

## “ADESSO M’INCAZZO!”: SWEARWORDS AS RESOURCES FOR MANAGING NEGATIVE EMOTIONS IN INTERACTION

VIRGINIA CALABRIA, MARIA ELEONORA SCIUBBA  
KU - LEUVEN/UNIVERSITÉ DE NEUCHÂTEL, TILBURG UNIVERSITY

virgina.calabria@kuleuven.be, M.E.Sciubba@tilburguniversity.edu

Citation: Calabria, Virginia, Maria Eleonora Sciubba (2022) “Adesso m’incazzo!': Swearwords as resources for managing negative emotions in interaction”, in Greta Zanoni, Serena Zuccheri *Emozioni: sentirle, parlarne, tradurle, MediAzioni* 33: D4–D28, <https://doi.org/10.6092/issn.1974-4382/15263>, ISSN 1974-4382.

**Abstract:** Drawing on Conversation Analysis and Interactional Linguistics, we explore how interactants express *in situ* emotions that have been identified as negative – annoyance, anger, etc. – by displaying their stance and fishing for affiliation, and by (dis-)affiliating in response (Stivers 2008). Our entry point are lexical resources mobilized in this interactional process of emotion management: *swearwords*. Swearwords have received limited attention in interactional studies (Butler and Fitzgerald 2011; Hoey *et al.* 2021), but they are versatile resources in Italian talk-in-interaction. Grammatically, they are interjections, verbs, nouns, phrases, sentences, etc.; interactionally, they are found in turn-initial position, mid-turn, and turn-final position; they can be only a segment of a turn or occupy an entire turn. Our analysis reveals that swearwords are a) either used to reinforce the speaker’s stance, together with other elements (lexico-syntactical resources, facial expressions, changes in voice quality, etc.), and they are treated as fishing for affiliation; b) or they emerge as the main resource to display urgency and exasperation and are treated as directives. Using swearwords allow participants to build and shift to different interactional contexts: from jocular/playful situations (in the dinner) to serious and urgent scenarios (in the business meeting). Moreover, the target of the emotions (and the swearwords) can be either outside the interaction, in the context of tellings (reported stories), or complaint sequences; or inside the interaction, in the context of instruction sequences, where recipients need not only to affiliate but to respond. A sequential and situated analysis of swearwords shows how negative emotions emerge and are locally managed in interactants’ lexical choices, their stance projection and responses. Thus, we aim to contribute to understandings of how emotions enable interactants to achieve intersubjectivity (Haddington 2007), playing a major role in the ways we experience the world around us and display this knowledge and understanding to our surroundings.

**Keywords:** emotions; swearwords; anger; complaint; stance; affiliation; intersubjectivity; interactional linguistics; conversation analysis; Italian talk-in-interaction.

## 1. Introduction<sup>1</sup>

The aim of this contribution is to explore how interactants express, and respond to, emotions that have been identified as negative, e.g., anger<sup>2</sup>, *in situ*. Our entry points are lexical resources that are mobilized in this interactional process of emotion management: swearwords. Swearwords have received limited attention in studies of interaction but are versatile grammatical and interactional resources for participants to express, respond to and manage their emotions.

Emotions have been deemed beyond the scope of linguistic studies (cf. Wierzbicka 1992a), namely by emic approaches such as Conversation Analysis (CA) and Interactional Linguistics (IL) (cf. Peräkylä 2021), because regarded as an intimate matter that belongs to the psychological and behavioral aspects of the mind (cf. Gross 1998). Disciplines like CA and IL share a strong interest for the systematicity of social interaction and are both informed by the idea that ‘there is order at all points’ (Sacks 1992[1972]: 484), since the interactants jointly work to ensure mutual understanding and display the lack thereof by accountable actions and practices<sup>3</sup> (cf. Sack, Schegloff and Jefferson 1974). The fact that emotion cannot be subsumed under the category “action”, but is rather seen as an “accompaniment, or overlay of verbal action” (Couper-Kuhlen 2016: 95) is somewhat problematic for CA/IL approaches, because it does not necessarily surface and therefore it might not be sequentially describable. However, there are instances when emotional displays (and not only talk) do surface through embodied and verbal resources that index specific emotions: “we won’t find that strong sorrow and joy are just distributed over the course of the conversation but instead, there are real places for them to occur” (Sacks 1992[1972]: 572). This idea has been recently taken up in CA and IL, as there is interest not only in how emotions emerge and are managed in every-day interactions, but also in how their displays are coordinated with the sequential organization of social interactions (cf. Weatherall and Robles 2021; Peräkylä 2021; Hoey *et al.* 2021). Namely, to describe the expression of feelings and attitudes, the term *affective stance*<sup>4</sup> is used to refer to the way in which emotions are made visible by and for co-interactants (cf. Peräkylä and Sorjonen 2012); whereas *affiliation* refers to the cooperative work done by the interactants (Stivers, Mondada and Steensig 2011) in sharing their stance with each other<sup>5</sup>. When an interlocutor

<sup>1</sup> We want to thank the two anonymous reviewers for contributing to clarifying some concepts and strengthening our overall argument. Any remaining errors are solely our own.

<sup>2</sup> Wierzbicka considers *anger* one of the “basic emotion concepts”, with happiness (1992: 539).

<sup>3</sup> As people speak, they carry out social actions through their turns at talks. Turns are specifically designed so that recipients are able to recognize what kind of action is being carried out (Schegloff 2007; Levinson 2012; Couper-Kuhlen 2018). The ways interactional resources (embodied and verbal) are deployed so that they can be recognized as implementing a particular action is called *action formation*, whereas how those turns are actually recognized by participants as carrying out a particular “major action” is called *action ascription* (Levinson 2012; Couper-Kuhlen 2018). Whether this action is actually recognized by participants or not will be evident in the following turns, therefore the main job of constructing a turn is projecting “what the response must deal with in order to count as an adequate next turn” (Levinson 2012: 107) and establishing intersubjectivity in interaction. The “set of practices that guides action formation and ascription within specific settings” forms activities (*ibid.*: 124).

<sup>4</sup> Ochs (1996: 410) defines affective stance as “a mood, attitude, feeling and disposition, as well as degrees of emotional intensity vis-a.-vis some focus of concern.”

<sup>5</sup> cf. Stivers (2008) for affiliation in storytelling. For the author affiliating means: “that the hearer displays support of and endorses the teller’s conveyed stance” (2008: 35).

expresses a stance, the other interlocutor might affiliate or disaffiliate, producing a “convergence between the ‘doers’ of an action or bit of conduct and its recipients, as co-producers of an increment of interactional and social reality” (Schegloff 1992: 1299). This process has been called *intersubjectivity* (cf. Sidnell 2014), and focus has been put on the creation of intersubjective relationships (cf. Kärkkäinen 2006; Haddington 2007; Stivers 2008; Couper-Kuhlen *et al.* 2021; among others), with an alignment of perspectives, and collaborative work to ensure mutual understanding. As Sorjonen *et al.* (2021) point out, intersubjectivity is not just established, but it has to be maintained in the course of the interaction, as this is crucial for the co-interactants’ mutual understanding: “Particular aspects of particular bits of conduct that compose the warp and weft of ordinary social life provide occasions and resources for understanding, which can also issue in problematic understandings. And it is this situating of intersubjectivity that will be of interest here” (Schegloff 1992: 1299). Emotions are then, in this perspective a necessary component of the interactants’ understanding of the social context surrounding them: “emotion is a social phenomenon. It is organized and made visible as a consequential event through systematic practices which are lodged within the processes of situated interaction, used by participants to build in concert with each other the events that make up their lifeworld” (Goodwin and Goodwin 2000: 252).

In the present contribution we focus on the linguistic structures and practices that interactants use and orient to in social interaction. More specifically we investigate how swearwords are deployed to index various degrees of emotions, and how emotions are displayed in the “places” where swearwords are uttered. Answering to the traditional CA question of “why that now?”, a speaker’s turn containing a swearword might be there displaying negative emotion, or implementing another action, i.e. teasing (see section 4.1). The emotional display is punctually indexed through the lexical choice of swearwords<sup>6</sup>.

Ex.1 shows a first illustration. This is taken from one of the two settings analyzed, an informal dinner among friends<sup>7</sup>. Giulio (GIU) and Giorgio (GIO) are waiting for their friends to arrive at Giulio’s house for dinner. Among them, Angela (ANG), Giulio’s girlfriend, is late and has not communicated when she will arrive.

The swearwords deployed in this interaction show great grammatical flexibility, ranging from interjections (l. 26), noun modifiers (l. 30), verb constructions (ll. 31–33), and nouns (l. 37). Interactionally, they can be used a) to convey a negative emotion, e.g., to display the climax<sup>8</sup> of anger (*adesso m’incazzo*) in a turn (co-occurring with other features of conversation, such as prosodic cues); b) to reinforce a (negative) stance (based on their lexical meaning, *una mazza ceppa di niente*); c) they can be recycled by co-participants in replies to the swearword (*incazzati*), to display affiliation. Thanks to this high flexibility, swearwords are an effective resource in the interactional management of emotions, as our analyses will show.

