between high and low global pitch is used for the contextualization of opposing attitudes that were held by Mia's friend at different times. In comparison to this, her utterance formulating the transition from the pre-France to the post-France appearance (lines 27–28) brings together into one unit a local pitch movement moving to a markedly high peak, and another local pitch movement moving to a markedly low pitch valley, as if to contextualize precisely the transition between these two parts of the story.¹¹

From syntactic and lexico-semantic points of view, most utterances in this sequence are syntactically complete sentences, without stylistically marked lexis. The organization of the units into an 'announcement – insertion – repetition of the announcement' pattern, seems to prepare the recipients for the climax twice.

The entire sequence of units before the climax is heard as non-emphatic, moderately slow speech, which provides the background necessary for the interpretation of Mia's imminent emphatic story climax. Against the background of these units with relatively unmarked 'normal' style (the empirical *tertium comparationis*), Mia's switch to a marked emphatic style in lines 29ff. constitutes a salient contrast.

For her switch to the saliently emphatic turn-constructional units in lines 29ff., with which she presents the point of her story, Mia here, and in the following units, combines prosodic, syntactic, and lexical devices that constitute a highly marked emphatic style. This is most salient in lines 29 through 38. Here, at the prosodic level, we find maximally dense accentuation. Instead of the earlier alternation between accented and unaccented syllables, we find almost exclusively accented syllables. The density of accented, as opposed to unaccented, syllables, and the density of highly prominent primary accents, as opposed to less prominent secondary

¹¹ For another example in which rhythm and intonation are used in a similar way in story-telling, see Selting (1992a).

accents, is greater in these units than in the prior units. Also, the density increases within the three units. In the rhythmic notation, we find almost only accented syllables in relatively brief cadences – first, of 0.4 seconds, and later, of mostly 0.6 seconds. Moreover, Eli's silent laugh in line 33, and the following pause, which functions as a 'silent beat', fit into the picture of a rhythmically integrated sequence, in which the salience of the prosodic marking increases throughout the sequence of units.

We also find marked intonation: high global pitch on both uses of the key word *todschick*, and additional movements to extremely high local pitch peaks in the accents on the syllable *tod*. There is also additional increased global loudness, a saliently elongated vowel on the syllable *tod*, and a level pitch movement in the item *todschick* in its second repeated occurrence.

Syntactically, we find elliptical constructions that give only the items that are absolutely necessary to make the point (a verb to denote the relation between the prior pre-climax story and the point to follow, an adjective to denote the friend's new look). Lexically, the compound evaluative adjective *todschick*, which combines the items *tod* ('death') and *schick* ('chic'), is a stylistically marked item that triggers an emphatic interpretive frame. Furthermore, the repetition of the word *todschick* signals emphasis. Mia pauses briefly after both utterances of this word. These pauses do not yield the floor; rather, as they could be possible beginnings of syntactically possible sentences (Sacks et al., 1974), they imply intended turn-holding for a continuation. They are inserted for dramatic effect. As a result of the addition of marking devices in each successive turn-constructural unit during the sequence, the climax is heard as an 'escalation'.

A fairly dense accentuation and isochronous rhythm is maintained after the emphatic climax, when Mia elaborates and illustrates the point of her story in lines 39–50. These segments, too, are contextualized as 'emphatic elaborations' of the story's climax. Here, however, the rhythm is more difficult to follow, because of many brief pauses functioning as 'silent beats'. Compared to the prior climax, with its highly salient, emphatic style, here, Mia shifts gradually to a less emphatic style. The sequence is described below.

Prosodically, the density of accented syllables in relation to unaccented syllables is lower than in the climax. A comparison with the pre-climax sequence shows, however, that it is still fairly high. Cadences are mostly about 0.8 or 0.5 seconds long, and still contrast with the longer cadences of mostly 1.0 ± 0.2 seconds in the prior sequence. The units show that, in this sequence, emphatic style is primarily constituted by rhythm. We no longer find as extreme and marked pitch movements as before. Intonation becomes gradually less marked. While in lines 39–46 Mia still uses high and further rising global pitch, in lines 49ff., in summarizing and ending the story, she uses falling and mid global pitch.

