

Corso di Laurea in Discipline della Mediazione Linguistica
Università di Macerata – Sede di Civitanova Marche

Lingua e traduzione – lingua inglese III

Modulo B: Interpretazione di trattativa

a.a. 2012-13

Prof.ssa Raffaella Merlini



– Dispensa per gli studenti –

PROGRAMMA

Semestre	II
Crediti	6
Ore	30
Programma	Alla trattazione teorica delle principali problematiche interlinguistiche e interculturali che contraddistinguono l'interpretazione dialogica in ambito commerciale da altre forme e contesti della traduzione orale (interpretazione di conferenza, interpretazione per i media, interpretazione in campo sociale, ecc.), si affiancherà la presentazione di trattative aziendali bilingui, sia autentiche sia simulate. In particolare verranno illustrate le dinamiche comunicative nelle diverse fasi di una trattativa commerciale. Attraverso lo studio di interazioni autentiche audio-registrate, si individueranno le finalità comunicative degli interlocutori e si evidenzieranno, con gli strumenti dell'Analisi Conversazionale, i meccanismi di coordinamento interazionale. Verranno altresì trattati alcuni aspetti del linguaggio non verbale che più specificamente incidono sull'andamento di un incontro mediato. Alla fine del corso gli studenti avranno non solo acquisito nozioni generali sulla configurazione triadica di un evento comunicativo interlinguistico e interculturale, ma avranno ampliato le loro conoscenze di specifici ambiti aziendali. Saranno inoltre in grado di interpretare da e verso l'inglese riconoscendo e trasmettendo le intenzioni comunicative degli interlocutori. Avranno sviluppato la capacità di usare registri formali della lingua orale, sia inglese che italiana, adeguati a situazioni professionali, e appreso le strategie necessarie per affrontare problemi traduttivi di natura sia linguistica sia culturale.
Bibliografia per l'esame	Katan, D. (2004) <i>Translating Cultures. An Introduction for Translators, Interpreters and Mediators</i>, Manchester, St. Jerome Publishing (pp. 234-254). Knapp, M. L., & Hall, J. A. (2006), <i>Nonverbal communication in human interaction</i>, Belmont, CA., Thomson Wadsworth (capitolo 7). Merlini, R. (2007) "Teaching dialogue interpreting in higher education: a research-driven, professionally oriented curriculum design", in M.T. Musacchio, G. Henrot Sostero (Eds.) <i>Tradurre: formazione e professione</i>, Bologna, CLEUP; pp. 278-306. Merlino, S. (2009) "La mitigazione nell'attività dell'interprete. Il caso di una trattativa d'affari", in L. Gavioli (Ed.); pp.231-257. Nofsinger, R. E., (1991) <i>Everyday conversation</i>, Newbury Park, Calif., Sage (capitolo 4). Sandrelli, A. (2005) "La trattativa d'affari: osservazioni generali e strategie didattiche", in M. Russo, G. Mack (Eds.); pp.77-91.
Lecture consigliate	Gavioli, L. (Ed.) (2009), <i>La mediazione linguistico-culturale: una prospettiva interazionista</i>, Guerra Edizioni, Perugia. Gentile, A., Ozolins, U., Vasilakakos, M. (1996), <i>Liaison interpreting. A Handbook</i>, Melbourne, Melbourne University Press. Russo, M., Mack, G. (Eds.) (2005), <i>Interpretazione di trattativa. La mediazione linguistico-culturale nel contesto formativo e professionale</i>, Milano: Hoepli.
Modalità d'esame	<u>Parte propedeutica:</u> Stesura di un profilo aziendale (vedi pagina successiva). N.B. La mancata consegna comporta l'impossibilità di sostenere la prova orale. <u>Prova orale:</u> La prova orale, della durata di circa 20 minuti, comprende: 1. l'interpretazione tra l'italiano e l'inglese di una trattativa commerciale simulata; 2. domande sulle nozioni teoriche illustrate durante il corso.

PROFILO AZIENDALE

Indicazioni per la stesura

Il profilo aziendale descritto qui di seguito rappresenta parte integrante del programma del modulo di “Interpretazione di trattativa” e la sua presentazione entro la scadenza indicata è obbligatoria per poter essere ammessi a sostenere l’esame di profitto.

La stesura **in lingua italiana** del profilo aziendale comporta la **descrizione di un’immaginaria azienda italiana** appartenente a **uno** dei seguenti comparti produttivi:

- abbigliamento
- arredamento
- articoli per la casa

Il profilo dovrà contenere le seguenti informazioni:

- ragione sociale
- sede principale
- tipologia di azienda (sas, srl, ecc.)
- storia (dalle 500 alle 700 parole)
- organigramma
- fatturato annuo

Esso sarà corredato da un **catalogo bilingue** (italiano-inglese) di una nuova linea di vostra invenzione, da lanciare sul mercato. La linea, che può essere di un qualsiasi prodotto a vostra scelta all’interno del comparto produttivo selezionato, conterà di 5 modelli dal design originale. Accanto all’immagine disegnata di ogni modello dovranno essere indicati:

- il nome del modello (in italiano e inglese)
- il numero di codice dell’articolo
- i materiali (in italiano e inglese)
- i colori in cui è disponibile (in italiano e in inglese)
- il prezzo all’ingrosso
- il prezzo consigliato per la vendita al dettaglio

Andrà infine redatto e incluso dopo il catalogo un **glossario italiano-inglese** di una ventina di termini tecnici accompagnati da una definizione.

N.B. I profili e i modelli palesemente ripresi da siti internet o da materiale informativo di aziende reali NON SARANNO APPROVATI. La qualità del disegno del modello NON è ovviamente oggetto di valutazione.

Gruppi di lavoro: Il profilo è un lavoro di gruppo; a tal fine, gli studenti possono formare gruppi composti da un minimo di 4 a un massimo di 6 persone. Solo in casi eccezionali, per gli studenti lavoratori non frequentanti o per gli studenti in Erasmus, è prevista la possibilità del lavoro individuale.

Termine per la consegna: 12 aprile 2013

Il profilo andrà consegnato in copia cartacea a lezione o durante il ricevimento della docente titolare. Gli studenti non frequentanti potranno anche inviarlo per posta alla Prof. Raffaella Merlini presso la sede del Corso di laurea a Civitanova Marche, previa comunicazione tramite e-mail (raffaella.merlini@unimc.it). NON saranno accettate copie elettroniche dell’intero profilo inviate per e-mail.

Il termine sopra indicato vale anche per gli studenti in scambio Erasmus. In caso di esigenze particolari, questi DEVONO CONTATTARE la docente titolare del corso per concordare tempi e/o modalità di consegna.

UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI PADOVA
CENTRO LINGUISTICO DI ATENEIO (C.L.A.)

*Tradurre:
formazione e professione*

a cura di
MARIA TERESA MUSACCHIO e GENEVIÈVE HENROT SOSTERO

cleup

Teaching dialogue interpreting in higher education: a research-driven, professionally oriented curriculum design

Raffaella Merlini

Introduction

The fact that this contribution is included in a volume on Translation¹ is testament not only to the editors' broad view of the discipline, but also to the recognition that this form of interpreting has lately gained in Italy. Having been overshadowed by its more glamorous and eye-catching cousin, i.e. conference interpreting, dialogue interpreting was for decades a largely neglected territory. Besides, while, internationally, studies in the field go back to the early 90s, in this country consistent research output is no more than a few years old. Two are the major causes that have brought it to the fore: the massive rise of immigration flows and public service interpreting needs, which are increasingly attracting media and public attention; and the implementation of the 2001 Italian university reform leading to the setting up of Language Mediation degree courses, of which more will be said in the next paragraph.

Whilst referring interested readers coming from other research avenues to the relevant literature,² I will restrict this introduction to Mason's (1999b:147) by-now classical definition of dialogue interpreting as "interpreter-mediated communication in spontaneous face-to-face interaction", and spend instead a few words on why I chose this expression over a plethora of competing denominations³. The generic term used in British university curricula of both Modern Languages, and Translation

¹ The term will be used here in its double acception, as written translation, thus opposed to interpreting, and, following functionalist approaches, as a generic term covering both the written and oral varieties of the same intercultural communicative interaction (Nord, 1997:104). To disambiguate the two, when necessary, the latter meaning will be signalled with a capital "T".

² Far from being comprehensive, the following selection is meant only as a very basic introduction to scholarly investigation of dialogue interpreting: Gentile *et al.* (1996), Carr *et al.* (1997), Wadensjö (1998), Mason (1999a), Roberts *et al.* (2000), Mason (2001), Brunette *et al.* (2003).

³ The latest and most scrupulous survey of terminological variants in three languages – German, English and Italian – can be found in Mack (2005).

and Interpreting degree courses is “*liaison* interpreting”. In Gentile *et al.* (1996:1), the term is taken to encompass a wide spectrum of settings, ranging from business to legal, medical, educational and tourist ones⁴. Irrespective of the context, the focus of the expression is on the connecting function performed by the interpreter in the exchange of information, and consequently on the interpreter herself⁵ as the “person in the middle”. The Italian term with an equivalent range of comprehensiveness and an equally institutionalised use in higher education is “interpretazione di trattativa”. To be foregrounded in this case is the “negotiation” activity which is instinctively associated with business transactions. If, however, the intention – as ours indeed is – is to shift the emphasis from the centrality of the interpreter as the “conduit” of cross-lingual exchanges or from the type of activity being performed through talk, onto the dynamics of a three-way interaction, in which all participants jointly define meanings, roles and footings (Mason, 2002:140), the concept of dialogue must necessarily be given pre-eminence.⁶

Starting with a brief account of training opportunities currently provided by Italian universities and other institutional actors in the field of oral mediation, this paper will concentrate on issues of *curriculum* design from the chosen theoretical angle of *dialogism*. A three-stage teaching programme, with phase-specific analytical instruments and samples of class activities, will then be suggested. Stemming, as they do, from my research interests and specific theoretical background, these indications are also, and to no smaller extent, the result of a 10-year experience in teaching the subject at different universities in both England and Italy. Over this period, in a trial and error process, whilst certain ideas and activities have been retained, others have gradually been discarded and replaced with more fruitful alternatives.

Given that, as Linell (1998:XVI) says, “each piece of scholarly work is, at some level, collective and dialogical”, before proceeding with the discussion, I should acknowledge at least two debts. As will soon become evident, Annalisa Sandrelli’s insightful contributions to the subject under analysis have provided ample food for

⁴ This use is far from generalised in the English-speaking world. The Canadian scholar Roda Robert (1997:8), for instance, indicates “*ad hoc* interpreting” as the most generic term, while reserving “*liaison* interpreting” for business settings. The other large sub-category of *ad hoc* interpreting is, in Robert’s classification, “community interpreting”, for which the label “dialogue interpreting” is given as a synonym.

⁵ To avoid the politically correct but clumsy expressions “he/she”, “him/her” and “his/her” or any other circuitous ways around the use of gender-based pronominal references, I will, with considerable bias, opt in this paper for the feminine forms.

⁶ It should be noted that the use of “dialogue interpreting” as the highest-level hyperonym is gaining increasing currency among researchers, in particular following Ian Mason’s contributions to this area of study.

thought, offering at times welcome shortcuts for an otherwise all too lengthy discussion, at others essential cues for constructive divergence. Secondly, I should mention Mariachiara Russo and Gabriele Mack who, in 2003, organised at the Forlì School for Interpreters and Translators a pioneering conference entirely devoted to training and professional issues in the field of dialogue interpreting⁷. The ensuing volume, which they co-edited (Russo and Mack, 2005), has given much needed impulse to scholarly debate on these topics within the Italian academic *milieu*. As I noted in the opening lines, my figuring among the contributors to the present volume is partly a consequence of this increased visibility.

Training interpreters, mediators or cross-cultural communicators?

Once very seldom used, the Italian phrase “*mediazione linguistica*” (language mediation) has been propelled to the front-lines of academic discourse by the recent reform of the Italian university system. With the creation, by ministerial decision, of a three-year degree course in “Language Mediation Sciences”, most universities have hastily set up similarly named programmes in a mass imitation phenomenon which the French scholar Daniel Gouadec, in his presentation at the Padua conference, referred to as “cloning”, and which is evidently affecting other countries besides Italy. At the same time, however, the constraints imposed by available human and financial resources along with the need for competitive diversification have creatively shaped these courses into a considerable number of variants. The resulting scenario is one where the old, reassuring polarity between learning foreign languages as a means to studying the corresponding literatures and, on the other side, perfecting language competence while training as interpreters/translators has given way to a disorienting fragmentation, especially at the latter – and incidentally more popular – end. Although the stated aim of the reform was to reduce the gap between university education and professional employment, it is honestly difficult to see how certain *curricula*, and they are by no means the minority, can offer “professionalising” modules within the confined space of the few hours earmarked for language teaching. Considered from this perspective, the introduction of first-level degree courses in Language Mediation, which has undeniably allowed many academic establishments with little or no tradition in translation and interpreting to enter the arena, has been tantamount to presenting mediation skills as a downgraded version of translation and interpreting ones.

⁷ The event followed, at three years’ distance, an international conference on interpreting studies held at the same institution, where dialogue interpreting contributions were given ample space in the programme (see Garzone and Viezzi, 2002).

The picture becomes even more confusing if one looks at professional practice. Italian graduates with a degree in Language Mediation are preferentially recruited by private companies as language experts, whose tasks may include business interpreting, for which they will have received some form of training during the three-year course. If we, however, consider the other large area of dialogue interpreting, namely community interpreting, the figure identified in the 1998 statutory act on immigration (Testo Unico sull'immigrazione, D.L. 286/1998) is that of the “mediatore culturale” (cultural mediator), whose training is left to the initiative of such actors as local governments, NGOs and immigrants' associations. Recent surveys have shown that the courses in question, when and where available, are not only episodic and of short duration, but are also mostly theoretical – the little practical exposure which participants sometimes receive is exclusively in written translation – and cover mainly legislative and administrative topics, with some instruction in broadly sociological and intercultural issues (see Merlini, 2005a:30-31). Moreover, they are strictly reserved for foreign citizens. The consequence is that immigrants-turned-mediators usually have no familiarity with interpreting techniques, and are given no guidance as to professional ethics and codes of practice. Being their profile largely indeterminate and their role socially unrecognised, their services are also very poorly paid. In practice, mediators are called upon to perform a variety of tasks, which go from providing administrative assistance to immigrants, to filling in forms, compiling reports, liaising with service providers, over and above translating documents and interpreting in contact situations. As for the aims of the mediation activity, these are defined in very broad terms. Favaro quoted in Mack (2005:8) indicates somewhat rhetorically:

mediation is carried out by removing, adding and modifying, so as to eliminate (language, communication and information) obstacles which impede access to and use of public services. It provides new insights, languages and information, while increasing both the quality and availability of service provision. It creates an in-between space for encounter and opens up new communicative prospects. Thus, it does not only function as a compensation process, by filling gaps, but brings about change and innovation. (our translation)

Leaving aside the realistic feasibility of such an enterprise, what is being described here is a *creative* social activity (consider the stress laid on the concept of “new” in the above quotation), which *autonomously* shapes the communicative context to allow for an evolution of both majority and minority behavioural and cultural paradigms. Cultural mediation is thus clearly seen as something more than Translation. Speaking of the difference between what he eloquently calls “cultural mediation” and “linguistic translation”, back in 1981 Ronald Taft observed:

[...] mediation between cultures requires the communication of ideas and information from one cultural context to the other. This is analogous to the process involved in linguistic translation, even though there is more to mediation than mere translation. [...] In practice, a person playing a mediating role may never be called upon to engage in the exact *translation* of words; rather, he will communicate the ideas in terms that are meaningful to the members of the target culture. (1981: 58-59; emphasis in the original)

Reacting against the view of interpreting as the domain of a mere transposition of words from one language to another (i.e. transcoding, to use Seleskovitch's terminology), many researchers have been stressing for years the intrinsically cultural nature of all Translation activity. Yet, this misconception is not as obsolete as one may think if, as recently as three years ago, a text like the following could appear on the official website of the *Italian Ministry for Employment and Welfare Policies*:

The cultural mediator is a foreigner who, by virtue of specific training, has acquired professional competence in the field of intercultural communication. He differs from the Italian service provider, from **the mere translation professional who is not necessarily trained for cultural empathy**, and from the *ad hoc* mediator, be it a voluntary worker, relative, friend or fellow countryman. [...] The mediator [...] acts as a bridge between the migrants' needs and the provision of public services. To establish a true dialogue between foreign service users and [Italian] service providers, **what is required is a decoding of ideas and behaviours, in addition to the translation of words**. (quoted in Mack, 2005:9; our translation and emphasis)

Apart from the reference to a "professional competence acquired through specific training", which, as already mentioned, is not frequently observed in everyday practice, the quotation (especially in its highlighted parts) would lend itself to amused rather than polemical remarks, if it did not come from such an official source. Admittedly, within the community of interpreting scholars, the debate is still ongoing as to the degree of intervention which is thought to be acceptable before mediation gives way to "advocacy". The growing trend, however, is to see mediation as one of the many forms of Translation (see Valero-Garcés, 2005), or rather as a Translation strategy called for in specific settings, characterised by power and knowledge asymmetry as well as marked cultural distance (see Merlini, 2005a).

To sum up the above, the current state of affairs, at least in Italy, exhibits a curious contradiction. Whilst plenty of official ink is describing, in rather grand terms, cultural mediation as a wider, more complex and certainly nobler activity than mere translation and interpreting, playing, as it does, a pivotal role in very sensitive areas of cultural contact, its practitioners are still relegated, both professionally and educationally, to an inferior position. Thus, society is seen to confer more prestige to a professional activity, conference interpreting, which in the

public opinion is deemed to require more advanced language skills but fewer and simpler relational and cultural competences. Leaving aside social or even political considerations⁸, as they would go beyond the scope of the present contribution, the approach adopted here is to consider interpreting as the overarching concept encompassing all forms of oral translation, and mediation as the form it takes in most dialogical contexts.

Designed to function within the current university framework, the *curriculum* described in the following paragraphs is meant to familiarise students with the dynamics of dialogue interpreting, with a view to forming technically and culturally competent communicators, who could easily practise in the fields of business as well as public service interpreting. If this is the desired outcome, then dialogue interpreting cannot be introduced as a language learning activity⁹, but rather as an autonomous didactic space, where language knowledge is developed on a par with methodological and pragmatic skills. Without equalling this approach to full professional training, a clear professional orientation is called for, so as to equip students with the skills required on the job market. On the other hand, by opting for the expression “professionally oriented *curriculum*” in place of the ministerially decreed “professionalising”, our intention is to highlight the distinctiveness of university education rather than realistically account for its constraints. As Federica Scarpa argues in this same volume, the aim of academic studies is to gain insight into a specific mental activity, thus preparing the mind for multiple variations of a basic scenario and for future adjustments to the specific requirements of a given professional field.

Dialogism and cooperation: setting the stage for the learning experience

In the introduction, mention was made of the “conduit” metaphor to describe the interpreter’s *liaising* function. As Wadensjö (1998:7-8) points out, this widely used image stems from a “transfer” model of human communication, which in 1979 Reddy called the “conduit model”. According to this theory of language use, which to some extent still underlies the present-day epistemology of monologism, “successful communication [...] takes place, if the message arrives at the destination, in the listener’s mind, in the same form as the intended message had in the speaker’s mind, i.e. it has not, on its way from source to destination, been distorted by any

⁸ On this, see Pöchhacker’s observations (2002:163-164), and in particular his reference to Prunč’s (1997) concept of “translational culture”.

⁹ The use of *liaison* interpreting as a language learning technique is amply discussed in Thomas and Towell (1985) and Sandrelli (2001).

kind of ‘noise’” (Linell, 1998:22-23). This clearly presupposes that intentions and meanings are the products of individual speakers and exist as pre-determined and complete entities in their minds. The model does envisage the possibility of distortions, which can however be avoided or significantly reduced through the speaker’s adoption of Grice’s (1975) maxims and the cooperation of attentive listeners. Tyler (1990:196) notes how the speaker is thus presented as an entirely rational agent who speaks his mind “with clarity, economy, and planned execution, [and] whose foreknowledge of intents, means and effects of words conjures ready recognition of those intents, means and effects in the minds of complicitous hearers”. Within this theoretical framework, the interpreter’s task is to act as channel through which pre-packaged messages go back and forth unimpeded (Bot, 2005 calls this the “translation-machine model” of interpreting). By the same token, however, the interpreter may become a major source of “noise” causing loss of information and distortion of meaning, through her inability to decode the speaker’s speech or recode it into the listener’s language, or by intervening in the exchange in her own right. If human interaction is seen as a unidirectional process of transfer from one person to another, then interpreted interaction must necessarily entail not one but two dialogues, the dialogue of one interlocutor with the interpreter and the dialogue of the latter with the other interlocutor. In Gadamer’s words:

Das Angewiesensein auf die Übersetzung des Dolmetschers ist ein Extremfall, der den hermeneutischen Vorgang, das Gespräch, verdoppelt: es ist das des Dolmetschers mit der Gegenseite und das eigene mit dem Dolmetscher.¹⁰ (1960/1990:388-389)

This way of looking at the interpreter as a person involved in two subsequent acts of communication, albeit within the overarching framework of her clients’ goals and conversational moves, identifies her as the only party who is constantly in a “dialogical situation”. Thus, ironically enough, while debasing the interpreter’s activity to a mechanical process of decoding and recoding of information, the “conduit” metaphor of the monological paradigm assigns to her a central and, to a very large extent, dominant role as the sole and unavoidable channel of communication.

Whereas monologism construes communication as a “from-to” process, dialogism portrays it as an intrinsically social and collective process, a “between” process, “where the speaker is dependent on the listener as a “co-author” (as well as in other capacities) and, more generally, on the various relevant contexts, and where he, the speaker, is also a listener (to his own utterance) and is engaged in sense-

¹⁰ Translation: Dependence on the translation of an interpreter is an extreme case that duplicates the hermeneutical process of the conversation: there is that between the interpreter and the other as well as that between oneself and the interpreter.

making activities in the course of the verbalization process itself” (Linell, 1998:24). In other words, meanings do not exist in a ready-made form beforehand. They grow out of vague thoughts and are gradually developed as utterances are formulated, becoming shared knowledge only when all parties to the interaction mutually provide evidence that they have established a shared understanding. The domination of monologism in Western intellectual history, Linell argues (1998:28), is largely due to a “written language bias”, whereby the written language is not only taken as a model for language structure and use, but serves also as the medium to describe language itself. Although dialogism, as an alternative epistemology, is presented as an equally comprehensive theory of human communication, thus applying to all modes, written as well as oral, its principles are derived from observation of talk in face-to-face encounters. Linell’s definition of dialogue as “interaction through symbolic means by mutually co-present individuals” (1998:10) highlights the mutual other-orientation of interlocutors, which can be extended to include an intended or imagined “virtual other”, but emerges in a more salient way in actual conversations between people. If the dialogical paradigm is applied to interpreted interaction, the interpreter loses her hegemony¹¹ but is reinstated as a full – and we could add re-humanised – participant in the exchange. Dialogism in interpreting thus entails at least three consequences. Firstly, the interpreter will be seen to contribute along with the primary interlocutors to the joint construction and negotiation of meaning, not only as a text-(re)producer but as a social actor with a moral responsibility to her clients and to the norms of professional ethics. Far from being discarded, the requirement of equivalence, i.e. faithfulness to the original message, will be judged against a multiplicity of contextual factors, in a holistic, synergic and dynamic view of communication as something more than an ordered sequence of utterances. Secondly, once the idea that the interpreter’s presence has no influence on the interaction is recognised as a fallacy, primary speakers, on their part, will become aware of their active role as co-definers of interpreting quality. Thirdly, though communication will remain largely dependent on the interpreter’s ability to convey meaning through the verbal channel, increased significance will be attributed to the role played by directly accessible features, such as prosody, eye-contact, facial expressions, gestures, posture and positioning, in offering to primary interlocutors alternative and complementary cues for sense-making. The double-dialogue of the

¹¹ In positing the centrality of the interpreter in the conduit model vs. the equality of her status with the primary interlocutors in the dialogical model, I offer a reverse perspective to the more current one which sees the restoration of the interpreter to an involved third party as a clear sign of her newly gained central role in cross-cultural communication. At a closer look, however, these are but two ways of representing the same theoretical shift, away from a view of interpreting as individual text production towards interpreting as a social and multi-functional activity.

monological paradigm is thus replaced by a triadic interaction model, whereby an interpreter-mediated encounter can be described as a “*trilogue*” (Malheiros-Poulet, 1995) or, more figuratively, a “communicative *pas de trois*” (Wadensjö, 1998:10-13).

In the dialogical framework, the concept of cooperation takes on new contours. Whereas the classical notion of dialogue – think of Grice – invokes a normative and ideal speech situation characterised by egalitarianism, harmony, consensus and agreement¹², empirically observed cooperation is at the same time more pervasive and less pronounced. Linell argues for its substitution with the concept of “coordination”, which he defines as the “co-accomplishment of concerted activities by conversational partners” (1998:74). Coordination thus presupposes the collective construction and management of a “communicative project” through mutually oriented inter-actions, whilst accounting for frequently occurring divergence in the interactants’ individual projects. In other words, in non-cooperative kinds of communicative activities, interlocutors pursue competitive goals which must, however, be coordinated within a general project, if communication is to take place. This redefined notion of cooperation bears relevance to the interpreting activity in dialogical settings. As Anthony Pym (2000:188) observes, to describe the cross-cultural mediator as a facilitator of communication is not tantamount to saying that cooperation is her aim, or that she must achieve it at all costs. Borrowing Linell’s terminology, the interpreter’s task is on the one hand to enable the overall communicative project¹³ by contributing to the coordination of the speech event, and on the other to adhere to the interlocutors’ individual projects as they gradually unfold. An instructive and productive way of considering the mediator’s aim is suggested by Chesterman (1997), when he claims that translators should not pursue equivalence but rather avoid misunderstandings. As Pym puts it “the translator would then not so much seek cooperation as try to eliminate the conditions that promote non-cooperation” (2000:183).

The following paragraphs will draw on the above observations and discuss their impact on teaching practice. The underlying assumption is that exposing the actual dynamics of talk-in-interaction can free students from inhibitory misconceptions not only about interpreting, but more generally about the learning experience, which itself will come to be seen as a dialogical process of joint co-accomplishment.

¹² Sperber and Wilson’s relevance theory replaces Gricean cooperation with the shared aim “to have the communicator’s informative intention recognized by the audience” (1988:161). Their shift, however, does not entail a break with the monological view of language, since reference is still made to an intention which pre-exists in the speaker’s mind, and to a merely information-transferring function of human communication.

¹³ Though referring to monolingual triadic exchanges, Caplow’s (1968) definition of “mediator” as the third party who defends the collective programme offers an interesting parallel.

Designing a three-tier curriculum

The suggested curriculum envisages a practical and theoretical pathway, ideally stretching over three to four years of academic study. More specifically, with reference to the Italian university system, the three stages identified below correspond to the second and third year of an undergraduate three-year degree course (*corso di laurea triennale*) and to the first year – with a possible extension to the second year – of a postgraduate degree course (*corso di laurea magistrale*). As already mentioned, the progression of activities is designed to develop solid interpreting skills, as well as an understanding of the dialogical interpreting format in its varied settings. The focus of attention will move from relaying information (level one), to coordinating interaction (level two), to analysing authentic interpreted encounters (level three). Elements of increased interactional complexity are introduced in the transition from one level to the next, with the most significant ones being the shifts from cooperative (level one) to competitive or even conflicting communicative scenarios (level two), and from symmetrical (level two) to asymmetrical participants' roles (level three).

Whilst role-playing will remain a constant in class activities throughout the three stages, research data will be gradually introduced not only to explore authentic interpreting practice, but also to highlight similarities and differences between simulated and real interaction. As argued by Elisa Turra (2005), the combination of different types of data is essential both to expose students to a wide range of discourses and pragmatic variables, and to bring about a fruitful integration between teaching and research. Though heeding the author's warning against an early introduction of transcripts of real interpreted sessions in the curriculum, the use of such material is even more strongly advocated here, as the only effective way of displaying the true impact of cultural and social diversity on communicative behaviour. To enable students to reflect upon their own performances as well as those of interpreters in the real-world, a selection of theoretical and analytical models will also be presented for each one of the three levels.

The use of these mutually reinforcing tools will be described in the following sections. Class activities and teaching materials will be illustrated through excerpts of transcribed audio- and videotaped student performances and authentic data drawn from the dialogue interpreting corpus which the present author has been creating since 2003.¹⁴ Owing to constraints of length only a few salient examples will be provided.

¹⁴ The corpus, which is still being expanded, covers three dialogue interpreting areas: immigration services, health-care provision and business negotiations. The latter collection includes both authentic and simulated interaction. At present, the total recorded time for each section is respectively 133 min., 124 min., and 542 min. of which 187 were recorded at a fair trade and 355 in interpreting

Level one: Relaying

The first stage of a dialogue interpreting curriculum should allow for a gradual transition from the reassuring solidity of the written text to the uneasy evanescence of spoken discourse. Talk is still treated here mainly as text¹⁵, and interpreting as a text-relaying task. The focus is on the recovery of information units and the logical connections between them. Analysing the propositional macro-structure of written texts is a useful preliminary exercise, but should soon be replaced by collective reconstruction of orally delivered information. Memorisation and recall of progressively longer stretches of oral discourse will be subsequently required from individual students.

Alongside oral summaries, a widely recommended activity in interpreter training is sight translation. Among its many learning benefits, Sandrelli (2005:85) relevantly mentions the “oralisation” of written texts, a process which forces students to simplify syntax by turning subordinate and embedded clauses into main clauses linked by coordinating conjunctions. At first sight – pun fully intended – this would seem perfectly in line with the aim indicated for this level. However, precisely because, as the author points out quoting Abril Martí and Collados Aís, sight translation presents students with a condition of maximum contact between the two languages, thus exposing them to the pitfalls of interference, we would rule it out as a preparatory exercise in the present curriculum proposal, and possibly see it as an additional skill taught at later stages. The development of “dexterity, precision and succinctness” (Snelling, 1992:4), which makes sight translation an ideal precursor of simultaneous interpreting, would be an over-ambitious and unrealistic goal, if set at the beginning of the students’ dialogue interpreting experience.

So a different way must be sought to lead students from literacy to orality. This may be found in oral presentations of company profiles. Students are first asked to collect information on a local company and draw up a profile in their native tongue (Italian in our case). The folder will include the company’s history, a description of the line of business, catalogues and advertising material, as well as the transcript of an interview with one of the company’s staff, and a short glossary of technical terms. This information is then presented in class in the foreign language (English) from very simple notes. Obviously no learning by heart is allowed. The presentation is interpreted sentence by sentence by another student back into Italian. The interpreting task is made easier by the distribution of the relevant glossary to the

classes and exams. Transcription of these recordings has already been completed. All the examples supplied in the present contribution show excerpts from these transcripts.

¹⁵ This refers to the distinction between “talk-as-text” and “talk-as-activity”, which has become widely known in the field of interpreting studies following Wadensjö’s seminal work of 1998.

whole class one week in advance on the corresponding presentation. To make sure that the delivery of information is as spontaneous as possible, at the end of the presentation the teacher will ask questions in Italian which the interpreting student will relay in English to his/her colleague.

The communicative scenario is, at this stage, fully cooperative; the speaker is the company's spokesperson supplying information to an audience, whose only goal is to learn as much as possible about the given business activity. There is no turn-taking between primary speakers, as the presentation is still a monological kind of communication, although an embryonic interactional element is present in the questions. The preparation of the company profile familiarises students with the business setting, in view of the simulated business negotiations of the next module. A first exposure to analysing and transcribing oral language is also offered through the interview. With reference to assessing the interpreting performance, Wadensjö's (1998:106-108) taxonomy of interpreter's renditions may be introduced.

Level two: Coordinating

At this level, students are presented with the notion of talk-as-activity. The focus is on the dialogical format of a complex three-party interaction, where the interpreter is not only reproducing utterances but coordinating the overall communicative project. The module will start with the distinction between monologism and dialogism (see above). Though Linell's work (1998) will be widely referred to and suggested for further reading, Bazzanella's (2002) definition of dialogue is a preferable conceptual framework for didactic purposes, as it allows easy recognition of the distinctive traits of different dialogical contexts. In her attempt to capture the essence of dialogue, the author turns to Eleonor Rosch's prototype theory and identifies the core components of dialogical communication in two attributes, namely "interactivity" and "intentionality". For each of the two prototypical "macro-features", she then lists a number of properties, or "micro-features", which may be central in certain forms of dialogue, and peripheral or totally absent in others. The first set includes: a) the use of the spoken medium; b) the interlocutors' co-presence in space and time; c) the involvement of two people; d) the alternation in turn-taking; and e) the joint construction of meaning. As for the second macro-feature, i.e. intentionality, Bazzanella indicates the following micro-features: f) shared knowledge and cultural frames of interpretation; g) shared code; and h) the pursuit of an individual as well as a collective goal. Reference to this framework will enable students to see how, despite the absence of some of the micro-features in both categories (namely, points c, f and g), a face-to-face interpreted encounter can indeed be considered a form of dialogue, not only in light of the applicability of all the

other traits, but because the third party is there precisely to bridge the knowledge, culture and code divide that separates the two main interlocutors.

After a thorough explanation of each micro-feature in the specific context of dialogue interpreting, the next step will be their actualisation in simulated interaction. Among its many learning benefits, in a dialogue interpreting course the role-play offers the opportunity to practise the foreign language in a true-to-life professional context, and, even more importantly in our view, to present the verbal exchange as a shared construction of meaning, or as Pym (2000:184) puts it, “as the active creator of intentions”. The role-play shows in the most direct way how speakers’ communicative goals are only partially pre-determined and evolve in response to the turn-by-turn moves of all interactants, including the interpreter (see example [1] below). An extensive discussion of the technique of the role-play in interpreting classes is found in Sandrelli (2001 and 2005). While referring the readers to the author’s practical guidelines and their robust methodological underpinnings (concerning issues such as the use of scripted dialogues, the nature and timing of teachers’ feedback, the involvement of the whole class in assessment exercises, etc.),¹⁶ the present curriculum departs from the teaching practice suggested in the earlier of the two contributions, in two respects.

Firstly, the interview with experts on topical issues, though of undisputed effectiveness as a language learning device,¹⁷ in a professionally oriented perspective is bound to shift the ground towards a different interpreting format, namely media interpreting. If, admittedly, professional contexts do include situations where journalists need interpreters to conduct private interviews, a more common instance is the broadcast interview, usually within a talk-show programme. Considering the additional skills required of the interpreter in this setting, where substantially different communication rules apply,¹⁸ this learning activity would be best placed at a post graduate level.

Secondly, in the present author’s experience, the development of a structured note-taking system in the context of dialogue interpreting has been found to be highly counter-productive. Sandrelli herself acknowledges the risk and proposes the teaching of “only the basic features of the note-taking technique devised by Rozan” (2001:181). However, she then proceeds to illustrate the guidelines given to students through examples which show an already well-advanced note-taking skill. Her arguing in favour of teaching note-taking, on the grounds that non-contextualised information cannot be retained in memory, is not sufficiently compelling. Students need no instruction on how to note figures, names and technical details. As for

¹⁶ These aspects are also treated in Cotta-Ramusino (2005) and Merlini (2005 b).

¹⁷ It should be recalled (see note 9) that this is the specific field of interest in Sandrelli (2001).

¹⁸ On this, see Straniero Sergio (1999) and Mack (2002).

“identifying the macrostructure of the text and writing down the skeleton of discourse” (2001:181), this task is undoubtedly essential in practising consecutive interpreting, where the compositional plan of longer stretches of talk must be graphically represented on paper to be accurately rendered. It may, however, turn into a deleterious distraction for dialogue interpreting students. Assessment of student performances has revealed that, almost invariably, the note-taking exercise occupies the students’ attention entirely, leading them away from the speaker’s communicative goal and from the overall direction of the conversation. Students stop keeping eye contact, providing feedback and managing turns. As they withdraw, mentally as well as physically, from the unfolding interaction, they become engrossed in pursuing meaning on the page, with the consequence that they lose it completely. This does not mean that reflection on the macrostructure of the verbal exchange is a pointless exercise; quite the opposite. If introduced at the feedback stage, the reconstruction of topic development – with particular attention to the modification of the speakers’ initial stances and goals – is indeed a valid teaching strategy.

In light of the above observations, a number of suggestions may be formulated. First of all, in this second module the focus should be exclusively on business negotiations. We would even argue for its further limitation to verbal transactions concerning the sale/purchase of goods. Following a brief illustration of the dynamics of negotiation, the communicative event is broken down into its constituent phases, which are then presented as distinct teaching units, each with its own specific linguistic and pragmatic features, and interpreting difficulties. A possible sequence might be the following:

- 1) opening (initial small talk, introductions, presentation of the respective companies);
- 2) clarifying the purpose of the encounter;
- 3) presenting the line of products (models, colours, materials, etc.);
- 4) talking about quantities, prices and discounts;
- 5) agreeing on terms of delivery and payment;
- 6) closing (filling in the order form, exchanging business cards, planning future steps).

Only when all the units have been covered, will the role-play extend over a full-length negotiation. With reference to the opening phase, small talk should not be neglected, given that it plays a vital role in business negotiations, as the means by which interlocutors build mutual trust. As Pym (2000:186) observes “the activity of gossip may [develop] relationships of mutual reliance and even friendship that may better ensure the success of future acts of cooperation”. Starting from phase 2), the

notions of joint construction of meaning, turn-taking and communicative projects can be seen fully at play. An effective way to bring to light the interlocutors' joint responsibility in topic development is to present the same communicative scenario twice, with two different students acting as interpreters. Example [1]¹⁹ provides an illustration of how a divergence in formulation (the introduction of a causal link and the added emphasis in speaker B's turn) and in floor management (student 2's interruption of speaker B) may steer the conversation along a different route:

Example [1]

Student 1

- A: Allora, questo è il modello che mi aveva segnalato la signora rispondendo alla mia mail. Questo era il modello a cui era più interessata, me lo può confermare?
- I: It is the model you were interested in?
- B: Yes, I was particularly interested in this model. I'm really fascinated, but I'm not very clear on the upper. Is it just a printed pattern or is it stitched?
- I: Ha detto che è interessata, apprezza questo modello però ha un dubbio se si tratta di...cioè se il disegno è stampato oppure cucito.
- A: Il disegno dici? Il disegno. No. Questa è una cucitura, perché la scarpa, la tomaia è in cotone. Ma l'interno della scarpa è in pelle, pelle di vitello, solo l'esterno è in stoffa e il ricamo è in seta.
- I: The pattern is stitched. The insole is in leather and the upper is in cotton.

Student 2

- A: Allora, questo è il modello che la signora aveva scelto tra i tre che le avevo mandato, vero?
- I: This is the model that you chose among the three that she sent to you.
- B: Right, this is what I'm really interested in, **because I find it a very fascinating, very attractive model, I'm fascinated / but...**
- I: **/ Sì, perché** lo trova molto attraente, è un modello che le è piaciuto particolarmente.
- A: Come mai le è piaciuto così tanto?
- I: She want to know why you find this model so attractive.

¹⁹ All the excerpts from transcripts of student performances presented in this paper have been left in their original form. The language mistakes made by students have, therefore, not been corrected.

Attempts to collectively reconstruct the progression of the communicative event should follow each role-play session. Additionally, students may be asked to transcribe the recorded class performances – example [1] comes from one such exercise – which will then be discussed the following week. The first elements of turn-taking will also be introduced. Later in the module, reference to the theoretical tools of Conversation Analysis, as first developed by Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974), will help students evaluate the impact of the interpreter's control of turn transfer, or lack thereof, on the interaction. Transcripts of authentic interpreting sessions may be presented at this stage. Example [2] gives evidence of a chaotic exchange, where frequently occurring overlaps (signalled by square brackets) result both from the Italian speakers' assertive conversational behaviour and from the interpreter's inability to organise the participants' turns:

Example [2]²⁰

- E1: perché [noi abbiamo la possibilità
E2: [noi la confezione] possiamo fare anche grosse confezioni
E1: abbiamo (.) confezioni da::: da circa: venti-vent-venti-venti chili
E2: oppure anche più grandi
E1: [anche più grandi
I: [[packages are around] twenty kilos and up to [one] hundred=
E2: [anche un quintale e mezzo] [anche]
I: =kilos
E1: ehm non ci sono problemi perché se vuole=
I: [[=sì ma lui lui voleva sapere] indicativamente il prezzo di un::=
FV: [[°how do we start how do we start]
I: =del radicchio al chilo
E2: eh beh adesso al momento [le dico il prezzo quando è il momento]
E1: [il prezzo ehm] varia perché
oggi oggi è un prezzo venti giorni fa ne aveva un altro ehm
I: [[of course it's very::]
E1: [[se vuole che] gli dica il prezzo di oggi è un discorso eh
I: today's price [is different from] the ()
E2: [il prezzo è cinquanta]
FV: that's the market
I: yeah
FV: that's obvious yeah I just want to have an idea () how much is it how much=
I: =sì per [avere un'idea] (.) il prezzo di oggi
FV: [it's the market you know]
E2: oggi come oggi=
E1: =cinquanta centesimi

²⁰ This excerpt is taken from the transcript of an interpreted encounter recorded at the *Tecnobortus fruit and vegetable trade fair*, Padua, 20.02.2004. Here, "E" stands for exhibitor, "I" for interpreter, and "FV" for foreign visitor.

Obviously, transcription conventions should be explained beforehand. Moreover, transcript analysis should be aided by repeated listenings to the audio-files.