<sup>6</sup> Prosody and embodiment (face expression) also play a crucial role, but for lack of space they aren’t always taken into account in the present paper.

<sup>7</sup> See section 3 for a detailed description of the data and the methods, and section 4.3 for a detailed analysis of ex.1 following ex.4.

<sup>8</sup> Selting (2017: 2) defines climax as: “a displayed point of higher emotive involvement, a ‘high point’ of the story, which makes relevant the recipients’ affiliative responses”.

Ex.1 MiCE-13 (00:01:14-00:01:44)

- 23 GIU e gli ho detto (.) mi raccomando non sparire.  
and I told her please do not disappear
- 24 mi raccomando dimmi cosa fai,  
please tell me what you are doing
- 25 .h †SÌ SÌ ti dirò a che ora arrivo.  
yes yes I'll tell you what time I'll arrive
- 26 → †eh (.) però^dio cane me lo devi anche dire a che ora arrivi.  
huh but goddammit you have to tell me what time you arrive
- 27 sono .h le nove, ti ho scritto dei <messaggi,>  
it's 9 o' clock I wrote text messages to you
- 28 ((looks at phone)) non ho ancora ricevuto nulla,  
I still haven't received anything
- 29 (1.2) ((GIU keeps on looking at phone))
- 30 → GIU †eh non ho ricevuto una mazza ceppa di niente, .h  
huh I haven't received freaking nothing at all
- 31 → ti ho scritto delle cose, .h adesso mi incazzo.  
I wrote stuff to you now I'm getting pissed
- 32 (0.6)
- 33 → GIO incazzati quando arriva no al tele:fono.  
get pissed when she arrives not over the phone
- 34 (0.5)
- 35 GIU .hh no: ma quando arriva non c'ho vo:glia perché non siamo  
no but when she arrives I don't want to since we aren't
- 36 neanche soli^dico solo perché ogni vo:lta? (.) bisogna fare  
even alone I'm only saying why every time we have to do
- 37 → le stesse cagate?  
the same bullshit

## 2. Swearing across the world and in Italian

Swearing seems to be a prerogative of human communication: it is said to be restricted to particular settings and categories of users, generally toward the lower end of register and class (Butler and Fitzgerald 2011; Mohr 2013; Tartamella 2016; Hoey *et al.* 2021). Although these authors consider swearing as gendered (male) behavior, some recent studies have shown that girls can engage in ritual insults if the context and situation is appropriate (Ehrlich and Meyerhoff 2014; Goodwin and Kyratzis 2014).

Swearing and swearwords, including profanity, expletives, vulgarity, imprecations, insults, etc., are taboo words and expressions generally related to religion, certain body parts or bodily excretions and actions, disease, sex, social violence, death (Mohr 2013; Tartamella 2016; Hoey *et al.* 2021) and are ubiquitous across ages, domains, and languages (Jay 2009; Ljung 2011; McEnery 2006; Napoli and Hoeksema 2009). As shown also in our data, swearwords are very versatile (Napoli and Hoeksema 2009) and may appear as exclamations (EN. *fuck* or IT. *cazzo*), verb constructions (EN. *are you shitting me* or IT. *m'incazzo*), multiword

constructions (EN. *give a fuck* or IT. *fare lo stronzo*), emphatic intensifiers (EN. *fucking* or IT. *mazza ceppa*).

From a semantic point of view, swearwords may be literal and denotative ('they fucked' / *fottevano/fotterono/hanno fottuto*), but they are more often nonliteral and connotative ('I feel like shit' / *mi sento una merda*) (Hoey *et al.* 2021). Some lexical items are taboo words in all their uses: in Italian the word *cazzo* and all its derivatives, like the English word *fuck* (Napoli and Hoeksema 2009), are taboo in both the literal (body part: penis) and figurative, non-literal sense (as intensifier, exclamations, etc.)<sup>9</sup>; other lexical items (*bloody*, IT. *scopare*) can be used both denotatively and figuratively (IT. *scopare* used literally means *to sweep the floor*, figuratively *to fuck*). Allan and Burridge (2006) argue that the use of dysphemism is emotionally charged, and draw a continuum between dysphemism, euphemism and orthophemism, where the latter is the semantically neutral lexical choice. Studies of swearing and taboo words in Italian span different methodological approaches: psycholinguistics (Tartamella 2016;) sociolinguistics (D'Achille 2010; Dardano *et al.* 1992; Faloppa 2004, 2011, 2020), lexical and textual linguistics (Galli de' Paratesi 2009), and translation (Pavesi and Malinverno 2000), and are mainly concerned with lexical properties and etymology of taboo words (Alba *et al.* 2019; Lotti 1990; Rossi 2011; Trifone 2012). Whereas studies of the use of swearing in interaction are limited to insults from a pragmatics perspective (Bazzanella 2020; Alfonzetti 2020; Alfonzetti and Spampinato 2012; Pugliese and Zanoni 2019). Tartamella (2016) ranked swearwords and insults perception, from less to most shocking, through an online questionnaire: he divided swearwords in 4 categories (expletives, *cazzo*/"dick"; insults, *coglione*/"asshole" [lit. ballocks]; curses *vaffanculo*/"go to hell/up the arse"; obscene, *culo*/"arse", and eschatological terms, *merda*/"shit"). This study, although it employs a different methodology, is interesting for our purposes because it allows us to position the swearwords present in our data on a "vulgarity" scale<sup>10</sup>.

In interactional and CA studies, swearing has been associated with the emotional and normative dimension made relevant by the participants (Butler and Fitzgerald 2011; Hoey *et al.* 2021) and by the transgressive status of profanity to which speakers orient to by suppressing or obscuring swearing (Schegloff 2003).

### 3. Methods and data

The corpus was collected by dr. Eleonora Sciubba within the project *ALIAS (Archivio di Lingua Spontanea)*, funded by KU Leuven (OWP2012/08). The data scrutinized

<sup>9</sup> Tartamella (2016)'s investigation places *cazzo* as the most used swearword in Italian, while the dictionary *Il Nuovo De Mauro Online* places it in the category FO "Fundamental lexicon" <https://dizionario.internazionale.it/parola/cazzo>. This explains the fact that this word, although referring to a specific part of the body, seems to be desemanticized in its various usages.

<sup>10</sup> Contrary to Tartamella's expectations, 84% of the proposed swearwords were deemed colorful and irreverent, but not so offensive and shocking. Some scholars researching taboo and swearwords have noticed that the use of swearwords in the Italian society is rather widespread (Galli de' Paratesi 2009; Rossi 2011), thanks to the youth revolution in 1968 that lead also to the loosening of censorship in the movie industry and the depenalization of swearwords in 1999 (<https://www.camera.it/parlam/leggi/992051.htm>). In the data presented here, this aspect seems confirmed, as we see how participants themselves treat swearwords as acceptable and appropriate to the context, by not sanctioning them or by recycling them.

for our analysis consist of 10.5 hours of video recordings collected in institutional (business meeting) and ordinary (dinner party) settings in Milano, documenting spontaneous multiperson interactions (3–5 participants), in everyday spoken Italian. All participants have given their informed consent to the recording and publication of the data in which they are visible. All proper names and sensitive information have been pseudonymized. The data have been transcribed following Jefferson's conventions (2004), and the original Italian transcripts translated into English.

We adopt Conversation Analysis, CA (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson 1974) and Interactional Linguistics, IL (Couper-Kuhlen and Selting 2018) as methods of investigation. This means that we conduct a sequential analysis of turns-at-talk and conceptualize syntax and grammatical resources as a practical matter, deployed by the participants to achieve certain social actions. In doing so, we take an emic approach to the data, analyzing the phenomena as they emerge from the interactions and are made relevant by the participants through their actions, and not as *ad hoc* categories. We follow previous research on emotions in CA, in line with the idea that emotions are a central component of both the individual's conduct and the individual's ways of interacting within society<sup>11</sup>. We focus on the visible expression of emotions – looking at swearwords – as this presents some systematicity and enables the participants to publicly display their understanding of the co-participants' social conduct.

By using *swearwords* as entry points, we aim to explore how interactants express negative emotions. Swearwords are a highly versatile resource in Italian talk-in-interaction, as emerged already from ex.1. As grammatical resources, they are used in the data as interjections (*dio cane*), nouns (*cagate*), modifiers (*fottuto*), verb phrases (*mi incazzo*), fixed expressions, and sentences. At the level of turn-management, swearwords can be found in turn-initial, mid-turn and turn-final position; they can be part of a turn only or occupy an entire segment of a turn, a turn constructional unit (TCU). Interactionally, they allow interactants to achieve a variety of actions: teasing, finding an audience and fishing for affiliation, complaining, reinforcing a (negative) stance, effectively implementing a directive (cf. Sorjonen, Raevaara, and Couper-Kuhlen 2017).

