How closings are accomplished in talk show interviews

A comparative linguistic study

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Abstract

This is a comparative linguistic essay aimed to investigate how closing sections construct social interaction in a number of talk shows, primarily *The Daily Show* and *The Colbert Report*. The talk show data is analyzed by means of Conversation Analysis (CA) which considers how language performs social interaction and the structures and norms which give the frames for this. The results of the analysis are compared to the results of a study carried out in 2003 by Esperanza Rama Martinez on the same subject matter. Martinez’ study is in fact the foundation for this study. In her study Martinez concludes that the closing phase is initiated by the interviewer and that there are always pre-closing components before the closing components begin. The results of this study are in line with Martinez´ study.

Keywords: conversation analysis, talk show interview, comparative study, speech act
# Table of contents

1. Introduction .......................................................................................................................... 3
   1.1 Linguistics and conversation analysis ................................................................................. 3
   1.2 The Daily Show and The Colbert Report .............................................................................. 3

2. Theoretical background ......................................................................................................... 4
   2.1 Pragmatics .......................................................................................................................... 4
   2.2 Implicature and maxims ....................................................................................................... 4
   2.3 Turn-taking ......................................................................................................................... 5
   2.4 Sequence organization and adjacency pair ......................................................................... 6
   2.5 Intersubjectivity and repair ................................................................................................ 6
   2.6 Speech Acts ......................................................................................................................... 6
   2.7 Martinez' study .................................................................................................................... 7
      2.7.1 The pre-closing section .................................................................................................. 8
      2.7.2 The closing section ........................................................................................................ 8

3. Method .................................................................................................................................. 9
   3.1 My study and the working process ....................................................................................... 9
      3.1.1 Qualitative research ...................................................................................................... 9
      3.1.2 Conversation Analysis ................................................................................................. 10
      3.1.3 Transcript symbols ...................................................................................................... 11

4. Results and discussion .......................................................................................................... 11
   4.1 Initiation of closing phase ................................................................................................... 13
   4.2 The closing section ............................................................................................................. 14
   4.3 Turn-taking ......................................................................................................................... 16
   4.4 Sequence organization and adjacency pair ........................................................................ 18
   4.5 Intersubjectivity and repair ................................................................................................ 19
   4.6 Speech acts ......................................................................................................................... 19

5. Conclusion ............................................................................................................................. 21

List of References .................................................................................................................... 24

Appendices ............................................................................................................................... 25
1. Introduction

1.1 Linguistics and conversation analysis
This is a comparative linguistic study regarding the closing-section in talk shows. The results of my study are compared to a study on the same subject matter by Esperanza Rama Martinez. Thus my thesis question is: Do the results in my study regarding the closing-section in talk show interviews confirm or reject the results in Martinez's study?

Language and social interaction are two sides of the same coin. When we speak on a daily basis we usually do not consider why and how we talk, or how speech is organized. Researchers have found that conversation is structured and guided by rules that are culturally determined. These rules vary due to the cultural and situational circumstances. Linguistics contains a wide array of research possibilities. It deals with disciplines such as pragmatics, semantics, conversation analysis, critical discourse analysis etc. The different disciplines are also linked or closely connected to other research areas such as sociology, history, political science and so forth (Holmes 2008, 378). Conversation analysis, CA, used in this essay, actually emerged from sociology through the works of Erving Goffman and Harold Garfinkel on face-to-face interaction and the normative character of shared understanding in daily interaction. This was later developed by Harvey Sacks into conversation analysis, focusing on telephone conversation. It initially focused on talk in conversations but has over time developed to encompass different types of talk such as interaction in lessons, medical clinics and news interviews (Mazeland 2006).

CA thus studies the organization of talk as situated, socially organized set of practices. It describes the methods members use for organizing talk as interactional structures that both shape the context in which they operate and enable its orderly, interactionally coordinated progression (Rawls 2012).

1.2 The Daily Show and The Colbert Report
The Daily Show is a talk show produced by Comedy Central and was first broadcast in 1996. The host, Jon Stewart, and his co-workers have a satirical approach on news, politics, trends entertainment etc. The Colbert Report, first broadcast in 2005, with the host, Steven Colbert, has the same approach as The Daily Show. There is always a guest invited such as a politician, a writer, a filmmaker, an actor or an activist. Both talk shows have been rewarded Emmys and a Peabody (wikipedia.org). This study analyzes a number of episodes from The Daily Show and The Colbert Report and the results are compared to a study carried out by Martinez in 2003. Martinez’ study deals with the closing-section in talk show and news interviews and
how they are structured and performed. Like Martinez I have watched a number of talk shows and transcribed them. I have also studied a number of articles dealing with CA and speech acts. These are explained further on in the theoretical background section. In the methodology section I describe the process of my work. The results and discussion section contains extracts from the talk show interviews to illustrate my results. These are compared to and related to previous research and especially the study by Martinez. The last chapter, the conclusion, is the section where I sum up the study, the working process and evaluate and suggest research for the future based on my essay. The full transcriptions of the closing sections of the interviews are found as appendices.

2. Theoretical background

2.1 Pragmatics
Pragmatics became a field of study in the 1970s and among the first to research on this were Austin, Searle and Grice. Pragmatics focuses on “language use in communication and the speaker’s intention when saying utterances in particular contexts” (Martinez-Flor and Usó-Juan 2010, 4). In pragmatics for instance metaphors and irony are used to send a message, in contrast to semantics which deals with what is strictly said (Escurdia and Stainton 2013, xvi).

In Speech Act Theory there is a concept called performatives. A performative is defined as an utterance where an act is performed, for instance, “I name this ship Titanic” (Wray and Bloomer 2013, 63). Performative utterances have two standard forms:1) the first person singular present indicative active such as “I order you to...” or “I promise you...”. 2) second or third person in passive such as “passengers are warned to cross the line by the bridge only” (Escurdia and Stainton 2013, 26). According to Escurdia and Stainton there are two rules for a performative act to work: “The convention invoked must exist and be accepted” and “the circumstances in which we purport to invoke this procedure must be appropriate for its invocation”. If these rules are disobeyed the intention will misfire. Another important thing to consider is that the person carrying out must be authorized to do so (2013, 23).