Naturally flowing from issues of interactional management is the discussion of communicative projects, with the crucial distinction between individual and collective goals. Here, the most useful role-play scenario is one where the primary interlocutors' projects are plainly misaligned. Example [3] presents a situation where a long-standing business relationship is likely to end, following the American customer's intention to buy shoes from a different supplier:

Example [3]

- A: Io sono venuta qui proprio per farle vedere il nuovo catalogo, ma soprattutto per, visto che siamo clienti...siamo in affari da tantissimi anni, per proporre delle soluzioni di prezzo vantaggiose proprio perché vogliamo venir loro incontro, anche facendo una politica di prezzo un pochino più vantaggiosa per loro.
- I: Sì, allora. She have... came here to show you the new catalogue, but also to propose you a new pricelist to help you, to help you for a new purchase.
- B: Ok well. As I said... that may interest me, of course, because if I can get better prices I can probably sell better, but as I said people are very careful with their money now, and as I said before there's the exchange rate problem, their shoes would probably still be too expensive for us.
- I: Allora, mi stava dicendo che **è molto diciamo molto interessata alla sua proposta**, anche se con il tasso di cambio probabilmente, diciamo, gli acquisti saranno ridotti, sarà difficile e forse diciamo il costo di queste scarpe è comunque un po' eccessivo.
- A: Le nostre sono scarpe di altissimo livello le nostre e questo loro lo sanno.
- I: Theirs are high quality shoes, very high quality.
- B: Oh yes I know that, but we have....
- A: Sono scarpe sulle quali, certo noi possiamo venire loro incontro, proporre dei prezzi... però stiamo parlando di una ditta che esporta in tutto il mondo scarpe di altissima qualità!
- I: Sì. This is a company, an important company with top quality shoes, **but she's saying to me that she want to propose you an interesting price**
- B: As I said, I'm not denying the quality because I've bought these shoes for so many years, the quality is not in question, I know, but we are considering settling for a slightly lower quality and buying at lower prices.
- I: Allora mi stava dicendo che è conosce la qualità delle scarpe, anche perché comunque siete diciamo in collaborazione da diversi anni però mi stava anche dicendo che una qualità un po' inferiore potrebbe andare comunque bene.
- A: Certo, se loro si stanno posizionando su un altro tipo di mercato, quindi un altro tipo di clientela...dipende appunto dal cliente, nel senso che un cliente che è abituato a comprare italiano, per me loro avrebbero problemi a vendere a questo cliente, anche se a un prezzo inferiore, una scarpa che però non ha la tradizione della scarpa italiana, chiaramente...

- I: Sì, mi scusi, posso tradurre?
 A: Sì, sì, solamente aggiungo solo questo, tutto sta se loro vogliono cambiare tipo di clientela.
 I: It depends on the client because the client who usually buys Italian shoes knows the difference. **Are you thinking of changing your client?**

In conflicting scenarios of this kind, a frequently observed tendency is for students to take upon themselves the task of reconciling the two parties' divergent goals. In other words, they tend to confuse their responsibility towards the interactional project with the idealised pursuit of a compromise (example [3] provides evidence of this; see parts in bold). Equally common is the students' progressive alignment with one of the two clients, usually with the culturally closer interlocutor, in this case the Italian-speaking one. An eloquent illustration is found in the following excerpt, where the impersonal reference to "the company" is replaced by the inclusive pronoun "we", overtly emphasised, a few turns later, in the comment "We have convinced her", accompanied by a complicitous nudge (as the video-tape of the performance clearly shows):

Example [4]

- B: So there's quite a variety. Is the sole... is the rubber sole in this colour, this grey colour, or eh does it come in other colours?
 I: Vuole sapere se la suola del modello del sandalo è sempre grigia o può essere anche di un altro colore.
 A: Può essere anche di un altro colore, noi di solito abbiamo due colori o grigio o tutta bianca, ma se loro vogliono altri colori noi possiamo produrla in altri colori, però di solito quelli che offriamo noi da catalogo sono o bianca o grigia.
 I: **The company** produce the rubber sole in grey or white colour eh but if you like you can ask another colour.
 B: No I think that the grey is fine I'll have grey with, let's say, with the red shoe, it's cute it's really nice. As for the model in canvas...
 I: Allora va bene la suola grigia con la scarpina rossa. Passando al modello in tela, invece...
 A: Sì, i colori qui sono tre, bianco, celeste e giallo.
 I: The colour of the other model, the second model, the model in canvas, eh **we** have eh three colours ehm white and: a very light blue, very very light, and yellow.
 B: I don't know whether the yellow will go over that well in my country, ok so I would stick to maybe white and baby blue, eliminate the yellow.
 I: Allora ha detto che dato che pensa che il giallo non sia un colore che vada molto nel suo paese, allora ha deciso di prendere gli altri colori quindi il bianco e il celeste.
 A: Io proverei a convincerla sul giallo, perché abbiamo avuto delle resistenze anche qui con i nostri eh acquirenti locali, invece sono andate moltissimo.

- I: She suggests you to try on your market the yellow colour... there were doubts here too, but it has sold well.
- B: I don't know. So you say to try out the yellow, you think it will eh it will go over. Mmm, I could, let's say let's try, let's make it ten pairs of the yellow.
- I: Allora ha detto che decide di provarlo, **quindi l'abbiamo convinta** per dieci paia gialle.

Leaving an in-depth discussion of the interpreter's loyalty and professional ethics to the next level of the curriculum, students should be made aware of shifts in the use of the 1st vs 3rd person singular, and their often unconscious identification with one of the speakers, signalled by the use of the 1st person plural.

A final suggestion concerning the role-play is that teachers should highlight rather than minimise, or worse ignore, instances of miscommunication brought about by the student's inaccurate renditions. This strategy pursues a twofold didactic aim. First, attention will be productively diverted from formal equivalence between original utterance and rendition, onto the communicative impact of the interpreter's translation choices. Second, students will perceive interpreted interaction as a truly cooperative effort, where lack of coherence leads primary speakers to recycle information and ask clarifying questions (see Bot, 2005). Example [5] shows the use of these devices by both primary speakers, in two subsequent occurrences of miscommunication – one concerning when to look at the order form, the other where to have dinner:

Example [5]

- B: Ok, shall we fill the order form now?
- I: Compiliamo il modulo ora?
- A: Se per la signora va bene, possiamo compilarlo noi, mentre lei magari si riposa in albergo. Adesso la accompagniamo in albergo e il modulo glielo porto a cena, così lei ha tempo dopo di darci un'occhiata, così domani, quando viene a visitare la nostra sede, possiamo già mandarlo in produzione.
- I: If you agree, they can fill the order and you can go in the hotel and have a rest, and see this order form at dinner or tomorrow when you will go in factory eh to visit eh their plant.
- B: Ok I think tomorrow will be fine, so that when we meet in the factory we'll deal with business. I don't like dealing with business over dinner.
- I: Preferirebbe domani perché non le piace occuparsi di affari dopo cena, preferisce domani durante la visita.
- A: **Si, certo, io le davo semplicemente il modulo stasera già riempito con tutti i dati, poi vedeva lei, magari domani mattina presto. Di certo non ne parlavamo a cena, la rassicuri, non è una cena di lavoro.**

- I: They only will give you this order form and they don't intend to, eh, talk about business after dinner.
- B: **Well I don't like talking about business during dinner either. Anyway, as I said, I will have a look at it tomorrow morning before we meet.**
- I: Sì, come diceva lei controllerà quindi in hotel poi vedrete domani.
- A: Perfetto allora io se posso, vorrei proporre un programma per stasera, immagino stasera non abbia altri impegni
- I: Have you any other meetings tonight?
- B: No, no I have no plans at all, tonight I have no other eh nothing to do. Totally free.
- I: She would like to eh to suggest you a programme for tonight for this evening.
- B: Ok.
- A: Innanzi tutto direi, magari un aperitivo in uno dei locali più alla moda in questi ultimi mesi, è un nuovissimo locale che hanno aperto qui vicino
- I: Maybe you can go to eat something in a very new eh a very new eh pub local near here
- B: **A local pub? We're going to eat in a pub in a local pub?**
- I: Yes, eat something.
- A: **La vedo sorpresa. Le assicuro, è un bellissimo posto, un nuovo caffè molto di moda che hanno aperto dove si può prendere un aperitivo.**
- I: It's a very new fashionable bar café...
- B: Oh, it's a café, ok, because a pub, I'm not a drinker you understand, so I don't really like going to bars.
- I: No, no is a café. It was my mistake.

The above excerpt points to a further aspect of interpreted interaction, namely the role of non-verbal language as an additional channel for sense-making. The underlined utterance reveals that speaker A has gathered from her interlocutor's facial expression and prosodic traits that she is not thrilled at the proposal. The didactic value of video-recording student performances to discuss non-verbal behaviour is widely recognised and, for reasons of length, won't be illustrated here.

The introduction of transcript analysis towards the end of the module may be useful not only to describe the actual dynamics of floor and topic management (see example [2] above), but also to illustrate the difference between "representation" and "metalinguistic elaboration" (Pym, 2000:189). Given the lack of shared cultural frames, the latter procedure is often used by interpreters to provide autonomous explanations of a given term, as shown in the last example in this paragraph, where the meaningless loan translation "Indian fig" for the Italian "fico d'India" ("prickly pear") is followed by the description of the fruit in question:

Example [6]²¹

- E: ehm (.) rappresentiamo un consorzio di cooperative agricole (.) siciliane
 I: he represents (.) the a-an organization of Sicilian ehm cooperatives
 E: produciamo comunque questi prodotti=
 I: =and this is the range of their products they produce watermelons oranges **I don't know if you know what these are**↑ here ehm called (.) **Indian figs a they are a kind of fruit which grows on cactuses and it's th-this size and it's oval (.) ehm yellow or red**=
 FV: maybe maybe we call it another name in England
 I: yeah
 FV: yeah maybe it's not familiar to me but okay
 I: ehm I know ehm **it's typical of southern Italy** (.) and ehm
 FV: yeah↑
 I: and ehm non ha una foto con sé↑
 E: no eh perché in questo momento no
 FV: of this Indian fig yeah↑=
 I: [=yeah]
 FV: [è tipo] il cactus gli hai detto tipo cactus↑
 I: sì sì sì sì

Level three: analysing

At a post-graduate level, different dialogue interpreting contexts may qualify for in-depth study. In addition to the above-mentioned media interpreting, the choice may fall on one of the three main areas of community interpreting, namely legal, public service and medical interpreting (see Roberts, 1997:9). In light of the present author's research interests, the last two have been opted for. Since the purpose of community interpreting is "to assist those immigrants who are not native speakers of the language to gain full and equal access to statutory services" (Collard-Abbas, 1989:81), its first distinctive trait is the institutional nature of the interpreted encounters. Borrowing Drew and Heritage's words, we could say that:

The interactions that are analyzed here are basically task-related and they involve at least one participant who represents a formal organization of some kind. The tasks of these interactions [...] are primarily accomplished through the exchange of talk between professionals and lay persons. (1992:3)

²¹ This excerpt is taken from the transcript of an interpreted encounter recorded at the *Tecnobortus* fruit and vegetable trade fair, Padua, 21.02.2004. Here, "E" stands for exhibitor, "I" for interpreter, and "FV" for foreign visitor.

Interaction in institutional settings is thus not only intentional, i.e. goal-oriented, as are all other types of dialogue, but primarily task-related, in that talk is here instrumental to performing specific activities of a professional nature. A further difference from ordinary conversation is that the professional capacity of one of the two interlocutors is made relevant to the conduct of these activities. This relevance entails a series of constraints on what will be considered “allowable contributions to the business at hand” (Drew and Heritage, 1992:22-23); hence, the extensively researched and documented asymmetry which characterises participation in institutional interactions. An often quoted example of this asymmetry is the medical practitioner’s control of the question-answer sequence in doctor-patient interviews.

From the symmetrical configuration of business negotiations, which, as Sandrelli (2005:79) quoting Smirnov highlights, are founded on the idea of an equal relationship between negotiating parties, the focus is shifted, at this level, onto exchanges characterised not only by a knowledge divide, but also by a status differential between primary interlocutors, resulting from the service users’ membership of a minority group. While the knowledge asymmetry may be partly reproduced in role-play activities – where, for instance, a physician who does not speak the foreign language is invited in class to act out a medical interview on the basis of a previously agreed clinical scenario –, the culture and power asymmetry is best explored through reference to real interpreting practice. This is why, in the present module, the balance is heavily tilted towards transcript analysis.

Already introduced in the preceding module, the reflection on the different forms of reported speech acquires much greater significance here, as it sheds light on issues of identity and neutrality. As mentioned earlier, in Italy the figure who is active in community interpreting contexts is currently that of the cultural mediator. This is normally a foreigner, who shares with the service user not only the same ethnic and cultural background, but frequently the same life experience as immigrant, with, however, the non-negligible difference that the former is at a more advanced stage in the integration process within the host society. Among the linguistic markers of the mediator’s conscious and often unconscious drives towards either identification or distancing are the shifts between direct and indirect speech in the renditions of the primary speakers’ utterances. Two analytical models may be suggested to systematise the study of these variations, namely Bot’s (2005:169-191) classification of “renditions of perspective”, and Merlini and Favaron’s (2005:279-285) categories of “footing”. Moving from Goffman’s (1982) concept of “production format” through Wadensjö’s (1998) subsequently developed “reception format”, the latter model combines within a single framework all the interpreter’s conversational alignments. In other words, the interpreter features here both as a translator of other people’s utterances (which she may report either in the 1st or 3rd person) and as a primary interlocutor, in Goffman’s words a “principal”, contributing on her own account to

the exchange. The excerpt shown in example [7] is taken from the transcript of an interaction which took place in 2004 at a Foreigners' Advice Bureau run by the municipal authorities of a Northern Italian city. A French-speaking asylum seeker from Cameroon turned to the service to find provisional accommodation, while awaiting the scheduling of his immigration hearing. The Moroccan mediator is first seen to identify with the Italian employee, whose utterances he translates in the 1st person, while distancing himself from the immigrant through the use of the 3rd person. Later in the conversation, however, the mediator's opposing pull towards solidarity is displayed in his adoption of the footing of principal, whereby he interacts autonomously with the immigrant, as the employee is temporarily out of the room, to explain how to present an acceptable account to the police, in preparation for the official hearing with the immigration authorities in Rome.

Example [7]²²

- P: da dormire (.) senza:: senza documenti è impossibile
 M: non ho capito
 P: da dormire sans document è impossibile
 M: quindi **pour dormir si vous n'avez pas pour avoir un lieu où dormir si v - vous n'avez pas de documents c'est impossible**
 P: () documenti ↑ (.) non ne ha ehm:
 M: **mais vous n'avez rien non**↑
 U: voici la déclaration j'ai été là-bas à Ventimiglia ()
 M: quand↑
 U: () (je suis arrivé en retard je suis parti) ils m'ont demandé d'écrire mon histoire (comment je m'appelle) j'ai quitté le Cameroun
 M: oui
 U: je suis du Cameroun () ils m'ont donné l'adresse de: votre adresse je suis venu ((the telephone rings)) ici rencontrer monsieur et madame
 M: oui
 U: ils m'ont envoyé prendre les photos je prends les photos comme ils m'ont dit ((the telephone rings))
 M: **lui è stato in via XXX poi l'hanno mandato:: qua ha scritto la sua storia e:: lui ha preso le foto e la marca:**
 [...] ((P leaves the room))
 U: chaque fois eh à chaque cinq cents mètres vous trouvez un policier si c'est pas un policier c'est les gendarmes
 M: ouai ouai
 U: chaque fois

²² Here, "P" stands for service provider, "M" for mediator and "U" for service user.

Example [8]²³

- D: oui je me doute vous faites de la cuisine essentiellement asiatique↑
 I: so do you cook euh:: Asiatic food↑
 P: mhm=
 D: =si hein↑ oui oui **c'est normal ça** [**c'est bien=**
 P: [((laughter))

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- I: =((whispered)) it's normal=
 D: =**c'est bien et c'est très bon en plus**
 I: and the taste is (good) as well
 D: hein↑ **il faut** mettre dans votre cuisine pour **il ne faut pas** changer les choses **il faut** manger comme vous mangez d'habitude **il faut** un petit peu modifier la façon de faire
 I: **you you:: you should** eat as you eat usually but **you have to** change some (.) a little bit
 [...]
 P: [mhmm
 D: [d'accord↑] donc c'est ça y (.) moi je pense **qu'il y a le midi il y a de temps en temps des >petits dérapages quoi<**
 I: euh **according to her** at:: at the lunch time **you sometimes eat too much** or something like that=
 D: =mhmm↑=
 I: =that's why the results are (.) too big: at the lunch time

Questions of cultural variation in politeness strategies will also be introduced. The medical interaction in question shows, for instance, the patient's use of laughter as a face-saving device which, while implicitly preserving her negative face (i.e. her freedom from imposition), is in line with her culturally-based recognition of hierarchical roles requiring deference. This interpretation is supported by the patient's sudden shift to a more assertive and argumentative tone, as the doctor leaves the room and she is left alone with the interpreter.

While raising the students' awareness as to the subtle ways in which the interlocutors' projections of multiple selves – in Davies and Harré's (1999) terminology, the interlocutors' "positions" – are discursively produced in the unfolding interaction, reflection on the above-mentioned aspects will stimulate a debate on professional ethics, preparing students to competently contribute to a clearer definition of the community interpreter's role.

Conclusions

The principle which has guided this contribution is the belief that interpreting should be seen and taught not only, and not mainly, as a linguistically or even culturally based sense-making process, but rather as a socially accomplished and socially relevant activity. The context in which this can be more easily achieved is the dialogical one. The creative, unpredictable nature of dialogue is the most visible sign of how human relations, and the thoughts, perceptions and images shaping them through talk, are in constant flux as a result of a multiplicity of factors. The complexity of

this activity, where the interpreter becomes a full-fledged social actor, contributing alongside the other participants to defining social roles and identities, makes it a most captivating object of study. If, in class activities, the emphasis is placed on the communicative projects, rather than on the mere correction of language and translation errors, students will no longer feel intimidated by the interpreting task. The learning experience itself will gradually acquire the contours of a wider dialogue, where discussion will lead to self-awareness and complement the teacher's assessment. To this end, a number of teaching suggestions have been put forward, among which the collective reconstruction of the interlocutors' conversational goals and moves in role-plays, reflection on the communicative impact of the interpreting student's interactional behaviour, and a theoretically informed analysis of real interpreted encounters.

Having extensively argued the merits of dialogue interpreting as an academic subject in its own right, an apt way to conclude this contribution is to consider, once again, the wider picture of university provision. In presenting a brief overview of currently available training and professional opportunities in Italy, mention was previously made of the existing bipolar system, whereby business interpreting needs are catered for by graduates of Language Mediation degree courses, while community interpreting still falls largely outside the boundaries of higher education. In the latter area, services are provided by cultural mediators with frequently inadequate qualifications and no knowledge of interpreting and translation techniques. As Viezzi (2002:193-195) rightly observes, the role played by community interpreting practitioners is of such import, that universities cannot remain alien to the field. Widening the scope of their training provision does not mean investing on an unrealistic expansion of the range of languages being taught, to include the wealth of minority languages required in community settings. Aside from the fact that traditional European languages, such as French, Spanish and clearly English, are widely used as *linguae francae* in everyday practice (see De Caneva, 2003-4), universities could offer post-graduate courses in cultural mediation focusing on translation and interpreting skills, cultural and communication studies, as well as professional ethics, rather than on language-specific training. As further suggested by Viezzi, universities could also explore the possibility of becoming accreditation centres, issuing community interpreting qualifications through examination procedures.

A final observation concerns the scope of undergraduate courses. Here, curricula should aim at fostering flexibility, by developing the different skills which are required of language mediation experts on the job market (such as language consultancy, terminology work, translation, interpreting, etc.). At the same time, while recognising the existence of wide areas of overlap and the desirability of a synergic approach, the autonomy of each learning activity should be firmly pursued, so as to orient

students towards a professional dimension. This excludes the use of one activity as a mere instrument for the acquisition of another (as has often been the case for dialogue interpreting classes). This equally excludes a mishmash of competences, while calling, instead, for the parallel development of distinct and mature skills, leading to a versatile graduate profile, which Gouadec (in this volume) identifies in the “consultant in intercultural communication”.

These, in our view, are the challenges of university education in the very near future.

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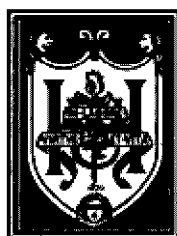
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INTERPRETAZIONE DI TRATTATIVA

La mediazione linguistico-culturale
nel contesto formativo e professionale



EDITORE ULRICO HOEPLI MILANO

La trattativa d'affari: osservazioni generali e strategie didattiche

Annalisa Sandrelli

6.1 L'interpretazione di trattativa: caratteristiche generali

Sotto la dicitura di "interpretazione di trattativa" ed i rispettivi termini usati in altre lingue si nasconde un'ampia gamma di contesti lavorativi. Esistono infatti molte altre denominazioni, che richiamano l'attenzione sull'ambito di lavoro (interpretazione di comunità, interpretazione nei servizi pubblici, interpretazione per i tribunali ecc.) o sul processo comunicativo (interpretazione bilaterale o di trattativa)¹. Fra i vari contesti lavorativi possono esserci notevoli differenze relativamente al ruolo dell'interprete, alle aspettative dei clienti e all'interazione fra i partecipanti. Infatti, come sottolineano Jiménez Ivars *et al.* (1999, p. 198)²:

Cualquier situación de diálogo entre hablantes de lenguas diferentes es susceptible de ser objeto de una *interpretación de enlace*. [...] más bien son situaciones condicionadas por el contexto, por el número de participantes, por su grado de formalidad o de informalidad, de espontaneidad (es decir, una situación que *surge* y que necesita ser interpretada) o de preparación (es decir, una situación *premeditada* o dispuesta de antemano) y por su finalidad.

Nonostante le differenze, è però possibile fare alcune considerazioni generali valide per tutte le situazioni³. La caratteristica distintiva dell'interpretazione di trattativa è la bidirezionalità, cioè la necessità di tradurre dalla lingua materna alla lingua straniera e viceversa, in una serie di scambi piuttosto brevi che rispecchiano i ritmi della conversazione. Infatti, mentre nell'interpretazione di conferenza la comunicazione è per lo più monologica e unidirezionale (dall'oratore al pubblico), nell'interpretazione di trattativa si ha una situazione dialogica e bidirezionale con un numero ristretto di persone (spesso solo tre): i partecipanti primari e l'interprete.

Secondo Bazzanella (2002), il dialogo fra i partecipanti può essere di tipo simmetrico o di tipo asimmetrico. Il dialogo simmetrico si ha quando i partecipanti primari, pur essendo di lingua e cultura diverse, hanno più o meno lo stesso *status* e livelli di istruzione simili. È questo il caso di una trattativa commerciale, in cui gli interlocutori hanno anche in comune le conoscenze extralinguistiche sul loro settore e la padronanza della microlingua relativa⁴.

Nel caso del dialogo asimmetrico, invece, vi è uno squilibrio di potere a favore di uno dei partecipanti primari, quando ad esempio uno dei due interlocutori è un membro della società del paese ospitante, mentre l'altro è uno straniero appartenente ad una minoranza. Spesso l'interlocutore appartenente alla cultura dominante ha la facoltà di prendere delle decisioni che hanno un impatto diretto sulla vita dell'altro interlocutore (Mason 1999, p. 148). In situazioni di questo tipo esiste spesso una marcata diversità fra i due anche in quanto a mezzi espressivi: è questo il caso, ad esempio, dell'interpretazione di trattativa in campo medico e in ambito giudiziario⁵.

In tutti i tipi di trattativa il livello di interattività tra i partecipanti è elevato, il che influenza i contenuti della conversazione: anche se il dialogo è parzialmente pianificato, il suo sviluppo dipende dall'andamento di ogni scambio dialogico. Sotto questo punto di vista il ruolo dell'interprete è fondamentale, poiché le sue scelte traduttive e interazionali possono influenzare le reazioni dei suoi clienti. Inoltre, a differenza di quanto accade nell'interpretazione di conferenza, l'interprete può interagire direttamente con i clienti per verificare la comprensibilità della traduzione, per chiedere chiarimenti, o per gestire i turni dialogici. Da non sottovalutare è anche il ruolo della comunicazione non verbale: grazie alla prossimità fisica fra i partecipanti, l'interprete ha accesso diretto ai significati espressi anche attraverso la gestualità, e dev'essere in grado di decifrare correttamente tutte queste informazioni (Mason 1999, p. 153).

Per riassumere, l'interprete di trattativa svolge due ruoli fondamentali, relativi rispettivamente alla trasmissione delle informazioni e alla gestione del dialogo (Wadensjö 1998a, pp. 102, 111-113). Non si limita a far passare le informazioni, ma interviene anche per chiarire incomprensioni, fornire spiegazioni ecc. In altri termini, nella trattativa si ha una vera e propria interazione a tre: l'interprete non è un filtro o un partecipante invisibile, ma un partecipante a pieno titolo (Mason 1999, pp. 149-151; Roberts 1997, pp. 10-11). Data la natura dialogica dell'interpretazione di trattativa, l'interprete sfrutta il contesto per la decodifica e successiva trasmissione delle informazioni: di conseguenza, ogni turno dialogico è tradotto come se fosse un discorso completo, mantenendo però un alto livello di coerenza e coesione con il segmento precedente (Hatim e Mason 1997, pp. 50-51).

Dopo questo rapido *excursus* sulle caratteristiche comuni a tutte le situazioni di trattativa, nel paragrafo seguente passiamo a discutere la specificità della trattativa d'affari.

6.2 La trattativa d'affari: specificità e competenze

Nella lingua inglese il termine più diffuso per indicare l'interpretazione in ambito commerciale e aziendale è *business interpreting* (Ko 1997)⁶. Tuttavia, tale termine è ambiguo, in quanto può comprendere anche quelle situazioni in cui si utilizza l'interpretazione consecutiva e/o simultanea. Smirnov suggerisce di operare una distinzione fra "liaison interpreting" (interpretazione di trattativa) generica, e "... 'liaison interpreting' for business liaison" (Smirnov 1997, p. 213). In questo senso, in italiano potremmo parlare di *trattativa d'affari*, che racchiude al suo interno il settore turistico, commerciale, aziendale e fieristico. Al riguardo, Del Rosso (1997, pp. 241-242) suggerisce un elenco di possibili situazioni di lavoro:

L'interprete potrà essere chiamato per trattative d'affari a livello aziendale, per la stipula di contratti presso studi notarili o legali, per rogatorie internazionali, per udienze in tribunale, per manifestazioni sportive, per assistenza linguistica in caso di fiere, per sfilate di moda, per degustazioni enologiche, per coadiuvare consorzi internazionali in vista di gare d'appalto, per visite a fabbriche, aziende, opere edili, musei, per incontri politici, per visite mediche all'estero, per gruppi di lavoro internazionali, per manifestazioni turistiche, per riunioni di agenti esteri di un'azienda, per incontri di associazioni di volontariato, per seguire una troupe televisiva durante la coproduzione di un documentario, per spettacoli artistici, e l'elenco potrebbe continuare.

Abbiamo osservato che il dialogo caratteristico della trattativa d'affari è simmetrico (cfr. paragrafo 6.1), in quanto "modern business ritual is more or less founded on the idea of equal relation of *partnership* between negotiating parties" (Smirnov 1997, p. 215)⁷. In effetti, la difficoltà principale di questo tipo di trattativa non riguarda lo *status* dei clienti, ma il ruolo dell'interprete stesso. Rileva infatti Katan:

There are three basic approaches for the business community with regard to language: a lingua franca; the adoption of the client or the seller language; or, thirdly, the use of external (and sometimes professional) interpreters and translators. (Katan 1999, p. 109)

La scelta di avvalersi di un interprete professionista è spesso all'ultimo posto nella scala delle preferenze. Katan spiega che tale atteggiamento da parte delle imprese è dovuto a due ragioni fondamentali: prima di tutto, l'interprete è visto come un intruso; inoltre, spesso non è considerato sufficientemente preparato, sia dal punto di vista delle conoscenze specialistiche che della conoscenza della cultura d'impresa⁸. Potendo scegliere, molte imprese preferiscono utilizzare dipendenti bilingui, poiché questi hanno le conoscenze tecniche necessarie, conoscono l'azienda e i suoi obiettivi, e soprattutto sono considerati più fidati: possono cioè essere messi a parte della strategia di negoziato, ed aiutare a condurre la trattativa nella direzione voluta⁹.

Stando a vari studi compiuti sul campo, la scarsa considerazione attribuita alla mediazione linguistica e culturale e l'atteggiamento negativo nei confronti degli

interpreti sono causa di un alto numero di fallimenti nelle trattative internazionali. Come osserva Katan (1999, p. 112): "International business communication is, in fact, more a case of international communication breakdown and failure". Un aspetto che spesso sfugge ai dirigenti d'azienda è che una buona conoscenza della lingua straniera non è sufficiente per poter interpretare una trattativa d'affari. Secondo Balboni (1998, p. 27), le parti coinvolte nella comunicazione interlinguistica (personale aziendale, addetti al commercio, giornalisti, docenti universitari ecc.) tendono a sottovalutare o ad ignorare la dimensione interculturale. Chi studia una lingua straniera per lavoro generalmente privilegia la correttezza sintattica e lessicale, trascurando il piano socio-linguistico, pragmatico e testuale. Ad esempio, per quanto riguarda l'architettura testuale, gli italiani tendono ad usare i periodi complessi basati sulla subordinazione, mentre gli anglosassoni preferiscono le frasi brevi dalle strutture semplici: un dirigente d'azienda italiano, parlando inglese, tenderà ad adottare il periodare tipico della sua lingua, con il risultato di essere poco chiaro e di dare l'impressione di poca affidabilità (Balboni 1998, pp. 30-31). Per avere successo nelle trattative d'affari internazionali occorre quindi anche una comprensione profonda dei metodi di negoziato, come sottolinea Ko (1996, p. 119): "Knowledge of the negotiating styles adopted by different cultural groups is of paramount importance for successful interpreting".

Inoltre, bisogna ricordare che i codici extralinguistici (cinesica, prossemica, vestemica, oggettemica ecc.) variano da una cultura all'altra (Balboni 1998, p. 31). Tutti noi filtriamo l'esperienza quotidiana attraverso le lenti dei *cultural frames*, i riferimenti culturali attraverso i quali ogni persona seziona ed interpreta la realtà:

A cultural frame is the perceptual window through which an individual defines him or herself, others, and the world. [...] Our physical senses flood us with data; we can only make meaningful sense of it all by passing it through the selective filters derived from our value orientations embedded in our cultural frame". (Brake *et al.* 1995, p. 159)

Questi filtri culturali ci abituanano a vedere la realtà in un certo modo, per noi "normale", e possono essere causa di fraintendimenti nelle trattative d'affari. Fra di essi, troviamo la concezione del tempo (e della puntualità), dello spazio (distanza accettabile fra le persone), il livello di formalità (forme di cortesia, forme negoziali), l'importanza delle gerarchie, lo stile di negoziato (aggressivo o cooperativo, individuale o di squadra), l'organizzazione aziendale (rigidamente gerarchica o con comunicazione fra la base ed il vertice), il modo di ragionare (induttivo o deduttivo), di presentare il proprio punto di vista (punto per punto o con una panoramica) ecc. (Brake *et al.* 1995; Lewis 1999).

Grazie alla diffusione dei corsi sulla comunicazione interculturale, si sta lentamente facendo strada nella mentalità dei dirigenti d'azienda la necessità di ricorrere ad interpreti professionisti. L'interprete può infatti svolgere una funzione di "consigliere culturale", intervenendo per scongiurare incomprensioni, e fornendo spiegazioni su aspetti potenzialmente rischiosi, ad esempio lo scambio di regali, la durata dei convenevoli, gli argomenti da evitare, come il denaro, le tasse, il ses-

so, il bere, la religione, la politica e molti altri (Wadensjö 1998b). Insomma, sono sempre di più le imprese disposte ad ascoltare il seguente consiglio:

When I hear of people who spend days on end negotiating a promising business relationship only to see it fall apart later due to a language-based misunderstanding, I don't say, 'Get a life'. I say, 'Get an interpreter'". (Dal sito Internet di David James)

Tuttavia, nelle trattative il ruolo dell'interprete non è sempre chiaro ai clienti che possono avere delle aspettative erranee sul suo conto. Per esempio, chi paga la parcella spesso tende a considerare l'interprete un suo alleato, e sulla base di questa convinzione potrebbe chiedergli la sua opinione sulla sincerità dell'altro interlocutore: "The client sees this as legitimate information for the successful clinching of a deal, and has the same expectations of the interpreter as of any other expert or consultant engaged to help with decision-making" (Ko 1996, p. 121). Di conseguenza, potrebbe essere opportuno affrontare l'argomento "neutralità" con i clienti prima dell'inizio della trattativa, spiegando che l'interprete è al servizio di entrambi, e cioè che il suo obiettivo è permettere la comunicazione tra gli interlocutori. Come abbiamo già esposto, infatti, l'interprete è un mediatore culturale oltre che linguistico. Di conseguenza, deve anche dimostrarsi sensibile nella gestione di stereotipi sulle nazionalità, di commenti poco lusinghieri o eventuali espressioni offensive usate in un momento di rabbia (Del Rosso 1997, p. 246).

Un altro rischio è la possibilità che l'interprete sia usato come capro espiatorio durante una trattativa dall'andamento difficoltoso. Se uno dei due clienti non vuole scendere a compromessi, per obbligare l'altro a cedere può far finta di non capire, attribuendo la colpa ad un errore di traduzione. L'interprete dovrà decidere se accettare o meno quest'atteggiamento, eventualmente chiarire la situazione o, in casi estremi, addirittura ritirarsi (Ko 1996, p. 123).

Per quanto riguarda gli aspetti linguistici e traduttivi veri e propri, la maggiore difficoltà è costituita dalla varietà di situazioni di lavoro. Generalmente i clienti hanno un patrimonio comune di conoscenze relative al loro settore, e segnalano l'appartenenza a tale settore attraverso l'uso della microlingua scientifico-professionale corrispondente (ciascuno nella propria lingua)¹⁰. Secondo la definizione di Balboni (2000, pp. 20-21), "le microlingue scientifico-professionali sono usate tra specialisti con lo scopo (a) di una comunicazione che sia *il meno ambigua possibile* e (b) del *riconoscimento di appartenenza* ad un settore scientifico-professionale".

Non essendo un addetto ai lavori, l'interprete non ha né il bagaglio di conoscenze settoriali, né la completa padronanza delle microlingue nelle due lingue fra cui interpreta. Perciò, durante la fase di preparazione cerca di acquisire le conoscenze e le competenze essenziali per svolgere il suo compito e per essere accettato come interlocutore competente dai due clienti. Come si è già rilevato nel paragrafo 6.1, durante le discussioni tecniche a volte è possibile chiedere aiuto ai clienti stessi: ad esempio, di fronte ad un termine sconosciuto, si può chiedere una definizione al cliente che l'ha usato, tradurla nell'altra lingua, e ottenere il vocabolo corretto nella lingua d'arrivo dall'altro cliente che, grazie alle sue conoscenze set-

toriali, ha capito di cosa si sta parlando.

Come si vede da questo breve *excursus*, la trattativa d'affari è una specialità complessa che implica una molteplicità di competenze e conoscenze. Del Rosso (1997, p. 248) sottolinea giustamente:

[...] siamo perciò di fronte ad un profilo professionale che può e deve riuscire a raggiungere livelli compiuti di competenza lungo tutto l'arco della propria carriera; una professionalità non data per definitiva fin dall'inizio, ma che si va creando gradualmente grazie ad un impegno ed una passione costanti.

A livello didattico, quindi, si possono ottenere risultati apprezzabili soltanto formulando degli obiettivi realistici, scegliendo pochi settori di specializzazione a titolo esemplificativo, e puntando sulla trasmissione di metodi e tecniche applicabili ad ogni contesto. Seguendo quest'impostazione, l'autrice ha deciso di dedicare un corso di Trattativa italiano-spagnolo della laurea triennale in Interpretazione e Traduzione di trattativa alla trattativa d'affari in ambito turistico e fieristico.

6.3 Il modello didattico¹¹

Il corso di Interpretazione di Trattativa I (italiano-spagnolo) del secondo anno presso la Scuola Superiore di Lingue Moderne per Interpreti e Traduttori di Forlì (Università di Bologna) si inserisce in un percorso didattico che prende le mosse dal corso di Mediazione Linguistica del primo anno. Se in quest'ultimo gli studenti cominciano ad analizzare le caratteristiche della comunicazione orale e si esercitano per migliorare la propria capacità di parlare in pubblico sia in italiano che in spagnolo, nel corso di Trattativa I si gettano le basi della tecnica dell'interpretazione di trattativa, tenendo presente che gli studenti sono abituati a lavorare prevalentemente su testi scritti e non orali. In seguito, nel corso di Trattativa II del terzo anno gli studenti migliorano ulteriormente la propria padronanza della tecnica applicandola ai settori dei servizi pubblici, sanitario e giudiziario.

Poiché il corso di Trattativa I si propone di far acquisire agli studenti le competenze necessarie per l'interpretazione in maniera graduale e poiché, come abbiamo evidenziato nei paragrafi 6.1 e 6.2, si tratta di una tecnica piuttosto complessa, si è deciso di evitare un'eccessiva specializzazione degli argomenti trattati. Si è scelto perciò di concentrarsi sugli ambiti turistico e fieristico, dei quali ci si può aspettare una conoscenza preesistente (anche se superficiale) da parte degli studenti. Inoltre, i dialoghi tipici di questi due ambiti sono abbastanza ripetitivi (e quindi prevedibili), il che permette agli studenti di concentrarsi sul perfezionamento della tecnica. Infine, bisogna ricordare che per la combinazione linguistica italiano-spagnolo il settore turistico e quello fieristico ricoprono un ruolo rilevante sul mercato dell'interpretazione: una buona conoscenza di tali ambiti lavorativi è quindi essenziale per gli studenti che desiderino dedicarsi alla professione dopo la laurea.

Prima di descrivere le attività proposte in classe, si possono fare alcune con-

siderazioni generali relativamente all'impostazione di un corso di questo tipo e al ruolo del docente. È evidente che un corso di interpretazione di trattativa dev'essere eminentemente pratico e che quindi la dimensione ideale dei gruppi di lavoro debba essere ridotta (otto-dieci studenti), in modo che tutti possano avere un ruolo attivo durante le lezioni.

Nella (ancora scarsa) letteratura sulla didattica dell'interpretazione di trattativa l'esercizio raccomandato più di frequente è il *role play*, o simulazione di dialoghi, che presuppone la compresenza di due docenti, uno per ciascuna lingua (Keith 1985; Parnell 1989). La presenza contemporanea di due docenti di lingue diverse consente di dare indicazioni mirate agli studenti, sia sulle strategie di traduzione più adatte che sulle sfumature di significato o sulle differenze culturali. Naturalmente è auspicabile un'esperienza professionale come interpreti da parte di entrambi, per simulare situazioni di lavoro realistiche che assicurino un legame tra didattica e realtà lavorativa.

Tuttavia, il metodo delle simulazioni non è privo di problemi. Infatti, quando i docenti impersonano i clienti, vi è il rischio che gli studenti portino tale identificazione all'estremo, considerandoli due esperti dell'argomento in discussione. Come si è illustrato nel paragrafo 6.2, neanche l'esperienza fa diventare l'interprete professionista un vero "addetto ai lavori". Da questo punto di vista, la situazione del docente di interpretazione di trattativa mostra dei parallelismi con quella del docente di lingua straniera che impartisce un corso sulle microlingue scientifico-professionali, le cui difficoltà sono descritte da Matte Bon (2000). Così come il compito del docente di lingua è presentare le caratteristiche delle microlingue, senza per questo essere tenuto a saperle usare professionalmente, il compito del docente di interpretazione è proporre dei dialoghi realistici, senza per questo potersi considerare un vero esperto dell'argomento in esame. C'è però una differenza notevole fra le due situazioni: i corsi sulle microlingue sono destinati a professionisti che di solito hanno scarse conoscenze della lingua straniera, ma tutte le conoscenze tecniche e la totale padronanza della microlingua relativa nella propria lingua madre. Di conseguenza, in un corso di questo tipo il ruolo del docente di lingua è di aiutare gli studenti ad analizzare le caratteristiche linguistiche dei testi, mentre da parte loro gli studenti possono aiutare a chiarire eventuali dubbi sui contenuti, secondo un modello collaborativo di apprendimento (Balboni 2000, pp. 79-80). Invece, nel caso di un corso di interpretazione di trattativa in cui si affrontano argomenti tecnici, né i docenti né gli studenti sono esperti dei settori trattati. Il docente di trattativa non può contare sull'apporto degli studenti per ciò che riguarda il contenuto delle simulazioni, ma deve anche evitare il modello didattico tradizionale, cioè quello del "[...] docente che 'sa' e che deve comunicare il suo sapere ad una classe di allievi che 'non sanno' (Balboni 2000, p. 78), per non trovarsi in una posizione critica.