Syntactically, the sequence of units in lines 39–50 is again characterized by elliptical syntactic constructions, which enumerate evidence for the emphatic climax in the form of list constructions (Müller, 1989; Erickson, 1992, etc.). Here, the formulation *hatte täschchen an* is remarkable, because it violates possible phrasal constructions in German. Possible formulations are *täschchen tragen* or *täschchen bei*

sich haben. Yet the construction *hatte täschchen an* is syntactically parallel to the following *hatte pömps an*. The syntactic parallelism helps to make the prosodic rhythm more salient. Finally, lexically, the diminutive *täschchen* ('little handbag') also signals emphasis.

After the elaboration of details and the summary *toTAL UMgedreht*, the recipients' perspective is oriented back to the present time (cf. Labov and Waletzky's (1967) 'coda'), in the syntactically complete sentence *und die is SO b geBLIEBM*, again with unmarked non-emphatic style. Thus the story is brought to an end.

The interpretation of the emphatic units as an emphatic climax (plus elaboration) is supported by Eli's laughter in line 33, immediately after the first emphatic *todschick*, and furthermore, by Eli's laugh tokens in 35–37 and 42: these display that Eli has understood Mia's climax, and make it possible for Mia to elaborate it. In line 47, Dor reacts with an acknowledgement token *tjaa*. All these recipient reactions are aligning continuers; they show alignment to Mia's story, but clearly refrain from turn-taking at this point in the interaction (on 'continuers' cf. Schegloff, 1982, 1988; Goodwin, 1986). Only after the entire story has been concluded by Mia's coda in lines 51ff., does Eli give a lexically explicit evaluation (*gut*); then, all three participants laugh together, before Mia shifts the topic.

As a result of the analysis so far, we can conclude that the interpretation of units as exhibiting emphatic style is brought about by the use and alter(n)ation of a cluster of prosodic and segmental linguistic devices in the constitution of sequentially organized conversational activities. Yet, it is primarily the density of accentuation, and in longer sequences of units, an isochronous rhythm with short cadences, which is the most important parameter contrasting emphatic and non-emphatic speech styles. In addition, other prosodic parameters, like marked pitch and/or loudness, can seemingly be used to contribute further markedness for the constitution of climaxes, or to signal cohesive relations between units. Here, as in the extracts analyzed in the previous section, emphatic climaxes make the display of recipients' alignment locally relevant.

A similar organization can be seen in extract (6). Nat tells a story about a conflict with her female fellow students. She was very annoyed about her fellow student's way of complaining about their situation as women, and reacted with the provocative thesis that women are partly responsible themselves. This, in turn, provoked aggressive reactions by her fellow women students. All the units in which the fellow women's behavior is described, show displayed involvement.

(6) K1: 207–228 (Laufnr. 079ff.)

- 1 Nat: da war auch irgenwie so was FRAUenthema un so ..
 <all all> M(\) -
there was also somehow such a feminist topic and so
- 2 Nat: da warn auch FÜMunzwanzich FRAUN un fünf MÄNner
 F(\ / \)
there were also twenty five women and five men
- 3 Nat: un dann ähm: .. war das
 <narrow pitch range>
and then ehm it was

- 4 / S O: daß hier / (0.8)
 M(\)
 <narrow pitch range>
 so that here
- 5 / F RAUN werdn unter / (0.8)
 M(-)
 <narrow pitch range>
 women are being
- 6 / DRÜCKT /
 (↑-)
 <narrow pitch range>
 oppressed
- 7 Nat: un die so WEIß du diese RICHTung so /
 M(/ \)
 <all all>
 < narrow pitch range >
 and such you know this line so
- 8 Nat: / un PORnos aufm / (0.7)
 M(-)
 <narrow pitch range>
 and pornos on the
- 9 / STERN und . und wie / (0.7)
 (↑-)
 <narrow pitch range>
 ((name of a magazine)) and how
- 10 Ida: [hm \
- 11 Nat: / SCHLIMM das alles is / (0.8)
 M(↑-)
 <narrow pitch range>
 horrible it all is
- 12 / und die unter / (0.6)
 <narrow pitch range>
 and those opp
- 13 / DRÜCKEr und / (0.6)
 M(↑-)
 <narrow pich range>
 ressors and
- 14 / WIR unter / (0.5)
 M(-)
 we opp
- 15 / DRÜCKten und so / (0.8)
 (↑-)
 ressed and so
- 16 Nat: .. un da hab ICH gesacht also /
 M(/)
 <all all>
 and then I said so