#### ***4. Managing negative emotions through swearwords***

We selected four excerpts representative of four instances that come from the interplay of two dimensions in our data: 1. how the swearword is treated by the participants; and 2. whether the target<sup>12</sup> of the emotions expressed in the turn(s) containing the swearword is inside or outside the constellation of present participants.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Peräkylä and Ruusuvuori (2012: 65): "Although our basic understanding of emotion regulation is different from the psychological, individual-centered view and the cultural view, we believe that our findings complement rather than contradict these other approaches".

<sup>12</sup> We use the concept of target to refer to the person to whom the emotion veiculated by the swearword is directed

1a. A swearword is used to reinforce the speaker's stance together with other elements (lexico-syntactical resources, facial expressions, changes in voice quality, etc.), and it is treated as fishing for affiliation (exx. 2, 3, 1–4);

1b. A swearword emerges as the main resource to display an emotion, and it is treated as a directive (ex. 2, 5);

2a. The person the swearword is addressed to is outside the interaction, e.g., in tellings (reported stories) and complaint sequences (exx. 2, 5);

2b. The person the swearword is addressed to is present in the interaction (friends in the dinner, co-workers in the meeting), e.g., in instruction sequences, where the need for the recipient is 'doing something' other than just affiliating (exx. 3, 1–4).

Our data presents a variety of dimensions: from a jocular environment, where swearwords are treated as teasing, and contribute to shared intersubjectivity, to the work environment, where swearwords index a problematic negotiation of intersubjectivity, a misalignment of perspectives. The presence or absence of the target among the co-presents can play a role in the establishment of intersubjective relationships.

#### 4.1. Teasing, and expressing annoyance

Ex. 2 shows a case where the activity of teasing and the display of annoyance contribute to create a shared jocular dimension among the ratified co-participants. Dinner party: Piera (PIE) and Rino (RIN) have just arrived at Giulio (GIU)'s house to find Giorgio (GIO) alone in the kitchen, chopping vegetables.

The excerpt starts with a complaint turn by Rino: he utters the turn-entry device *ma*/'but', moving from a previous topic to the next one, followed by the demonstrative adjective *quello*/'that' (one), anaphorically referred to a "distant" male referent, that, when used as personal pronoun in spoken Italian connotes negatively the referent, because of the "distance" that it indexes (Villani 2010). The verb construction that follows (*rompere i coglioni*/lit. "to break someone's balls") indexes an animate entity, Giulio, the host (not present in the room yet), and is delivered with emphasis on the profanity: the first syllable is stressed and the swearword is pronounced with slowed prosody. The lexical choice of the demonstrative, the swearword verb, and the reference to the exaggerated length of time (l. 02, *per tutta la giornata*/'the whole day long') serve the purpose of delivering the complainable and conveying Rino's negative stance: Giulio's request is perceived as unfair, since the person who made it is not present. Giorgio (ll. 04–05) treats Rino's complaint as non-legitimate, disaffiliating from it. He uses an indexical *dai*/'come on' that can be both backwards oriented – signaling problematic talk – and forward oriented signaling the necessity to pursue a different course of action, and to convey negative, disaffiliative stance toward a recipient (Pauletto and Fatigante 2015). What follows at l. 07 is in fact an imperative verb, a



partial recycling of the same verb construction without the swearword, lit. *don't*

Ex.2 MICE13 (00:23:37-00:23:58)

01 → RIN ma quello m'ha <rott'i coglioni> (0.2) per hm tutta la  
but that one has broken my balls all

02 giornata di arrivare in orario perché la tipa [dove-  
day long to arrive on time as this person had

03 GIU ((comes out of a door to the kitchen)) [(XXX)

04 GIO [DIFATTI  
in fact

05 [SEI ARRIVATO IN&  
you arrived

06 PIE [CIAO:: ((to GIU))  
hi

07 → GIO &RITA:[RDO. DAI NON ROMPERE  
late come on don't nag me

08 PIE [quella è la tua [camera? ((to GIU))  
is that your room

09 RIN [(↑OH;AH) HO CAPITO. MA NON HA ANCORA  
I get it but he hasn't

10 → [PREPARATO UN CAZZO.  
prepared a fuck yet

11 → PIE [figata. fammi ve[dere. ((to GIU))  
cool show me

12 GIO [MA COME? ((to RIN))  
what do you mean?

13 GIU vieni. ((to PIE))  
come

14 RIN sai quanto ci mettono a cuocere (.) queste cose qua?  
do you know how long it will take for these things to cook

15 GIO [mah:  
well

16 PIE [è gigante.= ((to GIU))  
it's huge

17 RIN = >'ttento che ti fai [male< ((to GIO))  
be careful you'll hurt yourself

18 → GIO ((to RIN)) [NON ROMPERE IL CAZZO TE. VA BENE?  
don't break the dick you ok?

19 PIE [è^e[norme ((to GIU))  
it's huge

20 GIO [BUTTALE GIO [BUTTALE  
throw them out Gio

21 GIO [io-  
I

22 (1.4)

23 GIO via. ((miming throwing zucchinis away))  
away

24 RIN ahahhahaa

*break, (don't bother me)* uttered with high volume, and orienting also to potential complainable<sup>13</sup>. At ll. 09–10, Rino produces an upgrade of his complaint in ll. 01–02

<sup>13</sup> Meanwhile Piera greets Giulio (l. 06), who has entered the kitchen, and asks him (l. 08) if the room he came from is his, prefacing an imperative request to see it (l. 11) accepted by Giulio (l. 13).



in response to Giorgio's disaffiliative turn, raising the volume from the onset of the turn. The dysphemism (*un cazzo*/"shit"/ lit. "a dick", l. 10) ends the turn, making his statement stronger and conveying his annoyance. At l. 14 Rino produces the reason for his complaint: the food will take a long time to cook. Giorgio expresses disagreement with *mah*, l. 15. At l. 18, the target of Rino's complaint, Giulio, finally orients to the complainer with the swear expression in high volume (almost shouting) *non rompere il cazzo te*: he recycles previous expressions and lexical items, *non rompere* and *cazzo*, allying with Giorgio. Rino smiles (not in the transcript) and does not respond back, treating this turn as teasing and not as confrontational. At l. 20 Giulio instructs Giorgio to go on with cooking, dismissing Rino's previous complaint (l. 14) as non-legitimate. Giorgio treats this instruction literally, building a comic effect: he gestures throwing away the zucchinis as the verb *buttare* means "to throw (away)"; but it can also mean throwing them in the pan, as Giulio was suggesting. Through an embodied and verbal semantic shift, throw the zucchini in the bin and not in the pan, Giorgio successfully manages to shift the activity performed, from complaining to teasing, as also confirmed by Rino's laugh (l. 24).

This episode shows a complicated intersubjective dimension: firstly, the disagreements between Rino and Giorgio, and Rino and Giulio do not get resolved, as they do not come to an agreement. Nonetheless, they switch from a complaint dimension to a jocular one. Secondly, the swearwords are used to convey the annoyance (or even anger) of the speakers (their affective stance), to emphasize their disaffiliation, and to give directives. Nevertheless, the participants orient to each other's turns as teasing and building a comic effect, rather than as confrontation or disagreement. Recycling similar swearwords and using the same high volume 'tone' show the participants' alignment toward the building of a shared dimension, rather than a disjunctive one. Despite their display of negative emotions, the participants' use of swearwords contributes to creating this jocular dimension, where teasing is at the basis of the establishment of intersubjectivity.

#### 4.2. Telling, and showing annoyance

In ex. 3 a participant talks about a person who is external to the interaction and has an annoying behavior. The display of annoyance contributes to receiving affiliation and attention from the co-participants and transforming the story into a laughable. At dinner, Angela (ANG), Piera (PIE); Giulio (GIU), Giorgio (GIO), Rino (RIN) are discussing the pros and cons of living together with other people. Giorgio brings as an example his housemate's "puzzling" behavior.