Analizzato in questi termini, il metodo delle simulazioni di dialoghi sembra sconsigliabile. Tuttavia, per affrontare correttamente la questione, non bisogna perdere di vista l'obiettivo primario dei corsi di interpretazione di trattativa, che non è la trasmissione di conoscenze settoriali su un dato tema, ma lo sviluppo di alcune tecniche (interpretazione bidirezionale, mediazione, traduzione a vista ecc.)

e di un metodo di lavoro (imparare a documentarsi e a prepararsi adeguatamente per un incarico professionale), oltre che delle capacità di autovalutazione per individuare le proprie debolezze ed i propri punti di forza. In altri termini, alla fine di un corso di interpretazione di trattativa gli studenti devono aver acquisito le basi di queste tecniche e devono aver capito come procurarsi le conoscenze linguistiche ed extralinguistiche necessarie per affrontare una trattativa. In questo senso, il metodo delle simulazioni dei dialoghi è sicuramente il più efficace. Tuttavia, la complessità della tecnica della trattativa rende opportuno un approccio graduale che adatti le varie attività didattiche alle esigenze di ciascun gruppo di studenti. Per una maggiore chiarezza espositiva, si è ritenuto di trattare la fase degli esercizi preparatori (sottoparagrafo 6.3.1) separatamente da quella relativa all'utilizzo delle simulazioni dei dialoghi (sottoparagrafo 6.3.2).

6.3.1 La fase preparatoria

La difficoltà iniziale della trattativa è abituare gli studenti a lavorare con testi orali. Per individuare gli esercizi propedeutici più adatti, appare utile applicare all'interpretazione di trattativa il Modello degli Sforzi di Gile (1995), come già suggerito in Sandrelli (2001) e in Abril Martí e Collados Aís (2001). In pratica, l'interpretazione di trattativa può essere vista come una serie di interpretazioni consecutive in miniatura (per la breve durata degli interventi) nelle due direzioni linguistiche. Di conseguenza, possiamo scomporre la dinamica della trattativa in ascolto e analisi, memoria e riformulazione, a cui giustamente Abril Martí e Collados Aís (2001, p. 95) aggiungono lo sforzo della bidirezionalità e quello dell'interculturalità.

Gli esercizi utilizzati nella fase preparatoria hanno perciò l'obiettivo di rafforzare le capacità di ascolto, comprensione, memorizzazione e produzione nelle due lingue, lavorando su testi che presentino difficoltà non solo linguistiche, ma anche relative a differenze culturali. La scelta dei testi deve anche servire a introdurre gli argomenti e la terminologia settoriale oggetto del corso, cioè, nel nostro caso, il settore turistico e il mercato fieristico.

In un primo tempo vengono proposti esercizi di ascolto di dialoghi, riassunti orali senza presa di appunti, analisi delle strutture testuali, clozing, e così via¹²: in questa fase è consigliabile tenere separate le due lingue di lavoro per evitare le interferenze, che in particolare nella combinazione linguistica italiano-spagnolo sono sempre in agguato. Contemporaneamente si lavora anche sull'arricchimento dei mezzi espressivi in entrambe le lingue, attraverso esercizi di attivazione del lessico (parafrasi), ricerca di sinonimi e contrari, esercizi di cambiamento di registro, relazioni preparate e presentate in aula dagli studenti ecc. (Abril Martí e Collados Aís 2001, pp. 114-119). In questa prima fase le lezioni possono essere tenute dai due docenti separatamente invece che in compresenza, alternando lezioni interamente dedicate alla madrelingua con lezioni nella lingua straniera.

Successivamente, si può introdurre l'elemento traduttivo cominciando con riassunti orali dalla lingua straniera alla lingua madre (la direzione meno problematica per gli studenti) e poi dalla lingua madre alla lingua straniera (Abril Martí

e Collados Aís 2001, p. 97). Molto utile risulta a questo punto l'esercizio di traduzione a vista nei due sensi¹³. Tra i meriti della traduzione a vista, Snelling indica lo sviluppo delle capacità di riassumere un testo succintamente e con precisione:

Sight translation exercises remain to the author's mind excellent preparatory exercises in the summarizing of a source text and in acquiring dexterity, precision and succinctness in the target language, whether the latter be the interpreter's mother tongue or one of his foreign languages. (Snelling 1992, p. 4)

Inoltre, se introdotta a questo punto della preparazione, la traduzione a vista può essere uno strumento per combattere le interferenze, proprio perché questa tecnica mette gli studenti in una condizione di massimo contatto tra le due lingue:

Precisamente por plantear una situación de máxima interferencia entre las lenguas de trabajo – texto escrito en una lengua y presentado oralmente en otra – la traducción a vista permite al estudiante comprobar su vulnerabilidad a las interferencias y desarrollar recursos para superarlas en una situación controlada. (Abril Martí e Collados Aís 2001, p. 122)

Oltre agli indubbi vantaggi didattici di quest'esercizio, bisogna poi tenere presente che la traduzione a vista è una prestazione professionale richiesta di frequente, soprattutto nell'ambito della trattativa: di conseguenza, gli studenti devono arrivare ad un grado di padronanza di questa tecnica piuttosto elevato (Ballardini 1998). Per riuscirci, è necessario sviluppare delle tecniche di lettura e di riformulazione del testo specifiche (Jiménez Ivars *et al.* 1999, pp. 201-202). Per quanto riguarda la lettura, ad una prima occhiata lo studente di interpretazione dev'essere in grado di individuare gli elementi chiave del testo e anticipare lo sviluppo di certe strutture linguistiche e semantiche, leggendo un segmento mentre sta ancora traducendo il segmento precedente. Gli studenti si abituano ad oralizzare i testi scritti, ad esempio scegliendo strutture più semplici, frasi più brevi, privilegiando l'uso delle coordinate invece che delle subordinate, spostando gli incisi, e così via. Imparano, quindi, a staccarsi dalla struttura superficiale del testo, sia a livello sintattico che lessicale e, con l'esperienza, a riconoscere e a risolvere i problemi di traduzione più comuni per ciascuna combinazione linguistica. È bene insistere anche sull'importanza di mantenere un ritmo fluido nel tradurre, per dar modo a chi ascolta di seguire agevolmente il testo: per chiarire questo punto può essere efficace registrare gli studenti mentre interpretano e far riascoltare loro il testo per consentire un'autovalutazione.

Infine, nella fase preparatoria alla trattativa, è opportuno dedicare uno spazio rilevante anche allo studio delle convenzioni dialogiche delle due lingue, cioè i cosiddetti *automatismi conversazionali*. Si tratta di quelle espressioni formulaiche fondanti del dialogo di registro formale, utilizzate per aprire e chiudere la comunicazione, per introdurre un nuovo tema, per contraddire l'interlocutore senza compromettere la trattativa, per interrompere educatamente, per ringraziare, per fare domande ecc. Faber *et al.* (2001) hanno elaborato una tabella di espressioni ritualizzate in spagnolo, inglese, tedesco e francese. La padronanza degli automati-

smi conversazionali nelle due lingue di lavoro è fondamentale per l'interprete, poiché evita effetti pragmatici indesiderati, come ad esempio l'impressione che il cliente abbia un atteggiamento minaccioso, autoritario, o poco rispettoso nei confronti dell'altro cliente. Come sottolineano giustamente le autrici:

Desde el punto de vista de la mediación interlingüística, es importante señalar que las categorías pragmáticas que consideramos son actos de habla y deben entenderse como manifestaciones de valores culturales que no coinciden en las distintas lenguas. (Faber *et al.* 2001, p. 143)

Sulla base delle tabelle di cui sopra, gli studenti del corso di Trattativa I hanno elaborato una tabella di espressioni corrispondenti in italiano. L'obiettivo è quello di far sì che gli studenti riescano a tradurre queste parti del dialogo senza particolare sforzo, in modo da potersi concentrare sulle informazioni nuove o cognitivamente più complesse. Per far esercitare gli studenti su queste strutture, è sufficiente inserirle nei dialoghi di trattativa proposti nella fase successiva del corso.

6.3.2 La trattativa

Il primo contatto con la trattativa vera e propria avviene attraverso l'analisi di dialoghi autentici. Si possono utilizzare interviste scritte e far lavorare a coppie gli studenti sulla traduzione a vista del testo; oppure si possono proporre registrazioni audio o video di interviste, autentiche o simulate. In ogni caso, è importante comunicare l'argomento di ciascuna lezione in anticipo, in modo che gli studenti possano svolgere un lavoro di preparazione tematica e terminologica. Ad esempio per quanto riguarda il settore turistico, si forniscono testi paralleli in italiano e in spagnolo tratti da guide turistiche, riviste, dépliant, siti Internet ecc. Gli studenti usano il materiale per familiarizzarsi con il tipo di lessico e di strutture usati nelle due lingue. Nella lezione successiva, lo stesso materiale può fungere da base per creare un dialogo di trattativa: gli studenti svolgono il ruolo di interprete a turno, e poiché conoscono l'argomento e hanno già risolto eventuali problemi terminologici, sono liberi di concentrarsi sul potenziamento della tecnica.

È anche utile distribuire agli studenti delle tracce per far preparare a casa una trattativa da simulare durante la lezione successiva, a coppie o a piccoli gruppi. Attraverso la preparazione dei dialoghi, gli studenti migliorano la capacità di espressione orale, prendono confidenza con le caratteristiche della comunicazione dialogica e si rendono conto delle convenzioni d'uso nelle due lingue. In campo turistico, le tracce proposte rispecchiano situazioni realistiche, come la prenotazione di un servizio in un'agenzia di viaggi (volo, albergo, la progettazione di un itinerario), la presentazione di un reclamo, o un'intervista all'assessore al turismo di una data località.

La trattativa in ambito fieristico, invece, viene introdotta nella seconda parte del corso, sia per la maggiore specializzazione tecnica, sia perché entrano in gioco le dinamiche del negoziato vero e proprio. Tuttavia, le situazioni che si presentano

in ambito fieristico sono abbastanza ripetitive e quindi schematizzabili. Si può discutere con gli studenti il probabile andamento degli incontri, e stimolarli a prevedere in anticipo i contenuti dei dialoghi. Per permettere loro di prepararsi adeguatamente, è utile distribuire della documentazione su ciascuna fiera trattata in aula, ad esempio la scheda tecnica dell'evento. Il fatto di utilizzare materiali autentici (facilmente reperibili su Internet) dà agli studenti uno stimolo psicologico, e consente loro di effettuare ricerche terminologiche mirate. Gli studenti sono incoraggiati a preparare dei piccoli glossari tematici prima di ciascuna lezione.

Per quanto riguarda l'apprendimento della tecnica, i problemi riscontrati più comunemente durante il corso sono stati la scarsa capacità di concentrazione e di ascolto, una gestione difettosa dei turni di parola e la ridotta capacità di cogliere (e sfruttare) gli aspetti non verbali della comunicazione. Si è notato che molti studenti cercano di memorizzare le battute, per poi tradurle più o meno alla lettera, invece di adottare un approccio semantico e pragmatico più produttivo. Infatti, di frequente la parte finale della battuta viene dimenticata: questo fenomeno può essere spiegato come sovraccarico della memoria di lavoro, che porta al crollo della concentrazione. Per aiutare gli studenti a superare la tendenza a riprodurre le parole (invece del messaggio) è consigliabile che i docenti preparino solo delle tracce per i dialoghi e non si basino su un vero e proprio copione: l'avere a che fare con un dialogo spontaneo aiuta gli studenti a staccarsi dalla forma del messaggio per concentrarsi sul contenuto. Inoltre, è importante che i docenti si immedesimino nei rispettivi ruoli, rispondendo a quanto viene comunicato dallo studente che interpreta in quel momento, anche se ciò li porta ad abbandonare la traccia preparata (Keith 1985, pp. 6-7; Sandrelli 2001, p. 175). A volte è possibile segnalare un errore di traduzione allo studente-interprete fingendo di non aver capito e chiedendo una spiegazione supplementare per farlo riflettere su ciò che ha detto. Nel caso in cui lo studente commetta degli errori di lingua, è consigliabile annotarli e commentarli solo alla fine dell'esercizio: infatti, se si interrompe lo studente per correggere l'interpretazione, la simulazione perde di realismo. Per lo stesso motivo, ciascuno studente dovrebbe interpretare almeno uno scambio completo (domanda e risposta): ciò gli dà modo di immedesimarsi nella situazione, e permette ai docenti di far notare alcuni aspetti importanti della tecnica. Non sempre gli studenti si rendono conto che a causa delle continue interruzioni nella conversazione causate dall'interpretazione, si rende necessario rafforzare la coerenza e la coesione del testo: per esempio, nella traduzione di una risposta si può inserire un esplicito riferimento alla domanda (e viceversa). È quindi importante sottolineare in classe il ruolo dei connettori logici, spesso assenti nelle interpretazioni degli studenti.

Altri aspetti problematici riguardano la tecnica corretta per chiedere spiegazioni o ripetizioni: si è visto che di frequente gli studenti interrompono l'interlocutore mentre parla se sentono un termine sconosciuto; oppure iniziano ad interpretare, per poi fermarsi e chiedere conferma di un particolare. È necessario suggerire, attraverso degli esempi pratici, come gestire il flusso delle informazioni fornite dai "clienti", e come interagire con loro per richiedere chiarificazioni senza pregiudicare l'andamento della trattativa.

Anche per quanto riguarda gli elementi non verbali della comunicazione si possono verificare vari problemi: si è notato che alcuni studenti non guardano gli interlocutori per concentrarsi meglio (guardare per aria o chiudere gli occhi sono atteggiamenti abbastanza frequenti); altri non utilizzano la gestualità nella comunicazione (stanno seduti completamente rigidi) o, viceversa, manifestano una gestualità eccessiva o inopportuna (giocano con la penna o i capelli). Tutti questi aspetti possono essere individuati e corretti in questa fase dell'apprendimento, magari utilizzando la videocamera per riprendere gli studenti quando interpretano.

Questi sono solo alcuni aspetti relativi alla tecnica dell'interpretazione di trattativa, che vanno ad aggiungersi alle specifiche difficoltà di traduzione presenti in ogni dialogo. Poiché uno degli obiettivi del corso è lo sviluppo delle capacità di autovalutazione degli studenti, i docenti cercano di stimolare la discussione in classe sulle difficoltà incontrate. Compito dei docenti è di fungere da osservatori e guidare la discussione, oltre che segnalare eventuali errori e pregi di ogni studente.

Infine, ad integrazione del corso, ogni studente elabora un glossario specializzato concordato con i docenti, che ha l'obiettivo di insegnare ad approfondire un argomento e ad utilizzare le conoscenze acquisite in un'ipotetica situazione di lavoro. Per la compilazione del glossario si utilizzano materiali autentici, tra cui pagine Internet, registrazioni audio e video, interviste a esperti realizzate dagli studenti stessi ecc. Oltre alla presentazione del glossario, l'esame di profitto comprende una prova di traduzione a vista e una di interpretazione di un dialogo su uno degli argomenti trattati durante il corso.

In questo breve contributo abbiamo presentato una panoramica sulle caratteristiche distintive dell'interpretazione di trattativa (paragrafo 6.1) e, più specificamente, della trattativa d'affari, in particolare relativamente agli aspetti culturali e al problema delle microlingue scientifico-professionali (paragrafo 6.2). Quest'analisi è alla base del modello didattico, illustrato e discusso nel paragrafo 6.3, elaborato per rispondere a specifiche esigenze formative del corso di laurea triennale in Traduzione e Interpretazione di trattativa presso la SSLMIT di Forlì. Siamo perciò pienamente consapevoli di non avere esaurito l'argomento, di per sé assai vasto. La speranza è di avere in piccola parte contribuito a stimolare il dibattito su questi temi, che solo negli ultimi tempi cominciano a ricevere l'attenzione che meritano anche in Italia.

¹ Sulle varie denominazioni si vedano Gentile *et al.* 1996; Mason 1999; Roberts 1997; Smirnov 1997; Wadensjö 1998b; Merlini e Mack in questo volume.

² Vedere anche Gentile *et al.* 1996, pp. 17-18.

³ Per un'analisi del processo interpretativo vedere Collados Aís *et al.* 2001; Abril Martí e Collados Aís 2001 e Sandrelli 2001.

⁴ Per una definizione del concetto di "microlingua", vedi paragrafo 6.2.

⁵ Per un approfondimento sulle caratteristiche dell'interpretazione in tali ambiti si vedano, fra gli altri, Gentile *et al.* 1996; Mason 1999; Roberts 1997 e Wadensjö 1998a. Per la situazione spagnola in particolare vedere Martín 2000 e Valero Garcés 1998.

⁶ Vedi Ko (1997, p. 192) per alcuni esempi di situazioni riconducibili all'etichetta di *business interpreting*.

⁷ Vedere anche Ko 1996, p. 116.

⁸ "First the interpreter is seen as an intruder, both physically and psychologically [...]. Secondly the interpreter is seen as a non-specialist, a generalist, above all with little understanding of corporate culture" (Katan, in Kondo *et al.* 1997, p. 162). Sullo stesso punto vedi anche Del Rosso 1997, p. 242.

⁹ Esempio in questo senso è la raccomandazione di David James, esperto di trattative d'affari internazionali, sul suo sito Internet (vedi bibliografia): "The ideal is to have bilingual employees of your company as negotiating team interpreters. They will have full knowledge of your company's organization, products and objectives and will have an accurate command of relevant technical terms in both languages. More importantly, they can be privy to your negotiating strategy and help lead the discussions in the right direction".

¹⁰ Nell'interpretazione di trattativa in ambito legale-giudiziario ed in ambito medico solo uno dei due clienti fa uso della microlingua professionale (l'avvocato, il medico), mentre l'altro cliente ne è escluso (l'imputato, il paziente).

¹¹ Per l'impostazione didattica del corso spunti di grande utilità sono stati tratti da Collados Aís e Fernández Sánchez 2001 e Jiménez Ivars *et al.* 1999.

¹² Per una trattazione più esaustiva degli esercizi preparatori all'interpretazione di trattativa si rimanda ad Abril Martí e Collados Aís (2001, pp. 97-124) e Sandrelli (2001, pp. 175-184).

¹³ Per un approfondimento del ruolo della traduzione a vista nella didattica dell'interpretazione si vedano, fra gli altri, Abril Martí e Collados Aís 2001; Ballardini 1998; Jiménez Ivars 1998; Jiménez Ivars *et al.* 1999; Laplace 1999 e Snelling 1992.

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Turn Organization

Remember those times in conversation when you desperately needed to be the very next person to speak? And we have all noticed the frustration of the person who is not able to "get a word in edgewise." Up to this point, we have taken for granted the way conversational participants take turns exchanging talk. In Chapter 2, we just assumed that someone was the speaker and that he or she had one or more recipients for whom an utterance was designed. But in Chapter 3, things began to get complicated because we were considering sequences of conversational actions produced by *different* speakers. We postponed consideration of how various participants become speakers: how one "gets the floor" as speaker to produce the first pair part of an adjacency pair, or the required second part, or to make some other contribution. We have learned enough about the conduct of conversation at this point to figure out that some system for organizing utterances into

turns is of vital importance to its participants. The organization of social or communicative actions into pairs, or sequences, or whatever, depends on some way of changing or alternating speakers.

For example, the adjacency pair depends on two speakers coordinating the production of at least one utterance apiece.

Presequences and insertion sequences further extend the number of times participants must exchange talk. And remember that positioning an utterance adjacent to another just-completed one can be very important, since that new utterance is normally interpreted as responding to the adjacently prior one and serves to display its speaker's interpretation of that prior utterance. This means that getting a turn "right now"—when one needs it—can be a serious issue. In conversation, these matters are dealt with by organizing participants' utterances into sequential *turns*.

Everyday life is filled with mechanisms for organizing people's activities. This frequently involves sequential or alternating turns. Guitar students at a recital perform in a sequence determined ahead of time and often published in a program. Sports fans (or concert or theater devotees) purchase tickets in a sequence determined by the individual's position in line. This is more or less determined by order of arrival (as is the "take a number" system prevalent in crowded retail and service outlets). Getting one's turn can be so important that people sometimes arrive hours or even days ahead of time to ensure an early place in line. In some cases, the order of turns is determined by the status of the participants. People who are richer, more famous, or more powerful may be served first. Each of these situations involves a system that generates single turns (one person at a time at the ticket window, for example). Some turn-organizing systems, however, operate to allow (or require) all participants to take their turns at the same time, as happens when all guests at a dinner party begin to eat when the host

*Getting a turn
"right now" can
be a serious issue.*

does. Single sequential turns are important in conversation because human beings' capacity to monitor several different spoken messages at once is limited and because some messages are responses to others and must occur later. But the organization of turns in a conversation is not determined ahead of time, nor is it fundamentally determined by wealth or fame (although these factors may influence turn taking), nor is it determined by order of arrival, in the broad sense—we do not take numbers or stand in line to talk.

□ The Turn-Taking System

Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1978) have proposed a model of how conversational turn taking is organized that focuses on two questions: Out of what message units are turns constructed? By what practices (methods, techniques) are turns allocated to one participant or another? Let us now examine the details of turn taking in the conduct of conversation.

TURN CONSTRUCTION

Sacks et al. (1978) claim that turns are constructed out of any of four different-sized units of talk. Some turns are one word long, constructed with a single lexical item ("yes," "Mary," "twelve"). Other turns are constructed with a phrase: several words that do not constitute a sentence, that do not have both a subject and a predicate ("in the garage," "gone home," "the boss"). Others are constructed with a clause, which we might describe as a group of words that do have all the necessary components to be a sentence (both a subject and predicate), but do not constitute a stand-alone sentence because they are designed to be part of some other sentence ("the woman who gave today's lecture," "when we finish studying"). Still other turns are constructed with a full sentence ("We'll turn on the TV when we finish studying," "Kitty is going to Japan"). The important

thing about each of these turn construction units is that participants can *project* where they will end—and thus where a particular turn might possibly be complete. This spot that participants recognize as the potential end of a turn, this place where a transition from one speaker to another becomes relevant, is called a "transition relevance place" by Sacks et al. (1978).¹ We will refer to this throughout the book as a *TRP*. Thus a word being used as a complete turn will have TRP at its end. So will a phrase designed to be a complete turn, as will a clause and a sentence. In conversational turn taking, the various practices that participants use to change from one speaker to another (or to give another turn to the same speaker) operate at the TRP. This makes the TRP a very important concept in our understanding the conduct of conversation.

Data Segment 4.1 exhibits several different types of turn construction units.

(4.1) [Sacks et al., 1978, p. 51]

- 1 A: Was last night the first time you met Missiz Kelly?
- 2 (1.0)
- 3 B: Met whom?
- 4 A: Missiz Kelly.
- 5 B: Yes.

The first turn is constructed using a sentence (line 1), the next two using phrases (lines 3-4), and the last one using a single word (line 5). In addition, we can sense that participants would probably detect a TRP (the possible completion of the turn) at the end of lines 1, 3, 4, and 5. Note that although a TRP may involve a short silence, our transcript does not mark this silence unless it is longer than "a conversational beat," as in the one-second silence in line 2. But whatever the cues that participants use to detect a TRP, whether they include a change in the pitch or volume of the voice, the end of a syntactic unit of language, a momentary silence, or some sort of body motion, it is at the TRP that transition from one speaker to another normally occurs. We now turn our attention to the way that

speaking turns are *allocated* (given to, or claimed by, a conversational participant).

TURN ALLOCATION

Sacks et al. (1978) identify three techniques by which participants determine who gets the next turn, and they propose a set of rules fixing the rights and responsibilities of the participants. Remember that speaker change should occur at a TRP. One practice for allocating the next turn is that the current speaker can choose the next speaker. This is called *current speaker selects next* (Sacks et al., 1978, p. 13). Our discussion of action sequences in Chapter 3 suggests one of the primary ways in which this can be accomplished: The current speaker directs the first pair part of an adjacency pair to some other participant. The identity of this other person can be indicated by the current speaker in various ways, including using the person's name, making eye contact, and so forth. Notice that this must be done *during* the course of the current utterance. Then, at the first TRP, the person who has been selected has exclusive rights to the next turn and is actually obligated to take that turn. Assume, for purposes of illustration, that Data Segment 4.2 occurs in a conversation of several participants.

(4.2) [Sacks et al., 1978, p. 51, simplified]

- 1 A: Uh you been down here before. havenche.
- 2 B: [Yeh.

The current speaker, A, selects B as next speaker by directing a question to B (line 1). Note A's stress on "you," which we will assume may have been accompanied by other behaviors or context identifying B. The next turn is then taken by B (line 2), who produces an answer to the question. No other participant may take the turn following A—to do so would violate turn-taking etiquette for conversation. In effect, current speaker selects next has priority over the other methods of allocating the turn because it is employed before the TRP and because

once it has been used no other participant may be selected as next speaker. This is a powerful technique not only for determining the next speaker but for extending the conversation another turn.

Before discussing the other two techniques for turn allocation, we should clear up a feature of this last segment (4.2) that seems to contradict the statement that speaker change occurs at the end of a turn construction unit (that is, at the TRP). B's "Yeh" clearly overlaps A's "havenche." Why does B's turn begin before the end of A's turn? Remember that participants are able to project the end of a turn construction unit and thus the occurrence of a TRP. In this case, A produces a sentence that projects to completion just after the word "before." Producing a statement for another participant to confirm or deny is a routine conversational action, and "Uh you been down here before" can be seen as a complete turn construction unit. B may have projected a TRP at that point and gone ahead to take a normal turn. The overlap would then be caused by A adding the tag question "havenche" to the end of a turn that B is treating as already complete. The point to be learned from this example is that the smoothness and coordination we frequently find in conversation depends on the skill levels of the participants and on their ability to respond to unexpected events.

How is the next turn allocated if the current speaker does not select the next one? Not every utterance is part of an adjacency pair, and many utterances do not require a particular participant to respond. What happens, for example, after someone makes an offhand observation or comment, or after someone answers a prior question? Sacks et al. (1978) say that if current speaker does not select next, then at the TRP any listener may begin a turn; that is, he or she may *self-select* (p. 13). Furthermore, the first listener to do so then has exclusive rights to the turn and any others who have begun to speak should stop. This rule puts a premium on starting quickly, since several participants may self-select and failure to be first may mean either that one drops out or that one continues with the risk of being judged as "butting in" on someone else's turn. Tannen (1986)

suggests that serious miscoordination problems can arise when one participant is a quick self-starter and another is slower to begin a turn (perhaps because he or she needs a more clearly marked TRP). Not only do such people have difficulty conversing with one another, but they often attribute negative intentions or characteristics to each other (for example, he wants to hog the entire conversation; or, she won't talk, she must not be interested in me). Sacks et al. (1978) point out that the existence of the self-selection option means that if current speakers are to be assured of selecting the next speaker they must accomplish it before the TRP, since at the TRP any listener may get the next turn.

Data Segment 4.3 involves several instances of listeners self-selecting. Six people are having breakfast, five of them seated around a table; B and J have just talked about someone who went skiing with his dark glasses on under his (tinted) goggles. B has just self-selected and begins to talk about yesterday's skiing.

(4.3) [Cliff Story, simplified]

- 49 B: Just like I did yesterday
 50 I might as well have had my
 51 dark glasses on under my goggles.
 52 W: Yeh. ()
 53 B: I cou-
 54 I couldn't see anything.
 55 (2.6)
 56 J: Well it's amazing tha:tuh () I picked
 57 the right day to get sick on.

B's remark in lines 49-51 is not directed at anyone in particular, but is a statement to the entire group. Furthermore, it is not the first part of an adjacency pair (it does not require one of just a few specific second actions). So B has not used current speaker selects next. At the end of that turn, W self-selects with an acknowledgment of B's remark and a few additional words that are not clear on the tape (line 52). It does not seem

that W has used current speaker selects next, so B's next utterance (line 53) is probably another self-selection. Notice that either the listener misprojects a TRP after "Yeh," or the current speaker suddenly elects to continue just after the TRP (we will consider this method of allocating turns in a moment). The resulting overlap is similar to the one in the "havenche" segment (4.2). In any case, B breaks off his utterance and restarts it again in line 54 (another self-selection). Then, after a fairly lengthy silence, J self-selects (lines 56-57). In this segment, then, who gets to speak is determined by who self-selects, when and how quickly they do it, and by the fact that no current speaker selects the next one. Let us now consider a third practice by which participants allocate the next turn.

What happens when neither of the two methods we have discussed is used to determine the next speaker? Sacks et al. (1978) say that if current speaker does not select the next one, and if no listener self-selects as next speaker, then (at the TRP) the current speaker may continue (p. 13). *Speaker continuation* is the technique by which a single participant may take an extended turn, but its use depends on the other two options not being used. Timing, as we said before, is critical if things are to go smoothly during turn allocation. In the two segments just above, we have seen instances of the current speaker electing to continue, where the current speaker's continuation was overlapped by a listener self-selecting (Segment 4.2, lines 1-2; Segment 4.3, lines 52-53). And the existence of the speaker-continues option is another reason for listeners to self-select quickly, for any delay may result in the current speaker resuming his or her turn.

Two other places in the "dark glasses" segment (4.3) are worth closer examination. It might seem from the written transcript that a TRP occurs at the end of line 49 (which would make lines 50-51 an instance of current speaker continues). On the tape recording, however, one can hear that B rushes on through "yesterday" and into "I might as well"; participants would most likely not project a TRP at the end of line 49. Lines 49-51

contain but a single turn construction unit. The other place is the short, untimed pause in line 56. This is not a TRP because "tha:t uh" indicates that J is not at the end of a turn construction unit and is not finished with his turn. So this, too, is not a case of current speaker continues, but is rather a case of a single turn construction unit. Finally, note that each of the three turn-allocation options applies again at the next TRP, and at the next, and so on.

The Sacks et al. (1978) model portrays conversational turn taking as *locally managed* and also *interactionally managed* by the participants (pp. 40-43). That is, it is the participants themselves, through the various practices they employ, who determine who shall speak next (and other important characteristics of turns, as we shall see). This management is local in the sense that it deals with the current turn and the impending next turn right at the point where speaker transition is relevant—the TRP. Turn allocation is not determined before participants begin (as in the case of the guitar recital), nor is it determined several turns ahead of time (as in standing in line at the ticket window). Conversational turn taking is interactionally managed in the sense that what one participant does affects what the others may acceptably do (for example, the use of current speaker selects next rules out other listeners self-selecting). Turn management is also interactional in the sense that the *possibility* that participants *can* do something affects how a participant may behave at the moment (for example, the possibility of the current speaker continuing affects how listeners use self-selection).

This locally, interactionally, participant-managed turn system—with its three turn-allocation practices operating at the TRP—is one of the defining characteristics of conversation. Other types of communication, other systems for exchanging talk, usually have their turn taking organized in ways different from that found in conversation. And the conversational system of turn taking has important consequences for how conversation unfolds, for how it is shaped and organized, and for how mistakes and other problems are dealt with.

Consequences of the Turn System

The system of turn taking discussed above is closely connected to the organization or structure that unfolds as conversation progresses. In fact, the turn system is largely responsible for several obvious structural characteristics of everyday conversation. It also provides students of conversation with an analytical framework with which to examine these and other characteristics of conversation. We begin with a consideration of a few of the most obvious and observable facts.

GROSSLY APPARENT FACTS

Sacks et al. (1978) relate their turn-taking model to a list of "grossly apparent facts" of conversation (pp. 10-11, 14-40). In each case, they describe how the fact is a result of, or at least compatible with, some feature(s) of the model. We shall review five selected facts.

First, only one participant usually speaks at a time, and overlap, when it occurs, is brief. As we have seen, the turn system localizes speaker change at the TRP. This means that instances of coordination problems will generally cluster around specific points in the flow of talk, points at which speakers will have reached a possible completion. In addition, whichever participant is properly selected as next speaker is given exclusive rights to the turn. That is, participants orient to resolving overlapping talk, usually by one person dropping out. On the other hand, the encouragement given by the turn system for listeners to self-select as early as possible results in instances of this brief overlap being fairly common. By way of contrast, certain audience response modes (responsive reading, for example) in religious services or political meetings are organized so that a single participant (the "leader") takes one turn, but the entire audience responds together in the next turn.²

Second, the order and distribution of speaker turns is not fixed or determined in advance, but varies within and between conversations. The turn system allows this variation in who

speaks next, who speaks after that, who gets more turns, and who gets fewer by providing three options for how the next turn is allocated. Each of these options leads (potentially) to a different next speaker. For example, current speaker selects next leads to the current speaker's choice of the moment, while listener self-selection leads to whoever starts first at the TRP. This is a good example of a fact of conversation that results directly from the local management of turns. A nonconversational contrast to this is formal debate, in which the order of speakers is determined ahead of time, usually by the style of debate being performed. Even the number of times each participant speaks may be fixed in advance.

Third, the size or length of turns varies from one turn to the next. Two different aspects of the turn system contribute to this characteristic of conversation. Turns are constructed out of various size units in the first place. Words, phrases, clauses, and sentences are generally of different sizes, and each type of unit can vary in length as well (sentences can be long or short, for example). In addition, the option that current speaker can continue (if neither of the other options has been exercised) allows a speaker to lengthen his or her turn after the first turn construction unit. Again, this is a clear example of the effect of local management of turns. Debate again provides a good contrast, because the speeches of participants have a fixed maximum length (measured, say, in minutes and seconds).

Fourth, what participants say in their turns, or what actions they do with their turns, is not restricted or specified in advance. Of course, what participants may acceptably do in any particular turn is restricted by what happened in prior turns and by general social norms, but the turn system itself does not require that conversational turns be used only for certain types of actions or contain only certain types of information. Along with the local management of turns, this also is a defining characteristic of conversation. The turn systems of broadcast news interviews and courtroom direct and cross-examination of witnesses, in contrast, both operate under the restriction that one participant will use turns primarily to ask questions

and other participants will primarily answer them. And in many ceremonies, the actual words participants must speak are scripted ahead of time. Note also that in some transcontinental telephone calls, participants routinely end their turns by saying some transition word, such as "over." This is a way of coping with the long time lag between the ending of one's turn and the first sound of the other's turn. Conversational turn taking does not depend on participants' saying anything special.

Finally, perhaps the most obvious fact about conversation (and again, a defining characteristic of it) is that speaker change occurs. The turn system provides for this through its two options for transferring to another speaker: current speaker selects next and listener self-selection. In addition, the turn system supplies periodic places at which speaker change can conveniently occur: the TRP at the end of each turn construction unit. Contrast this with both classroom lecturing and public speaking, in which speaker change may not occur, or may be restricted to a few places controlled by the lecturer ("Are there any questions?").

Thus the very nature of everyday conversation derives, in large part, from its turn-taking system. Its most noticeable characteristics are closely linked both to the ways in which turns are *constructed* (using words, phrases, clauses, sentences, and TRPs) and to the ways they are *allocated* (using the practices of current speaker selects next, listener self-selects, and current speaker continues). Even more important to the study of interpersonal communication, however, is the fact that many of the conversational tendencies and orientations that we commonly attribute to participants' personalities or interpersonal relationships derive (at least in part) from the turn system. For example, other participants may listen to us not because they are interested or because we are fascinating, but because they have to. We now examine several of these far-reaching consequences of turn organization in conversation.

*The very nature
of everyday conver-
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system.*

MOTIVATION FOR LISTENING

Why do people listen to each other during ordinary conversation? Although it occasionally happens that someone is discovered not to have been listening, for the most part we listen to each other's everyday talk. One answer to the question might be that people are interested in what other participants have to say. While this may be true, it does not adequately account for why we listen, because we all listen to talk that we are not interested in. Another answer might be that we listen to maintain the interpersonal relationships we have with other participants (for example, we want to be polite). This answer is closer to the point, but fails to address the connection between our interpersonal relationships and how conversation is conducted. One connection lies in the turn system.

The organization of conversational turn taking provides "an intrinsic motivation for listening" (Sacks et al., 1978, pp. 43-44). During the current turn anyone can be selected by the speaker to be next. Participants who are willing to speak if selected—that is, who are not willing to be "caught napping" or to be found rude—must monitor the course of the current turn to discover whether they have been selected. Furthermore, participants who may want to self-select at the upcoming TRP—regardless of whether they intend to continue the ongoing discussion or change it radically—must monitor the current speaker's talk to determine whether anyone has been selected as next speaker. If a given listener has been selected to speak next, he or she must cope with responding to the current utterance; if a given listener has not been selected, he or she must still determine whether anyone else has been selected as next speaker, because, if so, self-selection is ruled out. So things that happen in the current turn are potentially vital to how we should conduct ourselves in the next turn, whether we should speak (and, if so, what we may appropriately say) or whether we should remain silent. Participants who do not wish to be called to account for violations of conversational norms have a reason for listening that stems from the turn system, independently of whether the speaker's talk is interesting in the broader sense.

COMPETITION FOR TURNS

Conversational turns are valued, sought after (and sometimes avoided, negatively valued). When the current speaker has not selected next, there is frequently competition for the next turn. We have seen that the rule giving exclusive rights to the earliest self-selecting listener contributes to this, but there is more involved. Why should a listener (who wants to talk) compete for the very next turn? That is, why not wait until other participants have had their say and then self-select when there is no competition for the turn? We occasionally do this, of course, but it is usually when what we have to say can be said anytime during the conversation. When participants wish to respond to, comment about, or elaborate on what the current speaker is saying, they strive to obtain the very next turn. Why should this be so? For one thing, participants interpret an utterance done in the very next turn as being relevant to the adjacently prior one, as we saw in Chapter 3. It is easier to show the relationship of one's talk to what the current speaker is saying if one can get the very next turn. But the constraint imposed by the turn system is also a major influence on turn competition. If a participant does not successfully self-select for the next turn, then whoever does become next speaker may select someone else as the following speaker; that person may select still another participant, and so on. The availability of the current speaker selects next technique means that a participant can count on his or her impending utterance being relevant to the ongoing talk *only* if it is done in the very next turn. After that, the conversation may take other directions not related to what he or she was going to say. This can be a major contributor to competition for turns.

TURN RESERVATION

A potential problem faced by conversational participants is that on occasion they may wish to take an extended turn (to tell a story, for example). The reason this could be a problem lies in a particular feature of the turn system. We have examined how

a speaker has rights to the current turn up to the first TRP. That is, turns are allocated one turn construction unit at a time. A participant who wishes to produce an utterance several units long is subject to losing the turn at each TRP, where any listener may self-select. This leads to the common practice of using a turn to secure participants' agreement to allow the speaker to take an extended turn (or possibly an extended series of turns). Reserving the turn is a major function of the presequence (or at least the pre), which we looked at in Chapter 3.

Just as an adjacency pair sequence is often projected by an earlier sequence (the presequence), so larger structures of talk such as jokes, stories, and actions accompanied by background or other preparation are projected or announced in various prefaces or presequences. Stories and jokes, for example, are often announced, as in Data Segment 4.4.

(4.4) [Levinson, 1983, p. 323 (from Sacks)]

- 1 K: You wanna hear muh-eh my
- 2 sister told me a story last night.
- 3 R: I don't wanna hear it. But if you must.

K produces a story announcement and gets the go-ahead from R, although a somewhat reluctant one. After some banter among the participants, K then tells a fairly lengthy dirty joke. This use of the presequence serves other functions as well, such as ensuring that the speaker does not tell a joke or story that others have already heard. But a major function is temporarily to suspend competitive self-selection at TRPs and allow a speaker to work through an extended turn. In other cases, the speaker gets a series of turns, with some other participant briefly acknowledging each one. In his study of action projections, Schegloff (1980) notes that when people say something like "Can I ask you a question?" the next thing they typically produce is not the question, but some preliminary talk leading up to it. Data Segment 4.5 begins with B projecting that a question will be forthcoming (lines 1-2).



(4.5) [Schegloff, 1980, pp. 108-109, abbreviated]

- 1 B: Now listen, Mister Crandall, let
- 2 me ask you this. A cab. You're
- 3 standing onna corner. I heardjuh
- 4 talking to a cab driver.
- 5 A: Uh:uh
- 6 B: Uh was it-uh was a cab driver,
- 7 wasn't it?
- 8 A: Yup,
- 9 B: Now, yer standing onna corner,
- 10 A: Mm hm,
- 11 B: I live up here in Queens.
- 12 A: Mm hm,
- ((18 speaker turns omitted))
- 46 B: Now is he not suppose' tuh stop fuh me?

In this case, B's action projection ("let me ask you this") is a pre that helps to secure a long series of turns leading up to the intended action (a question about when a cab is supposed to stop to pick up a customer). Throughout this series of turns, A produces continuers (such as "Mm hm") that occupy a turn in only a token way and return speakership to B (see Schegloff, 1982). B is thus able to lead up to and eventually produce the projected question without having to compete for the turn at each TRP. Notice that stories and other extended-turn structures in conversation are not simply produced by a single speaker, but are jointly or interactively produced by a primary speaker together with other cooperating participants (see, for example, Mandelbaum, 1987).

The place where a silence occurs is an important factor in how it gets treated.

TREATMENT OF SILENCES

As students of conversation, we should not treat all conversational silences in the same way, in large part because participants do not either. The place where a silence occurs in the turn construction and allocation process is an important determining factor in how it gets treated. Sacks et al. (1978) distinguish among three different types of silence. One is the *lapse*, which occurs during and after a TRP, when the current speaker has not selected a next speaker, no listener has self-selected, and current speaker elects not to continue. That is, at the end of a turn, when no next speaker is selected through any of the three turn-allocation options, the conversation comes to an end—lapses—at least for the moment.

A second type of silence is the *gap*. This is a silence at the TRP (usually brief, often about one second or less) when the current speaker has not selected a next speaker and a self-selecting listener has not yet started. In other words, a gap is the silence between the end of one turn and some listener self-selecting for

the next turn. In the "dark glasses" segment (4.3), the silence in line 55 is an example of this (despite its 2.6-second duration). We might think of this as a sort of reaction time, the time it takes a listener to "read" the TRP, generate something relevant to say, and begin talking. An important characteristic of the gap, however, is that it is not attributed to any specific participant (it does not "belong" to anyone). It is just the silence—the gap—between speakers.