2.2 Implicature and maxims
To make communication efficient co-operation between the speaker and the listener is required. Paul Grice introduced the concepts of implicature and maxims which deal with how communication will be successful in terms of what is said and how this is interpreted. He
stated four maxims which characterize the presumptions for successful communication (Wray and Bloomer 2013, 63). These conversational maxims are connected with conversational implicatures and the purpose of speech is intelligible exchange of information. The maxims are: *quantity* – the amount of what is said is presumed to be neither more or less than required, *quality* – what is said is expected to be genuine and truthful, *relation* – what is said must be relevant, and *manner* – what is said must be clear and with a “reasonable dispatch.”

The four maxims are fundamental for the Cooperative Principle and how speech proceed or should proceed in general (Escudria and Stainton 2013, 51). To distinguish cooperative transactions in conversation there are certain features regarding this for instance that the participants have a common aim with the conversation. What the participants contribute with should be mutually dependent. Both participants should have a tacit or explicit mutual understanding that the conversation should continue or progress unless termination is agreed. A participant may fail to keep to the maxims through violation by lying, unwillingness to cooperate in accordance with the maxims and cooperative principle, through clash meaning that he/she is unable to fulfill one maxim without violating another, and finally by flouting a maxim where the participant openly disobey a maxim and thereby the cooperative principle (Escurdia and Stainton 2013, 52).

### 2.3 Turn-taking

Turn-taking is basically about who speaks when. It deals with the problem of “who should talk or move or act next and when should they do so”. Single units of talk are allocated to different speakers in turn made up by a set of rules (Heritage 2009). Sacks and others observed in 1974 that the participants in conversation strive to minimize overlaps and gaps. The problem each participant faces is to determine or decide when it is time for a new turn and when the current one is completed. Turn-taking provides mutual intelligibility through the successive turns the participants create understanding of the interaction and the possibility to identify and address misunderstandings (Wooffitt 2005, 33). Turns consist of constructional units, TCU, and each turn has at least one of these TCUs. Examples of TCUs are one word units such as “yes, no”, others are more elaborated such as clauses and phrases. The type of TCU used by the speaker helps the recipient to decide when a turn will be completed (Rawls 2012). The complexity of units is significant for how easy it will be for a recipient to comprehend or recognize when a turn is complete. It is also possible for recipients to determine the completeness of an utterance due to syntactic and prosodic information.
Another important dimension of understanding turn-taking is pragmatic factors such as relevance of a turn to the “immediate interactional context”.

“Thus the organization of turn-taking is accounted for by describing it as a set of constructional practices that enable the co-participants to determine the place at which speaker transition becomes relevant and to then deal with that issue according to a structural set of interactional options.” (Rawls 2012).

2.4 Sequence organization and adjacency pair
Sequence organization is defined as how participants in conversation link the different turns to each other and thereby create “a coherent series of interrelated communicative actions” (Rawls 2012). Examples of sequences are questions followed by answers, requests and decisions, criticism and reply. These two-part sequences are called the adjacency pair, containing of a first and a second pair (Rawls 2012). Wooffitt describes adjacency pairs as “some kind of conversational actions belonging with each other”. Utterances such as “hi-hi” constitutes a natural pair. In paired sequences there is a normative relationship. After the first speaker’s utterance the second speaker is expected to produce an utterance relevant to the first one (Wooffitt 2005, 32). Sequence organization deals with “how successive turns or actions are formed up to be coherent”. Significant term of sequences of action, meaning relevant turns or actions, is adjacency pairs e.g. questions-answers, greetings-greetings etc. Adjacency pairs have conditional relevance (Heritage 2009). In short, adjacency pair can be described as “related utterances produced by two successive speakers in such a way that the second utterance is identified as a follow-up to the first” (Holmes 2008, 278).

2.5 Intersubjectivity and repair
Organization of repair deals with how to solve problems of speaking, hearing and understanding what is said. Conversation starts with a speaker’s turn, continues with a second speaker’s response and ends in the first speaker’s next turn. When a turn is not answered as intended in the next turn as an adjacency pair, for instance a question – no answer- repetition of question – relevant answer, then a participant use a repair sequence (Rawls 2012). Interpretation of conversation is both subjective and intersubjective, the latter meaning that the participants deal with the adjacency utterances in similar ways. The participants seem to have a common understanding of what they are involved in and the rules for it (Parker 1999).

2.6 Speech Acts
Speech acts are defined as acts performed by speech or utterances “to say something is to do
something” (Kasher 1998, 4). The utterances we make could be certain noises, words or sentences which give meanings to communication. According to Austin, people use language not only to say things but to perform actions. He categorized utterances into *locutionary acts* which are what has been said, to make an utterance, *illocutionary acts* which are the intention of what is said and *perlocutionary acts* meaning the effect the utterance has on the listener (Kasher 1998, 12).

Kasher (1998 12) describes the performative acts as follows: locutionary acts are somebody saying something with sense, meaning and reference. Illocutionary acts are the intention of what is said such as information, warning, order. Perlocutionary acts are the effect of what is said or what is achieved of the utterance such as convincing, persuading, deterring, surprising or misleading.

Focusing on the illocutionary acts, there are five groups of utterances which are called performatives:

- **commissives** consisting of promises, offers, vows or guarantees.
- **directives** consisting of requests, commands, orders, suggestions, questions or giving permissions.
- **assertives** consisting of assertions, descriptions, statements, predictions, speculations or announcements.
- **expressives** consisting of compliments, apologizes, thanksgivings, greetings or acknowledgements.
- **declarations** consisting of appointments, sentencing etc.

Searle's theory about speech acts has been criticized due to his research only focusing on particular sentences out of context. Besides, the criticism claims that his work is merely based on intuition and not scientific results (Martinez-Flor and Usó-Juan 2010, 7). One must also be aware of that an utterance is interpreted from, on the one hand, its linguistic form and, on the other hand, from the context, identity of the speaker and location in a sequence (Parker 1999).

### 2.7 Martinez’ study

The starting point of my essay is a study carried out by Esperanza Rama Martinez, regarding the closing structure in talk show interviews. Martinez used conversation analysis, CA, for her study. In her study, consisting of 18 interviews, she found that the closing section follows a pattern. Her conclusion was that:

- a) The interviewer initiates the closing phase
- b) Pre-closing components always precede the closing component
What establishes the genre-specific features of the talk show interview are the purpose of entertainment, informal style and interpersonal actions. Also the limited time for an interview is a significant factor here. Though the talk show interview gives the impression of being an encounter between equals, and maintaining sociability, the closing structure with all its elements such as re-openings, invitations for instance, it is quite clear that the interviewer is the one in charge of the interview. The audience is a must since they act as a third participant and has an important role in the closing section by thanking the guest (Martinez 2003, 295).