The excerpt starts with Rino's comment on Giorgio's previous explanation of his life with his flat mate. Rino displays affiliation, by suggesting that living with others gets on your 'nerves', but Giorgio only partially agrees with this at l. 03, mitigating Rino's suggestion with *si^no*/"yes no" and saying that only sometimes he gets nervous. But in l. 04, with a contrastive *però*/"but", Giorgio starts building up annoyance: sometimes one just wants to say *fuck you*. At l. 06, he starts a complaint against his flat mate who every morning leaves the bathroom window open. At l. 08, Giorgio starts reproducing his morning 'routine': he wakes up and feels a *fottuto*/lit. "fucked" (fucking) cold and then goes to shower. On the swearwords Piera and

Angela laugh and Rino utters a continuer: Giorgio has ensured himself an audience. Thus, he goes on l. 11 with higher volume and stress on the cause of his annoyance: “it’s fucking cold”, with the swearword in the clear this time. At l. 12, Piera claims understanding and affiliation by explicitly saying she understands him, and using his name (in Italian both epistemic and emotional understanding are expressed with the verb *capire*). But in overlap, l. 13 Giorgio starts a reenactment, using verbal, embodied and prosodic resources (such as non-lexical vocalizations): DS<sup>14</sup> allows him to stage the conversation he has with himself, making his stance clear (Sidnell 2006) gaining him more co-participants’ laughter (ll. 14 and 16). At l. 17 with *però vabbè* /“but well”, Giorgio shifts the topic back from himself to the housemate, and starts an evaluation of his housemate’s behavior wondering whether his housemate is purposely set on annoying him or not (l. 18), using *cazzo* /“fuck” to reinforce this contrast. After Angela’s agreement (l. 19), in ll. 20–22, Giorgio continues his storytelling explaining that his housemate comes back home all cheerful (again DS is here used to convey the laid-back stance of the housemate, l. 21) which proves that his housemate cannot be acting annoyingly on purpose (l. 22), starting his TCU with *cazzo* at l. 21. At l. 23 Angela laughs displaying her attention, and Giorgio goes on, wondering whether his housemate intentionally behaves like a *stronzo* /“piece of shit”, bad. After a pause following the end of Giorgio’s reenactment, Rino self-selects and starts assessing what has been said, closing the episode as it had started, by using *eh* followed by a disjunctive particle (l. 01 and l. 26). Angela overlaps interrupting him, recycling Giorgio’s swearword, *cazzo*, and stating that living with other people is hard. By using the swearword she reinforces her negative assessment, but she also achieves aligning and affiliation with Giorgio’s stance over his storytelling.

In this excerpt, multiple levels intersect from general to particular: on the one side Giorgio and Rino are talking about cohabitation in general (l. 01 *vivere assieme* /“living together”; l. 04 *a volte* /“sometimes”); on the other, Giorgio is relating to a specific story about his housemate who has done specific things to annoy him (e.g., leaving the bathroom window open<sup>15</sup>). Giorgio’s display of annoyance seems to increase while the story progresses, from annoyance (l. 03) to anger (ll. 13–18): the swearwords are used in a *crescendo*, from *vaffanculo* to *porca troia*, to *cazzo* repeated various times, while the cold is *fottutto*, reinforcing its severity. In parallel, the story, which had started as a general complaint, becomes a staged episode with an audience, reenacted through DS. Therefore, Giorgio ensures the attention of an audience and a jocular shared dimension gets created, but he also obtains affiliation and agreement as the target of the emotion display is external to the present constellation of participants.

<sup>14</sup> Günthner (2002:351) observes: “[d]irect quoting is always a stylized, theatrical device used for dramatization that creates involvement and invites the recipient to display co-alignment and indignation.”

<sup>15</sup> In a previous sequence Giorgio had already told his friends how his housemate uses up all the warm water in the boiler.

## Ex.3 MICE2-45 (09:52-10:29)

- 01 RIN eh ma^a vivere insieme:, (.) è facile farsi prendere il  
*huh but living together it's easy to get on each other's*
- 02 nervoso [(|che;pe:)  
*nerves that;for*
- 03 GIO [sì^no ti viene ogni tanto.  
*yes no it happens every now and then*
- 04 → GIO >però a volte< [ti viene da dire vaffa:nculo sembra che lo&  
*but sometimes you wanna say fuck you it looks like*
- 05 PIE [(° °)
- 06 GIO &fai a:pposta >capito?< >e^poi lui< lascia  
*you're doing it on purpose, you know and then he leaves*
- 07 la finestra aperta nel bagno.  
*the windows open in the bathroom*
- 08 → GIO .h >ti:-< io mi alzo la mattina fa un freddo [fottuto:,  
*you I get up in the morning and it's fucking cold*
- 09 PIE/ANG [((laughs))
- 10 RIN [ehm^ehm  
*mhmmh*
- 11 → GIO †oh un FRE:DDO FO:TT:UTO  
*oh (a) fucking cold*
- 12 PIE [ti capisco giorgio  
*I get you Giorgio*
- 13 → GIO [entro in bagno e^dico PO:~RCA †TROIA.  
*I go in the bathroom and I say fucking shit*
- 14 RIN ((laughs))
- 15 GIO BA:M .hh >e mi faccio< la doccia <fre:ddo>^UAH:::  
*and I take the shower (it's) cold*
- 16 ANG .hh^
- 17 GIO >però vab†bè< non penso che lui >cioè capito?<  
*but then I don't think that he I mean you know*
- 18 → a volte mi vien da dire †cazzo lo fa ap|po:sta=  
*sometimes I tell myself fuck he does it on purpose*
- 19 ANG =N0:: non [ci <pensa pro:prio>  
*no he just doesn't think about it at all*
- 20 GIO [>poi in realtà to-< poi in realtà to:rna.  
*but then actually then actually he comes back*
- 21 → cazzo è conte:nto alle:gro >BELLA COME STAI<?  
*fuck he's all happy cheerful hey how are you?*
- 22 dico no non può: averlo [fatto °apposta°  
*I say no he cannot have done it on purpose*
- 23 ANG [((laughs))
- 24 → GIO o fa lo †stro:nzo, ma non cre:do. .h  
*or he's behaving like a piece of shit but I don't think so*
- 25 (0.6)
- 26 RIN .h da:- eh però^è diffi:ci|le perché:-  
*huh but it's difficult because*
- 27→ ANG [cazzo è <pesa:nte> convivere  
*fuck it's hard living together*
- 28 con delle perso:ne.  
*with some people*

### 4.3. Complaining, and displaying anger

Ex. 4 is an expansion of ex. 1, in that it occurs a few minutes earlier in the conversation. Giulio is explaining why he is angry against someone external to the interaction. Giulio (GIU) openly displays his anger and receives affiliation from Giorgio (GIO).

The excerpt starts with a sequence in which Giulio states openly that he is now getting pissed: the verb *incazzarsi* derives from the word *cazzo* and is used to express anger, as Rossi (2011) remarks. After an insertion sequence (ll. 03–12), Giorgio finally shows affiliation and alignment with Giulio, by starting his turn with a cluster of turn-entry-devices that encode consequentiality *e ma allora/“and but then”*, by providing a lexical ratification, and reusing Giulio’s dysphemism. Despite having received affiliation from his co-participant, Giulio goes on with a post-other-talk self-increment (Schegloff 1996; Calabria and De Stefani 2020), at l. 14 with the relative pronoun *che/“that”* projecting a relative clause referred anaphorically back to l. 09 “a guy”. If syntactically (three well-formed sentences) and pragmatically (a three-part list) the turn at ll. 15–16 is completed, prosodically it is not, and still projects more to come. Giorgio self-selects at l. 17 in overlap with 16, with an insulting question “does s/he suck dicks?”. Giorgio’s question explicitly shows the speaker’s stance toward ‘the guy’, and consequently his affiliation toward Giulio. In l. 18, Giulio starts an other-initiated repair as he could not hear Giorgio’s turn. Giorgio repeats at l. 19 in the clear, resolving the first repair. At l. 20 Giulio starts another repair (*him?*) to disambiguate whom Giorgio is referring to, since in l. 15, Giulio had mentioned both *him* – the psychologist – and *her* – Angela. But Giulio does not wait to hear the response, inferring that it is the psychologist who “sucks dicks” not Angela, and ratifies Giorgio’s question, by repeating only the verb of the swear expression *ciucciare/“to suck (a dick)”*.

At l. 23 of ex. 1 (which chronologically directly follows ex. 4) Giulio, using an *and*-prefaced continuation (Heritage and Sorjonen 1994), resumes the complaint about Angela started as account at l. 04 (ex. 4), reenacting at ll. 23–25 a constructed dialogue (Tannen 1986) with one latent (Auer 2014) quotative. At l. 26, he utters *eh* which projects a dispreferred continuation: this arrives with the disjunctive conjunction *però/“but”* reinforced by the curse (*dio cane/“goddammit”*), pronounced within the same intonation contour. The curse is a “strong” swearword<sup>16</sup>, and it indexes Giulio’s stance: the emotion is built up in the preceding turns, after a list-like series of recommendations (ll. 23–24), and Angela’s reassurance (l. 25), the curse is used at the climax of Giulio’s anger and it makes the emotion explicit. In fact, in ll. 27–31, using the 2<sup>nd</sup> pers. singular, he refers directly to Angela while checking his phone. At l. 30, he confirms he has not received anything with the exclamation *eh*, using an idiomatic expression consisting in a mild dysphemism – *una mazza ceppa di niente/“freaking nothing at all”* – an intensifier (Hoeksema and Napoli 2008; Napoli and Hoeksema 2009) that reinforces *niente/‘nothing’*.