- 17 Nat: daß ich das n bißchen ANders sehen würde=
 /
that I would see that a bit differently
- 18 Nat: =daß da IMmer ZWEI zu gehörn würden NE .
 <all. >M(/ ↑ \ ' /)
 < f >
that there always were two parties involved you know
- 19 Nat: die FRAU is . zu* von FÜNFzich
 M(\ \)
the woman is from fifty
- 20 Nat: oder DREIßich prozent oder wie auch IMmer
 \ /)
or thirty per cent or how much ever
- 21 Nat: jedenfalls is sie zum TEIL, auch SELber mit an
 <all all> F(\ \)
anyway but to some extent she is herself also
- 22 Nat: ihrer situation **SCHULD** . ((takes a deep breath))
 \ _)
responsible for her situation
- 23 Nat: / die **HAM** sich / (0.4)
 H(↑ \)
 <aspirated>
they were so
- 24 / **AUF**ge / (0.4)
 ↑ \)
 <aspirated>
 ang
- 25 / **REGT** also so die / (0.7)
 /)
 <aspirated>
 ry well now they
- 26 Nat: [/ **HAM** zwar nich ver / (0.6)
 H(\)
 did not call me
- 27 Ida: [ja
 \)
- 28 Nat: / **RÄ**terin gesacht aber: das / (1.1)
 ↑ \) -)
 traitor but that was just
- 29 Nat: [/ **FEH**lte irgendwie noch ne / (1.2)
 F(\ \)
 missing somehow you know
- 30 Ida: [mhm mhm
 \ / \ /)
- 31 Nat: ... das also so . ZUM beispiel SO läuft das dann
 - H,F(\ \) H(\ \)
 that so for example that's how it is

- 32 Nat: { wenn du **NICH** derselben meinung BIST
 < all > M(/ \)
 when you don't agree with them
- 33 Ron: { HM:
 (\)
- ((6 secs pause, after that Ida tells another story in support of Nat's point))

Nat contextualizes the perceived opposition between her fellow women students' and her own behavior and thinking prosodically, but with different cues than those used in the extracts examined so far.

In the first part of her story, in lines 3–15, she characterizes the other women's attitude, giving abbreviated quasi-citations of their typical thinking and arguing. Besides explicitly stating that the attitude is known to the recipients (*WEIß du diese RICHTung so*), she presents tokens of this way of thinking with level pitch accents, in a relatively isochronous rhythm.

Most cadences are between 0.6 and 0.8 seconds long; this results in a perception of a fairly rhythmic organization of the sequence of cadences. The rhythmicity, in co-occurrence with the use of level pitch accents, contextualizes Nat's evaluation of the attitude as a stylized and stereotypical one. The more dense the accentuation becomes, the more emphatic the evaluation appears to be. The emphatic impression is further amplified by the exclusive use of level pitch accents, and by the repeated coordination of units with *und* ('and'), giving Nat's description the air of a litany (cf. Ladd, 1980, on level pitch accents and 'stylization').

The style in lines 16–22, where Nat describes her reaction to the other women's attitude, contrasts markedly with the increasingly emphatic style in lines 3–15. Here, Nat's own attitude is contextualized quite differently, namely with falling and rising pitch accents, unisochronous rhythm, and less dense accentuation. Apart from the single emphatic accent on the word *ZWEI* in line 18 (constituted by a markedly high pitch peak and extra loudness), these units are not heard as exhibiting emphatic style.

However, as soon as Nat turns to telling the point of her story – her fellow women students' annoyance at her attitude – she switches styles again (lines 23–30). In the utterance *die HAM sich AUFgeREGT*, she explicitly labels the other women's reactions as 'annoyed' and 'upset'. Here, we find a relatively high density of accentuation, an alternation between an accented and an unaccented syllable, starting with two initial isochronous cadences, and two pitch accents with markedly high local pitch peaks. This makes this unit sound emphatic again, as an iconic representation of the other women's reported involvement. Afterwards, for the elaboration of the point, Nat shifts back to a less emphatic style; the accentuation is less dense, one accent with a markedly high pitch peak occurs between unmarked accents, and the cadences are again noticeably longer in duration.