The talk shows have developed from focusing on a person into a discussion with the audience. There is a constant shift between information and entertainment characterized by humour, private matters, sometimes gossip and discussions under informal conditions. This informal and not always sincere structure, allows the formal procedures such as turn allocation and length, to be deviated from. The task of the audience is to contribute with applause and laughter. The talk show interviews are interpersonal and informal with an audience present (Martinez 2003, 285).

2.7.1 The pre-closing section
According to Martinez, the closing sections of talk show interviews occur in a certain order. Before the closing appears, there is a pre-closing phase. This phase consists of an exchange of passing turns which give directions, arrange meetings and make invitations for the future. This phase also recapitulates things talked about before in the interview and finally, there is an exchange of well wishes and thanks. When an interview is finished this must be obvious and not interpreted as silence or re-opening of conversation, by the other participant. The tendency seems to be to not announce the end of the interview overtly. Instead references are made to future meetings etc. (Martinez 2013, 290).

2.7.2 The closing section
The closing-section with the terminal components consists quite often of the following: two exchanges, where both are structured as two adjacency pairs. Adjacency pairs are sequences which consist of utterances belonging to each other such as “How are you? I'm fine, thanks”. The first adjacency pair consists of the interviewer saying “thank you” and a corresponding response from the guest. The second adjacency pair consists of the interviewer turning to the audience saying the name of the guest once again, loudly and often with a gesture. The use of the guest’s full name functions as a signal or request to the audience to correspond with a round of applause. The interviewer then terminates with a “thank you” to the audience. In this way the audience is invited as a participant with applause and cheering. This signal from the
interviewer is often combined with a gesture or holding a book, intended to make the audience focus on the guest/interviewee. The final round of applause is a “thanksgiving act” instructing the audience to thank the guest/interviewee (Martinez 2013, 289).

The final component has most often a boundary marker which signals the closing. Words such as “okay” or “well” can act as boundary markers which are separating the interview from closing or termination, ending the main body of the interview. Re-openings can appear both in the pre-closing phase and after termination. Observations show that re-openings initiated by the guest take place in the pre-closing section, whereas re-openings initiated by the interviewer take place after thanksgiving exchange. This indicates that in talk show interviews, the guest knows that he/she cannot re-open after termination (Martinez 2013, 290).

3. Method

3.1 My study and the working process
This study consists of a number of interviews from two talk shows produced by Comedy Central, The Daily Show and The Colbert Report, found on the Internet. After transcription of the closing section, I have analyzed the structure and elements with a set of symbols used for Conversation Analysis, CA. Then I have compared my study to Martinez’s. The analysis focuses on the performance of routine activities such as turn-taking, repair and sequence organization (Rawls 2012). Since CA focuses on the relations and implications of utterances, my study focuses on the closing sections in talk show interviews and how the pre-closing and closing sections are initiated (Holmes 2008, 382). This includes pre-closing utterances, termination, turn-takings, adjacency pair and repair (Woofitt 2005, 26).

3.1.1 Qualitative research
Linguistic research on discourse often involves qualitative research. This analytical approach involves description and analysis and is closely connected to pragmatics. Emphasis lies on the different strategies speakers use in certain contexts with certain people. The research is often quite detailed, takes time and involves a small number of participants. The results can therefore only be applied to that particular group and can only be extended if compared to other groups (Wray and Bloomer 2013, 97). Qualitative research has the following features: the data collected is non-numerical and open ended and analyzed by non-statistical methods. Typical examples of research data are interviews where the transcriptions are analyzed by qualitative content analysis (Dörnyei 2007, 24). Characteristics of qualitative research are that
the aspects of the study are kept open and flexible, a range of data such as interviews, various types of texts, images etc. The analysis is done with words, not numbers, the researcher looks for the insider perspectives such as subjective opinions, experiences and feelings of individuals. The samples of information are small and the analysis is interpretive and subjective (Dörnyei 2007, 37).

The concepts of validity and reliability are mostly used within quantitative research. Validity deals with to measure what should be measured, reliability with that if the study is replicated the same results will be obtained. In qualitative research it is suggested that these concepts could be replaced with:

- credibility for truth value
- transferability for applicability
- dependability for consistency
- confirmability for objectivity

These alternative concepts are suggested because validity and reliability are not easily achieved in qualitative research due to the respondent's personal accounts and the researcher's subjective interpretations of the results and conclusions (Dörnyei 2007, 55-57).

3.1.2 Conversation Analysis
In this study conversation analysis, CA, is used, an analysis method initiated by Harvey Sacks. Sacks discovered that there are a structure and norms in conversation which in turn allow certain activities (Wooffitt 2005, 5-6). People talk or make utterances which perform actions. To identify and mark these utterances, structures and norms, Sacks and other scholars used and use conversation analysis. CA is the study of talk-in-interaction and encompasses not only ordinary but also more formal conversation. It was developed by Sacks regarding conversations from a suicide prevention center and group therapy sessions. The studies have since then extended to both formal and informal contexts (Wooffitt 2005, 68). CA focuses on recordings of verbal action which are transcribed. This is done in order to be able to analyze all verbal interaction in the conversation. With CA it is possible to detect and describe how conversation and human action is organized (Mazeland 2006). The focus is not on language itself, but the study of discourse and the interactive and practical construction conversation (Packer 1999).

Regarding analyzing data there are two different kinds of studies in CA: single case analysis and collection study analysis, the single case study focuses on interaction in one case where the analysis is drawn. In a collective study a number of single cases are compared to
each other from a specific aspect or feature (Rawls 2012). I have chosen collective study analysis for my study.