The third type of silence is the *pause*. This is a silence within a participant's turn, a silence that is attributable to that person. Pauses arise in three primary ways. First, a speaker can produce a silence during the course of his or her turn. This version of the pause does not occur at a TRP and can be related to a variety of factors, from being momentarily distracted to searching for the right word. The short, untimed silence in line 56 of the "dark glasses" segment (4.3) is this sort of pause. Note that J's pause is short in part because he uses "uh" to fill some of the space between "that" and "I." Second, a pause arises when, after a silence at the TRP, no listener self-selects and the current speaker elects to continue. The silence at the TRP then retrospectively becomes a silence *within* that speaker's turn—a pause. Third, a pause can occur when the current speaker selects a next speaker and, at the TRP, that person delays in responding. Line 2 in the "met Missiz Kelly" segment (4.1) is a case in point. After A selects B by asking a question (line 1), B delays a full second before speaking. Why is this type of silence a pause rather than a gap? Because it is attributable to the person selected as next speaker. In this example, B has rights and obligations to the turn effective immediately after A's turn ends (that is, at the TRP). Thus the silence in line 2 is considered B's silence—B's pause before speaking. As participants, we often treat pauses differently from gaps. We may attribute uncertainty or impending disagreement (as discussed in Chapter 5) to a selected next speaker's pause, for example, when we would not make such attributions to a speaker self-selecting after a gap.

Silence is an important component of everyday conversation. The interpretation that participants give to conversational silence, as reflected in their subsequent utterances (or lack of such utterances), depends on the location of the silence in the turn-taking sequence. This is our justification for using three different terms to name silences. The most critical distinction is probably that between silences before a self-selecting listener starts to speak and silences within an already selected speaker's turn. Unfortunately, while this usage is standard among conversation analysts, it is not standard among many communication and other scholars who study interpersonal processes.³ Despite some problems in terminology, however, research has rather consistently shown that perceptions of participants' communicative competence and even the viability of their conversation is related to the way they manage conversational silence (see, e.g., Cappella & Planalp, 1981; Wiemann, 1977).

BIAS IN TURN ALLOCATION

The turn system allows participants to allocate speaking turns in very unequal or biased patterns. The newcomer to the group, for example, may be favored with frequent selection as next speaker by various current speakers. Someone in disfavor may not be selected at all and may be able to speak only through self-selection in competition with everyone else. Listeners may choose not to self-select after the turns of a particularly powerful, esteemed, or interesting participant, thus allowing him or her the option to continue. One of the most common patterns (as noted by Sacks et al., 1978) is for the current speaker to select the previous speaker to talk again. This pattern allows the development of more extended dyadic structures of conversation, such as elaborated arguments, dialogues, or colloquies.

This possibility for bias in turn-taking patterns is a good illustration of an important characteristic of Sacks et al.'s (1978) model. The turn system is *context free*, yet it can be *context sensitive* to a variety of particular conversational happenings (p. 10). What this means is that the organization of turn taking

and the practices used to accomplish it do not depend on any particular types of participants, social situations, physical settings, and so on. None of the participants has to be (or is prohibited from being) a student, the mayor, or a staff member of the local telephone crisis line, for example. And the conversation does not have to occur (nor is it prohibited from occurring) just after class has ended, at city hall, or over the telephone. Conversation operates across a very broad spectrum of different types of people, purposes, locations, group sizes, and interpersonal relationships. In order to do this, its basic mechanisms must be context free in the sense just described. At the same time, however, participants can design their talk and allocation of turns for the people who are actually present (and how many), for why they are having the particular conversation, for what their interpersonal relationships are, and so forth. In this sense, the turn system is context sensitive.

These consequences of the turn system for conversation (and others we have not examined here) derive from the system's orderliness and the way it organizes turns at talk. Who gets more turns (and who gets fewer), who gets longer turns (and who gets shorter ones), why there is often competition for turns, why people often listen to conversation even when they are not really interested in what is being said, and why silences are meaningful to us in different ways are all related to the practices we use for constructing and allocating turns. But what makes the system orderly and what happens when its orderliness breaks down? We now turn to a consideration of these questions.

□ Turn Taking as a Normative System

We have all experienced conversations during which some sort of turn-taking trouble occurred. When two listeners begin talking at the same time, one usually drops out. A participant who misreads a TRP and starts talking before the current

speaker has finished may apologize for the "interruption." Such instances show us that participants attempt to follow some set of rules or norms in their turn taking and to let others know what they are doing. In general, conversation is orderly because the participants work to make it so. That is, participants routinely take steps to display to each other that their talk is orderly and that the conversation as a whole has been orderly. When this is called into question, participants take steps to restore orderliness. This is as true of turn taking as it is of other aspects of conversation. In fact, it is because participants make their turn taking orderly *for each other* that it can be seen as orderly by analysts and other observers. One of the ways in which this orderliness is displayed is through participants' attention to the rules of conversational turn taking.

ORIENTATION TO RULES

The turn system is a normative system. That means that participants orient to the observance of certain communication rules (see Shimanoff, 1980). In most cases, participants design their talk so that it can be seen to be in conformity to one or more norms of turn taking. For example, listeners not selected as next speaker (by the current one) normally remain silent at the TRP so that the person selected can exercise his or her rights to the turn. In some cases, when a participant's talk can be seen as violating a norm, the person will take steps to bring his or her behavior into observable conformity with the rules. This occurs, for example, when a current speaker, in electing to continue, overlaps with a self-selecting listener and immediately drops out, thus orienting to the self-selecting listener's rights to the turn. In other cases, participants may bring sanctions to bear on someone whose behavior they see as violative. For example, they may mention the rule, or request that the person's behavior change in certain ways. Of course, participants sometimes ignore apparent violations of turn-taking norms and the talk proceeds without further incident.

Data Segment 4.6 presents an example of one participant reacting to the observable norm violation of another. The participants are playing the game of Scruples, in which the person whose official Scruples turn it is presents some selected other player with an ethical dilemma to respond to. In this case, the question is: Would you tell the hostess of a dinner party that a corpulent guest sat in her antique chair and cracked it?

(4.6) [Aakhus, 1988, p. 42, modified]

- 1 T: Okay: Jim
 2 J: (1.3) hm:
 3 T: You are at a dinner party. (.)
 4 And hear a distinct crack (0.8) as a corpulent-
 5 M: Jim at a dinner party (.) nchhh
 6 (1.0)
 7 T: Can you shut up.
 8 J: a distinct (1.0) a distinct what?
 9 T: a dis- a distinct crack

T's summons (in line 1) and J's answer (in line 2) establish that T will be asking J a Scruples question (and taking an extended turn to do it). Other participants do not self-select during J's 1.3 second pause, thus orienting to the rule that only J has rights to that turn (after current speaker has selected next). J then begins her next turn by again selecting J as next speaker (with "you"), relying partly on having named him in the earlier summons. In the context of reading a multipart Scruples question from a card, and having identified J as the intended recipient, T's TRP at the end of line 3 is allowed to pass by all participants. This shows their orientation to her rights to finish the Scruples question. She continues on with the next part of the question (in line 4) and is overlapped by M, who jokes about Jim being invited to a dinner party. Note that the overlap (marked by the brackets between the lines) clearly begins before T's pause, so even if we judge the silence to occur at a TRP, M's utterance begins *during* T's turn and can be seen as a violation of turn-taking norms. A more accurate interpretation might be that T has reserved (and been granted) an extended turn

through the combination of the Scruples game context and the summons-answer sequence. T breaks off her utterance (in line 4), which shows an orientation to the norm that only one person should speak at a time in conversation. M and T finish at about the same time and a one-second silence follows. One way of interpreting this is that other participants are treating the turn as still T's turn and are withholding their talk, thus orienting to her rights to continue speaking. She does (in line 7), and produces a complaint against M. This displays her orientation to turn-taking norms and to M's line 5 as a violation. Notice the emphasis on "shut. up." Finally, J's question in line 8 seeks clarification of just that part of the Scruples question that was overlapped. It shows J's orientation to his selection as next speaker, along with his obligation to attempt an answer. J is requesting a repeat of that part of the question he apparently did not hear but is still responsible for answering.

Displays of orientation to the rules may be produced as much for observers or overhearers as for the participants themselves. In Data Segment 4.7, CBS *Evening News* anchor Dan Rather and (then) Vice President George Bush are engaged in a combative "news interview." There have been many instances of overlapping talk prior to this point, but on this occasion Rather produces an account for the overlap, thus displaying to the television audience (and to Bush) his orientation to turn-taking norms.

(4.7) ["Rather/Bush 'Interview,' " 1988-1989, p. 321, modified]

126 R: Mis ter Vice President, you set thee;

127 B: [an' the whole story has been =

128 = told to the congress.

129 R: [you set the rules fer this' :: this talk here.=

130 =I didn't mean to step on your line there, .hhh

131 but you insisted that this be li::ve,

The overlap in lines 126-127 and 128-129 is accounted for as having been inadvertent ("I didn't mean to"), despite the fact that such overlaps have been and continue to be frequent throughout the entire episode.

Note our continuing use of the term *overlap* rather than *interruption*. This is related to a potential problem in the way that both participants and researchers describe such incidents in conversation, a problem we now address.

OVERLAPS AND INTERRUPTIONS

Participants in everyday conversation apparently use the term *interruption* in a variety of ways. For example, a current speaker might regard a listener's slightly premature self-selection (just prior to a TRP) as an interruption if it is critical or otherwise unsupportive of the speaker, but not an interruption if it is supportive. Or, if current speaker selects a next speaker who pauses before starting, participants might regard a third party's self-selection during that pause as an interruption even if no actual overlapping talk resulted. If participants in a discussion regard themselves as being on opposite sides of the issue, they may feel interrupted by overlapping talk. But if the conversation is a generally cooperative one among friends, they may not feel that overlapping talk is a violation of their turn-taking rights. The point is that *interruption*, used as a folk (or vernacular) term by ordinary members of society, seems related not only to conversational structure, but to such factors as whether the participants like or agree with each other. Some overlaps (and even some nonoverlaps) may be regarded as interruptions—violations of turn-taking norms and social etiquette—while other overlaps may not. Bennett (1981) discusses the notion of interruption: It is "an interpretive category which participants can make use of to deal with currently prevailing rights and obligations in actual situations" (p. 176). This variability in the use of the term can be a source of confusion in studies of conversation when researchers use *interruption* in the vernacular.⁴ Drummond (1989) contends that the premature

labeling of overlap as *interruption* serves to obscure what is actually going on for the participants, such as one person dominating another, or one trying to help another (pp. 163-164).

Used in one way, *overlap* refers to simultaneous talk that arises from the normal operation of the conversational turn system (where two or more participants in a single conversation end up talking at the same time). As the turn system makes clear, this can arise in several different ways. First, a listener can self-select prematurely (under the pressure of trying to be first, or by misreading the extent of the current turn, for example). This would normally occur within a syllable or two of the TRP.⁵ Second, more than one listener could self-select at the same moment. This would also occur at the TRP. Third, a listener could self-select at the same moment that the current speaker elects to continue. Again, this type of simultaneous talk would cluster at the TRP. In each of these categories, overlap occurs (due to slight miscoordination and the like), even though all participants are orienting toward compliance with turn-taking norms. We will also use the term *overlap* more broadly to refer to simultaneous talk in general, including what others would call interruption. Used in this way, it is the generic term for simultaneous talk. None of the cases just described, however, would be interruption in the technical sense.

Interruption is used here to refer to simultaneous talk that does not occur at or near a TRP (Schegloff, 1987b, p. 85, n. 5; 1988-1989, p. 239, n. 10). It involves the apparent violation of turn-taking norms, in contrast to simultaneous talk that results from participants' orientation to those norms (overlap). When one participant begins to talk at a point where another (the current speaker) is taking a turn but not yet approaching a TRP, we shall (in most cases) term the resulting simultaneous talk an interruption.

Data Segment 4.8, taken from the same CBS *News* interview as Data Segment 4.7, contains two instances of simultaneous talk.

Turn Organization

(4.8) [Nofsinger, 1988-1989, p. 284]

11 R: let's talk about the record.

12 You say that we've misrepresented your record,

13 B: [Let's talk about the full record]

14 R: Let's talk about the record if [we've misrepresented]

15 B: [Yeh]

16 R: your record in any way (0.4) . . .

Just prior to this segment, Bush had complained that CBS *News* was not conducting the interview properly. Rather, in line 11, he proposes his version of how their talk should proceed and immediately continues by noting Bush's earlier charge that CBS was misrepresenting his record on Iran/Contra. After Rather's second sentence is well started ("You say that we-") and well before the next possible TRP (which would be at the end of line 12), Bush interrupts with a correction to the way Rather had formulated what the focus of their talk should be (Nofsinger, 1988-1989; on correction, see Jefferson, 1987; Schegloff, Jefferson, & Sacks, 1977). Bush proposes that the interview should be about the *full* record. This instance of simultaneous talk does not result from Bush orienting to the rules of the turn system: His utterance begins too late to count as occurring in conjunction with the prior TRP (at the end of line 11) and too early to be a "premature" self-selection related to the upcoming TRP. Also, note that Rather's utterance seems to have been broken off (we expect him to continue on with a question for Bush) and that he then repeats all of the overlapped portion (lines 14 and 16). The observation that Rather stopped and then produced his utterance again is an additional reason for categorizing this instance as an interruption. Compare this to the next instance of simultaneous talk (in lines 14-15). Here, it is possible that Bush projects a TRP after the word "record"; such an utterance would be similar to Rather's line 11. Bush self-selects with "Yeh," but Rather continues right on. Bush has (perhaps) misread the design of Rather's utterance and projected a TRP where Rather did not place one. This miscoordination while

orienting to the rules of the turn system results in an overlap that is not an interruption. It is unclear whether Bush was merely acknowledging Rather's utterance at this point (producing a one-word turn) or whether "Yeh" was to be the first word of a larger turn construction unit. If it is the latter case, by not continuing his utterance, Bush does show an orientation to the norm that only one participant should speak at a time.

Distinguishing among various types of overlap (including interruptions) is important because participants make strategic and normative decisions on the basis of how overlap occurs and their interpretation of it. Overlap can be a tactic for dominating a conversation, but it can just as well be a tactic for showing vigorous support of a speaker. Participants with different conversational styles may have trouble coordinating their turn taking and may attribute sinister motives to each other when overlap occurs (Tannen, 1984). Continuing research is needed to sort out the various functions of overlap and the meanings that participants attribute to it.

A temporary solution to the problem of how to use the terms *overlap* and *interruption*, then, is to confine the latter to a narrow technical use. But there are still other unresolved problems of a similar nature, such as the question of what to call instances in which a pause in the current speaker's turn is occupied by a listener self-selecting, or where a listener completes a current speaker's turn, with no resulting simultaneous talk. *Interruption* is not nearly as useful a term for the analyst as it is for participants.

So the turn system in conversation is a normative system in the sense that participants orient to its rules—by designing their behavior so that it conforms, by sanctioning or demanding an account of behavior that seems not to conform, or by providing accounts for or initiating repairs of such behavior. We will examine the details of various types of conversational repair in Chapter 5.

└ A Different Turn-Taking System

Throughout this book, we have occasionally used data segments involving talk that did not occur in ordinary, everyday conversation. For example, the "Bush/Rather" segments (4.7 and 4.8) are excerpts from what began as a broadcast news interview, and other data segments have been from courtroom testimony. This raises the question of how turn taking is managed in these nonconversational yet thoroughly interactional episodes. It turns out, at least for communication episodes that are not predominantly scripted in advance (such as formal ceremonies), that their turn systems are modifications of the one for conversation. Another way of putting this is that the turn system we have just examined provides a useful point of departure for analyzing the turn organization in courtroom testimony, public news conferences, business meetings, and the like. We shall now briefly examine the turn system of broadcast news interviews (relying primarily on Greatbatch, 1988) as a way of advancing our understanding of conversational turn taking.

One major difference between ordinary conversation and broadcast news interviews is that, in the latter, participants generally limit themselves to producing one of only two types of communicative actions: questions and answers. In ordinary conversation, participants' turns may generally be used for the production of virtually any type of communicative action or action sequence. The turn system places no restriction on what a turn may consist of or be used for (although, as we have seen, some constraints do arise as a result of participants' designing their utterances to "fit" with prior ones). So, for example, while the recipient of an invitation may be expected to orient toward producing an acceptance, rejection, or clarifying insertion, there is no general requirement in conversation that "first" turns be used for invitations (or any other action), or that "second" turns be used for acceptances (or any other

action). In broadcast news interviews, however, interviewers are generally constrained to use their turns for the production of utterances that are (at least minimally) recognizable as questions, and interviewees systematically orient to using their turns for producing answers. This constraint on what type of action participants are expected to produce in their respective turns is called *turn-type preallocation* (Greatbatch, 1988). Questioning turns are preallocated to interviewers and answering turns to interviewees. While this may seem to be an obvious (one might even say "grossly apparent") characteristic of this kind of interview, it is accomplished through the use of several coordinating practices that are not so obvious. Interviewers, for example, routinely produce statements during their turns, but they design them so as to support and provide for an impending question. That question is normally designed to make use of the preceding statements as preliminary material (Greatbatch, 1988, pp. 407-409). So the part of an interviewer's talk that is not actually a question is produced as leading up to, or as being in the service of, the next question. Furthermore, as prospective recipients of impending questions, interviewees routinely withhold comment on these preliminary statements and begin their turns upon completion of a recognizable question (Greatbatch, 1988, pp. 409-413). Interviewees thus treat interviewers' statements as preliminary to questions. Participants also have ways of orienting to the utterances of interviewees as being answers. For example, when interviewees produce talk that is not responsive to a prior question, they often attach it to a recognizable answer in the same turn (Greatbatch, 1986). As a result of participants' orientation to this preallocation of turn types, both interviewers and interviewees tend to get more extended turns than in everyday conversation. There are other systematic differences between conversational and broadcast news interview turn taking, as well.

The same sort of analysis could be conducted on the turn systems of courtroom testimony (see Atkinson & Drew, 1979), small group meetings, presidential (White House) news conferences, and other interactive communication episodes. In

each case, participants employ modifications of conversational turn-taking practices. This makes a great deal of sense if we remember that children learn initially to converse and to use the everyday system of turn taking. Only later do people begin to attend business meetings and listen to news conferences or news interviews. And even though they may never solicit, give, or hear testimony in court, they would likely be competent participants in such activities, due to their conversational competence. As mentioned in Chapter 1, this is one of the things that makes the study of conversation so fundamental to understanding other forms of talk.

Summary

The conversational turn-taking system is a major source of orderliness in everyday talk. From the perspective of the Sacks et al. (1978) model, turns are constructed using any of several different size units: words, phrases, clauses, and sentences. The possible completion point of a turn, the TRP (transition relevance place), can be projected by participants, who then employ three basic practices for allocating the next turn to someone. These practices are current speaker selects next, any listener self-selects, and current speaker continues. The transfer of speakership occurs at the TRP. The turn system operates the way it does because participants treat it as normative; that is, they orient to certain rules and treat certain behaviors as departures from (violations of) those rules. When such departures occur, participants work toward restoring orderliness. The operation of this turn system generates several patterns or tendencies in turn-taking behavior. Since failing to get the next turn when one wants it could result in not being able to produce one's utterance when it is most relevant, some competition for turns arises at TRPs. Certain types of overlaps and silences cluster around the TRP as well, although other types occur (with less frequency) away from the TRP. These patterns, and

certain kinds of bias as to which participants get to speak more often and more extendedly, are closely related to the details of the turn system. Before we decide that "hogging the conversation," "not getting a word in edgewise," "being interrupted," "missing your turn," "finishing what someone was going to say before he or she said it," "getting your point across," "being a courteous conversationalist," and "having an interested conversational partner" are due to the personalities of the participants or the relationships among them, we need to examine closely how turn taking is being managed and what implications that has for the conduct of that particular conversation. Sacks et al. (1978) provide a practical model with which to work, although other models of conversational turn taking are available (see Wilson, Wiemann, & Zimmerman, 1984).

The picture that emerges from our study of turn organization in conversation is that of moment-by-moment coordination practices through which the participants themselves locally determine who shall speak next (and a variety of other characteristics of conversation). An episode of talk turns out to be a conversation (or a classroom discussion, or a news interview) partly because participants orient to the turn-taking rules of that particular form of talk. Note that we are not saying that certain rules or norms are somehow activated and then somehow "cause" participants to produce a conversation. On the contrary, it is the repeated demonstration by participants that they are orienting to a particular set of norms (out of a sense that others expect them to, or for whatever reason) that makes an episode recognizable to us as a conversation. Indeed, one of the interesting things about the Rather/Bush episode (from which Data Segments 4.7 and 4.8 are taken) is that it begins as a news interview and gradually becomes something like a conversational argument (see Clayman & Whalen, 1988-1989; Schegloff, 1988-1989). The set of practices through which turn coordination is achieved, however, is not the only respect in which participants display to each other what they are doing and what they mean. Conversations are cooperatively brought

to a close, mistakes are repaired, and understandings are checked. Although these and similar processes are often treated separately in the conversation-analytic literature, we will group them together under the general term *alignment*. This is the topic of Chapter 5.

Notes

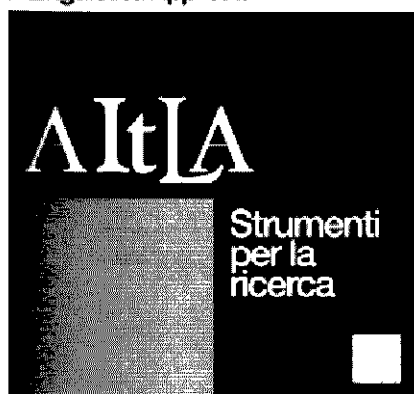
1. Sacks et al. (1978) do not describe the mechanisms by which participants recognize these possible turn completion places (TRPs). Cues that function as turn yielding, and other turn-related signals, have been discovered by Duncan and his colleagues. Many of these are nonverbal, such as changes in voice pitch and termination of gestures. See Duncan (1972, 1973), McLaughlin (1984, pp. 99-103), and Wiemann (1985).
2. Note that even this sort of turn organization does not seem like such a great departure from that of ordinary conversation if we think of turns being taken not by an individual person, but by a *party* to the communication episode. In the case of mass audience participation, one party is the leader and the other party is the entire audience. In fact, Sacks et al. (1978) do not generally speak of people or participants, but rather say that the turn system allocates turns to parties.
3. The term *hesitation pause* is sometimes used for silences within one speaker's turn (whether at a TRP or not) and *switching pause* for silences between different speakers. McLaughlin (1984, pp. 111-122) provides a good discussion of these usages. *Switching pause* often equates to one of the three terms discussed above, but it may also involve elements of several different types of silences (including gaps and pauses). *Lapse* is sometimes used to mean a relatively long gap at the TRP, regardless of whether the talk that follows indicates that the conversation (or at least the topic) actually ended. McLaughlin and Cody (1982), for example, use a three-second minimum in defining *lapse* for their study. And since they wanted to examine the relationship between these long silences and the talk that follows, they avoided defining the lapse in terms of the following sequence. But from the perspective of the Sacks et al. (1978) model of conversational turn taking, the failure of anyone to self-select should be thought of as a gap if talk resumes "just where it left off" (with an utterance designed as a sequentially next turn to the last one, for example), but should be considered a lapse if talk resumes in a way that restarts (rather than continues) the conversation.
4. The issue has become important because interruption, operationalized in various ways, is thought to be a factor in dominance and gender effects in communication (see, for example, Dindia, 1987; Kennedy & Camden, 1983). Researchers have been using increasingly sophisticated definitions of interruption in recent years, incorporating such elements as the distance from a TRP

that an overlap begins and whether the overlapping talk is facilitative (supportive) of the utterance it overlaps (West & Zimmerman, 1983). Although the beginning, termed the *onset*, of overlap is often used as a criterion for determining interruption, some studies include the end or resolution of overlap as a criterion as well. Roger and Schumacher (1983), for example, distinguish between successful and unsuccessful interruptions on the basis of whether "the first speaker was prevented from completing an utterance by the second speaker's taking the floor" (p. 702). Another procedure involves coding various characteristics of pre- and postinterruption talk as well as characteristics of the "interrupting" talk itself (Dindia, 1987; Kennedy & Camden, 1983). Drummond (1989) presents an excellent discussion of the shortcomings of these approaches, arguing that they are not sufficiently sensitive to the microdetails of how overlap actually occurs. One possible solution to this problem would be for analysts simply to give up using the term and to devise new terms or descriptions based (for example) on the word *overlap*. A similar solution, adopted by many conversation analysts, is to restrict *interruption* to a narrow technical use and not give it the broad range of interpretation it has in everyday parlance. Instances of overlap that both do and do not meet this narrow interpretation then receive descriptive accounts of their status. This is the practice adopted in this book.

5. See West and Zimmerman (1983, pp. 104, 113-114, n. 4) for a discussion of one way to distinguish overlaps from interruptions operationally.

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La mediazione linguistico culturale: una prospettiva interazionista



Guerra Edizioni

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7. LA MITIGAZIONE NELL'ATTIVITÀ DELL'INTERPRETE. Il caso di una trattativa d'affari.

1. Introduzione

Come si è accennato più volte in questo volume, l'interpretazione dialogica rappresenta un tipo di traduzione orale che conosce oggi ampia diffusione e che inizia ad essere studiato in modo ricorrente. Da un lato, infatti, i campi di applicazione di questa pratica comunicativa sono sempre più numerosi e sono rappresentati da contesti istituzionali assai eterogenei, quali per esempio l'ospedale, il tribunale, la questura, i servizi sociali, e da eventi comunicativi come le negoziazioni commerciali. Dall'altro, alcune riflessioni sviluppate a proposito di questa pratica comunicativa (vedi ad esempio Bolden, 2000; Davidson, 2000, 2002; Mason, 1999; 2001; Roy, 2002; Wadensjö, 1998; 2004) hanno permesso di riconoscerle una posizione teorica e concettuale autonoma nel più ampio panorama dell'interpretazione.

Ciò che definisce questo tipo di attività traduttiva, distinguendola dal lavoro svolto tradizionalmente dall'interprete nel contesto della conferenza, del convegno, dell'intervista televisiva o dell'incontro politico-istituzionale, è il suo carattere eminentemente interazionale. L'interpretazione dialogica è infatti un tipo di traduzione orale che ha luogo all'interno di una comunicazione faccia a faccia tra parlanti di lingue diverse. In questo tipo di contesto la funzione svolta dall'interprete sembra andare ben oltre il passaggio indisturbato di contenuti da una lingua ad un'altra; a questo proposito, alcune ricerche che si basano sull'applicazione al contesto dell'interpretazione dialogica di studi sul parlato e sui processi discorsivi (Wadensjö, 1998; Davidson, 2000; Mason,

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2006) hanno messo in luce come l'attività svolta dall'interprete non si esaurisca in un passaggio neutro di significato, ma sia piuttosto determinante nella produzione stessa di tale significato. Più propriamente, l'immediatezza dell'evento discorsivo, la presenza di tutti i partecipanti e gli obiettivi comunicativi alla base dell'incontro sembrano influenzare la dinamica interazionale, il modo in cui i significati sono costruiti e scambiati, e il tipo di atteggiamento assunto dall'interprete (Mason, 2001).

Gli studi sull'interpretazione dialogica, e soprattutto i contesti istituzionali che la richiedono, ricorrono talvolta all'idea di mediazione per riferirsi all'attività svolta dall'interprete; il termine è segno infatti di una concezione più flessibile del tradurre e dell'interpretare, che tenga conto del lavoro effettivamente svolto dall'interprete. In effetti, l'interprete dialogico sembra coinvolto in un'attività comunicativa assai complessa, che non si risolve soltanto nel lavoro di traduzione e che sembra piuttosto il risultato di una più ampia attività di mediazione. Le analisi fin qui elaborate sui contesti dialogici evidenziano infatti come l'interprete attui una serie di comportamenti che mostrano il suo farsi carico delle dinamiche interazionali in corso (e, in particolare, del raggiungimento degli obiettivi comunicativi) e, di conseguenza, il suo prendere in considerazione l'aspetto relazionale che entra in gioco in tali tipi di contesti faccia a faccia. Questi comportamenti manifestano quindi il fatto che nel contesto dialogico l'interprete assume una funzione di partecipante attivo all'interazione, e non di semplice tramite linguistico. L'attività di traduzione, alla quale teoricamente l'interprete dovrebbe limitarsi, è quindi ampliata da altre funzioni e competenze comunicative.

2. Metodo di studio e finalità

L'ipotesi ampiamente condivisa e motivata (Wadensjö, 1998; Mason, 1999; 2001; Davidson, 2000; 2002; Roy, 2002) sulla centralità comunicativa svolta dall'interprete nei contesti dialogici, ha portato a mettere in discussione l'impostazione tradizionalmente assunta dagli studi sull'interpretazione. L'obiettivo delle nuove ricerche sull'interpretazione dialogica è quello di abbandonare un atteggiamento prescrittivo che impone all'interprete una condotta neutrale spesso impraticabile, e di favorire invece un approccio descrittivo: tramite l'osservazione empirica dei dati (costituiti dalle registrazioni e trascrizioni di conversazioni mediate) si mira ad analizzare quello che effettivamente accade nei contesti dialogici e ad offrire all'interprete un insieme di considerazioni effettivamente spendibili nel proprio lavoro. Questo metodo di ricerca introdotto di recente nel campo dell'interpretazione dialogica da Wadensjö (1998) e Davidson (2002) si rifà all'approccio metodologico dell'analisi conversazionale (AC).

L'AC è già stata introdotta all'inizio di questo volume e ripresa in alcuni dei suoi capitoli; ci limiteremo qui a richiamarne alcuni aspetti che ci sembrano utili per la comprensione dell'analisi qui proposta della strutturazione dell'attività e della partecipazione. L'AC studia il parlato come attività socialmente organizzata ed ordinata,

e che può essere descritta dall'analista grazie alla registrazione e trascrizione di interazioni spontanee (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson, 1974). Tali interazioni possono avere luogo in contesti informali, come nel caso delle conversazioni in famiglia, o in contesti istituzionali, come, per esempio, nelle interviste di lavoro, nei tribunali, negli ospedali o nei colloqui d'affari.

Tra i principi fondamentali (Gülich & Mondada, 2001) che sono alla base di questa corrente disciplinare ricordiamo: l'assunzione del punto di vista dei partecipanti (ovvero, un fenomeno conversazionale esiste per l'analista solo quando esso esiste per i soggetti coinvolti, e come tale è reso manifesto nell'interazione); il principio d'ordine della conversazione (ovvero, il fatto che, sebbene la conversazione spesso possa sembrare caotica, essa è il risultato invece di un lavoro di coordinazione e sincronizzazione, sistematicamente e metodicamente realizzato dai partecipanti e visibile innanzitutto nel sistema di presa del turno); e infine il principio di sequenzialità e temporalità che giustifica e realizza il principio d'ordine (ovvero, le forme studiate dall'analista non sono mai analizzate in modo isolato ma all'interno di una sequenza conversazionale, le cui componenti esercitano l'una sull'altra un'azione contemporaneamente prospettiva e retrospettiva).

L'assunzione di questa prospettiva d'analisi nello studio dell'interpretazione dialogica permette di considerare e studiare il contesto dialogico come un luogo di interazione spontanea nel quale si realizza una co-produzione locale di significato e nel quale la presenza dell'interprete sembra influire, innanzitutto (e in modo abbastanza evidente), sui meccanismi di presa di parola, e, in secondo luogo e di conseguenza, sulla produzione di senso. Tale approccio permette quindi di ipotizzare nella figura dell'interprete un ruolo di partecipante attivo all'interazione, ruolo che, studi sulla traduzione di matrice più tradizionale hanno spesso visto come rischioso sul piano professionale (vedi Viezzi, 1996).

Il nostro studio, relativo ad una trattativa d'affari mediata dall'interprete, metterà in evidenza una serie di fenomeni comunicativi che confermano questo aspetto della partecipazione. In particolare, l'osservazione dei dati, registrati e trascritti, si soffermerà su una serie di atteggiamenti comunicativi ricorrenti nel fare dell'interprete e individuati in concomitanza con fasi problematiche dell'interazione: in queste fasi, l'interprete non si limita a tradurre i contributi delle parti ma sembra invece adoperarsi per far continuare la comunicazione e per garantire il raggiungimento degli scopi interazionali. Questi atteggiamenti saranno qui ricondotti a quella che in pragmatica è definita come una attività di *mitigazione*.

In quest'ottica il nostro contributo si basa su un approccio al discorso orale interattivo (più che su un approccio AC *stricto sensu*, per richiamare la distinzione terminologica di Gülich e Mondada, 2001), prendendo in considerazione fenomeni eterogenei, di natura non solo sequenziale, ma anche stilistica, e utilizzando come supporto teorico e analitico una teoria linguistica di stampo pragmatico (la teoria della mitigazione di Caffi, 1999; 2001).

3. L'interprete come coordinatore

Una funzione interazionale molto importante svolta dall'interprete nel contesto dialogico, e che dimostrerebbe l'aspetto di partecipazione dell'interprete nell'interazione (Gavioli, 2006: 55) e il suo ruolo di mediatore, è data dall'attività di coordinamento dei contributi delle parti. Wadensjö (1998) ha messo in luce come questa funzione proceda di pari passo con il lavoro di traduzione: il coordinamento è implicito quando riguarda il sistema di presa dei turni, mentre è esplicito quando si costituisce in formulazioni verbali come, per esempio, richieste di spiegazioni o chiarimenti elaborati autonomamente dall'interprete stessa nei confronti di una delle due parti. Più in generale il coordinamento è esplicito quando si realizza in enunciati ampliati o ristretti rispetto agli originali.

A questo proposito, e in riferimento al contesto della trattativa d'affari, Fogazzaro e Gavioli (2004) hanno evidenziato come l'attività di coordinamento e, conseguentemente, di mediazione svolta dall'interprete sia realizzata attraverso una selezione delle informazioni e una ristrutturazione del messaggio: queste operazioni permettono all'interprete di attribuire a sé alcune parti (quelle ridondanti) e di passare all'altro interlocutore altre parti (quelle ritenute fondamentali); e dunque, operando come un filtro, di ridefinire il ruolo degli interlocutori e i contenuti da loro espressi (Fogazzaro & Gavioli, 2004: 179). Invece, per quanto riguarda il coordinamento implicito, Fogazzaro e Gavioli (2004) osservano come l'interprete, nel corso dell'interazione, entri a far parte di quel sistema per il quale i parlanti negoziano costantemente la presa dei turni di parola e i significati espressi; infatti, attraverso segnali di conferma o richieste di chiarimento, i parlanti segnalano che il messaggio è stato compreso o meno e che il parlante può o non può continuare a parlare.

D'altra parte, è già stato osservato come un aspetto rilevante degli incontri mediati sia rappresentato proprio dal fatto che la negoziazione del significato deve essere sempre accompagnata da una negoziazione dell'ordine interazionale, e quindi della presa dei turni. Davidson (2002) definisce come inseparabili questi due processi di negoziazione. E Mason li individua come peculiari degli incontri cosiddetti "triadici":

The picture that emerges [...] is an extraordinary complex one. To the multi-tasking processes involved in all interpreting (simultaneous listening/watching, discourse processing, speaking, self-monitoring) is added constant (re-) negotiation of role, turn management and general monitoring of the unfolding of the talk exchange, in which at least three parties are involved (Mason, 2001: i).

L'interprete rientra dunque in questo sistema di negoziazione, sistema che determina il ruolo che essa andrà a svolgere. In particolare, Fogazzaro e Gavioli (2004) osservano come, nel corso dell'interazione, vi siano delle fasi in cui gli interventi dell'interprete e la sua funzione esplicita di mediatore sono negoziati e resi partico-

larmente rilevanti dagli altri parlanti. Tali fasi coincidono con momenti delicati della trattativa in cui vengono espressi messaggi complessi o potenzialmente conflittuali. L'interprete quindi è chiamata ad intervenire in momenti problematici e, attraverso il lavoro di coordinamento, realizzato soprattutto tramite la gestione dei turni e la formulazione di enunciati ampliati o ristretti rispetto agli originali, essa opera una mitigazione di quelle fasi dell'interazione che sembrano comprometterne l'intero andamento.

4. L'interprete e la gestione di elementi conflittuali

Gli studi sulla conversazione spontanea hanno messo in luce la tendenza dei parlanti a mantenere buone relazioni tra loro per consentire il proseguimento dell'interazione; in particolare, si nota una tendenza dei parlanti a massimizzare l'accordo e a minimizzare il disaccordo (Goodwin & Heritage, 1990, in Fogazzaro & Gavioli, 2004: 179-80). Questa tendenza, nel caso di, almeno alcuni, contesti mediati, si riproduce in modo singolare; la massimizzazione dell'accordo corrisponde spesso ad un tentativo dei parlanti di mettersi direttamente in contatto fra loro, scavalcando l'interprete, oppure alla formulazione di un messaggio che contiene elementi di condivisione che l'interprete in traduzione tende a valorizzare; invece, la minimizzazione del disaccordo corrisponderebbe di solito a pause ed esitazioni che invitano l'interprete a prendere la parola (Fogazzaro & Gavioli, 2002). Queste osservazioni evidenziano già il ruolo molto importante svolto dall'interprete nei confronti di elementi problematici o conflittuali. Il suo intervento, come già detto, è fondamentale e, in un certo senso, preteso e negoziato dagli interlocutori.

L'analisi della nostra trattativa ha messo però in luce il fatto che, sebbene effettivamente i parlanti nell'interazione manifestino la tendenza alla massimizzazione dell'accordo, la minimizzazione del disaccordo è invece molto più rara. È già stato osservato come, in certi contesti istituzionali, la presenza di un terzo elemento all'interno dell'interazione modifica gli atteggiamenti dei parlanti ed in particolare sembra autorizzare una libertà di espressione della conflittualità che non è presente invece nella conversazione ordinaria. Greatbatch (1992), per esempio, osserva come, nelle interviste televisive, la presenza del conduttore permetta un'escalation del disaccordo fra le parti e faccia sì che quell'attività di moderazione e mitigazione di asserzioni precedenti - riconosciuta da Pomerantz (1984b) come fenomeno ricorrente attuato dai parlanti nella conversazione al fine di evitare o almeno superare il conflitto - venga assorbita dall'intervistatore.

Relativamente al caso qui analizzato, il sospetto è che, nel contesto mediato, la presenza dell'interprete riduca la tendenza dei parlanti a mitigare i propri contenuti, e quindi autorizzi una maggiore libertà di espressione della conflittualità; il disaccordo quindi verrebbe manifestato dalle parti in modo molto più diretto ed esplicito, e l'at-

tività di mitigazione verrebbe assorbita dall'interprete stessa. Questo atteggiamento assunto dai parlanti sarebbe inoltre la dimostrazione dell'ipotesi per la quale la presenza dell'interprete nel contesto dell'interpretazione faccia a faccia modifica e ridefinisce la situazione comunicativa, e, di conseguenza, gli atteggiamenti e i contenuti espressi dai partecipanti.

5. Una definizione di mitigazione

Tradizionalmente la mitigazione è un fenomeno studiato in pragmatica con riferimento all'ambito della cortesia; con mitigazione si intende parlare di strategie per attenuare l'impatto di un atto minaccioso per la faccia, un *face threatening act (FTA)*, secondo il modello di Brown e Levinson (1987). La cortesia è definita come quell'"insieme di strategie che mirano a stabilire, conservare o alterare relazioni fra interlocutori - che esse rivestano carattere interpersonale, o sociale, quando non istituzionale"- (Bianchi, 2003: 91). Le relazioni sociali sarebbero quindi governate da un implicito e costante riferimento alle norme della cortesia che da un lato definirebbero i limiti d'azione, linguistica e non, entro cui i parlanti possono sostare, dall'altro richiederebbero, quando tali limiti vengono superati (quindi quando si verificano *FTA*), il ricorso a meccanismi riparatori. La mitigazione è quindi annoverata tra le attività di riparazione messe in atto dai parlanti per evitare o superare situazioni di disturbo e mantenere l'equilibrio relazionale.

Nell'ambito dell'Analisi Conversazionale, il riparo (o rimedio) è definito come un fenomeno in base al quale i parlanti in interazione risolvono determinati elementi problematici, quali, per esempio, forme linguistiche, riferimenti a persone, luoghi o momenti, affermazioni, modi di selezione del locutore successivo (Gülich & Mondada, 2001: 212). D'altra parte, l'organizzazione del sistema di riparo (che permette di localizzare il riparo in interazione, distinguendo se/dove esso è iniziato, dove è risolto e da chi) è inoltre strettamente legata a quella dei fenomeni di accordo/disaccordo e di preferenza/dispreferenza (Schegloff, 1977: 380). In particolare, il riparo è individuato come strategia utilizzata dai parlanti là dove si sviluppano complementi non preferenziali di coppie adiacenti. È stato, infatti, osservato come in conformità con il concetto di preferenza - in base al quale, le accettazioni, le risposte che soddisfano una richiesta o le espressioni di accordo sono definite preferite, mentre quelle come il rifiuto, il declino di un invito, una risposta che non soddisfa una richiesta o un'espressione di disaccordo sono definite dispreferite (Pomerantz, 1984a, vedi anche Gavioli, 1999: 55) - le azioni non preferenziali siano accompagnate da forme di rimedio come "le pause, le esitazioni, le giustificazioni, o i tentativi di aggiustare il tiro, volti a ripararne il carattere non-preferenziale" (Gavioli, 1999: 58). All'origine del lavoro di riparo troviamo quindi un tentativo da parte dei parlanti di mantenere l'orientamento reciproco e favorire la "cooperazione" discorsiva; come evidenziato

da Hutchby e Wooffitt (1998: 66):

The organization of repair is closely bound up with the question of interpersonal alignment, or intersubjectivity, in social life.