Here, as in (5), emphatic speech style is constituted by more than one emphatic unit. As style-constitutive cues, we find an isochronous rhythm with short cadences, plus additional locally marked accents in co-occurrence with syntactic and lexical cues.

We can postulate that the preferred recipient aligning reactions to a story such as Nat's in (6), about attitudes which she criticizes, would be reactions implicative of

agreement. This is indeed how the recipients react to Nat's narrative. In line 10, for example, Ida gives a short, disapproving *hm*; in line 27, she confirms Nat's point with *ja*; in line 30, she gives more recipient tokens. All these reactions are immediate, and signal Ida's implicit alignment with Nat's disapproval of her fellow student's attitudes. The aligning reaction of Ron, the other recipient, is delayed. It occurs only at the end of the transcript, after Nat has resumed the floor (in line 31) and related her story back to the pre-story topic that it was supposed to illustrate. Only now, in line 33, does Ron give an accented *HM*, with falling pitch, implying that he too is aligned with Nat's negative evaluation.

Emphatic speech style in *sequences* of units in story-telling thus appears to make similar kinds of recipient reactions relevant as those made relevant by *single* emphatic units. In story-telling, a switch to an emphatic style can be used by the story teller as a technique for making recipient aligning reactions relevant. In this sense, emphatic style is a general means of locally organizing and coordinating mutual demonstrations of reciprocity in interaction – and preferably, displays of congruent understandings of the events talked about. This accounts for the occasional experience that we feel compelled to show alignment with some assessment or story-telling even if we have failed to listen properly, or if we have not fully understood the point: we feel compelled to respond locally to displays of emphatic involvement by speakers.

4. Conclusion

'Emphasis' is a holistic interpretive notion. It is the context-sensitive interpretation of a bundle of marking features in particular conversational and sequential environments. The contextualization of turn constructional units or sequences of units as 'emphatic' is achieved by the use of marked prosodic cues, in co-occurrence with marked syntactic and lexico-semantic cues. Together, in bundles, these cues are constitutive features of what I have called 'emphatic (speech) style'. This style suggests the interpretive frame of 'emphasis', and contextualizes the units thus marked as 'emphatic'. Emphasis is a phenomenon in everyday speech that is signalled by particular linguistic devices in particular sequentially positioned speech activities. Emphasis and impressions of heightened emotive involvement are hence sequentially constituted and organized in everyday speech.

Holistically interpreted 'normal' and 'emphatic' speech styles can be analytically decomposed, and their individual constitutive features can be isolated. The choice and alter(n)ation of speech styles can be described as a dynamic, actively constituted, conversational signalling activity, involving individual devices from the linguistic subsystems of prosody, syntax, and lexico-semantics. With respect to prosody, only noticeable, exceptionally salient, marked realizations of prosodic categories have the power to contextualize units as displays of more-than-normal involvement. In the appropriate sequential context, and in co-occurrence with the appropriate syntactic and lexical cues, the interpretation of this involvement is 'emphasis'.

The constitutive cues of emphatic speech style can be summarized as follows: (1) markedly high density of accentuated syllables, (2) rhythmic organization with markedly short isochronous cadences, (3) pitch accents with markedly higher pitch peaks or greater loudness than in the surrounding units, (4) lexical devices such as intensifying lexical items, and (5) syntactic devices such as ellipses and/or syntactic parallelisms. Markedly dense accentuation and/or marked rhythmic organization are most often used in co-occurrence with other cues, but they can be the only marking devices. This makes (1) and (2) primary features of emphatic speech style. Pitch accents with greater loudness and/or higher pitch peaks than those in the surrounding accents, lexical intensifiers, and elliptical constructions and/or syntactic parallelisms can be used additionally. This makes (3), (4), and (5) optional or complementary features of emphatic speech style.

In conversation, the shifting or switching of styles serves to contextualize the successive development of activities. There is a proportional relation between the number of cues and their interpretation: the more cues are produced, and the more saliently marked these are, the greater the likelihood that a sequence of units will be interpreted as emphatic.