3.1.3 Transcript symbols
To analyze an interview, CA has a number of symbols. These transcript symbols were initiated by Gail Jefferson (Wooffitt 2005, 9) to really understand and be able to translate not only the language but also the performances in talk. The transcripts convey verbal, prosodic and kinetic details which seem relevant for analysis. The transcript symbols used in this study are depicted below (Jefferson 2004, 25):
- a simple dash indicates a turn is cut off
[ a left bracket indicating an overlap
(1) a number in parentheses indicates a pause
(cheering) words in parentheses indicates non-verbal utterances
word underline indicates stressed utterances
WORD upper case indicates loud sounds

4. Results and discussion
This study is based on 13 talk show interviews, 7 from “The Daily Show” and 6 from “The Colbert Report”. The interviews vary in length regarding how much speech is exchanged between the interviewer and the interviewee. The focus is on the pre-closing and the closing sections and how they are constructed. My intention is, as a first step, to identify the pre-closing section which appears before the final stage – termination of the interview. The second step is to identify the closing section and how it is constructed. In the analysis I look at when and how the phases are initiated. An analysis considering turn-taking, sequence organization, adjacency pair, intersubjectivity, repair and speech acts is also carried out.

My findings show that the talk shows follow a similar pattern. All interviews include a pre-closing and a closing section. The pre-closing section is a marker for when the real interview is over and preparation for the closing section takes place. The pre-closing section starts when the main interview is over. In my study this section is initiated differently in the interviews. The pre-closing sections are initiated by the interviewer most times, 10 out of 13, but in 3 cases it is the interviewee who seems to initiate this section. In all the interviews the audience takes part in the pre-closing section with laughter, cheering and rounds of applause. I found that pre-closing components always precede the closing component. This confirms the results in Martinez´ study. Regarding the closing section the interviewee does not take part
verbally or non-verbally in 5 interviews.

Since talk show interviews are expected to be not only serious but also entertaining, sometimes even amusing, this is accepted by all parties: the interviewer, the interviewee and the audience. The audience plays a significant role during the pre-closing and closing sections. It confirms and acknowledges the direction of the show which is taken by the interviewer. In the interviews the closing section is always initiated by the interviewer, never the interviewee. This result confirms Martinez’ study. This is quite natural since the interviewer is in charge and the whole interview takes place within a limit of time. Regarding turn-taking the interviews are carried out through successive turns, except one where the interviewer interrupts the interviewee in the pre-closing section. Overlaps are constantly taking place in the interviews as laughter from the audience or as jokes from the interviewer. 10 of the interviews are structured according to the sequence organization and adjacency pair, meaning that different turns are linked to each other in coherence. 5 are missing utterances from the interviewee in the closing section and 1 in the pre-closing section.

The table below illustrates the number of interviews, the talk shows, the interviewees and dates the interviews were carried out.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Talk show</th>
<th>Interviewee</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Colbert Report</td>
<td>Simon Shama</td>
<td>March 13th 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Colbert Report</td>
<td>Ken Burns</td>
<td>April 21th 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Colbert Report</td>
<td>Ellen Page</td>
<td>May 8th 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Colbert Report</td>
<td>Metallica</td>
<td>September 24th 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Colbert Report</td>
<td>Bette Midler</td>
<td>May 6th 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Colbert Report</td>
<td>Vince Gilligan</td>
<td>September 30th 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Daily Show</td>
<td>Anita Hill</td>
<td>March 13th 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Daily Show</td>
<td>Roger Ross Williams</td>
<td>January 13th 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Daily Show</td>
<td>Tim Gunn</td>
<td>January 14th 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Daily Show</td>
<td>Robert Gates</td>
<td>January 15th 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Daily Show</td>
<td>Steven Brill</td>
<td>January 16th 2014</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.1 Initiation of closing phase

I will illustrate the initiation of the closing phase/section through four examples. The first interview is with Ellen Page in “The Colbert Report”, the second with Anita Hill in “The Daily Show”, the third with Bette Midler in “The Colbert Report” and the fourth with Roger Ross Williams in “The Daily Show”.

**Pre-closing section with Ellen Page**

1. SC: Ah well, Ellen Page, thank you so much for joining me. Am, before we go I just wanna
2. make sure we actually been here tonight and not just dreaming (spinning a gadget on the table)
3. EP: [Oh
4. A: [laughing)

Steven Colbert closes the interview in the first sentence. He then re-opens it again with a joke, the interviewer takes the initiative to the pre-closing section. It ends with an utterance “oh” from the interviewee and laughter from the audience.

**Pre-closing section with Anita Hill**

1. AH: I´m just think (1) I just think (pitch) we can push it a little forward for the next
2. generation and ever imagine a world (1) where (1) it doesn´t happen (handgesture).
3. JS: No, I don’t think I´d like that. I think (1) (shaking his head) that I don’t really have any
4. reason to do a program. I´m just back to[bartending.
5. AH: [laughing]
6. Audience: [(laughing)
7. AH: Well, there’ll be plenty of other subjects that you can cover,[trust me! (laughing)
8. Audience: [(laughing)

The real interview has ended but Anita Hill continues to talk about the subject matter, sexual harassment, and initiates the pre-closing section with a reference to the main interview. The atmosphere is until then quite serious. Jon Stewart answers with a joke which is appreciated by all parties and the section ends with mutual laughing. In this pre-closing section there are no well wishes or thanksgivings.
**Pre-closing section with Bette Midler**

1. SC: So you can make an entire career of playing a character of [yourself?
2. A: [laughing]
3. BM: [Yeah, well
4. SC: [Wow (turning to audience)
5. A: [(laughing and cheering)]

Steven Colbert takes initiative to the pre-closing phase with a humorous utterance. He uses irony to emphasize what is said. The first line is a reference to the main interview about Midler’s career. The audience contributes with applause and laughter as expected and the pre-closing section is finished.

**Pre-closing section with Roger Ross Williams**

1. RW: I just found out that Uganda is the third (2) Google just came out with a study that
2. Uganda is the third country out of the top three countries, the third country to (1) to (1)to
3. watch gay porn.
4. JS: One of the top three is Uganda?
5. RW: Uganda.
6. JS: Wow. This google study, it doesn’t [name names, does it?
7. A: [laughing]
8. RW: No, (laughing) I might be in trouble myself.
9. JS: The film now (1) ah but you find it on Thursday if you been nominated for on short list.
10. [FOR OSCAR NOMINEE!
11. A: [(cheering and round of applause)
12. RW: Thank you.

In this interview it is the interviewee who initiates the pre-closing section. The interviewee Roger Ross Williams makes a revelation which is quite sensational since homosexuality is forbidden in Uganda at the time for the interview. The tone is humorous and alluding. Stewart, the interviewer announces time for the movie and award nominations. Williams ends the pre-closing section with “Thank you”.