La questione dell'allineamento interpersonale è cruciale anche nella pratica comunicativa della mitigazione. In un vasto studio di stampo pragmatico sull'utilizzo della mitigazione in contesti terapeutici, Caffi (1999; 2001) sottolinea infatti come alla base della mitigazione vi siano l'idea di adattamento del locutore e del suo agire nella situazione comunicativa e rispetto al destinatario, l'idea di calibraggio e di aggiustamento:

L'ajustement l'un à l'autre des membres d'une interaction (Birdwhistell in Caffi, 2001: 39).

D'altra parte, la mitigazione è intesa da Caffi come un *processo di modulazione linguistica* (ma vedi anche la nozione di "intensità" in Labov, 1984; Holmes, 1984; Bazzanella *et al.*, 1991; Gili Fivela & Bazzanella, 2009). Più propriamente, secondo Caffi:

Una delle due direzioni, opposta e complementare alla direzione "rafforzamento", della modulazione, definibile come la messa in forma retorica e stilistica dell'enunciazione, la sua espressività, lungo le due direttrici, l'una attenuativa, l'altra rafforzante (2001: 3).

Tale modulazione, operando in senso attenuativo su determinate componenti dell'atto linguistico (locuzione, illocuzione, perlocuzione), realizzerebbe a livello comunicativo degli effetti sui diversi parametri interazionali in gioco (parametri come per esempio, il ruolo, il potere, la certezza epistemica, la conoscenza, la rilevanza topicale, la distanza psicologica ed emotiva) e, in modo più esteso, sulla relazione interpersonale.

Questa visione nuova e ampliata della mitigazione prevede quindi, da un lato, il fatto di considerare un fenomeno linguistico come uno strumento di realizzazione di un ampio processo comunicativo, nel quale l'azione svolta su determinati parametri permette una definizione e costruzione della relazione interpersonale fra i locutori. Dall'altro, la prospettiva proposta da Caffi permette di spiegare il fenomeno della mitigazione andando oltre questioni di *politeness* ed esigenze legate alla faccia, e riconducendolo piuttosto a due dimensioni particolari, quella dell'efficienza interazionale e quella della costruzione dell'identità. La modulazione linguistica attenuativa favorirebbe quindi sia il raggiungimento degli scopi interazionali, sia il soddisfacimento, a livello relazionale, delle esigenze d'auto-presentazione che portano i parlanti ad assumere strategicamente un determinato ruolo comunicativo (per quale tipo di persona vogliono essere presi).

Ai fini del nostro studio, il lavoro di Caffi si mostra interessante non solo per la messa in luce di determinati elementi che coinvolgono e giustificano concettualmente (a livello speculativo) la pratica della mitigazione ma anche per la distinzione che viene fatta dei vari strumenti di mitigazione e che nel nostro lavoro è stata utilizzata per lo studio dei dati. L'analisi di Caffi (2001) ha infatti condotto ad una tripartizione degli strumenti di mitigazione basata sull'ambito di intervento della modulazione attenuativa; vengono così distinti strumenti relativi al contenuto proposizionale di un enunciato, che Caffi stessa (2001: 303) chiama *cespugli* (*bushes o hedges*), strumenti relativi agli indicatori di forza illocutiva, detti *siepi* (*hedges*), strumenti relativi all'origine deittica dell'enunciazione, detti *schermi* (*shields*)¹.

6. La mitigazione nell'attività dell'interprete

Nella sua analisi e classificazione del fenomeno mitigazione, Caffi (2001) distingue tra mitigazione e riparazione con riferimento alla diversità dello statuto ontologico su cui vertono le due operazioni. Secondo Caffi, infatti, nel caso della riparazione (o rimedio) l'oggetto esiste ed è rappresentato da una sequenza precedente, mentre, nel caso della mitigazione, l'oggetto non c'è ancora, è in fieri, o nel caso delle pre-sequenze è in pianificazione (Caffi, 2001: 68).

Nell'ottica dell'interazione mediata dall'interprete, questa distinzione assume un aspetto particolare: il fatto che, da un punto di vista sequenziale, i messaggi espressi dalle parti debbano teoricamente passare sempre attraverso l'interprete fa sì che un'eventuale attività di attenuazione da lei svolta si riferisca sempre a un qualcosa di già detto e formulato da un parlante (come nel caso del lavoro di riparo) ma si concretizzi in un enunciato nuovo, prodotto dall'interprete e diretto ad un ascoltatore (come per la mitigazione). D'altra parte ci sembra significativo fare una distinzione tra i due fenomeni del riparo e della mitigazione, sottolineando come quest'ultima, sia essa intesa in modo ristretto (come tradizionalmente legata alla *politeness*) o più ampio (come nella teoria di Caffi), implichi una negatività del valore perlocutorio dell'elemento che viene mitigato, negatività che non è invece implicata nel caso del riparo. Nel presente lavoro appare quindi più interessante parlare di mitigazione anziché di riparo in riferimento all'attività svolta dall'interprete; in effetti, gli interventi dell'interprete volti a realizzare una riparazione sono sempre individuati in concomitanza con elementi i cui effetti interazionali sarebbero potenzialmente o palesemente problematici, se non conflittuali. Inoltre, il concetto di mitigazione si incentra sull'idea

¹ Gli schermi sono poi distinti in:

Attanziali ("quando uno diventa nervoso fa così"). Spazio-temporali (di eventualizzazione e di finzione). Citazionali ("fra virgolette; per così dire; diciamo così"). Topicali (Digressioni strategiche: "tra l'altro; per caso"). Esempi strategici: "ad esempio, per esempio") (Caffi, 2001: 313-23).

di progettualità e intenzionalità, e si delinea in quanto *attività valutativa*: la mitigazione è intesa come un processo che interviene e modifica strategicamente (quindi per realizzare un obiettivo comunicativo) un determinato elemento. Ci sembra che riconoscere nell'attività traduttiva svolta dall'interprete le tracce di una valutazione e conseguente attenuazione di certi elementi non possa che confermare, ulteriormente, la funzione di partecipazione svolta dall'interprete nell'interazione.

La mitigazione è un fenomeno che negli studi sull'interpretazione dialogica non riveste ancora ampio spazio ed è studiato in riferimento soprattutto a questioni legate alla cortesia e alla faccia. Recentemente è stata infatti messa in luce l'importanza di questi aspetti nei contesti mediati e sono state avviate delle analisi volte a dimostrare come i *face threatening acts*, fenomeno d'altra parte ricorrente negli scambi triadici, vengano frequentemente modificati nell'atto di traduzione (Mason & Stewart, 2001: 51; Pöllbauer, 2007). Più in generale la mitigazione è individuata come effetto dell'attività di coordinamento esplicito ed implicito (Wadensjö, 1998) realizzato dall'interprete e come parte del più ampio processo di mediazione da lei svolto. Wadensjö ne parla come di:

A means of sustaining a cooperative atmosphere and simultaneously exercising discursal control, attempting to keep the client relevant and on topic (Wadensjö, 1998: 164).

Sono d'altra parte in molti gli autori (Wadensjö, 1998; Davidson, 2000; Fogazzaro & Gavioli, 2004) che concordano nell'individuare la ragione di questo tipo di intervento nel contesto sociale in cui si sviluppa l'interpretazione dialogica: la presenza di un obiettivo comunicativo da raggiungere (per esempio, nel caso dell'interazione medico-paziente, la definizione di una diagnosi o di una cura, nel caso di una trattativa d'affari, la firma di un contratto o la definizione di una strategia di mercato) favorirebbe da parte dell'interprete la messa in atto di strategie comunicative volte soprattutto a mantenere la conversazione *on topic* e a garantire la riuscita dell'incontro.

In linea anche con quanto affermato da Caffi, individuiamo, in quella che si potrebbe definire un'attività di mitigazione realizzata dall'interprete a fianco o all'interno dell'attività di traduzione, una funzione strettamente legata alla dimensione dell'efficienza interazionale; ovvero, l'interprete mitigherebbe al fine di raggiungere gli obiettivi comunicativi dell'incontro (nel nostro caso, per esempio, un accordo all'interno di una strategia di mercato). Il fatto che il presupposto della realizzazione di tale funzione risieda, in generale, nell'adattamento del locutore alla situazione comunicativa e al destinatario, giustificherebbe quindi una preoccupazione dell'interprete per questioni di natura relazionale, e conseguentemente, l'aggiustamento interazionale da lei operato quando la sintonizzazione fra i parlanti è compromessa.

7. Lo studio

I dati presi in esame in questo lavoro riguardano appunto una trattativa d'affari, evento comunicativo che ben si inserisce nell'ampia gamma di casi cui abbiamo fatto riferimento parlando di interpretazione dialogica. L'incontro, che ha avuto luogo a Milano nel 1996, coinvolge i rappresentanti di un'azienda italiana e quelli della casa fornitrice giapponese. L'interazione avviene grazie alla presenza dell'interprete, italiana, che traduce utilizzando l'inglese, lingua usata dal gruppo giapponese per comunicare. La trattativa si svolge in più fasi, con varie pause tra l'una e l'altra; la parte che è stata trascritta riporta circa due ore di registrazioni audio. L'argomento della seduta è lo smaltimento dei materiali obsoleti presenti nei depositi dell'azienda italiana e il conseguente acquisto della nuova serie di prodotti. In particolare vengono discusse le strategie da attuare sul mercato per favorire la svendita dei prodotti della passata stagione e i prezzi di acquisto dei nuovi arrivi.

Le informazioni relative ai partecipanti, in particolare all'interprete e ai suoi rapporti con l'azienda italiana, sono molto limitate. Il luogo dell'incontro definisce l'azienda italiana come ente ospitante e quella giapponese come ospitata. L'interprete è impiegata dal gruppo milanese con cui manifesta nell'interazione un certo grado di confidenza, dimostrando anche di conoscerne gli obiettivi commerciali. Come già ricordato, il portavoce giapponese per comunicare utilizza l'inglese, quindi una lingua che non è la sua, mentre il gruppo italiano comunica con l'interprete nella propria lingua e mostra anche talvolta di comprendere gli interventi in inglese formulati dall'altra parte. Questi aspetti sono richiamati all'attenzione come rilevanti perché potrebbero motivare, almeno parzialmente, quegli squilibri relazionali che spiegherebbero, in parte, il carattere conflittuale della nostra trattativa e quindi gli interventi, linguistici e non, attuati dall'interprete per superare questa conflittualità. Sebbene l'intento di questo lavoro sia quello di individuare tali interventi e non sia quello di sviluppare una riflessione sul modo in cui i ruoli e le relazioni dei partecipanti precedenti all'interazione influenzino la capacità dell'interprete di gestire l'interazione, si terrà in debita considerazione il fatto che:

The dynamics of the exchange in terms of power and distance - and also in terms of who, within the exchange, is truly monolingual and who, in addition to the interpreter, is actually bilingual - are of primordial importance in seeking to understand what is going on linguistically (Mason, 2001: ii).

Per quanto riguarda il metodo di trascrizione usato, il riferimento è al modello elaborato da Bazzanella (1994: 92)².

² Riportiamo i simboli utilizzati in particolare nella trascrizione trattata in questo capitolo:
X interprete

8. Analisi dei dati

Dall'analisi complessiva della nostra trattativa d'affari è emerso che l'interprete non si limita a tradurre letteralmente e in modo canonico i contributi dei parlanti ma svolge una funzione più ampia di mediazione fra le parti. Questo aspetto viene evidenziato soprattutto in fasi problematiche della trattativa, quando le parti coinvolte mostrano di non condividere determinate posizioni, oppure quando c'è incomprensione di intenti. In questi casi si verifica un potenziale disturbo per ciò che rappresenta la finalità principale dell'incontro che consiste nel raggiungimento dell'accordo. L'interprete sembra farsi carico di questo aspetto e ciò sarebbe dimostrato dal suo costante tentativo di fare in modo che la conversazione, anche quando gravemente compromessa, non collassi. D'altra parte, i parlanti non sembrano curarsi degli effetti negativi dei propri interventi e questo potrebbe essere motivato da un'implicita aspettativa nei confronti del lavoro dell'interprete.

Dall'ascolto e dalla lettura dei dati si osserva che, quando si verificano dei momenti di disturbo, l'interprete garantisce il proseguimento dell'interazione attraverso una costante attività di mitigazione dei contributi delle parti; i meccanismi più frequenti che realizzano questa attività sono:

1. La riduzione dei contenuti nella traduzione.
2. La formulazione di interventi propri.
3. La sostituzione di espressioni implicitamente aggressive.
4. L'utilizzo di *quotational shields*.
5. I *continuatori*.

L, L2	parlanti della delegazione italiana
G	parlante della delegazione giapponese
[]	sovrapposizione ([indica l'inizio, sia nel turno A che in quello B;] indica la fine – se pertinente indicarla)
—	latching
.	intonazione discendente
,	intonazione sospensiva
?	intonazione ascendente
testo:	prolungamento del suono
testo-	parola trunca
-	pausa: - pausa molto breve -- pausa breve --- pausa media
≈	parola non comprensibile acusticamente
()	più parole non comprensibili acusticamente
testo ^o	parola trascritta per deduzione ma non chiaramente comprensibile acusticamente
testo	enfasi dell'oratore
(.....)	informazioni contestualizzanti ricavabili dalla registrazione
in neretto le parti della trascrizione che si è voluto mettere in evidenza ai fini dell'analisi	

I primi due strumenti di mitigazione realizzano quella che Wadensjo (1998) definisce un'attività di coordinamento esplicito; i meccanismi tre e quattro riguardano invece la sfera della modulazione linguistica; infine lo strumento cinque opera soprattutto a livello del sistema di presa dei turni rispetto al quale manifesta un inserimento e una partecipazione legata all'iniziativa spontanea dell'interprete. La sezione successiva presenta alcuni cenni relativi alla conflittualità interna alla trattativa e quindi all'ambiente interazionale in cui si sviluppa il conflitto e in cui avviene il ricorso agli strumenti di mitigazione. In seguito sarà proposta l'analisi di tali strumenti.

9. La conflittualità interna alla trattativa

Nel caso analizzato, le sequenze problematiche che si verificano nell'interazione riguardano due casi principali; uno è quello in cui sorgono errori di comprensione fra le parti (in particolare quando il gruppo giapponese non capisce i problemi che manifesta la parte italiana) e tali incomprensioni rallentano il corso della seduta. L'altro è il caso in cui la possibilità del raggiungimento di un accordo finale viene negata o messa in discussione. Entrambe le situazioni possono essere considerate come tipiche del contesto della trattativa d'affari. In generale, la trattativa si caratterizza infatti per essere un ambiente interazionale nel quale gli interlocutori si trovano a confrontare interessi o posizioni diversi, con l'obiettivo di arrivare ad una soluzione comune; questo aspetto stimola fortemente il dibattito e limita la possibilità di un decorso verbale lineare. Frequente è la possibilità che i contenuti espressi dai parlanti si sviluppino e si modifichino in itinere (soprattutto attraverso dibattiti interni alle singole delegazioni) e che tali contenuti non siano chiari per una delle due parti coinvolte. Questi elementi complicano il lavoro dell'interprete. Inoltre, la dinamica della trattativa d'affari, in particolare il fatto che la fine dell'interazione corrisponda di solito al raggiungimento di un accordo finale o perlomeno ad un'avvenuta analisi delle reciproche posizioni delle parti coinvolte, potrebbe essere motivata da un'attitudine generale osservata nella conversazione.

Alcuni studi sul parlato (vedi ad esempio Pomerantz, 1984b) hanno infatti messo in luce il fatto che il disaccordo e la difficoltà di comprensione reciproca, pur essendo all'origine di sequenze problematiche nell'interazione, possono anche rappresentare un modo per garantire il proseguimento dell'interazione stessa. I parlanti sono costantemente coinvolti nella realizzazione di attività che richiedono delle risposte, e, quando tali risposte non vengono fornite dall'interlocutore, ciò è attribuito generalmente a difficoltà di comprensione, mancanza di un sapere condiviso o disaccordo. Per questo, al fine di ricevere tali risposte, i parlanti si adoperano per offrire chiarimenti, verificare l'esattezza dei fatti o modificare le proprie posizioni. In questo modo, quando la comprensione è raggiunta, l'interazione raggiunge anche una fase in cui i parlanti possono potenzialmente negoziarne la conclusione.

Una delle caratteristiche della nostra trattativa, come accennato sopra, è che i parlanti della delegazione italiana mostrano talvolta di comprendere ciò che viene detto in inglese dal parlante giapponese. Nel nostro caso ciò accade soprattutto da parte del portavoce italiano che ha una conoscenza approssimativa dell'inglese ed è il rappresentante del gruppo che fa le richieste commerciali ai fornitori giapponesi, quindi quello maggiormente interessato e attento alle reazioni di questi. Così, è frequente il caso in cui il portavoce italiano segnala di comprendere le aspettative degli interlocutori senza che l'interprete abbia la possibilità di tradurre ed, eventualmente, "filtrare" il messaggio. Quando questa comprensione "diretta" si attua, si osservano due tipi di situazione. La prima è quella in cui il messaggio percepito incontra il consenso italiano e di fatto non si verificano problemi ai fini della seduta. C'è una convergenza dei punti di vista delle due delegazioni e c'è desiderio da parte dei parlanti di comunicare direttamente fra loro (magari anche solo con formule di conferma tipo "ok"). L'interprete viene momentaneamente esclusa dalla conversazione ma solitamente si inserisce di nuovo nel quadro partecipativo, soprattutto tramite l'utilizzo di *continuatori* (Schegloff, 1982), e ristabilisce quindi l'ordine interazionale previsto dal contesto mediato. La seconda situazione è quella in cui la percezione dei contenuti espressi dal delegato giapponese provoca negli italiani un sentimento di insoddisfazione. Qui la comunicazione rallenta e dà luogo a momenti di tensione. Il conflitto, potenziale o palese, si manifesta o attraverso un commento esplicitamente negativo e diretto del portavoce italiano o attraverso una concitata discussione interna al gruppo, sempre italiano (è interessante notare che questo non accade all'interno del gruppo giapponese). In entrambi i casi, l'interprete tenta di far continuare l'interazione mitigando in traduzione gli elementi poleмici o offensivi.

10. Gli strumenti che realizzano l'attività di mitigazione

10.1. Le riduzioni nella traduzione

In concomitanza con gli interventi dei parlanti caratterizzati da un tono aggressivo o ironico o da espressioni forti, si osserva che l'interprete opera una selezione dei contenuti tradotti, realizzando ciò che Wadensjö (1998) definisce *reduced renditions*, ovvero enunciati in cui sono omesse delle parti dell'originale. L'attività di mitigazione realizzata dalla riduzione nella traduzione opera al livello dell'efficienza interazionale: il messaggio ridotto focalizza infatti l'attenzione dei parlanti sui contenuti rilevanti per raggiungere gli obiettivi comunicativi.

Nell'esempio riportato sotto, le parti stanno cercando di accordarsi sulla cifra che i fornitori metteranno a disposizione dell'azienda italiana per la nuova campagna commerciale; il rappresentante giapponese si mostra abbastanza restio ad accettare la proposta italiana perché vuole conoscere in dettaglio come verrà speso l'eventuale

budget messo a disposizione. Il parlante italiano è irritato dalla diffidenza mostrata, ai suoi occhi, dal fornitore, e interviene in modo polemico e "colorito". Tuttavia l'interprete tralascia in traduzione tutto il discorso sulla fiducia e l'intervento più alterato; riduce il contributo del parlante italiano ai termini essenziali per ottenere l'approvazione del delegato giapponese (ovvero, "la nostra proposta si traduce in un costo quindi decidiamo prima quale sarà il vostro contributo"), rimuovendo dall'enunciato ogni traccia polemica. Come si può notare, tutta la parte evidenziata in neretto nel contributo del parlante italiano non ha una corrispondenza nella traduzione:

Estratto 1

(L: rappresentante della ditta italiana, convenzionalmente chiamata *Schianchi*, nella trascrizione; X: interprete; G: rappresentante della ditta giapponese, convenzionalmente chiamata *Nappo*, nella trascrizione)

- 1 L ma voglio chiedere a Mister Nappo perché vuole sapere che tipo
- 2 di azione dovremo andare a fare quando in ogni caso si tramuta
- 3 in un costo, definiamo un costo e poi visto che ci ha sempre
- 4 detto che la Nappo ha fiducia nel in in come opera la Schianchi
- 5 non vedo perché adesso non la debba più avere, abbiám sempre
- 6 fatto i pre-stagionali, li abbiám fatti a modo nostro qualcuno con
- 7 un incentivo, qualcuno con una riduzione di prezzo, qualcuno
- 8 con una dilazione di pagamento, sono cose che bisogna vedere
- 9 caso per caso, c'è quello che desidera andare a puttane ma io
- 10 non lo posso portare a puttane beh, come si fa? ha un valore
- 11 tutto questo definiamo il valore poi commercialmente ragionan-
- 12 do sui cambi il direttore commerciale deciderà come andare a
- 13 spendere questi soldi
- 14 X so in any, what Mister Schianchi is saying
- 15 G mh mh
- 16 X is that in any case we won't ask a big to you our proposal
- 17 about what what ~ thinking
- 18 G (incomprensibile)
- 19 X yes but in any case the our proposal will be a cost so if we
- 20 know, if we decide now what will be your contribution and our
- 21 contribution to this in order to eh: undertake this proposal
- 22 to undertake this action in how to affect the market if we
- 23 know what will be the final cost then we can make a ~ our sale
- 24 ~ and decide how to use this amount how to un- un- undertake

Dopo i due tentativi di traduzione alle linee 14 e 16 (che sembrano rallentare l'impatto della richiesta successiva), l'interprete fornisce quindi una traduzione che mostra il suo orientarsi alla dimensione dell'efficienza interazionale: in effetti, l'interpretazione manca dei toni polemici dell'originale ed è strettamente centrata sul raggiungimento degli obiettivi comunicativi.

La riduzione di traduzione è considerata anche come parte di un'attività di coordinamento esplicito (Wadensjö, 1998); in effetti, essa permette di indirizzare i parlanti (e quindi i loro contributi) verso determinati contenuti, spostando la loro attenzione da elementi problematici verso elementi essenziali al raggiungimento degli obiettivi comunicativi.

10.2. La formulazione di interventi propri

Un altro modo attraverso il quale l'interprete può coordinare esplicitamente gli interventi delle parti è quello di formulare interventi autonomi. Un tipo di intervento dell'interprete che si verifica nella nostra interazione è quello di ri-aprire la conversazione dopo un turno che ne proietta una potenziale chiusura. Vi sono casi infatti in cui la comprensione delle aspettative e delle posizioni delle parti porta i partecipanti a rinunciare alla trattativa e a chiuderla. Gli interventi dell'interprete in questi casi hanno la caratteristica di "rilanciare" il *topic* conversazionale, riproponendolo per, ad esempio, un ulteriore chiarimento.

Nella sequenza successiva, alle linee 3 e 4, abbiamo un intervento del parlante italiano che mostra di comprendere la posizione del partecipante giapponese e inizia un turno ("allora è inutile che") che proietta una potenziale conclusione della conversazione. In questo momento l'esito della trattativa sembra gravemente compromesso perché le parti non riescono ad accordarsi sulla politica comune da intraprendere e soprattutto perché il parlante italiano sembra voler rinunciare a proseguire la negoziazione. Qui l'interprete interviene con una richiesta di spiegazioni al rappresentante giapponese che ripropone una discussione del *topic* conversazionale al fine di comprendere qualcosa di più della proposta fatta. In questo modo permette all'interazione di proseguire ed offre al parlante giapponese la possibilità di spiegare il proprio punto di vista. Non lascia che la comunicazione collassi e lo fa mitigando l'intervento del delegato italiano: la mitigazione si concretizza attraverso la mancata traduzione dell'enunciato "di rinuncia" e l'intervento autonomo dell'interprete che "rilancia" il *topic* per un ulteriore chiarimento (linee 5, 6 e 7):

Estratto 2

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | X | allora lui dice se lui ci se lui riduce i nostri costi da |
| 2 | | ottocento da ottocentocinquantatre [milioni] |
| 3 | L | [ottocentocinquantatre] |
| 4 | | allora è inutile che [()] |
| 5 | X | [why why] do you why do you say say |
| 6 | | why do you say re-reduce our cost by eight thousand |
| 7 | | [eight hundred fifty three |
| 8 | G | [this this |

- 9 X mh mh
 10 G is the the the part of the offer you made
 11 X yeah questo è l'ultima offerta che abbiam fatto noi

Come si vede nello scambio, la domanda di chiarimento è un chiaro tentativo di riaprire la conversazione. A livello relazionale, essa crea nei confronti dell'interlocutore un avvicinamento, ulteriormente rafforzato dall'uso del *continuatore* "mhm" (linea 9). Come sarà discusso meglio nel corso della nostra analisi, l'utilizzo dei *continuatori* da parte dell'interprete sembra giocare un ruolo molto importante nel favorire la sin-tonizzazione interazionale, e quindi il proseguimento della conversazione.

Un altro caso in cui troviamo un intervento spontaneo dell'interprete, sempre nella forma di una negoziazione di chiarimento è quello che segue. Qui l'interprete (turno 1) riporta una domanda della rappresentanza giapponese - una quantificazione delle giacenze per la fine del mese di ottobre - alla quale i parlanti italiani dicono di poter fornire una risposta certa (linee 8-9). L'interprete non tratta questa prima risposta come la risposta da tradurre e chiarisce che è necessario definire una cifra più precisa (linea 11). In questo modo ottiene un risultato che può comunicare all'altra parte e ciò, da un lato fornisce la risposta che era stata resa rilevante nell'interazione, dall'altro "salva la faccia" degli interlocutori italiani che evitano così di mostrare di avere dati imprecisi.

Estratto 3

- 1 X dice che prima di: di continuare vuole sapere allora per quanto
 2 riguarda i modelli che sono a- a- appunto eh: concernenti questo
 3 problema, che con- concernono questo problema quali sono quale
 4 sarà il numero dei modelli effettivamente che avremo eh che
 5 saranno obsoleti che avremo per la fine di ottobre
 6 L dobbiamo [vedere]
 7 L2 [≈]
 8 L [li ricaveremo] alla fine di ottobre
 9 L2 [alla fine di ottobre]ci viene ≈ insomma
 10 L eh!
 11 X **ok, facciamo a fine settembre allora quanti [ne avremo]**
 12 L [noi li] abbiam
 13 chiamati per vedere il numero dei pezzi. - comunque normalmente
 14 il settanta per cento della giacenza è dato da pre- da da
 15 pezzi obsoleti mi sbaglierò di uno o due punti
 16 percentuali indicativamente è il settanta [per cento]
 17 X [more] or less
 18 **indicately is seventy per cent of the units in stock so let's**
 19 **say seventy percent of the units in stock will be replaced**

Gli interventi introdotti spontaneamente dall'interprete, senza che vi sia una richiesta esplicita delle parti, sono quelli in cui si manifesta in maniera più evidente il suo lavo-

ro di coordinamento mirato all'ottenimento degli scopi dell'interazione e, nel nostro caso, di mitigazione che accompagna l'attività di traduzione, e sono dunque quelli che testimoniano maggiormente la complessità dell'attività svolta dall'interprete. Poiché l'interprete è responsabile della corretta comprensione dei contenuti e delle aspettative dell'interazione, le richieste di chiarimento costituiscono uno strumento importante per perseguire gli scopi dell'interazione e possono essere utilizzate per evitare una potenziale chiusura insoddisfacente della conversazione o anche per evitare di dare un'immagine insoddisfacente dell'operato degli interlocutori.

10.3. La sostituzione di espressioni implicitamente aggressive

Nell'analisi dei dati si è osservato che la traduzione fornita dall'interprete è talvolta caratterizzata da una sostituzione e modulazione in senso attenuativo di alcune espressioni lessicali che nell'originale sono implicitamente, o potenzialmente, aggressive o polemiche.

Nell'esempio che segue, il parlante italiano fa riferimento alla passata esperienza della propria azienda e alle difficoltà da questa incontrata nella svendita dei prodotti evidenziando come i costi sostenuti siano sempre stati affrontati dal suo gruppo da solo senza che sia stato richiesto un aiuto da parte dei fornitori giapponesi. Più propriamente, il termine utilizzato è quello di "accollarsi", parola che suggerisce un carico di responsabilità o onere dovuto essenzialmente alla mancanza di responsabilità di qualcun altro, il partner giapponese in questo caso. L'interprete mitiga il potenziale tono di accusa nei confronti dell'altra parte modificando il verbo; nei due esempi che seguono, i verbi *suffer* (estratto 4, linea 17) e *afford* (estratto 5, linea 6), rispettivamente "sopportare" e "potersi permettere", incentrano il motivo della richiesta di aiuto sull'impossibilità del soggetto a compiere l'azione e non sulla pretesa di intervento esterno. Tale significato è ulteriormente accentuato nell'estratto 5 (linee 6 e 7) dall'impiego di *alone* (non potersi permettere da soli) e di *at least*, che introduce nella riformulazione dello stesso verbo una richiesta indiretta di aiuto alla delegazione giapponese:

Estratto 4

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| 1 | L | allora, comincio io? Noi apprezziamo, lo sforzo, che riteniamo |
| 2 | | abbiate fatto nel darci i prezzi per il millenovecentonovan- |
| 3 | | tasette (colpo di tosse) vorremmo però ricordare con le prime |
| 4 | | - del rapporto, che noi veniamo da una stagione, completamente |
| 5 | | negativa, completamente negativa sotto due aspetti, primo, |
| 6 | | quello che abbiamo già detto che abbiamo ridotto, i prezzi di |
| 7 | | vendita, accollandocene il novanta per cento noi , e la seconda |
| 8 | | cosa è che ad oggi ci ritroviamo con un magazzino, di prodotti |

9 che entro quattro mesi verranno sostituiti da una nuova
 10 collezione
 11 X ok, eh: so first of all we would like to say that we appreciate
 12 the we appreciate that we have appreciated your effort in giv-
 13 ing us the prices in ninetyseven. but as Mr Rossi a- already
 14 told you before we would like to remind you that we are coming
 15 early from a negative sales season for two reasons, the first
 16 one is that we were forced to reduce a lot our sales prices,
 17 and of course **suffering ninety percent on ninety percent of**
 18 **this reduction had been suffer had been suffered by Schianchi,**
 19 the second reason that we have got our stock house full of
 20 products which in four months will be replaced by new ones

Estratto 5

1 L è chiaro che **noi non possiamo accollarci al cento per cento una**
 2 **svendita di prodotti**, eh non ce non ce lo possiamo permettere, e
 3 ottomila pezzi di case corrispondono praticamente al cinquanta
 4 per cento di un fatturato ipotetico millenovecentottanta
 5 millenovecentonovantasette
 6 X **surely we can not afford to put on sales a- at least we can not**
 7 **afford alone** to put on sales eight thousands pieces conside-
 8 ring that they in in m- money in a- amount they correspond to
 9 early fifty percent of our early turnover

Nella sequenza successiva, ritroviamo lo stesso tipo di intervento attuato dall'interprete: la sostituzione e modulazione attenuativa di un enunciato polemico proferito dal parlante italiano. Qui "la Schianchi si è stancata di contribuire" (linee 9 e 10) rappresenta una chiara accusa nei confronti dell'altra parte che viene però palesemente mitigata da un "Schianchi alone cannot afford hundred percent", dove l'accento viene posto sul "non potersi permettere", che con l'impossibilità oggettiva giustifica la richiesta.

Estratto 6

1 L questa è la proposta che facciamo noi di accollarci o di
 2 studiare insieme dei prezzi particolari per affrontare il
 3 novantasette nella migliore maniera nel modo migliore con
 4 questi prezzi noi non riusciremmo sicuramente ad affrontare
 5 un novantasette in maniera serena assolutamente
 6 X so [this is]
 7 L [la lalla concorrenza sicuramente e: l'informazione che
 8 tutt'oggi abbiamo sicuramente abbasseranno il prezzo il
 9 prezzo delle ditte tutti gli anni è destinato a calare. **la**
 10 **Schianchi si è stancata di contribuire al cento per cento a**
 11 **questi cali di mercato a questi cali di prezzo**
 12 X so with the prices in our hands for the moment being with the
 13 prices with these sale prices we surely not we will surely

14 not be able to sell out the units we have got in stock now
 15 so the only way we can do we can the only thing we can do
 16 in order to be able to start the season in march a: at least
 17 in the right way is to come to an agreement to reach togheter
 18 an agreement because **Schianchi alone cannot afford hundred**
 19 **percent to undergo all these eh: these expenses** as an another
 20 thing eh: our competitors as far as we know at least to now
 21 probably will reduce their prices because are aware of the
 22 prices of these split in future will always will always de-
 23 crease will not surely increase

Ci sono molti altri casi, in questa interazione, in cui troviamo interventi mitigatori attuati dall'interprete tramite la sostituzione di espressioni, soprattutto verbali. Un esempio molto chiaro si trova più avanti nella stessa conversazione dove "non gliene può fregare di meno" detto in riferimento alla ditta Schianchi viene reso più garbatamente con "we don't care". Questi interventi di sostituzione e modulazione proposizionale sono la traccia di un intervento partecipativo dell'interprete. In particolare essa tratta le manifestazioni polemiche e/o aggressive degli interlocutori come esplicitazioni "per i soli orecchi dell'interprete", ovvero destinate "soltanto" a lei, e si assume la responsabilità di agire nella comunicazione interpretando le aspettative degli interlocutori rispetto allo scopo dell'interazione. A tal fine calibra le proprie scelte linguistiche in base alla situazione e agli interlocutori, mitigando le scelte lessicali dei parlanti, sulla base della propria interpretazione della situazione e dei ruoli in atto.

10.4. L'utilizzo di *quotational shields*

Un altro caso di modulazione attenuativa realizzata dall'interprete nella sfera questa volta della deissi, è quello rappresentato dall'impiego dei *quotational shields*: questi strumenti di mitigazione sarebbero utilizzati, secondo Caffi (1999: 891), per prendere le distanze dal contenuto di un determinato enunciato (per esempio attraverso l'uso di una forma impersonale o passiva), per sospendere l'interpretazione letterale (per esempio attraverso formule del tipo "per così dire, fra virgolette"), o ancora per lateralizzare un argomento rispetto ad una direttrice topicale maggiore (per esempio attraverso l'uso di espressioni del tipo "tra l'altro", "oltre a tutto", "per esempio"). Nei dati analizzati osserviamo che essi vengono utilizzati dall'interprete in determinati momenti della trattativa, per esempio quando una delle due parti rifiuta l'offerta e quindi si affaccia la possibilità di un esito negativo dell'incontro.

Nell'estratto 7 riportato sotto, l'interprete ricorre allo strumento di attenuazione per alleggerire il tono dell'enunciato; qui la traduzione di "final agreement", espressione utilizzata dal parlante giapponese nel primo turno (vedi linee 1 e 2): "I don't think we can reach any final agreement") mostra una mitigazione che viene attuata attraverso l'uso di un *quotational shield* ("diciamo così", linea 6) immediatamente

prima della traduzione dell'aggettivo. Con la scelta di tradurre "non penso che riusciremo a raggiungere un accordo diciamo così definitivo", l'interprete tenta una distensione del contenuto. Si può osservare, inoltre, che l'intero turno dell'interprete è impostato in modo da alleviare l'effetto potenzialmente negativo che potrebbe avere sul destinatario. Si veda per esempio, l'attribuzione di quanto viene detto al parlante giapponese ("dice, fa", linea 5) che distanzia il contenuto del messaggio dalla persona dell'interprete, l'esitazione nella scelta del verbo di attribuzione, l'utilizzo del futuro ("riusciremo" linea 5) che sembra spostare a un altro momento la realizzazione dell'atto problematico (il non raggiungimento dell'accordo) oppure la scelta di "nel senso che" (linea 6) che offre una fra le diverse conseguenze possibili, piuttosto che la sola conseguenza.

Estratto 7

- 1 G so the: maybe the e: I-I don't think we can reach any final
 2 agreement today because I think that you have to think ~ all
 3 very careful and also you have to find some ~ accounting I mean
 4 account I mean ~ opinion
 5 X dice fa non penso che riusciremo a raggiungere un un accordo:
 6 **diciamo così** definitivo oggi nel senso che anche noi dovremo
 7 poi con le nostre con le nostre azioni fare bene i conti eh:
 8 vedere,

Come si può osservare nelle prime linee (1-4) le mitigazioni sono interpretate, ma non introdotte dall'interprete. Segnali di mitigazione sono infatti presenti anche nel turno del parlante giapponese (vedi ad esempio *maybe* a inizio frase e l'utilizzo della negazione del verbo assertivo (*I don't think* anziché *I think*). A questo proposito, alcuni studi hanno messo in luce come nel discorso di trattativa prevalgano atteggiamenti linguistici di riparazione là dove vengono rifiutate le offerte dell'altra parte e come tali atteggiamenti si concretizzino nel proferimento per esempio di scuse o giustificazioni ("ci dispiace ma non possiamo accettare l'offerta", o, nel nostro caso, *maybe I don't think that*). D'altra parte l'*accountability* è stata individuata come una caratteristica distintiva della condotta sociale dei parlanti, i quali la utilizzano al fine di evitare o riparare fratture interazionali quando le loro azioni potrebbero risultare inaspettate, dannose o comunque problematiche (Firth, 1995: 200). Le azioni dell'interprete qui sono dunque in linea con ciò che sembra essere l'aspettativa del parlante giapponese e si orientano agli scopi di questa interazione.

10.5. I continuatori

I *continuatori* (Schegloff, 1982) sono espressioni prodotte da un parlante nel corso

dell'interazione mentre l'interlocutore sta parlando. Nella conversazione ordinaria essi tendono dunque a sovrapporsi al parlato altrui rappresentando così un coinvolgimento positivo o *cooperative overlap* (Tannen, 1981: 146, in Wadensjö, 1999: 257): incoraggiano l'orientamento dei partecipanti e contemporaneamente facilitano il coordinamento fra gli stessi. Questa funzione originaria dei *continuatori* svanisce in parte nella conversazione mediata dove i contributi dei parlanti vengono regolarmente sospesi da quelli dell'interprete. Qui li ritroviamo piuttosto fra i turni dell'interprete e quelli della persona alla quale lei si sta indirizzando. L'interprete può usare formule come *mhm, ok, yeah*, come strumento per incoraggiare il parlato di un interlocutore che al momento detiene il turno, lavorando come una sorta di *deputy listener* (Wadensjö, 1998: 257). Attraverso queste espressioni l'interprete segnala quindi al parlante che fra i due è in fase di costruzione quel terreno di conoscenza comune (Davidson, 2002: 1285) che permetterà successivamente di offrire al discorso un contributo nuovo e rilevante. Inoltre, è da notare il carattere "universale" di queste espressioni, il fatto che tendenzialmente esse siano comprensibili per entrambe le parti, anche perché solitamente accompagnate da una particolare gestualità ed espressione facciale; la "bivalenza" dei *continuatori* permette così all'interprete, quando li utilizza, di indicare contemporaneamente ad entrambe le parti qual è la funzione che sta svolgendo in quel determinato momento nell'interazione. Tale funzione può essere il semplice riconoscimento di ciò che viene detto da una delle parti, oppure, nel caso questi interventi si trovino all'interno dei cosiddetti *boundary turns* (Davidson, 2002: 1289), il passaggio dell'interprete dall'uso di una lingua a quello di un'altra, e quindi da un coinvolgimento conversazionale con un interlocutore ad un'attività di traduzione.

Nel corso della nostra trattativa troviamo molto spesso delle lunghe alternanze di turni che coinvolgono l'interprete e il rappresentante della delegazione giapponese e che sono accompagnate da questo tipo di espressioni. Tali sequenze sono giustificate in parte dal fatto che spesso l'intervento di traduzione non è richiesto visto che i parlanti italiani mostrano di capire le intenzioni dell'altra parte; l'interprete così mantiene la propria posizione intermediaria mostrandosi, agli occhi dell'interlocutore, destinataria momentanea del messaggio. L'aspetto interessante però è dato dal fatto che si osserva una tendenza, da parte dell'interprete, ad utilizzare questi meccanismi comunicativi immediatamente dopo che si è verificato un momento di tensione e in particolare dopo che un atteggiamento potenzialmente minaccioso per l'altra parte è stato mitigato dall'interprete stessa. In particolare, quando il tono del parlante italiano si fa ironico o quando questi manifesta un palese disappunto, i *continuatori* sembrano andare a compensare l'"attacco" nei confronti della parte lesa, facendo riguadagnare spazio ed importanza ai contenuti da questa espressi e prevenendo una reazione negativa che potrebbe compromettere la riuscita dell'incontro.