<sup>16</sup> Swearwords against God (curses) are perceived as “volgarità altissima” (*highest vulgarity*) according to the “volgarometro scale” devised by Tartamella (2016) through a 2009 survey, to evaluate Italian people’s perception of swear/taboo words and insults: <https://www.parolacce.org/2009/05/16/abbiamo-il-volgarometro/>

## Ex.4 MiCE2-39 (13:42-14:43)

- 01 → GIU [io invece adesso m]^incazzo.  
*but now I'm getting pissed*
- 02 (0.4)
- 03 GIO perché?  
*why?*
- 04 GIU perché la ange non mi rispo:nde.  
*because the Ange is not answering me*
- 05 (1.3)
- 06 GIO a::h .h  
*ah*
- 07 (0.4)
- 08 GIU è^andata a fare^un aperitivo ((puts phone down))  
*she went to have an aperitif*
- 09 con un tipo,  
*with a guy*
- 10 (0.2)
- 11 GIO veramente?=  
*really?*
- 12 GIU =sì  
*yes*
- 13 → GIO e ma allora mi incazzo an[ch'io  
*but then I get pissed too*
- 14 GIU [che ha conosciuto: alla festa  
*that she met at the party*
- 15 di ru:pa ma lui fa lo psicologo a lai^na:te, allora lei  
*of Rupa but he is a psychologist in Lainate so she*
- 16 [ci vuole parla:re,  
*wants to talk to him*
- 17 → GIO [°li ciuccia i cazzi?°  
*does s/he suck dicks?*
- 18 GIU eh?  
*what?*
- 19 → GIO li ciuccia i cazzi?  
*does s/he suck dicks?*
- 20 → GIU lui? .h hm^ciuccherà il mio molto presto [penso  
*him? he'll suck mine very soon I think*
- 21 GIO [( )] (.) ( )=  
22 GIU =no no vabbè.  
*no no well*

At l. 31 he verbalizes he is getting mad with the verb *incazzarsi*/"getting pissed". In these turns, we see how Giulio's lexical choices index the negative emotion: from l. 28, where he uses an orthophemism (*nulla*/"nothing"), through l. 30 where he reformulates the previous utterance adding a dysphemism<sup>17</sup> intensifying double expletive (*una mazza ceppa*/"freaking nothing"), followed by the climax in the

<sup>17</sup> See Allan and Burridge (2006) for a definition and discussion of "dysphemism", "euphemism" and "orthophemism".

following line (*adesso m'incazzo*/"now I'm getting pissed"), a strong swearword (Tartamella 2016). At l. 33 Giorgio suggests that Giulio should get pissed only when she arrives. By recycling the same verb, Giorgio seems to understand and validate the rights of Giulio to get pissed and displays his affiliation with this. However, he proposes a different timing, which is a delicate move, and Giulio, at l. 35, disagrees as they will not be alone. L. 36 is a rhetorical question: *stesse*/"same" is pronounced with stress and followed by the dysphemism *cagate*/"bullshit", conveying Giulio's stance, and assessing Angela's behavior as wrong. With the verb *bisognare*/lit. "to need", as a lexical deontic, Giulio disagrees with the necessity to repeat the same behavior repeatedly.

Similarly to the previous excerpt, in this case we find that the target of the emotion is external. The anger is openly expressed with lexical means – together with voice quality – using the verb *incazzarsi* at the beginning and upgrading it with a curse word. This is treated as fishing for affiliation by Giorgio. Interestingly,

Ex.1 MICE-13 (00:01:14-00:01:44)

23 GIU e gli ho detto (.) mi raccomando non sparire.  
and I told her please do not disappear

24 mi raccomando dimmi cosa fai,  
please tell me what you are doing

25 .h †SÌ SÌ ti dirò a che ora arrivo.  
yes yes I'll tell you what time I'll arrive

26 → †eh (.) però^dio cane me lo devi anche dire a che ora arrivi.  
huh but goddammit you have to tell me what time you arrive

27 sono .h le nove, ti ho scritto dei <messaggi,>  
it's 9 o' clock I wrote text messages to you

28 ((looks at phone)) non ho ancora ricevuto nulla,  
I still haven't received anything

29 (1.2) ((GIU keeps on looking at phone))

30 → GIU †eh non ho ricevuto una mazza ceppa di nie:nte, .h  
huh I haven't received freaking nothing at all

31 → ti ho scritto delle cose, .h adesso mi incazzo.  
I wrote stuff to you now I'm getting pissed

32 (0.6)

33 → GIO incazzati quando arriva no al tele:fono.  
get pissed when she arrives not over the phone

34 (0.5)

35 GIU .hh no: ma quando arriva non c'ho vo:glia perché non siamo  
no but when she arrives I don't want to since we aren't

36 neanche soli^dico solo perché ogni vo:lta? (.) bisogna fare  
even alone I'm only saying why every time we have to do

37 → le stesse cagate?  
the same bullshit

Giorgio displays alignment and affiliation not only by reusing the same swear expression (*incazzarsi*) but also by categorizing negatively (through the swearword multiword construction) the person he is treating as 'the cause' of Giulio's anger. Giulio, on the other hand, brings back the conversation to the complainable, the target of his anger: Angela. In any case, Giulio as well reuses the same expression suggested by Giorgio (ll. 17–20 ex. 4): this shows that repeating or reusing the same swearwords ratifies the emotion/stance conveyed more effectively, showing, and reinforcing intersubjectivity.

#### 4.4. Giving directives, and steaming off anger

The last excerpts<sup>18</sup> are taken from a business meeting in a consultancy company among the chairperson Paolo (PAO), and three managers, Annina (ANN), Duilio (DUI) and Mario (MAR). Paolo's display of anger toward the co-participants (his employees) is treated as a directive (Sorjonen, Raevaara, and Couper-Kuhlen 2017). Before the beginning of this excerpt, they were discussing personnel's tasks within the company, but they cannot reach an agreement. They have a database called CRM to store this information, but it is not clear whose responsibility it is to keep it updated and running.

At ll. 01–02 Paolo tells Annina, who is responsible for the commercial sector, that she should manage the database. This is treated as a problematic statement: Annina does not reply and a long pause (2.1) follows. At ll. 04–06, Paolo restates the

Ex.5.1 MIPRO1-50 (26:11-32:00)

01 PAO †allora (0.5) va bene. >sa- sapete cosa vi dico?< che il  
so okay you know what I say that the  
02 ci erre emme è un servizio commerciale. te lo gestisci tu.  
CRM is a commercial service you manage it  
03 (2.1)  
04 → PAO †EH CAZZO. (0.2) ADESSO: (1.2) È UN SERVIZIO COMMERCIALE.  
huh fuck now it is a commercial service  
05 (.) NON È uno strumento †è un servizio commerciale °se lo  
it is not a tool it is a commercial service if you  
06 imposti così.° .h definisci il processo e lo gestisci.  
set it up like this you define the process and manage it  
07 (2.4)  
08 ANN °va†bèn°.   
okay  
[...]

reason Annina should be in charge of CRM but this time he places a turn-initial *eh cazzo*/"INTER.fuck" continuing his turn with high pitch and volume. The turn-initial swearword, the change in voice tone, and the presence of pauses, at ll. 4–5, are all indications that Paolo has started displaying annoyance about the management of the situation. At l. 06, he gives Annina directives. Another long pause (2.4) follows l. 07, but this time at l. 08 Annina accepts Paolo's directives, giving the preferred answer *vabèn*/"okay". Despite her vocal agreement, she displays the problematic nature of this acceptance with her body conduct (gaze aversion) and voice tone (low voice).

Between minutes 26:31 and 27:31 (not in the transcript), Paolo explains the details of her work, but Annina disagrees. She perceives Paolo's directives as a punishment against her personally, and displays anger too, only by raising her voice tone, without swearing. Between 27:32 and 28:54 (not in the transcript), Annina explains that performing this task is absurd for her, as beyond her scope, but Paolo

<sup>18</sup>To make the analysis easier to follow, a long excerpt has been split in four parts. Some lines in the transcript have been omitted and summarized when relevant for the rest of the analysis.



insists that it falls under her commercial responsibility. He is the boss thus she has to accept his instructions, despite disagreeing. Paolo increasingly displays his impatience and annoyance: contrary to before, he will not move on in the meeting agenda until this problem is settled.