**4.2 The closing section**

The interviewer initiates the closing phase and the interviewee answers with thanksgiving or handshakes. The audience answers to the signal from the interviewer when it is time to start their thanksgiving and round of applause. This is the closing sections in the interviews with
Ellen Page, Anita Hill, Simon Shama and Tim Gunn.

**Termination with Ellen Page**

6. SC: ELLEN PAGE! [X-MEN, DAYS OF FUTURE PAST! ELLEN, THANK YOU SO MUCH! (shaking hands with guest)
8. EP: [Thank you
9. A: [(cheering and round of applause)
10. SC: We’ll be right back! (pointing at audience)

There are two exchanges or two adjacency pairs. The first pair consists of the interviewer, Steven Colbert, naming the interviewee, Ellen Page, and she responses with a thanksgiving. It is combined with handshaking. The second pair is the naming and the response from the audience. There are no boundary marks or re-openings. Colbert is ending the interview with pointing at the audience and a phrase of coming back.

**Termination with Anita Hill**

9. JS: [THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR BEING HERE! ANITA OPENS IN SELECT CITIES 21 OF MARCH! ANITA HILL!
11. THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR BEING HERE! (shakes hands with guest)
12. A: [(laughing and round of applause)

In this case the first exchanges or adjacency pair consists of naming and thanksgiving of the guest and she responses with non-verbal action, handshaking. The second pair is the naming and thanksgiving and the response from the audience in the form of cheering and round of applause. It is quite clear that this is the termination since the voice of the interviewer is loud when he is doing his announcements. There are no boundary marks or re-openings.

**Termination with Simon Shama**

7. SC: SIMON SHAMA! (holding up book) [“THE STORY OF THE JEWS”! THE BOOK WITH PBS WALL TO WALL JEWS! WE’LL BE RIGHT BACK!
9. A: [(cheering and round of applause)
10. SC: [SEE YOU IN A WEEK! (pointing) GOODNIGHT!
11. A: [(cheering and round of applause)

The first adjacency pair here consists of the interviewer, Steven Colbert, naming the guest and the response from the audience. The second pair is Colbert addressing the audience and its response with cheering and round of applause. The first pair does not involve the guest,
Simon Shama, and there is no second speaker as might have been expected. No boundary marks or re-openings occur either.

**Termination with Tim Gunn**

7. JS: Very excited, [TIM GUNN, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.](shaking hands with guest)
8. A: [(cheering and round of applause)]
9. TG: Thank you (shaking hands)

Jon Stewart terminates the interview with a phrase which works as a boundary marker “Very excited”, and naming the guest in the first exchange or adjacency pair. In this interview the guest, Tim Gunn, contributes with the second part in the first pair with a “Thank you”. They are also using non-verbal language such as handshaking. The second exchange is between Stewart and the audience. Here Gunn is the one who makes the last utterance before termination.

4.3 Turn-taking

In talk show interviews turn-taking seems to work very well. On the one hand there are almost no gaps which could confuse the other participant whether the turn is complete or not. Overlaps on the other hand quite often appear e.g. in terms of funny comments or non-verbal utterances. According to my findings the participants in The Daily Show and The Colbert Report have no difficulty understanding when a turn is completed and it is time for the next turn.

**Interview with Bette Midler**

6. SC: [BETTE MIDLER! THANK YOU SO MUCH!](shaking hands with guest)
7. BM: My pleasure!
8. A: [(cheering and round of applause)]
9. SC: [BETTE MIDLER! THE BOOK IS "A VIEW FROM A BROAD"! WE’LL BE RIGHT BACK!]
10. A: [(cheering ad round of applause)]

Steven Colbert terminates the interview by emphasizing the guest’s name, Bette Midler, and she answers with “My pleasure!” There is no doubt from Midler when she is in turn to talk or in another way contribute to the conversation. There are no overlaps, except from the audience, and no gaps which can interrupt the conversation. TCU, turn constructional units, are in this excerpt phrases such as “Thank you so much”, or “My pleasure”, which indicate
the next turn for Colbert or Midler. The audience reacts to the TCUs as well and interferes or responds as expected with round of applause and cheering at the same time. Since the excerpt is so limited it can be difficult to decide whether the utterances are relevant or not in the context. Anyhow, they seem to work, the interviewee and the audience respond to the interviewer’s announcements with acceptance.

**Interview with Vince Gilligan**

1. SC: Vince! Thank you so much for coming, oh I know, I know you came here like ah you, you flew out a first thing in the morning after, did you party all night?
2. VG: Aah, party until about midnight. I’m a little, a little old to be, ah look tired
3. SC: Tired?
4. VG: But you know I fly 10 000 miles for Houston
5. A: [Aah (round of applause)
6. SC: [My favourite guest of all times! (shaking hands with guest)
The turn-taking in this part of the interview takes the form of a conversation. The overlap is made by the audience with an utterance “Aah” and round of applause at the same time as Gilligan and Colbert are talking. There are no gaps to indicate misunderstandings between the parties. The conversation is brief and easy and goes on with mutual intelligibility. The TCUs are phrases such as “tired?” and “did you party all night?”

**Interview with Simon Shama**

1. SC: So, so (1) is there another book coming after 1492?
2. SS: There ( ) there is [volume 2.
3. SC: [Volume 2 what happens after 1492?
4. SS: It finishes with our conversation this evening. [So almost everything-
5. SC: [So it´ s all just this (1) well, Simon, it sounds like a hit.
6. SC: SIMON SHAMA! (holding up book) [“THE STORY OF THE JEWS”! THE BOOK WITH PBS WALL TO WALL JEWS! WE´LL BE RIGHT BACK!
7. A: [(cheering and round of applause)
The interviewer, Steven Colbert, overlaps the interviewee, Simon Shama on line 3 with speaking at the same time. Shama is also interrupted by Colbert on line 5 and 6. The turn-taking does not work here because the previous turn is not completed. TCUs used are phrases such as questions or statements “it sounds like a hit”. There are no misunderstandings of the
context but Colbert wants to terminate the conversation.

4.4 Sequence organization and adjacency pair
Sequence organization and adjacency pair are crucial in CA. In the interviews the adjacency pair takes the form of the interviewer announcing and thanking the guest in the termination phase. The guest answers with a verbal utterance or a gesture/no gesture. The second adjacency pair, consists of the interviewer and the response from the audience, e.g. the interviews with Malala Yousafzai in *The Daily Show* and Ken Burns in *The Colbert Report*. In the pre-closing section the adjacency pair consists of, for instance, a question and response, as in the interview with Bette Midler.