Nell'estratto 8 riportato sotto, una battuta formulata in inglese dal parlante italiano nei confronti del delegato giapponese ("just complete", turno 2) scatena l'ilarità del gruppo italiano, alludendo alla pignoleria del delegato giapponese che il gruppo

italiano ha più volte criticato nelle sequenze precedenti. A questa battuta potenzialmente offensiva segue una serie di turni che coinvolge l'interprete e la parte "offesa". Questi turni sono molto brevi e, per quanto riguarda l'interprete, sono caratterizzati dall'impiego di tali espressioni "continuative". La catena discorsiva viene iniziata dall'interprete (linea 3). Anche se è impossibile definire, per problemi di acustica, che cosa dica l'interprete al parlante giapponese nel primo turno, si intuisce che il messaggio è rivolto a lui e che costituisce uno spostamento di *topic* rispetto a ciò che ha detto il rappresentante italiano: è come se l'interprete gli stesse comunicando "non facciamo caso a ciò che ha detto, andiamo avanti". In questo modo viene manifestata una sorta di distacco da parte dell'interprete nei confronti della frase proferita, che rappresenta una derisione nei confronti del delegato giapponese, probabilmente legata alla ritrosia da questi mostrata nell'accettare l'offerta (in questo senso, la risata del gruppo contribuisce a definirla come tale). L'interprete, quindi, svia da un fattore di disturbo e potenziale conflitto riparando prima con un intervento suo personale che non corrisponde all'enunciato proferito dall'italiano e che cambia *topic* rispetto al suo commento, e poi con una focalizzazione dell'attenzione sul messaggio dell'interlocutore attraverso l'uso dei *continuatori*:

Estratto 8

- 1 G eh: on this, eh: so the[::]
- 2 L [just] complete"! (risate)
- 3 X ()
- 4 G you are talking about [this]?
- 5 X [yah]that column off
- 6 G mh mh, and the ~ is four, four billion two hundred fifty, five million
- 7 X **yeah**
- 8 G this amount
- 9 X **yeah**
- 10 G ah ah on six thousand six hundred forty fifth
- 11 X **mh, mh**

Similmente nell'estratto 9, in una fase particolarmente tesa della trattativa, in cui una domanda polemica da parte del parlante italiano introduce ancora una volta la possibilità di uno scontro tra le parti ("ottocentocinquantatré da dove salta fuori?", turno 1), ritroviamo lo stesso tipo di intervento attuato dall'interprete. Qui, l'utilizzo dei *continuatori* a sostegno dello scambio interazionale col delegato giapponese è preceduto da un'attenuazione del carattere aggressivo della domanda (che viene tradotta con "why", turno 2). Attraverso questo tipo di interventi, l'interprete incoraggia il parlante giapponese a spiegare il proprio punto di vista, mostrando collaborazione e riducendo la possibilità di una presa di parola del parlante italiano. Questi, a sua volta, può tornare a condividere i contenuti espressi dal fornitore, come dimostrano gli interventi "sì" (linea 6) e "more or less" (linea 19).

Estratto 9

- 1 L sì ma ottocentocinquantatré da dove salta fuori?
 2 X [why
 3 G [this is the cost
 4 X [yeah
 5 G [on on
 6 L sì
 7 G on the [~
 8 X [ok
 9 G of part expressed
 10 X yeah
 11 G and not played by ~
 12 X yeah
 13 G you can leave here
 14 X yes [eh
 15 G [and this twenty percent of this
 16 X mh mh
 17 G is one point sixtyfive
 18 X the price, ok
 19 L more or less
 20 G so ~ this one
 21 X yes

Limitatamente alla nostra trattativa, si potrebbe quindi riconoscere ai *continuatori* una funzione molto importante nella più ampia attività di mitigazione realizzata dall'interprete. Tali espressioni sembrano infatti completare e rafforzare il ruolo svolto da altri meccanismi di mitigazione, operando nel senso di uno sviamento dall'elemento problematico e della dimostrazione di un atteggiamento di ascolto e collaborazione. L'attività di mitigazione si comporrebbe quindi di due meccanismi principali, il primo rappresentato dall'intervento personale dell'interprete volto a modificare il topic in corso (il commento o la frase polemica), mitigandolo o modificandolo; il secondo costituito da un atteggiamento complementare al primo, finalizzato a indirizzare l'interlocutore su tale topic nuovo o modificato e incoraggiandolo a focalizzarsi su questo piuttosto che su quello potenzialmente offensivo.

L'utilizzo dei *continuatori* è un meccanismo che manifesta esplicitamente la partecipazione spontanea dell'interprete nell'interazione, il suo inserimento all'interno del sistema di presa di parola, e, soprattutto, la modifica che essa attua di tale sistema; in effetti, dando rilevanza agli interventi della parte offesa, ed escludendo momentaneamente dall'interazione l'altro interlocutore, l'interprete crea una diversa configurazione partecipativa con una delle parti, coordinando autonomamente lo scambio. Tale coordinamento sembrerebbe favorire lo sviluppo e il proseguimento dell'interazione globale, creando empatia ed agendo quindi anche ad un livello relazionale.

11. Conclusioni

L'analisi della trattativa d'affari mediata dall'interprete ha messo in luce il fatto che, in concomitanza con sequenze interazionali problematiche, nelle quali le parti coinvolte non condividono determinate posizioni e nelle quali il tono dei parlanti si fa polemico o aggressivo, l'interprete non si limita a tradurre ma assume una serie di comportamenti comunicativi volti ad attenuare la carica espressiva degli enunciati.

Tale attenuazione è stata qui ricondotta ad una più ampia attività di mitigazione, identificata, nei dati analizzati, con cinque meccanismi comunicativi individuati nelle azioni dell'interprete. In particolare, si è osservato come una riduzione della traduzione e la formulazione di interventi propri consentano all'interprete di sviare da elementi problematici, e, in quella che è generalmente identificata come un'attività di coordinamento, permettano di focalizzare l'attenzione dei parlanti su un *topic* rilevante ai fini dell'interazione. Per quanto riguarda la modulazione linguistica, si è osservato come l'interprete modifichi in traduzione certe espressioni implicitamente polemiche attenuandone il valore proposizionale oppure come essa utilizzi dei mitigatori che permettono un alleggerimento dell'impatto di contenuti negativi (come il rifiuto ad accettare un'offerta di mercato). Infine, si è notato come, in alcuni casi, l'attività di mitigazione sia completata dall'interprete attraverso l'impiego dei *continuatori* che: a. manifestano collaborazione da parte dell'interprete-interlocutore, b. confermano il nuovo *topic* proposto dall'interprete (o quello da lei mitigato) come *topic* di conversazione, ignorando una precedente azione potenzialmente offensiva (o la componente offensiva di un'azione precedente). In questo modo l'interprete sospende la presa del turno da parte della parte che ha potenzialmente offeso e dà spazio e rilevanza ai contenuti della parte che ha potenzialmente ricevuto l'offesa.

Questi interventi comunicativi mostrano come il lavoro svolto dall'interprete non si componga soltanto di un'attività traduttiva, ma, nel caso dei contesti dialogici, implichi anche una presa in considerazione di questioni che riguardano il rapporto fra gli interlocutori. In effetti, l'interprete sembra in primo luogo preoccuparsi e farsi carico della riuscita dell'incontro, e quindi del raggiungimento degli obiettivi comunicativi; in secondo luogo, e come diretta conseguenza di questo, l'interprete mostra uno sforzo costante nel garantire il proseguimento dell'interazione, favorendo la cooperazione tra i parlanti e un'attenzione al rapporto fra essi, quando questo rischia di essere compromesso da elementi di potenziale offesa. È interessante notare che tale potenziale offesa è un'interpretazione dell'interprete ed è visibile all'analista negli interventi dell'interprete stessa che, attraverso la propria azione mitigatrice, mostra di riferirsi ad aspettative diverse dei due interlocutori. Da questo punto di vista l'interprete agisce come filtro di tali aspettative. Questo ruolo assunto dall'interprete in questa interazione, soprattutto come traduttrice del contributo dei parlanti italiani, non viene mai sanzionato e anzi in alcuni casi la parte italiana riprende le parole o i contenuti proposti dall'interprete, mostrando così di avere compreso e accettato la sua

“mediazione”. L'attività di mitigazione esercitata dall'interprete testimonia quindi un suo intervento partecipativo nell'interazione, intervento che, sebbene teoricamente non previsto nel lavoro dell'interprete (ma vedi Gentile *et al.*, 1996, che riconosce le trattative di affari come particolarmente sensibili a interventi mitigatori dell'interprete), appare invece inevitabile in un contesto come quello dell'interpretazione dialogica, dove l'interprete è chiamato ad intervenire come un vero e proprio parlante, e non come un semplice tramite linguistico.

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Translating Cultures

*An Introduction for Translators,
Interpreters and Mediators*

David Katan



Each of the items below the waterline is a cultural orientation. In the following chapter we will focus our attention on two cultural orientations which automatically influence the way we use language to communicate: the orientations towards action and communication.

The other orientations directly influence behaviour, and hence communication in a wider sense. A short explanation of these orientations, and the possible options according to Brake *et al.* (1995) is given below, both to give the reader an idea of the array of possible combinations, and also because a number of these orientations will be referred to in our discussion on action and communication orientations. Where there is a significant difference in labelling, the authors responsible have been shown.

9.3 A Taxonomy of Orientations⁸

The first two orientations are discussed in detail in Chapter 10.

• Action

<i>Brake et al.</i> • be/do	<i>Hofstede</i> masculine/feminine	<i>Trompenaars</i> affective/neutral
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• Communication

<i>Hall</i> • High Context Communication • Low Context Communication	<i>Trompenaars</i> Diffuse Specific
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• Environment

<i>Brake et al.</i> • control • harmony • constraint	<i>Trompenaars</i> inner-directed (internal) outer-directed (external)	<i>NLP</i> proactive reactive
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If we accept that cultures are animate agents for a moment, we can then say that they vary in their perception of the environment: some may feel that they can control the environment, as in “Just Do It” discussed in Chapter 5.4, and feel in charge of their own destiny. Others, at the opposite end of the cline, will believe that the environment – including supernatural forces, destiny and luck – has a measure of control over them (*Che sarà sarà, Inshalla*).

⁸ For more details on indicators of orientations and statistics regarding a culture’s orientation see, in particular, Hofstede (1991); Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars (1993); Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1997).

The United States is a prime example of a control orientation, from its insistence on air-conditioning to the conquering of space and “the buck stops here”. Southern Europe, on the other hand is closer to a constraint orientation, with people more willing to accept the importance of *force majeure* and acts of God.

A third perception of the environment is the dominant Native-American and Eastern orientation, which is to operate in harmony with real or perceived environmental forces. The following extract from “Isho: the vigyana bhairava tantra”⁹ offers us a glimpse of how the two polar orientations differ in their fundamental perception of what really happened:

When Hillary reached to the highest peak of the Himalayas, Mount Everest, all of the Western world reported it as a conquering – a conquering of Everest. Only in a Zen monastery in Japan, on a wall newspaper, it was written, “Everest has been befriended” – not conquered! This is the difference – “Everest has been befriended”; now humanity has become friendly with it. Everest has allowed Hillary to come to it. It was not a conquering. The very word ‘conquer’ is vulgar, violent. To think in terms of conquering shows aggressiveness. Everest has received Hillary, welcomed him, and now humanity has become friendly; now the chasm is bridged. Now we are not unacquainted. One of us has been received by Everest. Now Everest has become part of human consciousness. This is a bridging.

• Time

<i>Brake et al</i>		<i>Hall</i>	<i>NLP</i>	<i>Trompenaars/Kluckhohn</i>
• single-focus	fixed	monochronic	through time	sequential
• multi-focus	fluid	polychronic	in time	synchronic
				Past/Present/Future

• Monochronic/Polychronic Time

Hall (1983) devotes most of his book to the cultural understanding of time. Monochronic time cultures perceive time as the frame. The focus is on the task rather than the relationship; and schedules are important and adhered to. According to Tannen (1992) and Pease and Pease (2001) men in general are more task oriented than women. With regard to national cultures, rather than gender, Northern Europeans and Americans also tend towards this orientation. Those with this orientation would consider it rude to interrupt a meeting, client or phone call to attend to another person. The word “interrupt” is itself a monochronic word.

Polychronic or multi-focus cultures, on the other hand, place greater emphasis on the relationship, and multi-tasking. Tasks will be completed according to relationship needs rather than time needs. In a bank, serving only one person, and not

⁹ <http://www.oTantra.net/VBTv2/chapter03.html>

answering the phone or another important person would be considered rude. Mediterranean, Arab, South American and Asian cultures tend towards this orientation.

• *Fluid/Fixed Time*

Fixed time cultures perceive time technically. A minute is sixty seconds: "Time is money", and can be spent, used and wasted. "On time" means technically 'on time', and apologies are expected between 1 and 5 minutes after, depending how close to fixed time the culture is. Time management, 'Just in Time' and 'Time and Motion' studies work well in these cultures. American, German and Swiss cultures are particularly conscious of technical time.

Fluid time defines punctuality with more flexibility. *Subito* in Italian technically means "immediately". It is the standard reply given by those in the service industry when being asked for service. The informal meaning is "I'll be with you when I have finished what I'm doing". In fluid-time cultures, delays are expected and tolerated. A meeting can start fifteen to thirty minutes late depending on the culture without undue tension being created. Those with a fixed-time orientation have difficulty in comprehending the Italian informal but institutionalized *quarto d'ora accademico* / "the university fifteen minute sliding start" much loved by Italian academics and students alike. It is always useful to check which time is being talked about: e.g. "German time", "Italian academic time", "Neapolitan time", "Milan time", and so on.

From Spanish Abroad, Inc.¹⁰

The fabled Mexican attitude toward time – 'manana, 'manana,...' – has probably become legendary simply from comparison with the USA. But it's still true. Especially outside the big cities, that the urgency Europeans and North Americans are used to is often lacking. Most Mexicans value *simpatia* (congeniality) over promptness. If something is really worth doing, it gets done. If not, it can wait. Life should not be a succession of pressures and deadlines. According to many Mexicans, life in the 'businesslike' cultures has been desympathized. You may come away from Mexico convinced that the Mexicans are right!

• *Past/Present/Future*

Past-oriented cultures emphasize tradition. Any change tends to take place over a long period and in relation to the past. The historical context is paramount to understanding the present, and history itself is highly valued. This is certainly true of Italy with many of its road names recording an event or personality in history. Television interviews (both in Britain and in Italy) tend to concentrate on the background of the subject in question, much to the irritation of the American guest who wants to talk about 'now'.

¹⁰ http://www.spanishabroad.com/mexico/country_guide/mex_society.htm

Present-oriented cultures, such as America, emphasize the here and now. "History is bunk", said Henry T. Ford. The future also is not so important: "time waits for no man"; "take care of today and tomorrow will take care of itself". Long-term planning tends to be in terms of five to ten years at maximum (Hall 1990:141).

Future-oriented societies can plan ahead to the next generation. Japanese business plans take account of the past and can plan for the next hundred years in "the eternal cycle" (Adler 1991:30-1; Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars 1997:138; Brake *et al.* 1995:52). Italy also has a future orientation in terms of relationships. Once formed they are expected to be long term, with dues and favours to be repaid over a long period.

The terms "enduring" and "infinite" need to be interpreted against these orientations. President Bush's use before the 2nd Gulf War is discussed below (in *The Denver Post* 28/11/01) in terms of everything but enduring or infinite. To a large extent both the past and the future are deleted, and for many will only go to strengthen negative stereotyping:

TO SPIN OR NOT TO SPIN

Rick Jacobs, principal and owner of Monigle Associates, corporate identity and branding consultants in Denver, says names like 'Infinite Justice' and 'Enduring Freedom' are really more like 'brands'.

His company, by the way, just unveiled a new logo for Fort Lewis College in Durango, hoping to change its reputation as 'Fort Leisure'. One of the problems with the college's old logo is that it showed beckoning mountains in the background with a book in the foreground. A closed book.

This is the sort of stuff Monigle does for its 800 clients, 95 percent of whom are outside Colorado. So Jacobs knows his brands.

'I was a bit surprised at how they're using branding principles in order to rally the troops, if you will', Jacobs said.

There is, of course, the example of 'Desert Storm', the brand name for the 1991 Gulf War. It seemed to catch on.

'I think we saw in Desert Storm the value of being able to define something with terms that allow people to rally behind it. It's a very interesting use of branding', Jacobs said.

'Something like "Enduring Freedom" doesn't have as much of an action associated with it. 'Desert Storm' clearly is action-oriented, and it sends very powerful, visual signals to people. But that's what it was. That was an appropriate name for that kind of an engagement.

"Enduring Freedom" seems more long-term than a storm, and I think the nature of this engagement is going to be exactly that. This is likely not going to be a huge front where we send in massive troops, but a long-term, precise, very surgical kind of operation that is going to go for years'.

It takes a completely different orientation to approach the subject as Arundhati Roy does. Here, we have an orientation which focuses on everything *but* the present:

Could it be that the stygian anger that led to the attacks has its taproot not in American freedom and democracy, but in the US government's record of commitment and support to exactly the opposite things – to military and economic terrorism, insurgency, military dictatorship, religious bigotry and unimaginable genocide (outside America)? It must be hard for ordinary Americans, so recently bereaved, to look up at the world with their eyes full of tears and encounter what might appear to them to be indifference. It isn't indifference. It's just augury. An absence of surprise. The tired wisdom of knowing that what goes around eventually comes around ... But war is looming large. Whatever remains to be said must be said quickly. Before America places itself at the helm of the "international coalition against terror", before it invites (and coerces) countries to actively participate in its almost godlike mission – called "Operation Infinite Justice" until it was pointed out that this could be seen as an insult to Muslims, who believe that only Allah can mete out infinite justice, and was renamed "Operation Enduring Freedom".

• *Space*

• Private/Public	Individual privacy v more public use of space
• Distance/Proximity	Preference for distance/low physical contact v. proximity/high physical contact
<i>Trompenaars:</i>	
• Specific orientation	Open access to personal life space; but access, position and authority etc., segregated according to context
• Diffuse orientation	Selected entry to individual's private life space, but relationship, position, authority, etc., crosses contexts

The Japanese have an orientation towards public space and distance, with open-plan offices, and small communal living quarters, but very little physical contact (public/distance). In comparison, an American or European house or office will tend towards the private, and higher levels of proximity are tolerated (private/proximity). We have already mentioned (in Chapter 4.1) Hall's appropriate distances for white North Americans when discussing culture at the level of environment. Typical appropriate distances for Southern Europe and South America will be closer – and will be perceived as much too close for the British.

The British are notoriously poor 'touchers' compared with other cultures. One study by Nancy Henley ('Body Politics') counted the number of touches between pairs chatting in cafes during a one hour sitting. The results: in Puerto Rico there were on average 180 instances of touch, in London, none.¹¹

¹¹ <http://www.globalideasbank.org/TouchHealth.html>

• *Diffuse/Specific*

Space can also be perceived as psychological (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner 1997:73-76). The degree to which individuals let others into their life (psychological space) tends to change with culture. Americans tend to the specific. New acquaintances become intimate friends over a relatively short period of time. However, this relationship (including both entitlements and obligations) is specific to a particular activity or sector.

A diffuse life space orientation, on the other hand, has a relatively guarded approach to acquaintances. However, once a relationship has been formed (whether business or personal), entry, including entitlements and obligations is expected to all areas of private space. Germany is a prime example of this system, and Italy also tends towards this system. The meaning of the word "friend" and the expected reciprocal rights and the duties will vary according to cultural orientation. The word itself should not be translated but mediated. Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1997:83) write about a personal experience in the U.S.A:

...the British author had been introduced at a reception following a graduation ceremony as Dr. Hampden-Turner, but at a party for much the same people a few hours later as Charles Hampden-Turner. He had also been introduced as "I want you to meet my very good friend Charles... (what's your surname?)."

• *Power*

<i>Brake et al.</i>	<i>Hofstede</i>	<i>Trompenaars</i>
Hierarchy	High Power Distance	Ascription
Equality	Low Power Distance	Achievement

In all societies there is power. It can be distributed evenly, with an attempt to reduce the degree of visible status. Alternatively, hierarchy and visible status can be emphasized. Italy is a relatively high power distance country, while Northern Europe, Britain and the States in particular tend to emphasize low power distance. South America, Asia, and (to a lesser extent) Southern Europe tend to respect high power distance. The importance of 'respect' when addressing a person, address rituals, and the degree of HAP or LAP type language most of the citizens have, are indications of a culture's power distance orientation.

In a similar way, Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner distinguish between cultures that tend to accord status according to 'who' someone is (according to family, background or title) and those cultures oriented towards awarding status to proven results (achievement) regardless of background. Clearly a professional's obligations are also culture-bound here: to the people who employ you (ascription) or to the task (achievement), as Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1997:109-10) explain:

...it often becomes clear that the translator from an ascriptive culture behaves "unprofessionally" according to the standards of achieving cultures. According to British, German, North American, Scandinavian and Dutch values, the translator is an achiever like any other participant and the height of his or her achievement should be to give an accurate, unbiased account of what was said in one language to those speaking the other language. The translator is supposed to be neutral, a black box serving the interests of modern language comprehension, not the interests of either party who may seek to distort meanings for their own ends.

In other cultures, however, the translator is doing something else. A Japanese translator, for example, will often take a minute or two more to "translate" an English sentence 15 seconds long. And there is often extensive colloquy between the translator and the team he or she serves about what the opposite team just said. The translator on the Japanese side is an interpreter, not simply of language but of gesture, meaning and context. His role is to support his own team and possibly even to protect them from confrontational conduct by the western negotiators.

• *Individualism*

<i>Brake et al.</i>	<i>NLP</i>
Individualism	(tend to) Internal + Independent/Proximity
Collectivism	(tend to) External + Co-operative

Japan is the most well-known "we", collective, oriented culture. However, Southern European (such as Turkey and Greece), Central and South American countries are even more collective, relying on tight social networks for most communication. America leads the "I", "do your own thing" cultures on all individualism indexes, while Northern Europe (such as Italy and France) are also heavily individualist. Differences between these countries occur most on the universalistic/particularist orientations.

• *Particularism*

<i>Trompenaars</i>	<i>Hofstede</i>
Universalism	Truth
Particularism	Virtue

Universalist codes are universally applicable. There is a tendency to generalize laws and procedures, and to apply them universally. American mass-production, McDonald's, sneakers (as we have seen in Chapter 4.1) and Henry Ford's "You can have any colour you like as long as it's black" symbolize the desire for universalism. Particularist cultures, such as those on the Russian subcontinent, Asia, Central and

South America, and Southern Europe plus France and Italy, do not reduce situations to simplistic rules. These cultures emphasize difference, uniqueness and exceptions, from food and restaurants to the application of parking fines and queuing. We have already mentioned the universalist American difficulty in understanding the particularist Mexican approach to speeding offences in Chapter 2.3.

George Orwell noted how it is possible to be particularist in a politically collectivist society in his political satire *Animal Farm*: "All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others" (see also Hofstede 1991:161). This orientation nurtures the patronage system, which can work for the good of the collective society as in Japan, or for a particular group or family as in Italy (see also Mead 1994:111-37 and Gannon 2001:126). This means that the translation of the term 'democracy', for example, needs to be contextualized (see also Lewis 2000:131). Francesco Rossi does so in his 1963 film *Le Mani Sulla Città* 'Hands Over the City', an investigation into the collapse of a block of flats. Jones, in his *The Dark Heart of Italy* describes the plot to explain Italy today, perceived, understandably enough from a universalist orientation, as corrupt:

[The Christian Democratic] party get rich by assigning building contracts to *Mafigosi*, who in return guarantee the politicians their votes ... As far as the law goes, *tutto è in regola*, everything is 'by the book'. The [illegal construction of the flats] has been legalized. The commission of enquiry can reach no conclusion. Politics is reduced to the buying and selling of votes made possible by the vast amounts of money slashing around by the construction business. Besieged by angry women, the mayor unfolds huge notes and passes them around. Looking over his shoulder he smiles and says 'Consigliere, see how democracy works?'

• Competitiveness

<i>Brake et al.</i>	<i>Hofstede</i>	<i>NLP</i>
Competitive	Masculine	Proactive + Independent + Self
Cooperative	Feminine	Sorting style: (material) things (Reactive) + Co-operative + Others Sorting Style: people

Competitive cultures privilege the more masculine character. There are winners and losers, people "live to work", workaholics are respected, and material success is a high motivator. Cooperative cultures, on the other hand, work together as interdependent teams, "work to live" and place a higher value on the quality of life. Japan, Germany, Italy and the Anglo-American countries are all competitive cultures. High-cooperative cultures include the Scandinavian countries, Spain and a number of South American countries. As Hofstede (1991:90, emphasis in the original) explains, this orientation affects the interpretation and evaluation of terms such as 'average' and 'best':

Experience in teaching abroad and discussions with teachers from different countries have led me to conclude that in [...] the more masculine cultures like the U.S.A. the *best* students are the norm. Parents in these countries expect their children to try and match the best. The 'best boy in class' in the Netherlands is a somewhat ridiculous figure.

• Structure

<i>Brake et al.</i>	<i>Hofstede</i>	<i>NLP</i>
Order	Strong Uncertainty Avoidance	Procedures
Flexibility	Weak Uncertainty Avoidance	Options

The future is an unknown factor for all cultures, and day-to-day life can also present people with the unknown. The degree to which a culture feels threatened or uncomfortable with ambiguity, uncertainty or change, is an indication of its orientation towards order or flexibility. Japan, Greece, Italy and Germany have a strong orientation towards order, and tend to avoid ambiguity or change in all things. Hence change tends to come about through destabilization and revolution. In Italy, though the appearance of structure is highly valued, its particularist orientation ensures that the orientation towards order is never fully achieved.

The Anglo-American countries have a relatively high toleration for uncertainty and change. According to Hofstede (1991:113), Great Britain is the most unperturbed of that group, and rates forty-eighth out of the fifty-three countries surveyed in terms of "the extent to which members of a culture feel threatened by uncertain or unknown situations". Singapore, at number fifty-three, has the highest toleration. These cultures have less need for detailed rules which attempt to define all situations. Flexibility (except for time itself), choice and options are valued. To a certain extent this orientation explains the reasons why the Italian equivalents of "No Smoking" or "Thank you for not smoking" notices are the more detailed and legally structured:

DIVIETO DI FUMARE

Ai sensi della Legge n. 584 del 11.11.1975 è severamente vietato fumare; i trasgressori sono soggetti all'applicazione delle previste Sanzioni Amministrative.

SMOKING IS FORBIDDEN

Pursuant to regulation no. 584, 11/11/1975, smoking is severely forbidden. Those in breach will be subject to the relevant Administrative Sanctions

• *Thinking*

<i>Brake et al.</i>	<i>NLP</i>	<i>Hall</i>	<i>Trompenaars</i>
Deductive	Match / Similarities / Large Chunks	HCC	
Inductive	Mismatch / Differences / Small Chunks	LCC	
Linear	Specific	Monochronic	Specific
Systemic	General	Polychronic	Diffuse

• *Deductive/Inductive*

Alternative labelling for deductive/inductive has already been given at the beginning of the chapter. Deductive thinking orientations focus on theories, logic and principles. This is very true of Germany and France, and to a lesser extent Italy. Situations are classified according to already existing theories. Inductive cultures are more pragmatic and specific, starting from empirical observation. Facts and statistics are highly valued. The United States and Britain are particularly inductive.

• *Linear/Systemic*

Linear-oriented cultures will dissect problems into logical and precise sequences, look for detail, precision and minute cause and effect, such as the McDonald's itemization of the service counter routine. Systemic, on the other hand is holistic, and tends to look at the full picture, the background and relationships with other parts of even bigger pictures. Explanations will be less in terms of statistics and logic; but rather in connections, feelings and similes. Italy tends towards the systemic, while Japan is a clear example of the most systemically oriented culture.

Many have already noted how communication patterns between men and women differ. Any popular book on the subject will tell you that it is not necessary to go abroad to encounter difference: men tend to be linear while women tend to be systemic – and the results of these different orientations to reality are known to us all.

Even today we still need translators. Men and women seldom mean the same things when they use the same words. For example, when a woman says "I feel like you *never* listen", she does not expect the word *never* to be taken literally. Using the word *never* is just a way of expressing the frustration she is feeling at the moment. It is not to be taken as factual information.

To fully express their feelings, women assume poetic license and use various superlatives, metaphors and generalizations. Men mistakenly take these expressions literally. (Gray 1993:60)

A woman's superior sensory equipment picks up and analyses [verbal and non-verbal] information and her brain's ability to rapidly transfer between hemispheres makes her more proficient at integrating and deciphering ... This is why most men have difficulty lying to a woman face-to-face. But as most women know, lying to a man face-to-face is comparatively easy, as he does not have the necessary sensitivity ... most men, if they're going to lie to a woman, would be far better off doing it over the phone, or with the lights off, and a blanket over their heads. (Pease and Pease 2001:29)

Chapter 10. Contexting

The aim of this chapter is to:

- introduce Edward T. Hall's Theory of Contexting in communication
- discuss the links between contexting and left/right brain distinctions
- illustrate a number of the language behaviour differences as a result of contexting differences
- show the relevance of contexting for a cultural interpreter/mediator involved in translation and interpreting transactional situations

10.1 High and Low Context

Communication			Possible cultural priorities	
<i>Hall</i>	<i>Trompenaars</i>	<i>Simons et al.</i>		
• HCC	Diffuse	loosely knit	Relationship	what is understood the context of the message the meta-message
• LCC	Specific	tightly woven	Task	what is said the text of the message

One of the guiding orientations, which perhaps could be termed a meta-orientation, is 'contexting'. This term was coined by Hall in 1976 (1989:85-128) and further discussed in 1983 (59-77). The basic concept is that individuals, groups, and cultures (and at different times) have differing priorities with regard to how much information (text) needs to be made explicit for communication to take place.

The words 'text' and 'context' have particular meanings here. Context is "stored information", and as such is very close to Halliday's (Halliday and Hasan 1989:47) "non-verbal environment of a text" which is made up of "the context of situation and the wider context of culture". In terms of communication, according to Hall (1983:61), it is "the amount of information the other person can be expected to possess on a given subject", while the text is "transmitted information".

Both Halliday and Hall, among many others, agree that communication entails both text and context. Gregory Bateson's comment (as cited by Ting-Toomey 1985:83) is clear and to the point: "All communication necessitates context and ... without context there is no meaning".

Halliday suggests that the context of situation is "the total environment in which a text unfolds" (Halliday and Hasan 1989:5, 36) but then goes on to say: "In the normal course of life, all day and every day, when we are interacting with others through language ... we are making inferences from the situation to the text, and from the text to the situation". It seems that here Halliday is concentrating on the immediate context of the text within a single frame of culture. Hall's context though, is explicitly both the context of situation and the context of culture, i.e. it includes the beliefs and values that determine the behaviour to be interpreted.

Clearly, also, in any communication, the speaker and listener will have their own perception of the context. The more these perceptions are shared the more possible it will be, as Halliday suggests (Halliday and Hasan 1989:5), to use them as a framework for hypothesizing what is going to be said. Sperber and Wilson (1995:15) also understand 'context' in terms of perception rather than reality. They suggest that it is "the set of premises used in interpreting an utterance" and that it is "a psychological construct, a subset of the hearer's assumptions about the world. It is these assumptions, of course, rather than the actual state of the world, that affect the interpretation of an utterance".

Halliday (Halliday and Hasan 1989:12-14; also Taylor Torsello 1992), on the other hand, sees context of situation as a tangible construct (visible and audible). The description is in terms of a simple conceptual framework of three headings:

the field	what is happening
the tenor	who are taking part
the mode	what part the language is playing

Problems in understanding, through translation or otherwise, arise from the fact that assumptions about the world differ. Widdowson (1979:138) shows the importance of sharing mutual assumptions in successful communication with this well-known conversation exchange:

A: doorbell!!
 B: I'm in the bath.
 A: Ok.

Both parties 'know' that "I'm in the bath" did not mean what was textually said. As a result, the meta-message is successfully communicated through what is already shared. In another situation, between two other people who do not know each other, less can be assumed to be understood; and the conversation might be as follows:¹

(phone rings)
 A: George?
 B: Yes?
 A: Look, I'm a little tied up at the moment – do you think you could answer it and ask them to phone back in 10 minutes?
 B: Sure. Where is it?
 (phone stops ringing)
 A: Never mind.

¹ See also Scollon and Scollon (2001:76-82) and their discussion on meta-communication and unclear reference.

Interlocutors in each communication event will, usually out-of-awareness, arrange themselves and others along the context scale. We tend to believe we know how much needs to be said and explained to have our message understood the way we meant. Whether or not this is true, as we cannot mind read, is usually difficult to objectively judge. In cross-cultural communication, the scope for error is even larger.

There are, then, two aspects to communication (text and context), each represented by a triangle:

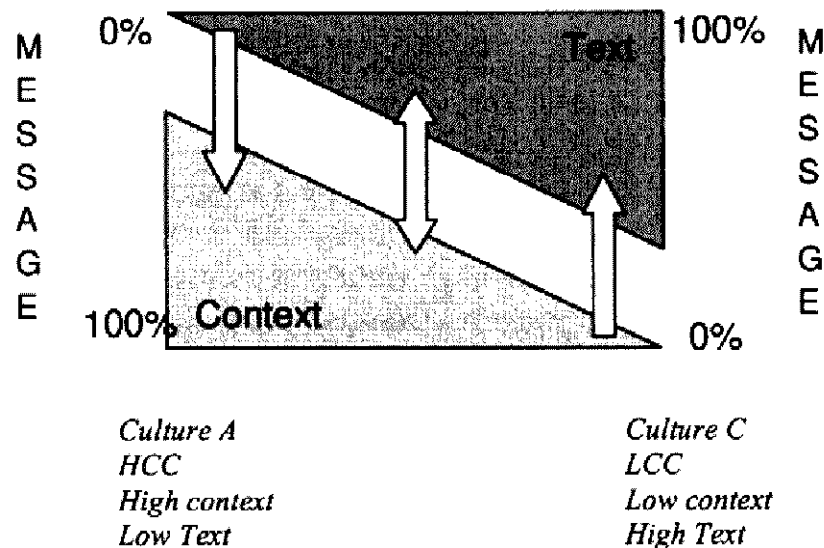


Figure 40. Hall's Triangles

At one theoretical extreme, all the information that is to be conveyed is made visible, or explicit, in the 'text' triangle. While at the other extreme, no text is necessary as all the information is implicit, i.e. it is contained in the 'context' triangle. The diagram, adapted from Hall (1983:61), shows how both triangles operate together in a cline to form the message. He explains that, "as context is lost, information must be added if meaning is to remain constant".

Hall suggests that contexting is a fundamental aspect of culture; and also that members of a culture will have a shared bias, either towards communication through the text or the context. This will be their guiding principle in all decisions to be made. However, as we have already noted in the introduction, orientations *can* change according to situation. Following other authors, we will refer to a High Context Communication orientation as 'HCC' and a preference for text as a Low Context Communication orientation or 'LCC'.

Hall's contexting theory is "begging to be connected" (Vincent-Marrelli 1989:473) to a language based theory of communication. In her paper is a clear indication of how the theory can prove fruitful in understanding Anglo-Italian cross-cultural miscommunication.² George Simons *et al.* (1993) have also made extensive

² See also Katan (1994).

use of this HCC/LCC polarity in their volume on cross-cultural business management. They also suggest that all cultural orientations depend on this meta-orientation, which they relate to two principle types of culture: 'loosely knit' and 'tightly woven'. The metaphors relate to the adaptability of a loosely knit fabric, which has yet to take on a final form and can be stretched without damage. This is compared with a dense, interwoven, more solid fabric – and more resistant to change. We begin to see parallels here with the uncertainty avoidance orientation: either towards structure or flexibility.

How much written information is available for the foreign visitor, and how much will need to be obtained from a local informer is a possible indication of how high or low context a culture is. In New York, there are helpful signs indicating the best time and angle from which a photograph should be taken at every tourist site. In Cairo there are no signs telling you which pyramid is which – but there is no shortage of guides.

On American Forces radio,³ there are a variety of public service adverts giving advice that would strike higher context communication cultures as 'obvious', i.e. the sort of advice that would be passed on informally (out-of-awareness) and through observation:

- It's a dog's life, so please don't stroke us while we are eating, or chase us around the garden.
- Remember, those nice exotic house plants could be poisonous for your little ones.
- Eating too fast is not only bad for your diet; it is also bad for your digestion.
- Oil and grease on linoleum floors can be dangerous. It's just an accident waiting to happen.
- Spend quality time with your family. You can make a difference.
- When it comes to choosing a life-mate, be sure to check with your best friend.

Universities vary their welcome to new students according to how text-based they are. The British and the American have "Freshers' Week"⁴ and "Orientation" respectively. During this time, administrative, academic and student organizations battle for the time to formally and technically explain and entertain. In Italy, and other Mediterranean countries, the explaining and the entertaining is very much more informal and unplanned. Students are informed through the grapevine.

Some British universities, being older, are more 'tightly woven', and therefore less explicit in their dissemination of information. Two Americans, Bill Bryson and Stuart Franklin noted the inaccessibility of the culture for an outsider at one of the Oxford colleges:

³ Heard on ZFM, American forces Radio (1995-6)

⁴ The term "fresher" is British English; "freshman" is the less PC American term.

Waiting for a professor one day, I passed the time by glancing through [the bulletin board announcements]. 'Master's Handshaking will take place in the Dining Room of the Master's Lodgings. Please wait in the passage outside,' said one. Another, more cryptically, announced: 'Lagrangian Mechanics – Saturday 11 a.m'. A third stated: 'RFC 1st and 2nd XV practice Thurs. 2 p.m'. Perhaps 50 such notices were pinned to the board, all dealing with some important component of college life, and it occurred to me, as I stood there idly looking them over, that I couldn't truly understand a single one. It is a feeling you soon grow used to in Oxford. *National Geographic* (November 1995:120)

Other universities, in higher context communication cultures, do not even use bulletin boards; and students are expected 'to know' through the informal network of personal contact where and when lessons are, and in particular when and where changes have been made. In an HCC, tightly woven culture, the participants are expected to share more of the larger context – whether or not this is actually the case.

Identity, in tightly woven cultures, is closely related to social position. People take their place within a pre-formed, stable and interwoven network where change is unusual. Japan would be a case in point. Trompenaars (1997:102-119) uses the term 'achievement' and 'ascription' orientations to explain cultures' options in according status. An LCC culture will tend to accord status to the person who merits the position through proven capability in the field and through election. Particularly important is a written CV. In an HCC culture you already need to be known for who you are. Long-term contacts and networking become increasingly important – paper qualifications less so.

So, HCC cultures are not immediately oriented to the newcomer (though the guest will be very well looked after). The United States, on the other hand, is a prime example of a 'loosely knit' society, accepting newcomers into its social fabric. The successful newcomers will also have an orientation to low uncertainty avoidance and the ability to change identity. They quickly become, for example, ethnic Black, Afro- or Chinese- American. In this melting pot there is space (both physical and mental) for change.

Many authors have also likened the LCC and HCC differences in terms of rooting systems. Some cultures have more solid and interwoven roots, while others, with a shallow root system can be uprooted without creating great disturbance. Remarks made (reported below) by two ministers (one British and one Italian) on the problem of unemployment reflect this presence or lack of a deep root system.

In each case the ministers' reaction to unemployment is totally 'natural'. In Britain, in the aftermath of the 1981 Brixton riots, Norman Tebbit, the then Secretary of State for Employment, made the "infamous assertion that 'My father didn't riot but got on his bike to look for work. 'Get on your bike' became the moral imperative of conservatism";⁵

⁵ Quoted from "The Silent Takeover Global Capitalism and the Death of Democracy" in www.thirdworldtraveler.com/Global_Economy/Silent_Takeover%20_Part1.html

SOME CONSIDERATIONS ON POLITICAL IDEOLOGY AND THE BRITISH SEARCH FOR PROSPERITY FOR ALL ITS CITIZENS

4.4 Labour market flexibility. The Conservative government believed that insecurity in the workplace motivates the workforce. The government resisted all measures to give part-timers the same rights as full timers or to introduce a minimum wage in the belief that these measures would cost jobs. The argument used is 'low pay or no pay'. If work is not available you should simply 'Get on your bike' to find it. There is no such thing as 'a job for life'.⁶

Not only is this idea firmly accepted by the Conservative party (and to a large extent by the general populace) but the expression "get on your bike" has now come into the language, and into recent dictionaries (e.g. *Longman* 1992).

Tiziano Treu, the Italian Employment minister in Berlusconi's centre-right government (1995), had a very different point of view when talking about the chronic unemployment situation in Southern Italy:

<i>[...] è naturale che i ragazzi, specie se diplomati o laureati, piuttosto che spostarsi preferiscono attendere qualche opportunità nella zona in cui hanno le loro radici.</i> <i>Corriere della Sera (3/5/95)</i>	It's natural that young people, particularly those with college or university qualifications, would prefer to wait for an opportunity in their own area where they have roots, rather than move.
--	---

The fact that a culture is more HCC or LCC will also mean, according to Hall, that there will also be other related text/context orientations. Victor (1992) and Simons *et al.* (1993) have produced lists of typical (and simplified rather than actual) features of these two different orientations. With some adaptations, they are outlined below:

Low context operating mode	High context operating mode
More loosely knit shallow rooted	More tightly woven deep rooted
<i>Emphasis placed on:</i>	<i>Emphasis placed on:</i>
• text	context
• facts	relationship/feelings
• directness	indirectness
• consistency	flexibility (in meaning)
• substance	(social/personal) appearance
• rules	circumstances
• monochronic	polychronic

⁶ John Baillie of Park Lane College, Leeds, United Kingdom, 1997. Contribution to the EDUVINET "Living Conditions of EU Citizen", <http://www.eduvinet.de/eduvinet/uk005.htm>

If we take two different cultures, such as Italy and Britain, and compare them on the above lists, it is clear that they can be associated more with one list than with another. Italy would tend to operate on a more tightly woven, high context basis, while the British would tend to operate on a more loosely-knit, low context basis. Comparing Britain and the United States, it would seem that the US is even further down the cline towards low context. We should also remember that the operating mode favoured will, as we have already mentioned, depend on many variables: culture, sub-culture, gender, class, age, situation, and, of course, individual personality.

That being said, there are some useful generalizations that can be made (always couched in the positive, to reflect prioritized cultural values). If we think about the way the British and the Italians regard fashion, food and furniture, it is clear that the British are lower context, attaching more value to functionality, whereas Italy places a higher value on design, taste and aesthetics.