Ex.5.2 MIPRO1-50 (26:11-32:00)

77           perché^è TRE MESI CHE FATE IL GIOCHINO DEL (0.2) adesso ti metto  
                   three months that you play the game of                   now I put you

78           l:ì la pallina (0.2) ade- eh- e- e- vi tirate le palline.  
                   there the little ball and you throw at each other little balls

79 →       (.) ↑EH CAZZO (.) ADESSO BA:STA. mi dite chi è l'owner  
                   huh fuck           now   stop you tell me who is the owner

80           del ci erre emme, (1.2) e^↑NO (0.2) scusate eh  
                   of CRM                   and no           sorry huh

81           (1.0)

82   DUI       me lo prendo ↑io.  
                   I'll take it

83           (1.2)

84   PAO       ALLORA (0.3) se ti pre- se ti prendi tu il ci erre emme:  
                   so           if you ta- if you take   the CRM

85           de↑scrivi un proces↑so, (1.0) ma:ndi f- mi fai vede:re  
                   describe a process           send   you show me

86           una::: una comunicazione organizzativa, (0.4) la m- ↑la  
                   an   an organizational communication   it we

87           concordiamo (.) la mandiamo fuori (.) ↑dopodiché (0.2)  
                   agree on           we send it out           afetr that

88           PUNITIVO divento vera↑mente.  
                   I'll become punitive for real

89           (4.4)

90   PAO       ocche:i?  
                   okay

91           (1.6)

92   PAO       >perché< è è: inutile:: >fare< (0.4) i giochini (0.6) i  
                   because it is useless doing           little games   the

93 →       giochini rompono i coglioni non è il momento in questo  
                   little games break balls   it is not the moment in this

94           momento in questa società de- (0.3) di fare i giochini.  
                   moment in this company           to play little games

95           (2.1)

[...]

From l. 77, with an increase in volume, Paolo accounts (with *because*) for changing his mind about this topic, by scolding off his employees like children, using the verb 'to play': they are throwing at each other the database responsibility as a 'hot potato'. As Paolo's TCUs progress, and so does the display of anger, he seems not to control his register anymore, using colloquialisms (e.g., *ci siamo incartati* l. 68; *venirne fuori* l. 69; *finché non ne usciamo* ll. 70–71; *non mi schiodo* l. 76); high volume and pitch; and uttering the turn with pauses and restarts, which signal the problematic progression of the talk, climaxed at l. 79 with the exclamation *eh*

*cazzo*/"INTER.fuck". His turn is potentially complete at l. 80 and a pause follows (l. 81). At l. 82, Duilio orients to Paolo's talk as an urgent request to act and volunteers to become the owner of the CRM, also showing his treatment of Paolo's previous turns (from l. 79) as a display of anger. Between ll. 84–88 Paolo gives instructions to Duilio (who nods) about what is expected from him, lexicalizing explicitly his anger by saying he would become punitive if instructions were not followed (ll. 87–88). There is no uptake, another long pause (4.4) follows (l. 89), while the co-participants keep their eyes on the table: Paolo is entitled to this punitive attitude, as he is the boss. At l. 90 he asks for confirmation, but again nobody replies (l. 91 a long pause ensues, 1.6). Therefore at l. 92 he says that playing is useless for the company, reinforcing this at l. 93, with a swearword construction: games *break balls* (*rompono i coglioni*). Ll. 92–94 show again how Paolo displays, through colloquialisms and the usage of swearwords, his anger. Another long pause follows (2.1) at l. 95. Then Paolo gives instructions to Duilio (not in the transcript). Paolo keeps giving instructions and directives, stressing the key points at l. 102, and from l. 103 he openly displays his exasperation (he spreads his arms wide and increases his volume). At ll. 106–109 he accounts for his frustration by saying that since they started CRM there have been people who have not said *shit* (*un cazzo*, l. 108) to him. The dysphemism, *un cazzo*, uttered in high volume, conveys the problematic gravity of something that is expected but not happening, communicating with the boss, which intensifies Paolo's annoyance. At ll. 108–109 he closes the topic (*adesso*

## Ex.5.3 MiPRO1-50 (26:11-32:00)

101 PAO e mi fai un p:ro:cesso. mi disegni un processo su questa  
and you make a process you draw a process about this

102 cosa. (1.1) CHI COME QUANDO: (0.4) in quale a- con quali  
thing WHO HOW WHEN in which with which

103 abilità e con quali °fasi°. (0.3) †e vediamo UN PO' SE  
skills and in which stages and let's see if

104 ARRIVIAMO A CAPO DI QUESTA COSA >perché< †È DA QUANDO C'È  
we can figure out this thing because it is since the

105 IL CI ERRE EMME CHE è- è: un continuo: (.) andare avanti e  
CRM exists that it has been a continuous back and

106 indietro sta cosa. (0.9) poi c'è †chi (0.2) ə:h ə::h dice  
forth this thing also there are people who say

107 əh io ci metto le mani oddio non ce le metto °vabbè° poi  
I handle it oh god not I don't well then

108 → c'è chi (0.2) non mi dice un CA:Z↑ZO (0.2) EH adesso †basta  
there are people who do not tell me a fuck huh now stop

109 su questa cosa qua.  
on this topic

[...]

*basta*/"now stop"), uttering the turn with final intonation and averting his gaze to signal the end of the activity (Rossano and Stivers 2010). Between minutes 30:57–31:20 (not in the transcript), Annina agrees with Paolo, however he is now angry, and restates again, shouting, that they need to find an owner of CRM. Annina replies that they have found Duilio.

## Ex.5.4 MiPRO1-50 (26:11-32:00)

121 PAO I PROCESSI NO- no- non vengono: non si ↑autoscrivono. (0.4)  
*the processes do not do not come do not write themselves*

122 non ↑siamo nel mondo di harry potter. (1.7) non  
*we are not in harry potter's world they do not*

123 si ↑autoscrivono bisogna che ci sia un owner ↑che (.)  
*write themselves it is necessary that there is a owner who*

124 ↑è responsabile di quella cosa lì: (.) e scrive un pro- e  
*is responsible for that thing there and writes a pro- and*

125 → scrive un processo. (0.7) ↑oh cazzo ↑poi (0.2) giustamente  
*writes a process of fuck then obviously*

126 si confronterà con gli al↑tri (0.6) e dirà: >a r↑aghi<  
*s/he can compare with the others and can say guys*

127 per me il processo è questo.  
 [...]

133 PAO >adesso< ((to MAR)) in marketing è chiara  
*marketing now in marketing is it clear*

134 la situazione?  
*the situation*

135 (0.4)

136 MAR >chiaris°sima°<  
*very clear*

At l. 121, Paolo needs to make sure they understood, because, as he ironically explains, they are not living in a magical world: (l. 122). He uses again uncontrolled register as he displays his stepping out of the work zone using lexicon and references that do not belong to the finance and business domains (*Harry Potter*, l. 122). With *oh cazzo*/"oh fuck", l. 125, Paolo expresses a change-of-state: now it should be clear what he expects them to do. At l. 126 he reports some possible objections, using colloquialisms, such as *a raghi*/"hey guys", displaying again uncontrolled vocabulary and the stepping out of the working talk and role. In the omitted part, he invites his co-participants to move on. However, he needs to check that everyone is on board, so he gazes at Mario who was not involved in this conversation until now. Mario confirms his understanding with a superlative and the sequence is now closed

In this complex excerpt, we see a different setting from the jocular shared dimension of the dinner, where following instructions is more relevant than displaying affiliation. Compared to previous excerpts, the establishment of intersubjectivity is made complicated by the setting itself: the roles of the interactants in the company give them different deontic rights, which not only means they cannot directly disagree with a superior, but also that only one participant, the boss Paolo, is entitled to his anger, as this emotional display is deployed to ensure the progression of the meeting and to solve a practical issue within the company. Here the targets of the emotions – anger, impatience, exasperation – are inside the interaction: namely, they are in an asymmetric situation (cf. Sorjonen, Raevaara and Couper-Kuhlen 2017) as employees. This

asymmetry is oriented to by participants in different places throughout the interaction. Paolo uses his deontic rights as boss to contrast Annina's disagreement and to give urgent directives. He does so in an effective way (as we see by Annina's attempts at mitigating, Duilio's offer of acting, and Mario's superlative affirmative response), by mobilizing many resources: body conduct, volume and voice quality, prosodic clues, lexical choices (e.g., colloquial register and swearwords).

### 5. Discussion and conclusions

In this article we set out to explore, through the means of IL and CA, how interactants mobilized *in situ* swearwords to display and manage negative emotions and accomplish specific social actions. As we can see in table 1 a variety of actions can be implemented by using a swearword in a turn, confirming the flexibility of these resources in Italian.

The interactants, by using swearwords, can implement a directive (*non rompere, non rompere il cazzo, incazzati*); display a negative attitude toward a target (*m'ha rotto i coglioni; li ciuccia i cazzi?; ciuccerà il mio*); intensify a negative statement<sup>19</sup> with an expletive (*freddo fottuto; una mazza ceppa di niente; non mi dice un cazzo; non ha ancora preparato un cazzo; i giochini rompono i coglioni; fa lo stronzo; le stesse cagate*); orient toward the definitive closing of previous talk (*oh cazzo*); display the incremental climax of an emotion (*porco dio; vaffanculo; eh cazzo; porca troia*). Also co-participants can use swearwords in response to these actions: in showing affiliation with the person displaying the negative emotions in exx. 3-4, or in response to the teasing ex. 2, co-participants recycle the same, or partially the same, swearword or turn containing one. This reusage suggests the achievement of a convergence of stances.