**Interview with Malala**

1st adjacency pair
JS: [PLEASE (showing book) GET THE BOOK, DONATE TO THE MALALA FUND BY VISITING WWW.MALALAFUND.ORG, MALALA YOUSAFZAI!] [(whispering and shaking hands with guest)]
M: [(shaking hands)]

2nd adjacency pair
JS: [PLEASE (showing book) GET THE BOOK, DONATE TO THE MALALA FUND BY VISITING WWW.MALALAFUND.ORG, MALALA YOUSAFZAI!] [(whispering and shaking hands with guest)]
A: [(cheering and round of applause)]
The first adjacency pair consists of Jon Stewart´s verbal announcement and Malala´s response with handshaking. The second adjacency pair is Stewart´s announcement and the response from the audience with cheering and round of applause.

**Interview with Ken Burns**

Adjacency pair
SC: [KEN BURNS! (shows DVD).”THE ADDRESS”! WE´LL BE RIGHT BACK!(shake hands)]
A: [(cheering and round of applause)]
In this termination or closing section of the interview there is a first adjacency pair consisting of Colbert´s addressing the audience and the audience´s response with cheering and applause.
**Interview with Bette Midler**

1st adjacency pair
SC: So you can make an entire carrier of playing a character of [yourself?
BM: [Yeah, well

2nd adjacency pair
SC: [Wow (turning to audience)
A: [(laughing and cheering)]

The first adjacency pair consists of a question from the interviewer, Colbert, which the interviewee, Midler, answers. The second pair is an utterance from Colbert addressing the audience and the response from the audience with laughter and cheering.

4.5 Intersubjectivity and repair
No significant intersubjective repair occurs in the interviews. There seems to be no misunderstandings or need for questions to clarify utterances. The interviewer and the interviewee follow the pattern of adjacency pairs and alignment without the need of repair. Worth noticing about intersubjectivity is also that the participants seem to interpret the different utterances and turn-takings similarly. There is a mutual understanding of the context.

4.6 Speech acts
As mentioned in the theoretical background-section, Seale focuses on the illocutionary acts, which he categorized into five groups of utterances called performatives. The illocutionary acts describe the intention of the speaker. The following categories of speech act performatives are found in the interviews:

**Commissives**
Almost all the interviews contain commissives in the form of promises to the audience about coming back stated by the interviewer, for example:
SC: See you in a week! (pointing) Goodnight! *(The Colbert Report)*
JS: We’ll be right back! *(The Daily Show)*

These utterances can also be regarded as assertives in the form of statements. In *The Colbert Report* the guest Vince Gilligan makes an offer/assertion:
4. SC: Tired?
5. VG: But you know I fly 10 000 miles for Houston.
The utterance can also be interpreted as an assertive in the form of assertion or statement.

**Directives**

Directives appear often as questions, for instance in the interviews with Simon Shama and Bette Midler in *The Colbert Report*:

*Interview with Simon Shama*

1. SC: So, so… is there another book coming after 1492?
2. SS: There ( ) there is [volume 2
3. SC: [Volume 2 what happens after 1492?
4. SS: It finishes with our conversation this evening.

*Interview with Bette Midler*

1. SC: So you can make an entire carrier of playing a character of [yourself?
2. A: [laughing )
3. BM: [Yeah, well

In the form of order/command in the interview with Ken Burns in *The Colbert Report*:

SC: (laughing) Don´t, don´t blink (pointing finger)! It´s a stationbreak on the IBS.

**Assertives**

In all the interviews announcements a made by the interviewer naming the guest and his/her book or movie, for instance in the interview with Simon Shama in *The Colbert Report*:

SC: Simon Shama! (holding up book) “The story of the Jews”! The book with pbs wall to wall Jews! We´ll be right back!

From the interview with Robert Gates in *The Daily Report*, the following utterances by Gates are statements:

3. RG: [I fired both the Airforce Chief of Staff and the Airforce Secretary for their
4.unwillingness to 7. tackle problems within the nuclear programs.

5. A. [(laughing)

6. RG: So you gotta. (1) whether its veterans, affairs or any place else (pointing finger) it´s
7.not just at the top. You gotta be willing to hold people accountable and show that there are
8.consequences for not get the job done.

**Expressives**

The expressives in the interviews consists mostly of thanksgiving by the interviewer or the interviewee. In some, compliments are uttered by the interviewer, for example in the interview with Ellen Page in *The Colbert Report* and in the interview with Malala Yousafzai
in The Daily Show:

Interview with Ellen Page
SC: Ah well, Ellen Page, thank you so much for joining me. Am, before we go I just wanna make sure we actually been here tonight and not just dreaming (spinning a gadget on the table).

Interview with Malala
JS: I, I, I am humbled to speak with you (hand on his heart). Ah, I will say yes. [I don’t know where you came from, but I’m very glad you’re here.

Also the audience’s utterances such as rounds of applause and cheering can be considered as both a compliment and thanksgiving.

Commissives, expressives, assertives and directives, performatives within the illocutionary acts, are found in the interviews. The utterances analyzed above are words or sentences spoken by the interviewer. Also the audience contributes with non-verbal utterances such as cheering and rounds of applause.

5. Conclusion
I have studied 13 talk show interviews, in this case by Jon Stewart in The Daily Show and Steven Colbert in The Colbert Report. The interviews are transcribed to be able to analyze the closing section. There are three parties who are involved in the speech interaction during the interviews, namely the interviewer, the interviewee and the audience. The interviewer and the interviewee perform as the main characters by exchanging verbal utterances such as words and sentences in the form of jokes, questions information and so forth. A significant part in the talk show structure is also the audience with the contribution of non-verbal utterances as cheering and rounds of applause. These non-verbal utterances work partly as support for either the interviewer or the interviewee by confirming what is said. The confirmation takes the form of encouragement, sympathy and agreement to what is uttered or said between the two other parties.

Utterances and performances in organized speech are connected in a dialectical relation: an utterance produces a new utterance or performance which in turn produces another utterance. The outcome of these utterances or performances determines the course of the following performances. It is quite interesting to discover how organized (and unaware) we are in speech and that we seem to be rather intersubjective in speech and social interaction. Though a talk show interview seems to be improvised in some parts and not formal, it strictly
follows norms and structures regarding who is in charge, turn-taking, sequence organization with adjacency pair and so forth. Another interesting finding is the speech acts analysis showing the categories of utterances made in terms of commissives, directives, assertions and expressives within the illocutionary act.