With regard to appearance, we have already mentioned the English city without mirrors: "The girls in their cheap and flimsy finery ... How the Italians would despise and laugh at them". Another article, published a year earlier, echoes the same thoughts. The article (*The Sunday Times* 18/12/94, 6:5) has an LCC title "Face Facts" and discusses the case of a woman who had been described as "ugly" by a policeman. The verbalization of 'ugly' flouts PC norms (discussed in Chapter 5.3). The article, in fact, begins by discussing the public outcry which resulted from the police officer's ill-advised description. The article then moves on to look at Britain as a whole (emphasis in original):

Britain *does* look a mess, particularly compared to our EC neighbours. The average Italian waiter would not dream of working in anything other than starched white coat and bow tie. The average Italian banker is kitted out in immaculate tweed and has perfectly manicured fingernails – as does the local fruit seller and probably newsagent too. I've lived in Milan. I remember feeling obliged to look neat and tidy for the plumber/telephone man/cleaner.

Using the Meta-Model we can immediately note the use of the modal necessity: 'to feel obliged'. The values that lie behind that statement are steeped in a culture which values individual freedom (an orientation towards self). An Italian would tend to value in-group norms. It would, therefore, be 'normal' to dress neatly and tidily in public groups (an orientation towards others).

The culture-bound aspects of the normality are hidden in the deletion of the performatives of words such as *rispetto* / "respect" or *normale* / "normal", and in the nominalization of *in ordine* / "neat and tidy". The full representation (hidden to most speakers) would be as shown in figure 41.

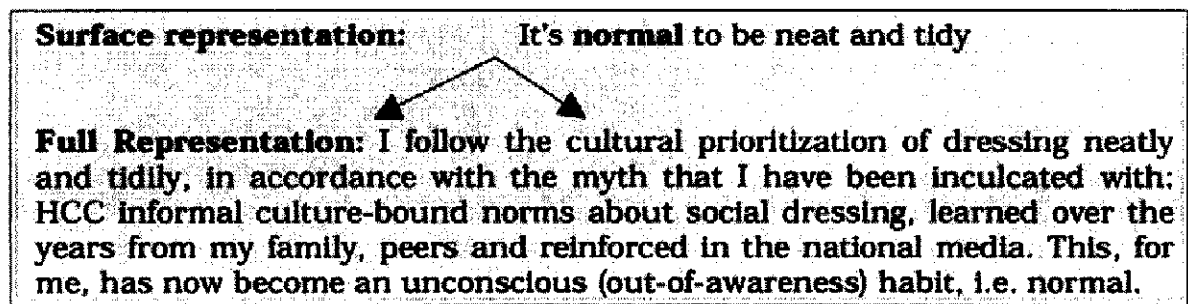


Figure 41. Full Representation of Italian "normal"

What is hidden in the English remark is as follows:

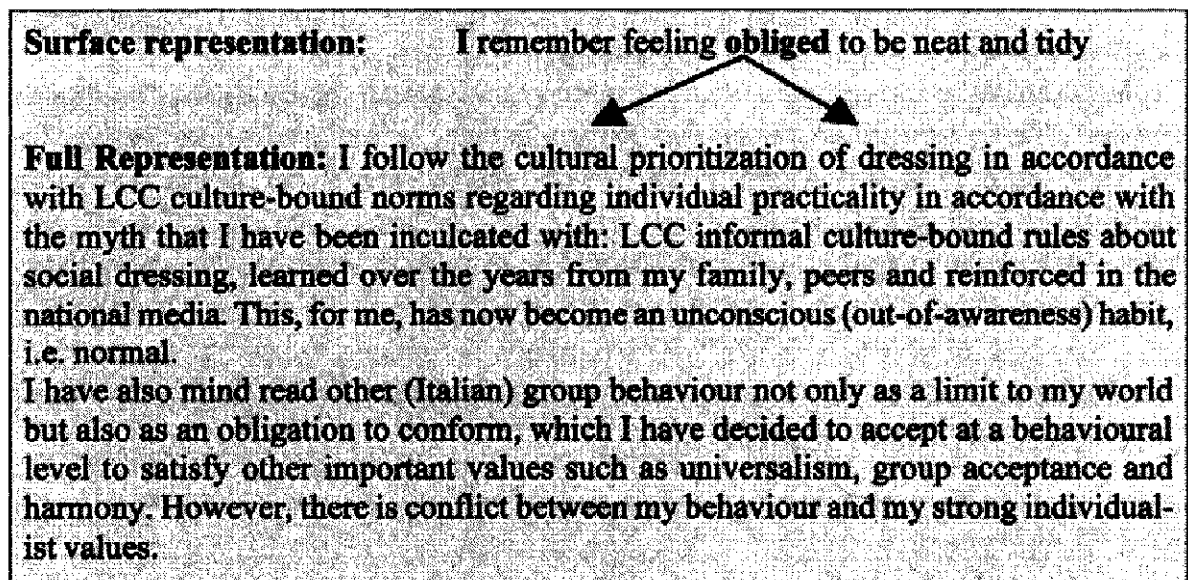


Figure 42. Full Representation of English "obliged"

The two cultures, British and Italian, not only disagree on the importance or cultural prioritization of being "neat and tidy", but there is also disagreement over the criterial equivalence, i.e. what has to happen for the neat and tidiness value to be met. We have already seen how 'casual clothes' need to be contextualized before we can fully understand what is being talked about. Also, what is 'tidy' for one culture (and, of course, generation) will not necessarily meet the criterial equivalence of another. Hofstede (1991:118) notes a related culture-bound concept, that of 'dirt', or as he calls it "matter out-of-place". He points out that what is dirty or clean is also an extremely relative concept: "The Italian *mammas* and nannies see dirt and danger in the piazza where the American grandparents see none".

However, the Americans, British and Italians are in complete agreement that the Japanese have an exaggerated sense of dirt. The Italian fruit seller and newsagent may have "perfectly manicured nails", but the Japanese train, taxi and bus drivers, for example, wear starched white gloves. Their gloves, in harmony with the rest of their immaculate uniforms, are expected to remain clean all day.

What counts as neat and tidy in Singapore is also very different generally from accepted Western 'civilized' attitudes. Fines for litter dropping in Singapore are

taken seriously, and laws requiring houses to be repainted are also a sign of the culture's perception, interpretation and evaluation of dirt. As a result, both the Japanese and the Singaporeans tend to perceive the West in much the same way as the West sees a developing country, i.e. as a dirty place. Dirt, as we have said, is a relative concept, and each culture is happy with its own understanding of the concept. There will always be cultures that exaggerate, and cultures that do not come up to our standard. And so every culture positions itself on a cline, convinced that its position is the correct one. This is the heart of the belief that the map or myth is reality.

The following contexting cline comes from a business article adapted by Victor (1992:143). Hall's theory, in fact, has been developed, like much anthropological theory more in the very pragmatic field of business management than in any other field. It should also be pointed out that unlike the other orientations mentioned in the previous chapter, this particular cline is not based on any published statistics:

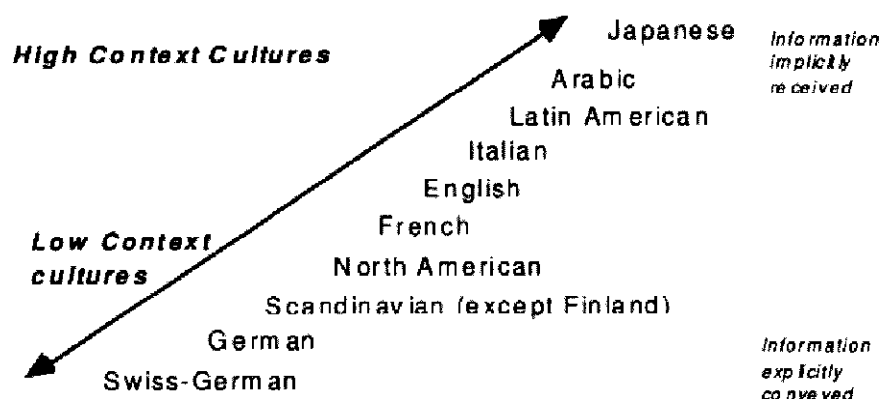


Figure 43. Context Ranking of Cultures

The highest context communication culture is the Japanese, which fits our stereotype of their inscrutable culture, where silence is more valued than the word. At the other end of the cline is the Swiss-German where the stereotype of exacting precision and detailed information fits their LCC position.

An extreme example of a low context character comes from Charles Dickens' *Hard Times* (1987). The schoolmaster, Thomas Gradgrind is presented to the reader with these words:

Now what I want is Facts. Teach these boys and girls nothing but facts. Facts alone are wanted in life. Plant nothing else, and root out everything else. You can only form the minds of reasoning animals upon Facts: nothing else will ever be of any service to them. Thomas Gradgrind, sir. A man of realities. A man of fact and calculations. A man who proceeds upon the principle that two plus two are four, and nothing over, and who is not to be talked into allowing anything else.

Thomas Gradgrind, as we can see from the cline, will be appreciated by cultures lower down the ranking scale. In fact, he has problems enough in England, and with

this orientation should not be sent to a teaching post in Japan.

Returning now to an earlier discussion on language and culture, we can now look at the relationship between the use of the lexico-grammar and the contexting theory. We will look first at the English language, and then at British and American differences in the use of English.

10.2 English – The Language of Strangers

The English language itself, as a lexico-grammatical system, is decidedly LCC in comparison with many other languages. The language is well-adapted to explication, and less suitable for the signalling of pre-established social relationships, as Mühlhäusler and Harré (1990:32-33) note. They point out that in Japanese, the language itself obliges speakers to pronounce themselves on one of the four levels of relationship with others. Membership in the relationship itself is an essential part of Japanese discourse: "To speak at all some choice must be made among the four. Whatever word one selects expresses a particular relationship". English, on the other hand "does not facilitate the expression of social relations between speakers and audience at all".

Halliday (1992:75) notes exactly the same point, and explains the LCC nature of the English language itself (as used by the middle-class): "the ways of meaning of the listener are precisely not taken for granted. This kind of discourse can be spoken to a stranger". Hasan (1984:131, 151) notes that cultures select from 'implicit' and 'explicit' options (without ever mentioning Hall or the contexting theory). In her study, contrasting Urdu and English, she notes that an English person:

could not speak as implicitly as the Urdu speaker, even if he tried – the system of his language will not permit him to do so ... We can claim without hesitation that the dominant semantic style in Urdu is the implicit one ...

Urdu, spoken by eighty-five million people in Pakistan, North and central India and Bangladesh is an example of a language spoken by a tightly woven group. According to both Halliday and Hasan, speakers of this language will tend to select the implicit option, not only for lexico-grammatical reasons, but also because the context of situation will not have changed in time and there are strong relations between events.

Concluding her research on the high level of assumptions made by Urdu speakers, and the expectation that the addressee (whether total stranger or not) will implicitly know, Hasan (1984:153) makes a strong case for the tightly woven/loosely structured hypothesis: "the Urdu speaker's world must be a fairly-well regulated place in which persons, objects and processes have well-defined positions with reference to each other, and the speakers know the details".

• *American and British English*

We now turn to differences in standard usage of the same lexico-grammatical sys-

*N*onverbal Communication in Human Interaction



Mark L. Knapp | Judith A. Hall

Chapter 7

THE EFFECTS OF GESTURE AND POSTURE ON HUMAN COMMUNICATION

We respond to gestures with an extreme alertness and, one might say, in accordance with an elaborate and secret code that is written nowhere, known by none, and understood by all.

—EDWARD SAPIR

Sapir's view (quoted here) aptly characterized the prevailing view of gestures during the first part of the 20th century. If he were alive today, his assessment would no doubt be somewhat different. Spoken language and gestures are commonly acknowledged as building blocks of human interaction (informal conversation as well as more formal public discourse), but, unlike language, gestures received relatively little scholarly attention until the last part of the 20th century. Kendon (1981a) identified only six scholarly books on gesture published between 1900 and 1979 in the English language. Now, however, gestures are carefully scrutinized by scholars from around the world, and an academic journal specifically devoted to gesture research, *Gesture*, was launched in 2001. As a result, our knowledge of how people use and respond to gestures has greatly increased.

What exactly is a gesture? *Gestures* are movements made by the body or some part of it. Typically, gestures are thought of as arm and hand movements, but head gestures are also well known. Normally gestures are produced without bodily touch, but it does happen. For example, a pointing gesture may touch the speaker's own body or that of the listener. The movements involved while actually performing tasks such as grooming, smoking, eating, drawing, or hammering a nail are not considered gestures, but arm and hand movements that allude to and represent the performance of such behaviors are definitely considered gestures. In fact, people whose daily work involves a variety of manual manipulations, like the work of a car mechanic, may develop a gestural repertoire that emanates from this work (Streeck, 2002).

Gestures perform many functions. They may replace speech (during dialogue or when speech is not used at all), regulate the flow and rhythm of interaction, maintain attention,

add emphasis and/or clarity to speech, help characterize and make memorable the content of speech, act as forecasters of forthcoming speech, and help speakers access and formulate speech.

What types of gestures are commonly employed in everyday interaction? Gestures may be categorized in many ways (McNeill, 2000; Morris, 1977, 1994). This chapter uses a classification system based on the extent to which a gesture is dependent on speech for its meaning. This is a useful distinction and we can learn a lot about gestures as either *speech-independent* or *speech-dependent*. At the same time, however, it is also important to recognize the difficulties in neatly categorizing a behavior which, on the surface, may seem relatively uncomplicated. Take, for example, the head shake (Kendon, 2002). Sometimes we use the head shake as a speech-independent gesture meaning "no" (even though a side-to-side head wobble in parts of India and Bulgaria means just the opposite). And while a "no" meaning can be communicated without speech, sometimes people will say "no" during the shake. The meaning of the shake has a greater dependence on the accompanying speech when it is used to signal disapproval or doubt which may occur while saying, "Well, I guess I could talk to him . . ." In addition, the head shake also accompanies statements to underscore intensity or impossibility, as in "You just wouldn't believe how beautiful she was." The head shake, like all the gestures discussed in this chapter, can be used and interpreted in different ways, depending on the way it is enacted and the context in which it occurs. With this in mind, let's examine those gestures that are less dependent on speech for their meaning.

SPEECH-INDEPENDENT GESTURES

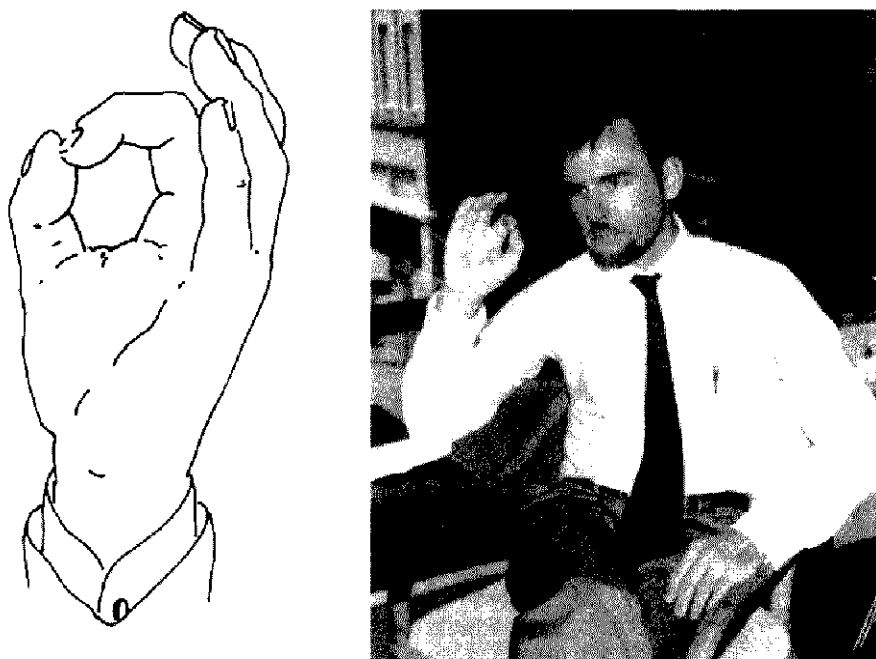
Speech-independent gestures are also known as *emblems* (Ekman, 1976, 1977) or *autonomous gestures* (Kendon, 1984, 1989). They are nonverbal acts that have a direct verbal translation or dictionary definition, usually consisting of a word or two or a phrase. There is high agreement among members of a culture or subculture on the verbal translation of these signals. These gestures are the least dependent on speech for their meaning and most commonly occur as a single gesture. The "ring gesture" in Figure 7-1 is an example of a speech-independent gesture found in several cultures.

Children are able to decode some of these speech-independent gestures by the time they are 3 years old, and this ability increases dramatically by age 5 (Kumin & Lazar, 1974; Michael & Willis, 1968, 1969). In one study, 4-year-olds of both sexes accurately decoded the emblems for "yes," "no," "come here," "quiet," "good-bye," "two," "I won't listen," "blowing a kiss," "I'm going to sleep," and "I won't do it." None of the 4-year-olds was able to accurately decode "crazy." Generally, children at this age understand and decode accurately more speech-independent gestures than they actually use in their own interactions. However, with prompting and support by caregivers, babies who have not learned to talk can effectively use between 10 and 60 signs to communicate (Acredolo & Goodwyn, 1996).

Adult awareness of speech-independent gestures is about the same as of word choice. It is a behavior we are usually very conscious of enacting. These gestures often are produced with the hand, but not exclusively. A nose wrinkle may say "I'm disgusted!" or

FIGURE 7-1

The ring gesture signifies "A-OK" or "good" in the United States as a speech-independent gesture. It may stand for "zero" or "worthless" in certain conversational/cultural contexts.



"Phew! It stinks!" To say "I don't know" or "I'm helpless" or "I'm uncertain," we might turn both palms up, shrug the shoulders, or do both simultaneously. Ekman believes that facial emblems differ from facial expressions of emotion by being more stylized and presented for longer or shorter duration. Facial emblems also may emphasize particular parts of the face, for example, smiling to indicate happiness or mechanically dropping the jaw or dramatically raising the eyebrows to indicate surprise.

In some cultures, speech-independent gestures are strung together to form a sequential message, but this is unusual in the United States. Although it could happen if you were on the phone when a visitor enters your office and you need to indicate "wait a minute," "come in," and "sit down" in succession. Sometimes an entire system of speech-independent gestures develops as with underwater divers, umpires, and television directors. Even though these gestures form a system of signals related to performing a specific task, such systems can grow beyond the boundaries of those tasks. In the sawmills of British Columbia, for example, the noise level made spoken communication very difficult. A system of task-related gestures developed but eventually came to include messages not associated with the tasks of the sawmill (Meissner & Philpott, 1975). Gesture systems not limited to a specific task are known as *sign languages*. Sign language is commonly thought of as a form of communication for the hearing impaired, but sign languages also develop in other contexts. Examples are in religious orders where vows of silence are taken and in social situations where some participants are forbidden to speak, as has been reported for Armenian wives in the presence of their husbands (Kendon, 1983).

Speech-independent gestures may be used when verbal channels are blocked or fail, but they also are used during verbal interaction. A person may be telling the story of another person's strange behavior and may conclude by making a gesture that communicates "He's crazy." In this case, the circular gesture at the side of the head substitutes for the entire sentence. This gesture also could be used to complete an utterance: "If you ask me, I think . . ." In this case, the verbalizations are redundant and unnecessary for understanding the message being communicated. In this example, the speech-independent gesture occurred at the end of a speaker's turn, but others may occur at the beginning. Ekman's study of the "shrug" emblem finds it occurs most often at the beginning of a speaker's turn (see Figure 7-2).

In an interview observed by Ekman, he noted an emblem that was used for a long time during the interaction and served as the interviewee's commentary on the episode. This "emblematic slip" (analogous to a slip of the tongue) occurred when a woman was subjected to a stressful interview by a person whose status forbade free expressions of dislike. The woman, unknown to herself or the interviewer during the interview, displayed "the finger" on one hand as it rested on the arm of the chair. Listeners may also use speech-independent

FIGURE 7-2

The shrug gesture.



gestures to comment on or qualify what the speaker is saying. "Yes" and "no" gestures are common listener responses during another's speech.

Thus, even though speech-independent gestures can communicate messages without attendant speech, their meanings are still influenced by context. Giving someone "the finger" can be humorous or insulting, depending on who is performing it, who is the target, and what other behaviors accompany it. Facial expressions and eye movement accompanying speech-independent gestures are likely to expand the range of possible meanings associated with a hand gesture. And it is always possible that the meaning associated with a gesture in the absence of speech will be modified if it is accompanied by speech, including those occasions when the accompanying speech is seemingly redundant. Some of these emblematic gestures are specifically adapted to particular subgroups within a given culture. In the United States, for example, the finger-wag gesture indicating "no-no" is used primarily when adults are addressing children; the "shame on you" gesture seems limited to usage by children (see Figure 7-3).

Sherzer's (1974, 1982) detailed work of the pointed lip gesture used by the San Blas Cuna of Panama and the thumbs-up gesture used by urban Brazilians illustrates how gestures may have a general meaning that is modified by context. For example, the thumbs-up gesture has a general meaning of "good" or "positive" (see Figure 7-4). Context, however, expands the range of meanings. It can be used to indicate understanding the point of what someone said or did; to acknowledge a favor granted; to greet someone; to indicate knowledge of the next move in an interactional sequence and who is going to perform it; and to request permission to carry out an action, as when a customer signals a waiter about the availability of a table.

Sometimes the context does not affect the meaning so much as the slight changes in the way the gesture is performed. When the forefinger extended (with the rest of the hand

FIGURE 7-3

Finger emblems used in the United States for "no" (left) and "shame on you" (right).

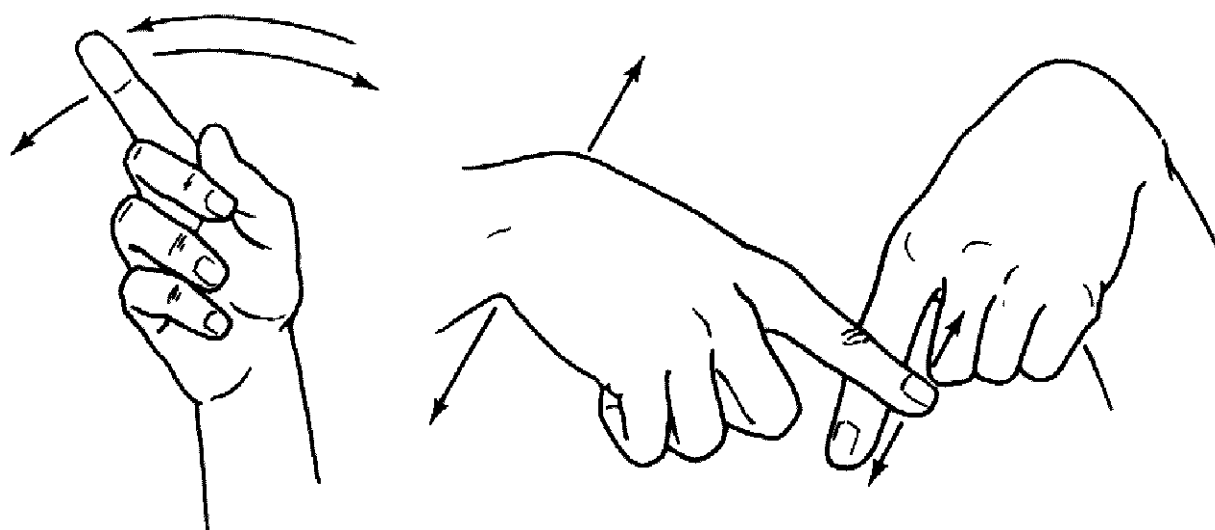


FIGURE 7-4

The thumbs-up gesture by 2004 vice presidential candidate John Edwards.



in a fist) is held motionless about 12 inches in front of one's chest, the meaning is "wait a minute"; when the finger repeatedly moves up and down, the meaning shifts to one of emphasis or reprimand; when the same finger and hand are put perpendicularly in front of the lips, it means "be quiet."

There are published lists of emblematic gestures for cultures around the world (Armstrong & Wagner, 2003; Axtell, 1991; Barakat, 1973; Creider, 1977; Johnson, Ekman, & Friesen, 1975; Morris et al., 1979; Poggi, 2002; Saitz & Cervenka, 1972; Sparhawk, 1978; Trupin, 1976; Wylie, 1977). Kendon's (1981b) analysis of over 800 emblematic gestures contained in some of these lists revealed three broad categories of meaning that accounted for 80% of the speech-independent gestures observed in the United States, Colombia, France, southern Italy, and Kenya and 66% of those found in Iran. These categories were *interpersonal control*, *announcement of one's current state or condition*, and *an evaluative response to the actions or appearance of another*. Ekman's studies of five cultures indicate each had emblematic gestures for greeting and departing, replying, directing locomotion (all forms of interpersonal control); for insults as evaluation of another's actions or appearance; and for referring to one's physical and affective state or announcing one's current condition or state. Some cultures have many emblems in a particular category (e.g., evaluations of another's behavior), whereas the emblems in another culture may emphasize other messages (e.g., interpersonal control).

As yet, no speech-independent gestures have been found that are made the same and have the same meaning in every culture studied. Future research may identify some, however. The most likely candidates are gestures having to do with affirmation, negation, stop, don't know, and sleeping, eating, and drinking (functions all human beings share).

Far more common are examples of gestures of similar form that differ in meaning from culture to culture. In 1877–1878, Bulgaria and Russia combined forces to fight Turkey. The alliance discovered a real problem in that the Russian way of saying “no” was to shake the head from side to side, and a very similar Bulgarian gesture (a head sway or wobble) meant “yes” (Jacobson, 1972). The ring gesture (thumb and forefinger in a circle) pictured in Figure 7-1 indicates “you’re worth zero” in France and Belgium; “money” in Japan; “asshole” in parts of southern Italy; and in Greece and Turkey it is an insulting or vulgar sexual invitation. Of course, to many U.S. residents it is simply “A-OK.” Things certainly would not be “A-OK” if the ring gesture was used in cultures that attach other meanings to it.

The thumbs-up gesture pictured in Figure 7-4 is usually decoded as “good,” “positive,” or “OK” in the United States, but in the Middle East it is an obscene gesture. The thumb inserted between the index and third finger (fig gesture) is an invitation to have sex in Germany, Holland, and Denmark but is a wish for good luck or protection in Portugal and Brazil (see Figure 7-5). The “V” gesture with the palm toward the performer is a sexual insult in Great Britain but means “victory” if the palm is facing away from the body. During World War II, Winston Churchill made the “V for victory” gesture world famous. In the United States, there does not seem to be the British meaning of sexual insult associated with the “V” sign, nor is there any distinction in the form of the “V” for victory and the “V” for peace—a meaning that gained popularity in the anti-Vietnam War protests of the 1960s (Figure 7-6 shows Persian Gulf War demonstrators making the “V” sign for peace).

The vertical horn sign pictured in Figure 7-7 is normally decoded “cuckold” in Portugal, Spain, Italy, and places in Central and South America. Students from cultures in which this gesture indicates that “your wife has been unfaithful to you, and you are either too stupid to know it or not man enough to satisfy her” would indeed be surprised if they were to attend the University of Texas. Here, and throughout Texas, the horns hand is used to show identification with the university and represents school spirit. It is modeled

FIGURE 7-5

The fig gesture.

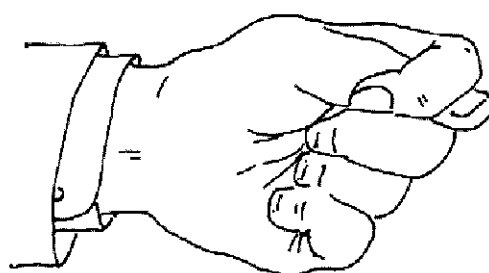
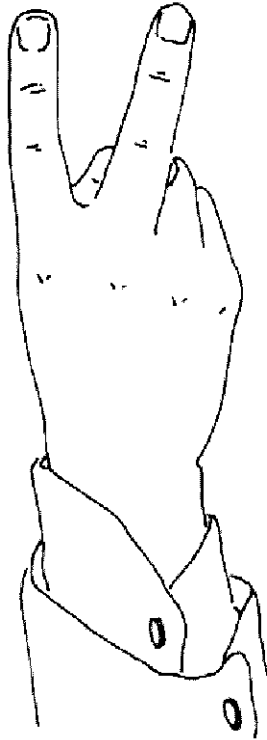
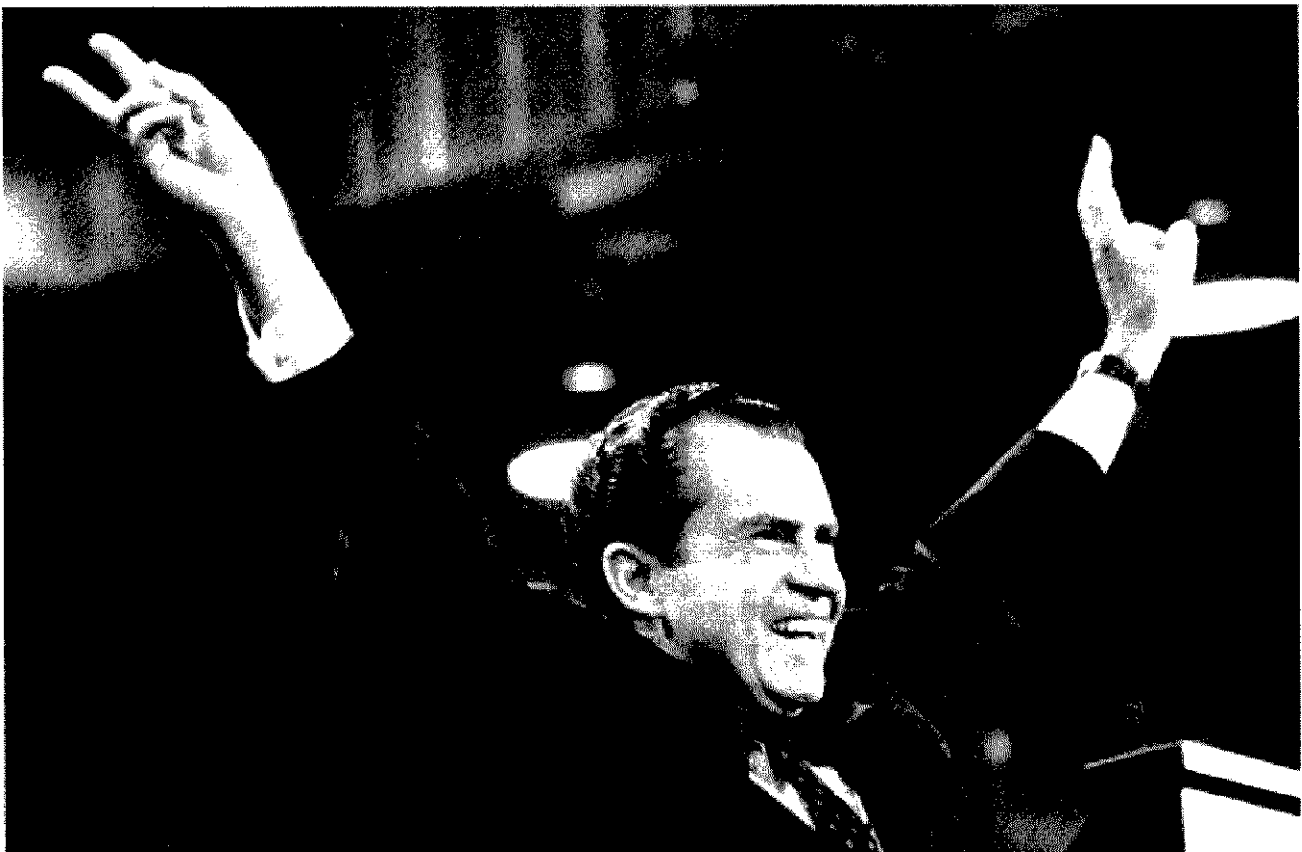


FIGURE 7-6

(a) "V" gesture used as an insult in Britain. (b) Richard Nixon makes the "V for victory" gesture at the 1968 Republican Convention in Miami.



a



b

FIGURE 7-6 (Continued)

(c) People at an anti-Persian Gulf War demonstration in Washington, D.C., using the "V" gesture to signify "peace."



c

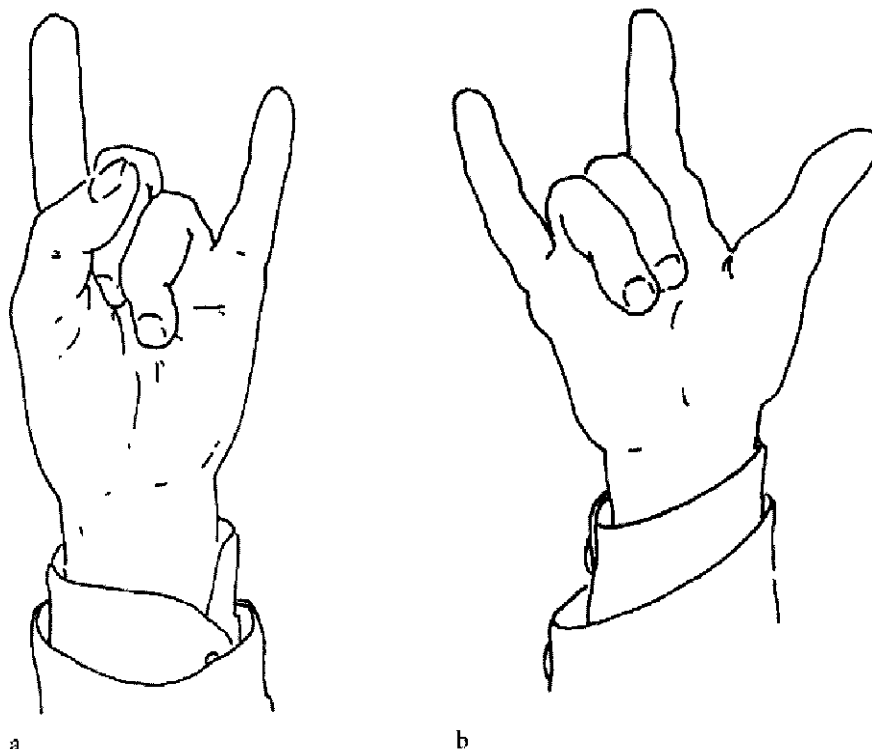
after longhorn cattle and literally represents the University of Texas Longhorns. Consider the reaction of people who associate the horns hand with "cuckold" viewing a University of Texas football game with 75,000 fans making the sign vigorously, repeatedly, and in unison. In addition, another sign that is similar, but has the thumb thrust out instead of tucked in, is decoded by many people around the world as "I love you." The origin of this sign is in the finger spelling of deaf communicators.

Many autonomous gestures have no equivalent in other cultures. In France, for example, one can signal "drunk" by making a fist around the nose and twisting. Some messages have different gestural forms from culture to culture. Notice how the gestures for suicide in Figure 7-8 reflect the most common methods of suicide in each culture. The number of speech-independent gestures used within a given culture may vary considerably, from fewer than 100 in the United States to more than 250 identified with Israeli students.

One of the problems in comparing studies of speech-independent gestures across cultures is the lack of a uniform method for identifying them. Johnson, Ekman, and Friesen's study (1975) of American emblematic gestures proposes a systematic procedure that future studies may want to use. The authors ask members of a particular group or culture to produce emblems associated with a list of verbal statements and phrases. They

FIGURE 7-7

(a) The vertical horn gesture. (b) The "I love you" sign.



(c) Hank Aaron ends a short speech before a game between the Texas Rangers and the Colorado Rockies with the University of Texas "Hook 'em Horns" salute in Arlington, Texas.

c

FIGURE 7-7 (Continued)

(d) Miss America 1995, Heather Whitestone, a former Miss Alabama, walks down the runway and signs "I love you" to the crowd after she won the 74th annual pageant in Atlantic City. (e) The double horn gesture in Naples means "cuckolded."



d

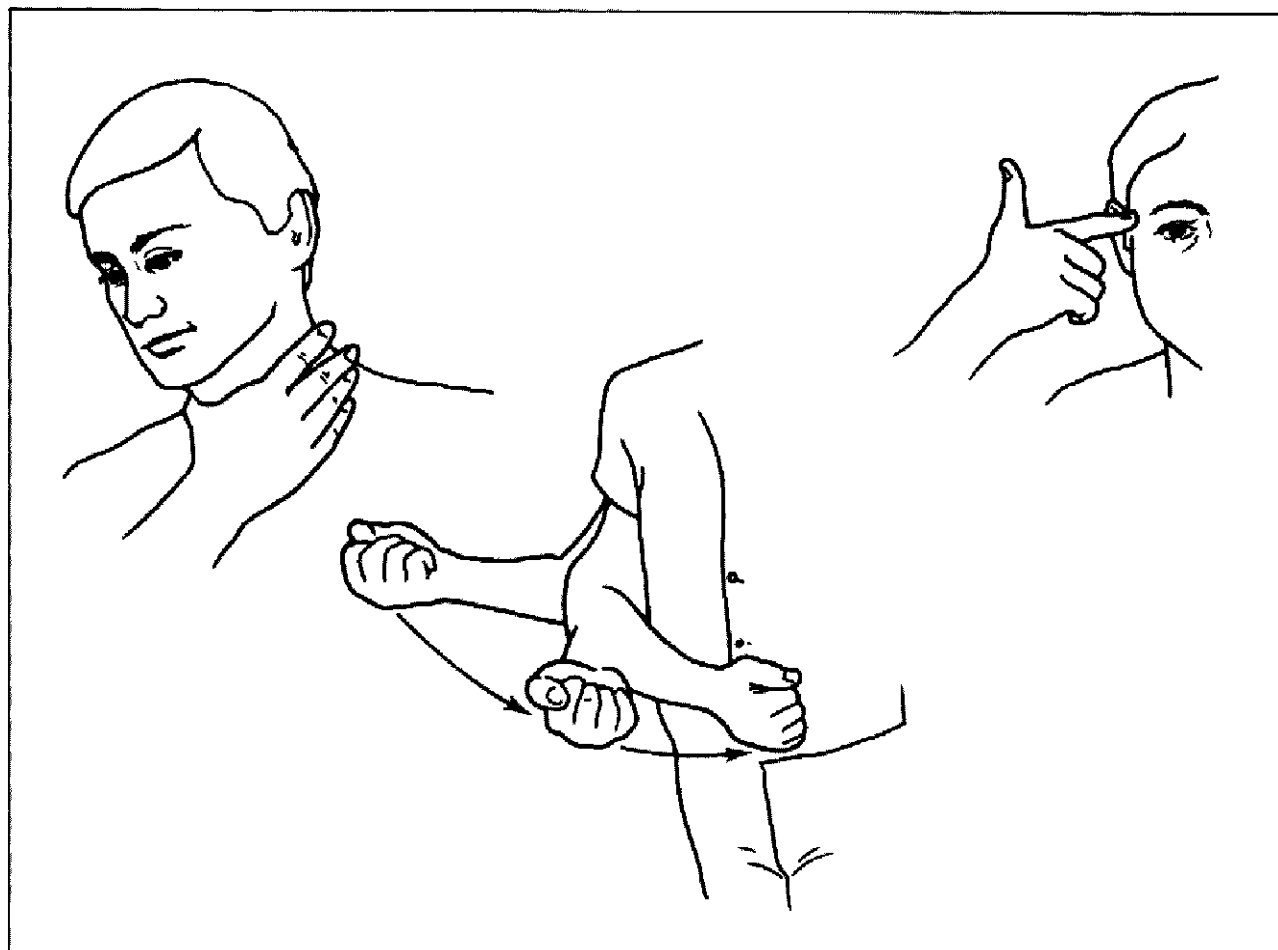


e

report that after about 10 or 15 informants have been tested, a great majority of the emblems have been identified. To qualify as a "verified" emblem, at least 70% of the encoders must perform the action in a similar way. The emblems similarly encoded are then presented to a group of decoders who are asked to identify the meaning of the gestures and the extent to which they reflect natural usage in everyday situations. Gestures used primarily for games like charades normally are not considered "natural." Inventions and performances that require speech are also eliminated. At least 70% of the decoders also have to match the encoder's meaning and judge the gesture to be used naturally in everyday communication situations. The index finger pointed at the head can mean "smart" or "stupid" depending on context, but if 70% of those in a given community say it means "stupid" (without accompanying contextual information), then this is considered a verified emblem for "stupid" among this group. It does not prevent context from changing the meaning, however.

FIGURE 7-8

Cultural variations in suicide gestures: TOP LEFT: the South Fore, Papua New Guinea; BOTTOM: Japan; TOP RIGHT: the United States.



SPEECH-RELATED GESTURES

Speech-related gestures, sometimes called *illustrators*, are directly tied to, or accompany, speech. The meanings and functions of these gestures are revealed as we examine how they relate to the attendant spoken language. Attempts to classify the various types of speech-related gestures have used different terminology (Efron, 1941/1972; Ekman, 1977; Kendon, 1989; McNeill, 1992, 2000; Streeck & Knapp, 1992) but four common types emerge:

1. Gestures related to the speaker's referent—concrete or abstract
2. Gestures indicating the speaker's relationship to the referent
3. Gestures that act as visual punctuation for the speaker's discourse
4. Gestures that assist in the regulation and organization of the spoken dialogue between two interactants

REFERENT-RELATED GESTURES

As we talk, we use gestures to characterize the content of our speech. Sometimes these are movements depicting fairly concrete referents; sometimes vague, abstract ideas are the referent for gestural depiction.