The dimensions of disappointment and complaint are transversal to these actions as they are transversal to the macro-activities implemented in the excerpts. We observe:

- the deployment of swearwords in the making of a jocular dimension, where teasing and responding with an insult, or a directive in a multiword verb construction, create the base for a shared intersubjectivity (ex. 2);
- the deployment of swearwords within reported speech, to reenact an external person in a story telling environment, secure an audience and affiliative displays from co-participants (ex. 3);
- strong curses in complaint sequences displaying the escalation of anger and ensuring affiliation, as well as the convergence of a negative stance toward the same target (ex. 1-4);
- in the delicate work environment, swearwords as index of a problematic negotiation of intersubjectivity (a misalignment of perspectives and a difficulty in achieving mutual understating), and effective means to give a directive and convey the urgency to act (ex. 5).

<sup>19</sup> We also have a case of swearword *figata* in ex. 2 where the assessment is instead positive.

EXCERPT, SETTING & INTERACTIONAL ENVIRONMENT	RECIPIENT(S) I/O PARTICIPANTS' CONSTELLATION	EMOTION(S)	SWEARWORDS	ACTION(S)
2 Dinner among friends  Informal, symmetrical setting  Jocular shared dimension/ Complaining sequence	inside	annoyance	m'ha rotto i coglioni (1); non rompere (1); non ha ancora preparato un cazzo (1); non rompere il cazzo (1)	complaint complaint; teasing
			surprise	figata (1)
3 Dinner among friends  Informal, symmetrical setting  Story telling	outside	annoyance	vaffanculo (1) cazzo (2); fa lo stronzo (1)	fishing for affiliation/audience
			fottuto (1)	fishing for affiliation/audience; making a laughable
			fottuto (1); porca troia (1)	making a laughable
			cazzo (1)	affiliating
1;4 Dinner among friends  Informal, symmetrical setting  Confidence sharing/ Complaining sequence	outside	anger	mi incazzo (2)	complaint; fishing for affiliation
			mi incazzo (1); li ciuccia i cazzi (2); incazzati (1)	affiliating
			dio cane (1); non ho ricevuto una mazza ceppa di niente (1); cagate (1)	complaint
			ciuccerà (1)	ratification by repetition
5 Business meeting  Formal, asymmetrical setting  Instruction sequence	inside	anger; exasperation	rompono i coglioni (1) non mi dice un cazzo (1)	complaint
			eh cazzo (2); oh cazzo (1)	implementing directives

Tab.1 Reciprocity of emotions, settings and actions implemented, swear expressions used

The outsideness or insideness of the target person can determine what is relevant next in the turn-by-turn unfolding of the interaction: in the case in which the target is external, affiliating is the relevant next action (exx. 3, 1, 4), the interaction is less disrupted and the complaint can go on and the speaker build up even more anger (ex. 1); when the target is internal (exx. 2, 5) the response to the emotion a) can be immediate and disrupt the progressivity of the interaction (ex. 2); b) or what is relevant next is the urgency to act (ex. 5). Moreover, when it is internal there are other prosodic cues, e.g. shouting, that display the escalation of the emotion; while when external, the lexical choice, the dysphemism, has a more prominent role.

If previous CA studies have documented how speakers orient to the transgressive status of profanity (Schegloff 2003) and the normative restrictions on swearing (Butler and Fitzgerald 2011), the data presented in this study shows that improprieties can also concur to creating intimacy (Jefferson, Sacks and Schegloff 1987) and positive emotional experiences, such as humor (Beers Fägersten and Stapleton 2017). Swearwords in our excerpts contribute to building a mechanism of “social swearing” (exx. 2, 3) creating humor, expressing solidarity, and emotions, as opposed to “annoyance swearing” (exx. 4, 5) cathartically releasing them (Montagu 1967; Beers Fägersten and Stapleton 2017). Whether expletives, dysphemism, or curses, swearwords in this study are not accounted nor repaired even in the business meeting<sup>20</sup>. They are treated as not breaching the normative constraints of the interaction (Garfinkel 1967; Goffman 1981). They are also not treated as speaking issues needing repair (Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks 1977). In the overall corpus, however, this dimension is present and oriented to by the participants, who sanction and make relevant the problematic aspects of swearwords. Jefferson, Sacks and Schegloff (1987: 160) acknowledge the relevance of context for the production and treatment of “frankness, rudeness, crudeness, profanity, obscenity, etc., [which] are indices of relaxed, unguarded, spontaneous, i.e. intimate interaction”. In conclusion, as they are used and made relevant in the unfolding of turns, swearwords acquire a public dimension in interaction. They contribute to the achievement of specific social actions and therefore to the building of intersubjectivity, a shared understanding of the situation. By using swearwords in the management and display of their emotions, participants make these emotions visible, public, too (cf. Peräkylä and Sorjonen 2012). Hence, the emotions cease to be only an internal process and become a social phenomenon.

## REFERENCES

- Alba, M., C. Canneti, E. Felicani and C. Murru (2019) “Male parole. Il gusto di dire le parolacce”, in B. Aldinucci, V. Carbonara, G. Caruso, M. La Grassa, C. Nadal, and E. Salvatore (eds) *Parola una nozione unica per una ricerca multidisciplinare*, Siena: Edizioni Università Per Stranieri Di Siena.
- Alfonzetti, G. M. (2020) “'Fuck Prof Ke lezione di merda': Insultare sui muri dell'università”, *Quaderns d'Italià* 25: 103–134.
- Alfonzetti, G. M. and M. Spampinato Berretta (2010) “L'arte dell'insulto o il 'rispondere per le rime'.” *Actes du Congrès International de Linguistique et de Philologie Romanes - Innsbruck 3–8/09/2007*, 3–11.
- Allan, K. and K. Burridge (2006) *Forbidden Words. Taboo and the Censoring of Language*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Auer, P. (2014) “Syntactic structures and their symbiotic guests: Notes on analepsis from the perspective of online syntax”, *Pragmatics* 24(3): 533–560.
- Bazzanella, C. (2020) “Insulti e pragmatica: complessità, contesto, intensità”, *Quaderns d'Italià* 25: 11–26.

<sup>20</sup> Contrarily to what Butler and Fitzgerald (2011) show for broadcast interviews.

- Beers Fägersten, K. and K. Stapleton (eds) (2017) *Advances in Swearing Research: New Languages and New Contexts*, Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Butler, C. W. and R. Fitzgerald (2011) "'My f\*\*\* ing personality': swearing as slips and gaffes in live television broadcasts", *Text & Talk – An Interdisciplinary Journal of Language Discourse Communication Studies* 31(5):525–551.
- Calabria, V. and E. De Stefani (2020) "Per una grammatica situata: Aspetti temporali e multimodali dell'incrementazione sintattica", *SILTA* 44(3): 571–601.
- Couper-Kuhlen, E., M. Etelämäki and M. L. Sorjonen (2021) "Directive turn design and intersubjectivity", in M. L. Sorjonen, A. Peräkylä, R. Laury and J. Lindström (eds) *Intersubjectivity in Action: Studies in Language and Social Interaction*, Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 61–80.
- Couper-Kuhlen, E. and M. Selting (2018) *Interactional Linguistics: Studying Language in Social Interaction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- D'Achille P. (2010) "'Chi dice donna dice...'. Le parole come strumento di infamia", *Storia delle donne* 6/7: 13–30.
- Dardano M., C. Giovanardi and M. Palermo (1992) "Pragmatica dell'ingiuria nell'italiano antico", in G. Gobber (ed) *La linguistica pragmatica (Atti del Congresso della Società di Linguistica Italiana, Milano, 4-6/09/1990)*, Roma: Bulzoni, 3–37.
- Ehrlich S. and M. Meyerhoff (2014) "Introduction. Language, Gender, and Sexuality", in S. Ehrlich, M. Meyerhoff and J. Holmes (eds) *The Handbook of Language, Gender, and Sexuality*, New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1–20.
- Faloppa, F. (2004) *Parole Contro. La rappresentazione del diverso in italiano e nei dialetti*, Milano: Garzanti.
- (2011) *Razzisti a parole (per tacere dei fatti)*, Roma & Bari: Laterza.
- (2020) *#ODIO. Manuale di resistenza alla violenza delle parole*, Milano: UTET.
- Galli de'Paratesi, N. (2009) "Eufemismo e disfemismo nel linguaggio politico e nell'italiano di oggi", *Synergies Italie*: 137–144.
- Garfinkel, H. (1967) *Studies in Ethnomethodology*, Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall.
- Goffman, E. (1981) *Forms of talk*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Goodwin, M.H. and C. Goodwin (2000) "Emotion within Situated Activity" in A. Duranti (ed) *Linguistic Anthropology: A Reader*, Malden-Oxford: Blackwell, 239–257.
- Goodwin, M.H. and A. Kyratzis (2014) "Language and Gender in Peer Interactions among Children and Youth", in S. Ehrlich, M. Meyerhoff and J. Holmes (eds) *The Handbook of Language, Gender, and Sexuality*, New York: John Wiley & Sons, 509–528.
- Gross, J. J. (1998) "The emerging field of emotion regulation: An integrative review", *Review of General Psychology* 2(3): 271–299.
- Günthner, S. (2002) "Perspectivity in reported dialogues. The contextualization of evaluative stances in reconstructing speech", in C. F. Graumann and W. Kallmeyer (eds) *Perspective and Perspectivation in Discourse*, Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 347–374.
- Haddington, P. (2007) "Positioning and alignment as activities of stance taking in news interviews", in R. Englebretson (ed) *Stancetaking in Discourse*:



- Subjectivity, Evaluation, Interaction*, Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 283–317.
- Heritage, J. and M. L. Sorjonen (1994) “Constituting and maintaining activities across sequences: And-prefacing as a feature of question design”, *Language in Society* 23(1): 1–29.
- Hoeksema, J. and D. J. Napoli (2008) “Just for the hell of it: A comparison of two taboo-term constructions”, *Journal of Linguistics* 44(2): 347–378.
- Hoey, E. M., P. Hömke, E. Löfgren, T. Neumann, W. Schuerman and K. Kendrick (2021) “Using expletive insertion to pursue and sanction in interaction”, *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 25(1): 3–25.
- Il Nuovo De Mauro Online* <https://dizionario.internazionale.it/>
- Jay, T. (2009) “The utility and ubiquity of taboo words”, *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 4(2): 153–161.
- Jefferson, G. (2004) “Glossary of transcript symbols”, in G.H. Lerner (ed) *Conversation Analysis: Studies from the First Generation*, Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 24–31.
- Jefferson, G., H. Sacks and E. A. Schegloff (1987) “Notes on laughter in the pursuit of intimacy”, in G. Button and J. R. E. Lee (eds) *Talk and Social Organization*, Bristol: Multilingual Matters, 152–205.
- Kärkkäinen, E. (2006) “Stance taking in conversation: From subjectivity to intersubjectivity”, *Text & Talk – An Interdisciplinary Journal of Language Discourse Communication Studies* 26(6): 699–731.
- Levinson, S.C. (2012) “Action formation and ascription”, in J. Sidnell and T. Stivers (eds) *The Handbook of Conversation Analysis*, Malden-Oxford: Blackwell, 103–130.
- Ljung, M. (2011) *Swearing: A Cross-cultural Linguistic Study*, London: Palgrave MacMillan.
- McEnery, A. (2006) *Swearing in English*, London: Routledge.
- Mohr, M. (2013) *Holy Sh\*t : A Brief History of Swearing*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Montagu, A. (1967) *The Anatomy of Swearing*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Napoli, D. J. and J. Hoeksema (2009) “The grammatical versatility of taboo terms”, *Studies in Language* 33(3): 612–643.
- Ochs, E. (1996) “Linguistic Resources for Socializing Humanity”, in J. Gumperz and S.C. Levinson (eds) *Rethinking Linguistic Relativity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 407–437.
- Pavesi, M. and A. L. Malinverno (2000) “Usi del turpiloquio nella traduzione filmica” in C. Taylor (ed) *Tradurre il cinema (Atti del Convegno, Trieste 29–30/11/1996)*, 75–90.
- Peräkylä, A. (2021) “Emotion as an emergent theme in conversation analysis”, in J. S. Robles and A. Weatherall (eds) *How Emotions Are Made in Talk*, Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins, xiii–xviii.
- Peräkylä, A. and J. E. Ruusuvuori (2012) “Facial expression and interactional regulation of emotion”, in A. Peräkylä, and M. L. Sorjonen (2012) *Emotion in Interaction*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 64–91.

- Peräkylä, A. and M. L. Sorjonen (2012) *Emotion in Interaction*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Pugliese, R. and G. Zanoni (2019) "Impoliteness and Second Language Teaching: Insights from a Pragmatic Approach to Italian L2", *mediAzioni* 24: 1–62
- Rossi, F. (2011) "Parole oscene", *Treccani Enciclopedia dell'Italiano*. [https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/parole-oscene\\_\(Enciclopedia-dell'Italiano\)/](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/parole-oscene_(Enciclopedia-dell'Italiano)/) (visited 01/03/2022).
- Sacks, H., E. A. Schegloff and G. Jefferson (1974) "A simplest systematics for the organization of turn-taking in conversation", *Language* 50(4): 696–735.
- Sacks, H., E. A. Schegloff and G. Jefferson (1977) "The preference for self-correction in the organization of repairs in conversation", *Language* 53: 361–382.
- Schegloff, E. A. (1992) "Repair after next turn: the last structurally provided defense of intersubjectivity in conversation", *American Journal of Sociology* 97(5): 1295–1345.
- (1996) "Turn organization: One intersection of grammar and interaction", in E. Ochs, E. A. Schegloff and S. Thompson (eds) *Interaction and Grammar*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 52–133.
- (2003) "The surfacing of the suppressed", in P. J. Glenn, C. D. LeBaron and J. Mandelbaum (eds) *Studies in Language and Social Interaction: In Honor of Robert Hopper*, Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 241–262.
- (2007). *Sequence Organization in Interaction: A Primer in Conversation Analysis I*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Selting, M. (2017) "The display and management of affectivity in climaxes of amusing stories", *Journal of Pragmatics* 111: 1–32.
- Sidnell, J. (2006) "Coordinating gesture, talk, and gaze in reenactments", *ROLSI* 39(4): 377-409.
- (2014) "The architecture of intersubjectivity revisited", in N. J. Enfield, P. Kockelman and J. Sidnell (eds) *The Cambridge Handbook of Linguistic Anthropology*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 364–399.
- Sorjonen, M. L., A. Peräkylä, R. Laury, R. and J. Lindström (eds) (2021) *Intersubjectivity in Action: Studies in Language and Social Interaction*, Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Sorjonen, M. L., L. Raevaara and E. Couper-Kuhlen (eds) (2017) *Imperative Turns at Talk: The Design of Directives in Action*, Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Stivers, T. (2008) "Stance, alignment, and affiliation during storytelling: When nodding is a token of affiliation", *ROLSI* 41(1): 31–57.
- Stivers, T., L. Mondada and J. Steensig (eds) (2011) *The Morality of Knowledge in Conversation*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Tartamella, V. (2016) "Il "volgarometro": un questionario per valutare la forza offensiva delle parolacce", in D. Lagorgette (ed) *Actes du colloque Les Insultes 3: Bilan et Perspectives, Théorie et Actions 2009*, 113–138.
- Tannen, D. (1986) "Introducing constructed dialogue in Greek and American conversational and literary narrative", in F. Coulmas (ed) *Direct and Indirect Speech*, Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton, 11–32.
- Trifone, P. (2012) "Cor cacchio. Dire no in romanesco", *LINGVARVM VARIETAS An International Journal*: 45–51.

- Villani, F. (2010) “Pronomi dimostrativi come pronomi personali: l’uso di SE in finnico e di QUESTO/QUELLO e di QUESTI/QUEGLI in italiano”, in J. Havu, C. Klippi, S. Hakulinen, P. Jacob and J. S. Fernandez (eds) *Actes du XVIIe Congrès des romanistes scandinaves*, Tampere Studies in Language, Translation and Culture, Tampere: Tampere University Press, 1285–1294.
- Weatherall, A. and J. S. Robles (2021) “How emotions are made to do things”, in J. S. Robles and A. Weatherall (eds) *How Emotions Are Made in Talk*, Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 1–24.
- Wierzbicka, A. (1992b) “Talking about Emotions: Semantics, culture and cognition”, *Cognition and Emotion* 6(3/4): 285–319.

## Appendix

### Talk transcription conventions (based on Jefferson 2004)

(.)	short pause or gap (up to 0.2 seconds)
(2.4)	measured pause, gap, silence (in seconds)
[ ]	onset and end of overlap
(maybe)	dubious transcription
(he;it)	alternative transcription
( )	incomprehensible segment
((cry))	transcriber’s comment
.	final intonation
,	continuative intonation
?	interrogative intonation
to↑morrow	the segment following ↑ is pronounced with a higher pitch
yester↓day	the segment following ↓ is pronounced with a lower pitch
OVER	loud
°nope°	soft
<u>sure</u>	emphasis; ‘punched up’ pronunciation
fa:r	lengthening
alwa-	cut-off
< >	slowed down, compared to the surrounding talk
> <	speeded up, compared to the surrounding talk
.h	inbreath
h	outbreath
cohhhst	pronounced with breathiness (laughter)
(h)	laughter token
fhellof	smiley voice or suppressed laughter
=	latching; no break or gap between end of one line and beginning of next line
&	turn continuation by the same speaker
his^son	liaison
ə	schwa