The results in my study confirm the conclusion of Martinez' study. The closing phase is always initiated by the interviewer with reference to the interviewee by mentioning his/her name. This is most often combined with a thanksgiving and announcement of a book or a film. This is quite natural since the interviewer is in charge of the program and has a limited amount of time to perform the interviews. There is always a pre-closing phase before the real closing section. The pre-closing phase is initiated differently, by the interviewer 10 times and by the interviewee 3 times. Sometimes it is a bit difficult to determine where the pre-closing section starts and ends since many utterances are the same in both sections. To keep in mind is that the real interview is over and quite often the pre-closing opens up with a humorous question or an ironic utterance. Turn-taking is fundamental in CA when we look at gaps and overlaps. In the interviews, on the one hand, no gaps which can indicate misunderstandings or else, are made. Overlaps, on the other hand, appear constantly and are mainly made by the interviewer verbally and the audience in form of non-verbal utterances. This is a consequence of the talk show form with its limited amount of time and entertaining approach. The conversation in the interviews is built on sequence organization and adjacency pair. In the pre-closing section the adjacency pair frequently consists of a question and a response. In the closing-section the first adjacency pair appears between the interviewer and interviewee and the second between the interviewer and the audience. The first pair consists of naming, thanksgiving and a verbal utterance or gesture. The second pair consists of the response from the audience to the utterance of the interviewer. Intersubjectivity works in the interviews since there is a covert agreement between the parties about the context. Because of this agreement there is no need for repair of any kind. The illocutionary act deals with the intention of what is said such as performatives. In the analysis of speech acts the following performatives are found: commissives, directives, assertives and expressives. Finally, speech or conversation is organized and through linguistic research on subject matters such as pragmatics and verbal and social interaction it is possible to detect and reveal how this works and is constructed by using a research method as CA. Regarding future studies in this field I have two suggestions:

1. Has the closing section in talk show interviews changed due to subject matters, politeness and what is acceptable since they were initiated in the 1960’s?
2. What could cause that intersubjectivity, the unspoken agreement we all seem to follow, would change or erupt in a talk show interview?
List of References


Electronic sources


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en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Colbert_Report (Hämtad 2014-03-02)

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Daily_Show (Hämtad 2014-03-02)
Appendices
Transcription of talk show interviews.

The Colbert Report www.colbertnation.com/

Pre-closing part
1. SC: So, so (1) is there another book coming after 1492?
2. SS: There ( ) there is [volume 2.
3. SC: [Volume 2 what happens after 1492?
4. SS: It finishes with our conversation this evening. [So almost everything-
5. SC [So it´s all just this (1) well, Simon, it
6. sounds like a hit.

Termination
8. WITH PBS WALL TO WALL JEWS! WE´LL BE RIGHT BACK!
9. A: [(cheering and round of applause)
10. SC: [SEE YOU IN A WEEK! (pointing) GOODNIGHT!
11. A [(cheering and round of applause)

The Colbert Report 21th April 2014

Ken Burns, moviemaker
1. SC: Maybe the next film?
2. KB: Maybe (1) th, the, [the presidency of William Henry Harrison.
3. A: [(round of applause)
4. SC: Yes, that´ll be a very short documentary.
5. A: [(laughing)
6. KB: [(laughing)

Pre-closing section
7. SC: [(laughing) Don´t, don´t blink (pointing finger). It´s a
8. stationbreak on the IBS.
9. KB: Then I could do it (laughing)

Termination
10. SC: [KEN BURNS! (showing DVD).”THE ADRESS”! WE´LL BE RIGHT
11. BACK! (shake hands)

12. A: [(cheering and applause)

**The Colbert Report 8th May 2014**

**Interview with Ellen Page, actress**

**Pre-closing section**

1. SC: Ah well, Ellen Page, thank you so much for joining me. Am, before we go I just wanna
2. make sure we actually been here tonight and not just dreaming (spinning a gadget on the table)
3. EP: [Oh
4. A: [(laughing)

**Termination**

5. EP: ELLEN PAGE! [X-MEN, DAYS OF FUTURE PAST! ELLEN, THANK YOU SO MUCH! (shake hands with guest)
6. EP: Thank you
7. A: [(cheering and applause)
8. SC: We´ll be right back! (pointing at audience)

**The Colbert Report 24th September 2013**

**Interview with Metallica**

**Pre-closing**

1. SC: WOW! I JUST, I LOVE, I LOVE HOW, HOW EASY THE TRANSITION IS
2. BETWEEN
3. A: [(cheering and round of applause)
4. SC: POSTAPOCALYPTIC MAYHEM (laughing) AND FRONT ROW OF YOUR CONCERT!
5. A: [(laughing)
6. M: [(anaudible nodding and laughing)
7. JH: It´s not much difference
8. SC: Yeah, she really rocked out with (unaudible and beep)

**Termination**

The Colbert Report 6th May 2014
Interview with Bette Midler
Pre-closing section
1. SC: So you can make an entire carrier of playing a character of [yourself?](laughing )
2. A: 
3. BM: [Yeah, well
4. SC: [Wow (turn to audience)
5. A: [(laughing and cheering)]
Termination
6. SC: [BETTE MIDLER! THANK YOU SO MUCH! (shakes hands with guest)
7. BM: My pleasure!
8. A: [(cheering and round of applause)
9.SC: [BETTE MIDLER! THE BOOK IS ”A VIEW FROM A BROAD”? WE’LL BE RIGHT BACK!
10. RIGHT BACK!
11. A: [(cheering ad round of applause)

The Colbert Report 30th September 2013
Interview with Vince Gilligan creator of ”Breaking Bad”
Pre-closing section
1. SC: Vince! Thank you so much for coming, oh I know, I know you came here like ah you, you flew out a first thing in the morning after, did you party all night?
2. VG: Aah, party until about midnight. I’m a little, a little old to be, ah look tired
3. SC: Tired?
4. VG: But you know I fly 10 000 miles for Houston
5. A: [Aah (round of applause)
6. SC: [My favourite guest of all times! (shakes hands with guest)
Termination
8. [VINCE GILLIGAN, THANK YOU SO MUCH! VINCE GILLIGAN ”BREAKING BAD” IN IT´S ENIRETY! WE´D BE RIGHT BACK!
9. A: [(cheering and round of applause)]

The Daily Show www.thedailyshow.com/full-episodes/
Marsh 13 2014 with Anita Hill, and her documentary about the sexual harassments by Clarence Thomas.