Speech styles are dynamic, relational phenomena that cannot be defined as fixed, static entities beyond their use in particular conversational contexts. In constituting and altering speech styles, speakers orient themselves to the styles that have been used in the prior units. From an empirical point of view, the features of the prior units furnish a dynamic *tertium comparationis*. A switch or shift of styles is signalled by a sudden or gradual increase or decrease of style-constitutive cues *in relation to the prior units*. Speech styles, from this standpoint, are thus active, interactional accomplishments, and the choice and alter(n)ation of speech styles has social and interactive meaning.

In the extracts analyzed in this paper, sudden shifts from an unmarked 'normal' style to a marked 'emphatic' style were used to contextualize climaxes in story-telling as 'peaks of involvement'. Gradual shifting toward a more emphatic style was used in 'staging' an emphatic climax. Shifting away from an emphatic style after a climax was used to contextualize the transition from the climax itself to the elaboration of the significance of the climax, and ultimately to the 'calmed down' end of the story. Prosody, in particular, paralleled and contextualized the sequential development of the activity at hand.

The prosodic and other cues constituting emphatic speech style are used to contextualize particular, restricted types of activities (here, climaxes in story-telling) *as such*, and to make them recognizable and interpretable *as such*. That is, without this marking, the relevant units could be interpreted as part of the pre-climax complication. Often, in addition to being locally marked, these relevant units are prepared for, or 'staged', in the preceding units.

Finally, the emphatic stylistic contextualization of climaxes also makes some type of display of the recipient's alignment with respect to the matter at hand locally relevant. Presumably, emphasis can be used as a contextualizing technique both in individual units and in successive units. In both cases, it contributes to the interactive organization of demonstrations of participant reciprocity in interaction. Emphasis

does not make special reactions relevant in its own right; rather, it makes only those types of reactions relevant that are appropriate to the activity at hand to begin with. In conclusion, although emphasis does not initiate special sequences of its own, its analysis, and especially the analysis of prosody as one of its main constitutive cues, should not be neglected. In some cases, prosody is the only emphatic cue that makes climaxes in story-telling recognizable and interpretable.

Appendix: Transcription conventions

Transcription symbols in the text line of transcripts:

aber DA kam	primary accented syllable of a unit
aber DA kam	secondary accented syllable of a unit
S icher	extra strong/loud accent
si:cher	lengthening of a sound
s:i:ch:er:	lengthening of an entire word
.	brief pause of up to ca 0.5 secs.
..	each dot ca 0.5 secs. pause, here ca 1 sec
(0.8)	pause timed in tenths of a second
((lacht))	para- and/or non-linguistic events
(? er kommt ?)	transcriptionist's doubt
a(1)so	doubtful sound within a word
*	glottal stop
n, m	syllabic sounds, according to sonority and length
=	latching
[ich gehe	simultaneous talk, overlapping utterances
l jaha	

Transcription symbols in the prosody line(s) of transcripts:

Global pitch direction:

F,R,H,M,L()	(noted before the left '(' parenthesis) notation of the global pitch direction before the accent sequence delimited by parentheses: F=falling, R=rising, H=high, M=mid, L=low (Parentheses are usually noted before the first accent and at the end of the cohesive unit.)
H,F()	combination of global characterizations
[() ()]	combined contours with only weak or no boundaries between units with different global pitch directions (e.g. 'paratones')

Accent (proto)types or unaccented local pitch movements in and after accented and/or unaccented syllables:

\	falling
/	rising
-	level
∨	falling-rising
∧	rising-falling

Accent modifications:

↑\, ↓/, ↑-	locally larger pitch movements than in surrounding accents, higher or lower accent peaks than usual
_	falling to very low pitch
...	sequence of unaccented syllables

(Outside the parentheses, local pitch movements function as 'pre-head' ('Vorlauf') or unstressed pitch movements after the accent sequence.)

Other prosodic parameters which are used with local or global extension; the extension is indicated by the position of the < >:

<f>	forte, loud
<l>	lento, slow
<p>	piano, low
<all>	allegro, fast
<dim>	diminuendo, decreasing loudness

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