**Pre-closing**

1. AH: I’m just think… I just think (pitch) we can push it a little (emphasizing) forward for
2. the next generation and ever (emphasizing) imagine a world…where…it doesn’t happen (handgesture).
3. JS: No, I don’t think I´d like that. I think…. (shake his head same time) that I don’t really
4. have any reason to do a program. I’m just back to [bartending.
5. AH: [(laughing)]
6. Audience: [(laughing)]
7. AH: Well, there’ll be plenty of other subjects that you can cover,[trust me! (laughing)
8. Audience: [(laughing)]

**Termination**

9. JS: [THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR BEING HERE! ANITA OPENS IN SELECT
10. CITIES 21 OF MARCH! ANITA HILL! THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR BEING
11. HERE! (shakes hands with guest)
12. A: [(laughing and round of applause)]

The Daily Show 13th January 2014

Interview with Roger Ross Williams, the director of the film ”God loves Uganda” about the American Evangelican Movement.

**Pre-closing section**

1. RW: I just found out that Uganda is the third (2) Google just came out with a study that
2. Uganda is the third country out of the top three countries, the third country to (1) to (1) to
3. watch gay porn.
4. JS: One of the top three is Uganda?
5. RW: Uganda.
6. JS: Wow. This google study, it doesn’t [name names, does it?
7. A: [(laughing)]
8. RW: No, (laughing) I might be in trouble myself.
9. JS: The film now (1) ah but you find it on Thursday if you been nominated for on short list.
10. [FOR OSCAR NOMINEE!]
11. A: [(cheering and round of applause)]
12. RW: Thank you.
Termination
13. JS: GOD LOVES UGANDA! SELECTED CITIES! ROGER ROSS WILLIAMS!
14. CONGRATULATIONS! [(Shake hands)
15. RW: [(shake hands)
16. A: [(cheering and round of applause)

The Daily Show 14th January 2014
Interview with Tim Gunn with the program "Under the Gunn".

Pre-closing section
1. JS: Let me tell you something. that´s why God invented Atevol alright!
2. TG: (Laughing)
3. JS: I´m excited to see this, my friend. I´m gonna (1) ah (1) watch this. It´s"under the
4. Gunn”!
5. Premiere is Thursday, your own show.
6. TG: Lifetime.

Termination section
7. JS: Very excited, [TIM GUNN, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN. (shake hands with guest)
8. A: [(cheering and round of applause)
9. TG: Thank you. (shakes hands)

The Daily Show 15th January 2014
Interview with Robert Gates, former secretary of defence.

Pre-closing section
1. JS: Let´s go with (2) we´re going to take a (unaudible) then will be more with Robert
2. Gates. The book is called "THE DUTY"! (holding book) WE´LL BE RIGHT BACK!

Break
3. RG: [I fired both the Airforce Chief of Staff and the Airforce Secretary for their
4. unwillingness to 7. tackle problems within the nuclear programs.
5. A. [(laughing)
6. RG: So you gotta. (1) whether its veterans, affairs or any place else (pointing finger) it´s
7. not just at the top. You gotta be willing to hold people accountable and show that there are
8. consequences for not get the job done.

Termination
9. JS: [Yeah! (unaudible) agree. Can you stick around for a little while? We´ll talk on the
The Daily Show 16th January

Interview with Steven Brill columnist on "Time"

Pre-closing section

1. JS: So I guess (unaudible) it boils down to the real issue is then [why do you hate America?]
2. I mean, I (unaudible).
3. A: [(laughing)]
4. SB: Exactly (laughing). How did you know?
5. JS: Stick around (hands on table) because I wanna ask about (2). Now, you talk about taxpayers subsidizing this new insurance premium. But isn’t that what we were doing before with the uninsured being treated in these emergency rooms? So I just want to get into that a little as we come back.
9. SB: Okay (quietly)

Termination

10. JS: Steven treats bitter pill. It appears on new issue of Times Magazine (gesticulate).
11. [It’s a monthly column, STEVEN BRILL!]
12. A: [(cheering and round of applause)]
13. JS: WE’LL BE RIGHT BACK!

The Daily Show 3d April 2014

Interview with Pelé regarding the book "Why soccer matters”.

Pre-closing section

1. P: And god gave to me, the Worldcup. [Then I bring something from seventy for you (pick up t-shirt from package)]
2. JS: [Yeah, yeah, oh, you gotta be kidding me (hands on head)]
3. A: [(cheering and round of applause)]
4. JS: Oh, for god’s sakes! (rising and holding t-shirt). Noooo (2) Aaaaah (1) Ooh (kissing t-shirt). OLÉ,
5. OLÉ, OLÉ, OLÉ, OLÉ! (dancing). MY FRIEND, OH GOD BLESS! GOD BLESS YOU
6. MY FRIEND SO MUCH! [(hugs the guest)
7. P: [(hugs and unaudible)]

**Termination**

8. JS: [It’s so lovely! LADIES AND GENTLEMEN! WATCH "SOCCER MATTERS"! THE
9. BOOK SELLLS NOW! THE GREAT PELÉ!]
10. P: [(applause and kisses to the audience)
11. A: [(cheering and round of applause)]

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**The Daily Show 10th October 2013**

**Interview with Malala Yousafzai with the book ”I am Malala”**

**Pre-closing section**

1. JS: I, I, I am humbled to speak with you (hand on his heart). Ah ,I will say yes. I don’t
2. know where you came from, [but I’m very glad you’re here.
3. M: [(laughing)
4. JS: [Thank you for being here today.
5. A: [(cheering and round of applause)]

**Termination**

6. JS: [PLEASE (showing book) GET THE BOOK, DONATE TO THE MALALA FUND
BY VISITING WWW.MALALAFUND.ORG MALALA YOUSAFZAI! [(whispers and
shakes hands with guest)
7. M: [(shake hands)
8. A: [(cheering
and round of applause)]
I work as a teacher in English and civics at Komvux in Hässleholm. I also find English fascinating and try to read and write as much as I can in this language.