Pointing movements, for instance, can help indicate a specific person, place, or thing being discussed. The referent may be in the immediate conversational environment or something more distant, as is the case when you say, "And where did you come from before that?" while pointing your finger in the direction of the referred-to place. Gestures that draw the referent's shape or movement and gestures that depict spatial relationships can be used to help a listener visualize features associated with concrete referents. When you say, "I had to bend the branch way back" while illustrating how you did this, the gesture bears a close relationship to the concrete semantic content of your speech. When referent-related gestures outline the referent by drawing a picture in space (e.g., an hourglass figure signifying "shapely woman"), it may be asked whether this is truly speech related. The test for determining whether such a picture may be speech independent is if 70% of the members of the usage community respond with the "shapely woman" meaning when confronted with the gestural portrayal without any speech context.

More abstract referents are characterized when we sketch the path or direction of an idea in the air; when we make a series of circular movements with the hand and/or arm suggesting, "I mean more than the specific words I've used"; and when we use expansion and contraction gestures, like those of an accordion player, to indicate the breadth of the subject being discussed. Sometimes we represent abstract content via gestural metaphors. For example, cup-shaped gestures in the following sample of discourse (McNeill, 1985) represent containers of what could be supposed. When they spread apart, they seem to convey the idea that "anything is possible," and their sudden disappearance suggests that what might have been did not happen:

"Even though one might (both hands form cups and spread wide apart) have supposed (cups vanish abruptly) . . ."

SPEAKER'S-RELATIONSHIP-TO-THE-REFERENT GESTURES

These gestures, rather than characterizing the nature of the thing being talked about, comment on the speaker's orientation to the referent. The positioning of the palms can show very different orientations toward one's own message (see Figure 7-9). For example, palms up for more uncertainty ("I think" or "I'm not sure"); palms down for certainty ("clearly" or "absolutely"); palms out and facing the listener for assertions ("Let me say this . . ." or "Calm down"); and palms facing the speaker for embracing a concept ("I've got this great idea . . ."). Palm positions can have other speech-related associations, such as a speaker's palms up when pleading, begging, or even anticipating closeness in greetings.

Oscillating hand movements suggest a speaker "isn't sure" or "could go either way." Charles de Gaulle, former president of France, was noted for his grasping gesture, which many felt signified his desire to control the subject under discussion (see Figure 7-10).

FIGURE 7-9

Palm gestures.

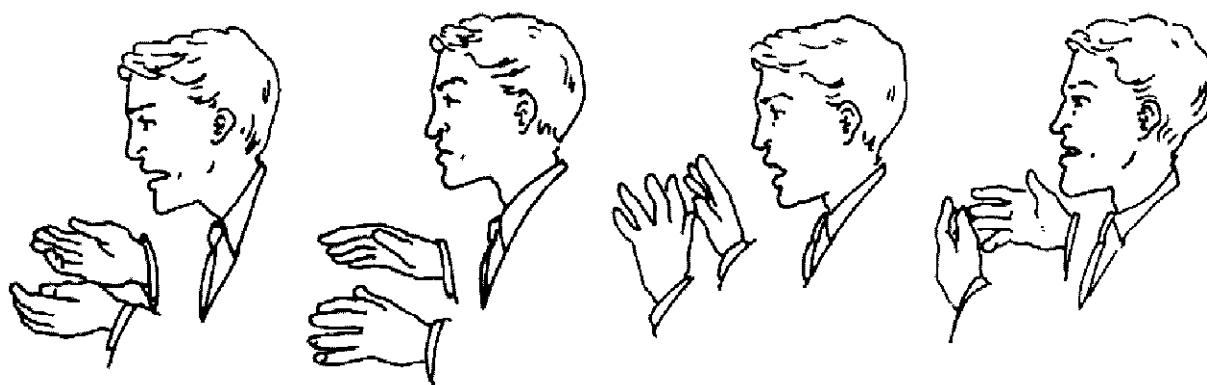


FIGURE 7-10

General Charles de Gaulle's characteristic gesture, perceived by many as "grasping for control of an idea."



1950



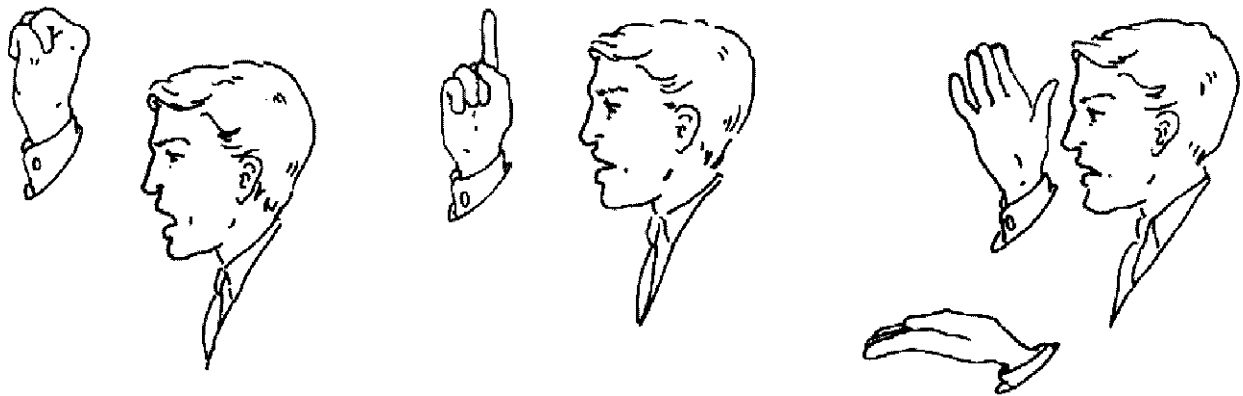
1964

PUNCTUATION GESTURES

Punctuation gestures accent, emphasize, and organize important segments of the discourse. Such a segment may be a single word or a larger utterance unit (e.g., a summary or a new theme). When these gestures are used to emphasize a particular word or phrase, they often coincide with the primary voice stress. Punctuation gestures can also organize the stream of speech into units. When we speak of a series of things, we may communicate discreteness by rhythmic chopping hand gestures, for example, "We must consider A (gesture), B (gesture), and C (gesture)." Sometimes a single chopping hand gesture after C indicates C will be considered separately, or A, B, and C will be considered as a group. A slight downward movement of the head may accompany the hand gestures. Pounding the

FIGURE 7-11

Punctuation gestures.



hand or fist in the air or on another object also acts as a device for adding emphasis and visually underlining a particular point being made (see Figure 7-11).

Punctuation can, of course, be accomplished with body movements other than the hands. The “eye flash” (not the “eyebrow flash” discussed in chapters 2 and 10) is one such display (Bull & Connelly, 1985; Walker & Trimboli, 1983). The momentary widening of a speaker’s eyelids, without involving the eyebrows, has been found to occur most often in conjunction with spoken adjectives and used for emphasis.

INTERACTIVE GESTURES

Thus far, the gesture categories discussed have focused on the content of the speaker’s monologue. *Interactive gestures* acknowledge the other interactant relative to the speaker and help regulate and organize the dialogue itself. Because they are directed at the ongoing involvement and shared roles of the interactants, these gestures occur only in the presence of others. The main function of interactive gestures, then, is to include the interaction partner in the dialogue. This is usually done through some form of pointing gesture in the partner’s direction. Such gestures probably constitute about 10% to 20% of the gestures observed in conversation.

Bavelas (1994) and her colleagues (1992, 1995) have identified four primary functions served by these gestures:

1. Delivering information
2. Citing a previous contribution by your partner
3. Seeking to solicit a specific response from your partner
4. Referring to issues associated with the exchange of speaking turns

These functions and certain variations associated with them are identified in Table 7-1 and illustrated in Figure 7-12. Others have found that the “thinking face” facial gesture also elicits audience coparticipation in word searches and thereby serves the overall inclusion function. The Goodwins (1986) have pointed out that self-touching contributes to a state of conversational disengagement, the opposite of inclusion.

TABLE 7-1 Functions of Interactive Gestures

1. **Delivery Gestures** As a group, these gestures refer to the delivery of information by the speaker to the addressee.

General delivery gestures mark the standard relation of speaker to addressee; the speaker "hands over" to the addressee new information relevant to his or her main point. A verbal paraphrase is often "Here's my point."

Shared information gestures mark material that the addressee probably already knows—information that is part of their common ground (Clark & Brennan, 1991). They mean, essentially, "As you know."

Digression gestures mark information that should be treated by the addressee as an aside from the main point. Analogous to "By the way" or "Back to the main point."

Elliptical gestures mark information that the addressee should elaborate for himself or herself; the speaker will not provide further details. Analogous to "or whatever."
2. **Citing Gestures** As a group, these gestures refer to a previous contribution by the addressee.

General citing indicates "as you said earlier," that is, that the point the speaker is now making had been contributed by the addressee.

Acknowledgment of the addressee's response indicates that the speaker saw or heard that the addressee understood what had been said. Paraphrased, "I see that you understood me."
3. **Seeking Gestures** As a group, these gestures aim to elicit a specific response from the addressee.

Seeking help requests a word or phrase that the speaker cannot find at the moment. A verbal paraphrase would be "Can you give me the word for . . . ?"

Seeking agreement asks whether the addressee agrees or disagrees with the point being made. Analogous to "Do you agree?"

Seeking following asks whether the addressee understands what is being said. Verbal equivalents include "you know?" or "eh?" at the end of a phrase.
4. **Turn Gestures** As a group, these gestures refer to issues around the speaking turn.

Giving turn hands it over to the other person. As if to say, "Your turn."

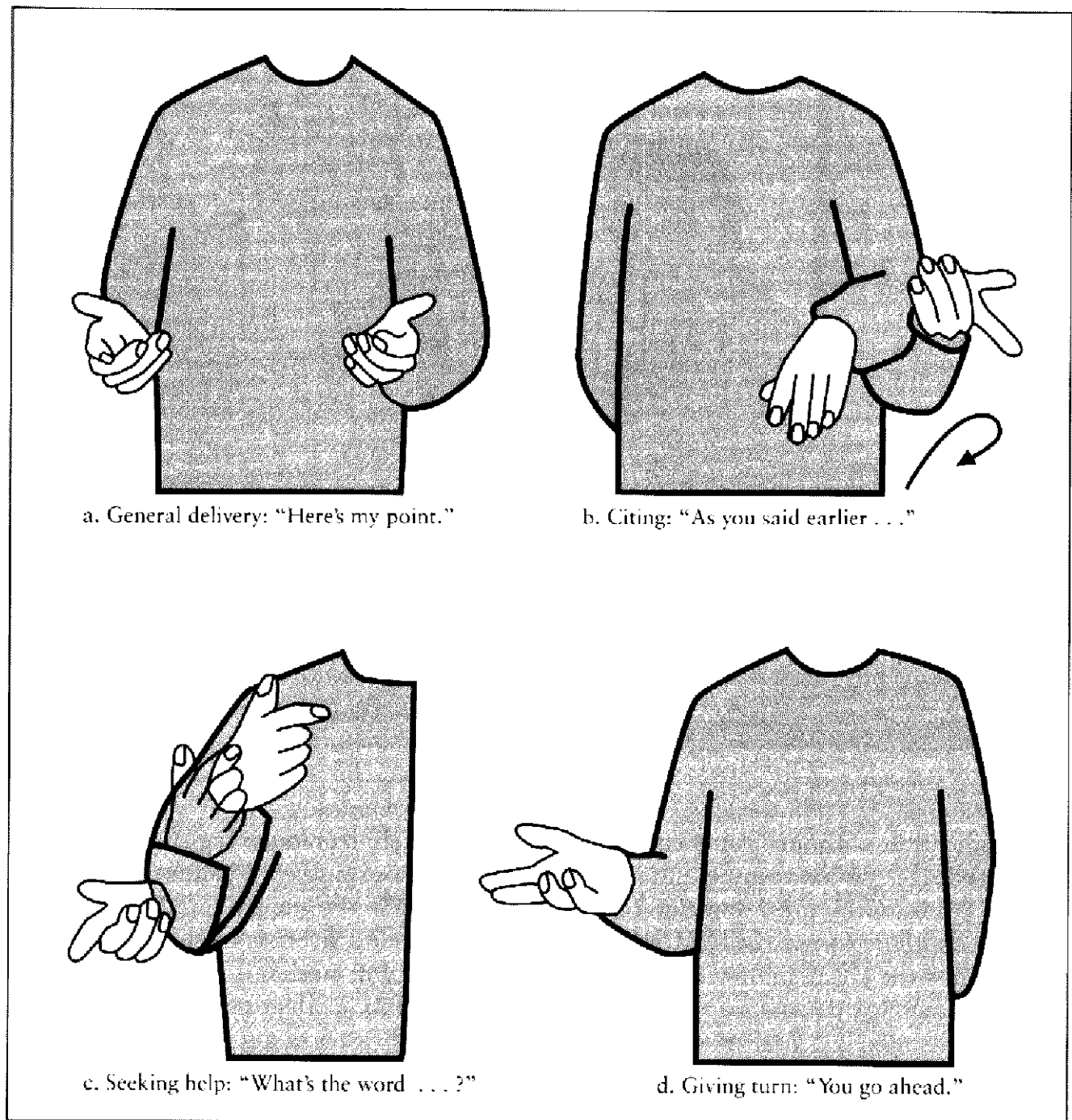
Taking turn accepts the turn from the other person. Paraphrased as "OK, I'll take over."

Turn open indicates that it is anyone's turn, as if to say "Who's going to talk next?"

SOURCE: From Bavelas, *Research on Language and Social Interaction* 27(3): 213, 1994. Reprinted with permission of Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

Although the preceding fourfold classification of speech-related gestures is useful for understanding how gestures and speech work together, some gestures may not be limited to a single function. For example, a speaker's relationship with the referent may be highly intense. Some of the gestural displays illuminating this relationship, however, may also emphasize (punctuate) certain specific message units. Nevertheless, we must recognize that there are different types of speech-related gestures and they may serve different functions for the parties involved. Efron's (1941/1972) cross-cultural comparison shows how helpful gestural distinctions can be. He found that as southern Italians talked, they made extensive use of gestures that had a close resemblance to their referent (e.g., pictorial), whereas eastern European Jews made very little use of such gestures. It seems reasonable that different cultures value different kinds of information, and gestures vary accordingly. Even the number of gestures in all categories may vary from culture to culture.

FIGURE 7-12

Interactive gestures.**GESTURE FREQUENCY**

The frequency of gesturing can be influenced by several key factors: (1) First, we would expect to find more gestures in face-to-face communication and when the speaker expects the recipient will see his or her message (Alibali & Don, 2001; Bavelas et al., 2002; Cohen, 1977; Cohen & Harrison, 1973). We do, of course, use some gestures when our listeners cannot see us, for example, when talking on the telephone (see Figure 7-13). Continued

FIGURE 7-13

Gesture made while speaking on the telephone.



communication without visible contact, however, is likely to reduce the number of gestures used. It is curious why we use any gestures when our audience cannot see them. It may be habit, but because some gestures are knowingly used to help communicate ideas, we may continue to use them in order to maximize the effectiveness of the only channel being used—the voice. In this sense, gestures act as a priming mechanism that activates the entire communicative system and thereby gets the most out of the vocal signals. (2) Gestures are also likely to increase when a speaker is enthusiastic and involved in the topic being discussed. (3) We would expect speakers concerned about their listeners' comprehension of their messages to use more gestures, too—especially in difficult or complex communicative situations, as when the listener is perceived as not paying attention, is not comprehending, or the speaker cannot find the right words to express an idea (Bavelas et al., 2002; Holler & Beattie, 2003). Even though exposure to gestures that accompany speech may sometimes facilitate more accurate decoding on the part of the listener, there are other occasions when the contribution is negligible (Krauss et al., 1995). (4) Speakers trying to dominate conversations also would be expected to use more speech-related gestures. (5) The speech content plays a role in the number of gestures used. When answering questions about manual activities (“Explain how to change a car or bicycle tire” or “Explain

how to wrap a box for a present”), we would expect more gestures than when answering questions about visual or abstract images (Feyereisen & Havard, 1999).

As we note in the next section, speech and gesture are intimately linked, and it would be hard for anyone to abstain completely from gesturing while speaking for very long. Even if it were possible, it would be ill advised because gestures play an important role in communicating. An experiment reported in a 1931 Soviet publication asked subjects to talk while inhibiting all gestures of the head, hands, face, and body. It is reported that no one was able to carry out the instructions completely, and “the speech . . . lost its intonation, stress and expressiveness; even the very selection of words needed for the expression of content became labored; there was a jerkiness to the speech, and a reduction of the number of words used” (Dobrogaev, 1931). Without gestures, speakers also would have to increase the number of phrases and words used to describe spatial relations and would probably pause more often (Graham & Heywood, 1976). Rimé (1982) found speakers’ fluency to be adversely affected when their gestures were restricted. Listeners are also likely to experience a serious loss: Gestures often facilitate comprehension and help listeners access linguistic cues in their memory (Berger & Popelka, 1971; Rogers, 1978; Woodall & Folger, 1981). Actually, a more accurate statement is that gestures synchronized with and supporting the vocal/verbal stream increase comprehension. This is accomplished through the functions we have outlined: by vivifying ideas, by intensifying points, by maintaining listener attention and focus, and by marking the organizational structure of the discourse. Gestures out of synchrony with the vocal/verbal stream are distracting and interfere with listener comprehension (Woodall & Burgoon, 1981). Experiments conducted by Krauss and his colleagues (1995, 1996) indicate that gestures may not be aiding listener comprehension by contributing *semantic* information. Instead, they argue, speech-related gestures are more likely to aid listener comprehension by getting attention, activating images or motoric representations in the listener’s mind, and aiding recall.

THE COORDINATION OF GESTURE, POSTURE, AND SPEECH

Earlier we said that speech-related gestures are tied to, or accompany, speech. That they are connected to speech is easily understood, but the exact nature of that connection is more difficult to understand. Most scholars agree that body movements and gestures are not randomly produced during the stream of speech; they are inextricably linked as parts of the same system. The disagreements among scholars in this area focus on how to define coordination or synchrony of speech and movement. Must two things happen at exactly the same time to be in sync? For the same length of time? If speech and gesture are closely coordinated, does the same part of the brain control both systems? Is there a synchrony of speech and movement between two speakers as well as within the behavior of a single speaker? This section focuses on the research on these issues. The first part addresses the coordination of a single speaker’s speech and movement; the second examines the coordination of two speakers’ behavior.

SELF-SYNCHRONY

In the early 1960s William S. Condon began a microscopic analysis of the coordination between movement and speech. By examining individual frames of a 16 mm film, he was able to match body movements with a speech transcript. This allowed him to observe speech-body orientation accurate to $\frac{1}{24}$ th of a second. Condon (1976; Condon & Ogston, 1966) showed that even at the most microscopic levels (e.g., spoken syllables and smaller), speech and movement are rhythmically coordinated. This means a change in one behavior (a body part, for instance) will coincide or be coordinated with the onset of change in another behavior (phonological segment or some other body part). Just as speech units can be grouped together to form larger units, so can movement units. A sweep of the arm or a turn of the head may occur over an entire phrase of several words, but we may see movements of the face and fingers coordinated with smaller units of speech. At every level, however, the phrases of speech production and the phrases of movement seem closely coordinated.

The smallest idea unit in spoken language is called the *phonemic clause*. This group of words, averaging about five in length, has only one primary stress, which is indicated by changes in pitch, rhythm, or loudness, and it is terminated by a juncture. This unit commonly has shown systematic relationships to body movements. Slight jerks of the head or hand often accompany the primary stress points in the speech of American English speakers. Gestures also seem to peak at the most salient part of the idea unit as well. At the junctures or boundaries, we also find movements of the head or hands indicating completion or initiation.

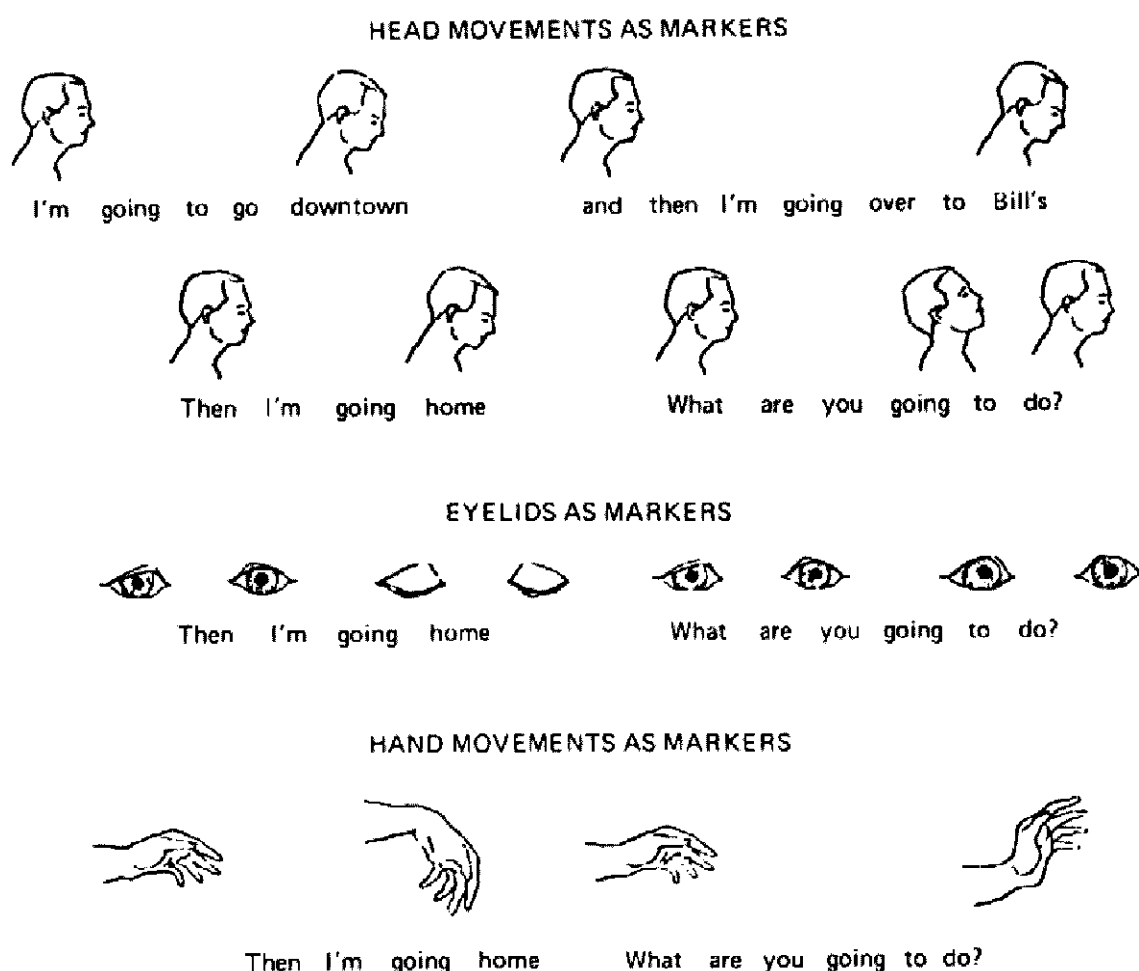
Birdwhistell's (1966) analysis of nonverbal activity that accompanies verbal behavior led him to postulate what he calls *kinesic markers*. These nonverbal behaviors mark a specific oral language behavior. Markers seem to operate at several different levels. For instance, we might see an eye blink at the beginning and end of some words; a microlateral head sweep may be seen during the expression of a compound word we would hyphenate in the written form. Figure 7-14 shows head, hand, and eyelid markers occurring at the end of statements and questions. Similarly, after making a point, speakers may turn the head to one side, or tilt, or flex or extend the neck, signaling the transition to another point.

Another level of markers is characterized by gross shifts in postural behavior (involving half the body) indicating or marking a sequence of points or point of view expressed by the speaker. One marker on this level is simply the shift from leaning back when listening to leaning forward when talking. The observation that postural shifts mark new stages of interaction or topic shifts, particularly at the beginning or ending of speech segments, has been made by several researchers (Bull & Brown, 1977; Erickson, 1975; Schefflen, 1973). Markers on the next level are frequently complete changes in location, following the presentation of one's total position during an interaction.

Kendon's (1972b, 1980, 1987, 1988) detailed analyses of speech and body movement confirm the notion of self-synchrony. He also supports the idea of a hierarchy of body movements that acts in conjunction with our speech behavior. Kendon found that the wrist and fingers tended to change positions most often, followed by the forearm, then the upper arm; elements of the face generally changed more often than the head; trunk and lower limb movements were rare. The larger units of body movement were related to the larger units of speech; the smaller body units were related to the smaller verbal units.

FIGURE 7-14

Some postural-kinesic markers of syntactic sentences in the United States.



Kendon also made some important observations of when movements occur in relation to the speech stream. Some movements accompany speech, but many precede speech units. The time between the speech preparatory body movement and the onset of speech is apparently related to the size of the impending speech unit, with earlier and more extensive behavior (more body parts involved) for larger speech units. A change in body posture, for instance, may precede a long utterance and be held for the duration of the utterance. Like other researchers in this area, Kendon believes the hierarchically structured body movements probably convey information about verbal structure and communicative involvement. The positions of the head, limb, and body sometimes forecast information to a listener, such as length of utterance, change in argument strategy or viewpoint, and the like. The act of forecasting upcoming components of talk through gesture is a crucial function in social interaction. Speakers often shift their gaze to their hands during the production of iconic gestures, thereby calling them to the attention of the listener. Speaker gaze returns to the listener as the speech unit projected by the gesture is completed. In this process, gaze acts like a pointer (Streeck, 1993; Streeck & Knapp, 1992).

The linkage of gestures to speech has also been demonstrated in studies that show how gestures help speakers access and retrieve words from their mental lexicon (Hadar, 1989;

Krauss & Hadar, 1999; Krauss, Chen, & Chawla, 1996; Morrel-Samuels & Krauss, 1992). Hanlon, Brown & Gerstman (1990) showed that they could improve word retrieval in a picture naming task by training aphasics to perform gestures just prior to the naming task. This important role of gestures in lexical retrieval and speech production is often overlooked and underemphasized, but it is clear that gestures facilitate both the invention of messages as well as their organization and delivery.

The preceding research leads us to conclude that speech and gesture are coordinated. But why? Most likely because they are two components used in the expression of a single unit of content. Both systems are being guided by the same overall purpose, and both systems seem to be under the governance of the same parts of the brain (Cicone et al., 1979; Kimura, 1976). As Kendon (2000, p. 61) said, "[A]lthough each expresses somewhat different dimensions of the meaning, speech and gesture are co-expressive of a single inclusive ideational complex, and it is this that is the meaning of the utterance." It is not unreasonable, then, to assume a pathological state for people manifesting out-of-sync behavior (Condon, 1980). Nor should it surprise us that gestures and speech both break down in aphasia (McNeill, 1992).

Gesture and speech also appear to grow up together. In one remarkable study, Petitto and Marentette (1991) argue that *manual* infant babbling (rather than oral) may serve as a precursor to language learning. Several other studies indicate that children use more gestures as they develop, just as they use more words, and the nature of that gesticulation varies with the changing nature of the speech production (McNeill, 1992). Kendon (1983, p. 25) put it this way:

There appears to be a shift away from elaborate enactments or pantomimes, which serve instead of speech, toward a more precise coordination, as if gesture is coming to be used more selectively. Gesture is used much less to depict whole scenes. It is brought in only at certain points along the way. There is also an increasing use of abstract, discourse-making gesture; iconic gesture becomes more symbolic and more restricted in the aspects of meaning it is called upon to display.

INTERACTION SYNCHRONY

The preceding section revealed a speech-body movement coordination within the actions of a single speaker. This section provides information about a speech-body movement coordination between two speakers—a kind of social rhythm (Bernieri & Rosenthal, 1991). This behavior has been studied in two ways, which we call *matching* and *meshing*.

Matching

Without always being very aware of it, human beings commonly tend to mimic the mannerisms, facial expressions, postures, and other behavior of the people they interact with. This has been called the "chameleon effect" (Chartrand & Bargh, 1999)—not because people, like chameleons, change colors to match their environment, but because people change their postures, gestures, and mannerisms to match those of their interaction partners. This kind of mimicry can occur completely outside of our conscious awareness even though matching behavior may also be used intentionally when a person is trying to communicate affiliation. Matching the behavior of our fellow interactant may occur in several

different ways. Sometimes a speaker's behavior is followed in kind by the listener when he or she becomes the speaker (Cappella, 1981). Here the matched behavior occurs not simultaneously but in sequence. Chapter 11 reports research that shows how we tend to match our partner's utterance duration, loudness, precision of articulation, latency of response, silence duration, and speech rate. In some instances, the speaker's behavior elicits an offsetting or compensatory behavior from the other interaction partner. For example, if a speaker is leaning toward a listener and the listener perceives the interaction distance to be too close, the listener is likely to lean back or in other ways increase the interaction distance (see chapter 5).

Other researchers have been interested in those occasions when both interaction partners exhibit the same behavior at the same time. Postural congruence is one of those frequently matched behaviors. It may involve crossing the legs and/or arms, leaning, head propping, or any number of other positions. Notice the variety of postural congruence in Figures 7-15, 7-16, and 7-17. When the listener's behavior is a mirror image of the speaker's, this form of matching is called *mirroring*.

FIGURE 7-15

Postural congruence. The pair facing each other in the foreground are showing matching postures; the pair facing each other in the background are showing mirror-image postures.

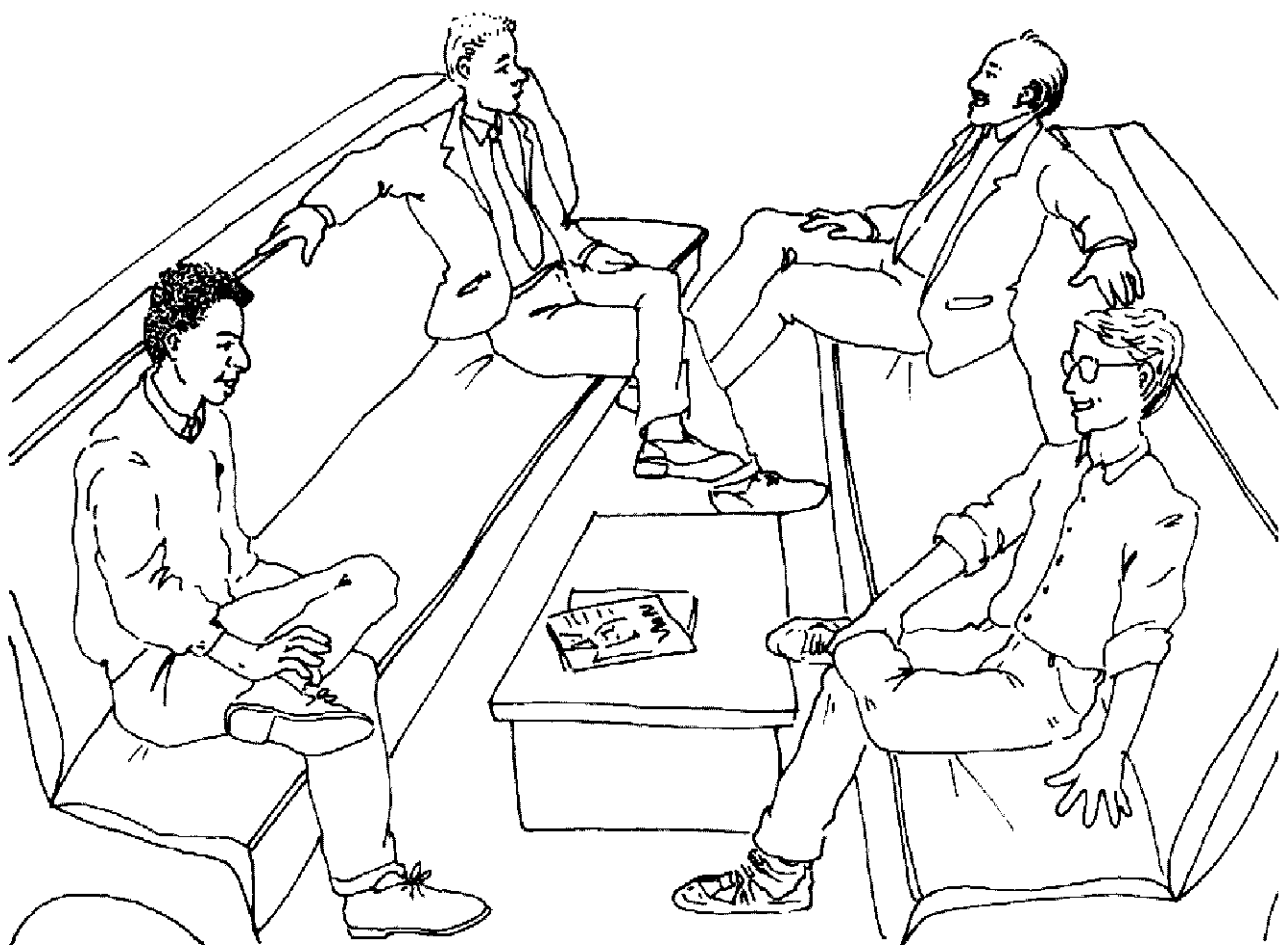


FIGURE 7-16

Examples of postural congruence through head-propping and leaning.

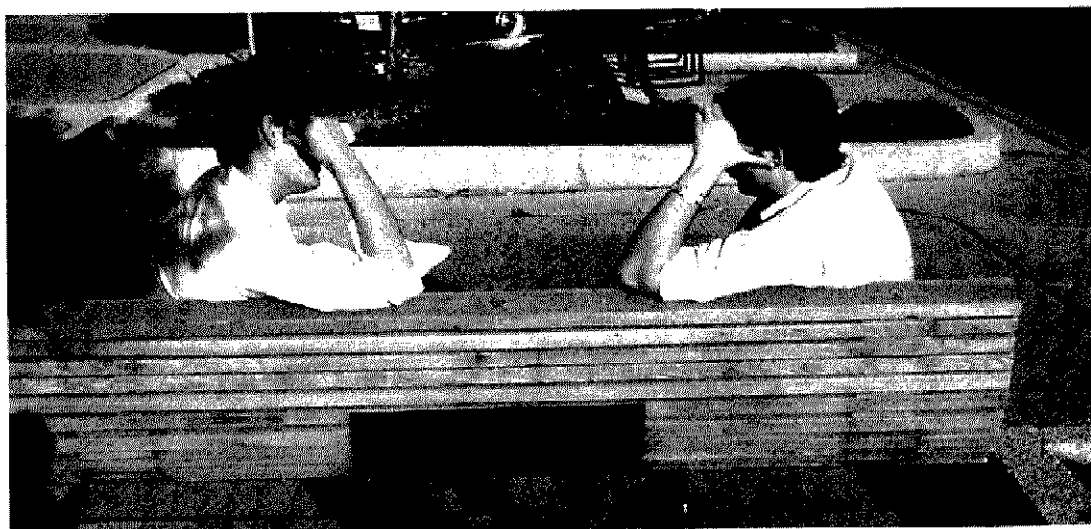


FIGURE 7-17

Notice the postural congruence exhibited by cabinet official Joseph Califano and former President Jimmy Carter, 1977.



Postural congruence has been observed to occur during periods of more positive speech; rated by observers as an indicator of rapport and cooperation; and established as an act that is influential in creating rapport (Charney, 1966; LaFrance, 1979, 1985; LaFrance & Broadbent, 1976; Trout & Rosenfeld, 1980). Nonconscious mimicry has also been found to occur more often with people who enter an interaction with the goal to affiliate or establish rapport (Lakin & Chartrand, 2003). In one study, a trained actor selectively mimicked postures and gestures of only some students in an interview situation. In a postinterview assessment of their partner (the actor), students who had been mimicked evaluated their partner significantly more favorably and indicated they "identified" with him or that he "thought like me" (Dabbs, 1969). None of the students reported an awareness of the mimicry. Chartrand & Bargh (1999) also found mimicry to increase the degree of liking on the part of an interaction partner. In short, mimicry seems to occur more often when we are other-oriented—for example, wanting to be liked by others, feeling concerned about others, seeking a closer relationship with others, showing dependence on others, and so on.

Bavelas and her colleagues would agree that postural mimicry is most likely to occur when we are other-oriented, but they did not find that it was a sign of rapport or cooperation. Instead, they found that postural mimicry occurred during periods of conversational involvement rather than during cooperation or periods of rapport. Bavelas maintains it is a signal that the participants are talking *with* each other rather than *at* each other—performing symmetrical roles rather than complementary ones. Thus, from this perspective, the matching of an interaction partner's nonverbal behavior reflects the moment-to-moment aspects of conversational involvement.

Bavelas has also studied a related phenomenon she calls *motor mimicry*. A common example of motor mimicry is when a person you are near drops a heavy weight on his or her foot. As the injured party reacts in pain, your wincing facial expression seems to register an empathic response (see Figure 7-18). Sometimes we lean in the direction of another person's efforts; sometimes we smile at another's joy. For many years, scholars believed this was a purely empathic reaction based on a vicarious experience. The work of Bavelas et al. does not deny this inner experience, but their research also shows motor mimicry is primarily a communicative phenomenon. Wincing in reaction to another's injury, for example, depended strongly on the visual accessibility of the injured party in Bavelas's experiments. Furthermore, the pattern and timing of the winner's reaction was determined by eye contact with the victim (Bavelas et al., 1988; Bavelas et al., 1986).

This tendency to match and mimic the behavior of others (posturally, facially, vocally, and so forth) sometimes leads to a condition known as *emotional contagion*, which occurs when an emotional experience is triggered as a result of mimicking someone else's behavior. Two of the essential conditions for this process to occur include strongly felt emotions and communicators who are skilled encoders and decoders (Hatfield, Cacioppo, & Rapson, 1994).

Meshing

Another way of examining the phenomenon of interaction synchrony has been to observe the ongoing co-occurrence of changes in movement and speech by each of the two interactants. Changes, in this type of research, refer to the initiation, termination, speed, and/or

FIGURE 7-18

(a) Former President Ronald Reagan and former defense secretary Casper Weinberger exchange similar facial expressions. (b) An onlooker winces in pain as another experiences it.



a



b

direction of the behaviors under study. Like matching behavior, meshing has also been linked to conversational satisfaction and liking for one's interaction partner (Cappella, 1997).

The study of meshing behavior arose out of Condon's earlier work on self-synchrony. He observed how both interactants seemed to coordinate their actions. One person (Davis, 1971) who viewed his films reported this:

The third film clip Condon showed me was an example of heightened synchrony. A man and a woman—employer and job applicant—sat facing each other in a sequence that at normal speed seemed merely to involve rather a lot of shifting around, as the man first uncrossed and then recrossed his legs and the woman stirred in her chair. But when the film was run through a few frames at a time, their synchrony became clear. In the same frame, the two began to lean toward each other. They stopped at the same split second, both raised their heads, and then they swept backwards together into their chairs, stopping in the same frame. It was very like the elaborate courtship dances of some birds, or—in Condon's favorite analogy—they were like puppets moved by the same set of strings. Condon told me that this kind of heightened synchrony happens often between male and female. During courtship, it's one of the ways in which vast statements can be made between a man and a woman without a word being said. (p. 103)

As Condon suggests, this kind of interaction synchrony may reflect the nature of the ongoing relationship, whether it is the extent of involvement, rapport, or the degree of intimate, interpersonal knowledge about the other. In some instances, this relationship is dramatically visible by the kind of synchrony taking place; at other times, the coordination may only be seen in the microscopic analysis of individual film frames. Out-of-sync partners are not likely to value the experience. The fact that out-of-sync experiences tend to stand out for us reminds us how often we operate in synchrony with others. Out-of-sync behavior may reflect decreased listening, a lack of knowledge of one's partner, and so forth. Interaction synchrony may also be a precursor of language learning. Condon and Sander (1974) found babies 12 hours old whose head, hands, elbows, hips, and leg movements tended to correspond to the rhythms of human speech. When the babies were exposed to disconnected speech or to plain tapping sounds, however, the rhythmic pattern was not observed. If this finding is validated by other researchers, it may mean an infant has participated in and laid the groundwork for various linguistic forms and structures long before formal language learning begins (see Bernieri, Reznick, & Rosenthal, 1988).

Sometimes our responses as listeners and the feedback we provide in the form of facial expressions or head movements appear at specific junctures in the speech of our partner. Vocalizations ("mmm-hmm," "I see," and the like), head nods, and movements of hands and feet tend to occur at the ends of rhythmical units of the talker's speech, that is, at pauses within phonemic clauses but mainly at junctures between these clauses. Vocally stressed words also tend to be accompanied by movements. Listener gestures and movements are often indications that the listener understands, appreciates, or anticipates speaker behavior.

Dittmann (1972) noticed that adults sometimes believe children are not listening to them and badger them with questions like "Did you hear me?" Dittmann reasoned that this common adult-child perception may be associated with what he calls "listener responses," for example, head nods, some eyebrow raises, some types of smiles, "yeah," "I see," and so on. His study of children in grades 1, 3, and 5 found these listener responses

were nearly absent except under "the strongest social pull" by the other interactant. Subsequent studies indicated the major deficiencies were in "mmm-hmm" and head-nod responses. By eighth grade, a dramatic increase in these listener responses is found. Now the early adolescent's peers are beginning to lengthen their response duration (providing more opportunity for such listener responses); the "response pull" from adult interactants is increasing; and there is a continuing movement away from a purely self-orientation and toward imagining what others are experiencing.

The detailed observations of researchers like Condon, Dittmann, and Kendon offer clear evidence that human interactants do exhibit a speech-body movement interaction synchrony. It is also clear that this synchrony may take place on very microscopic levels. Still, there are questions. How much of this synchrony is due to an ordered relationship between speech and body movements, and how much is due to coincidence? Are there social contexts that intensify the degree of synchrony? How much synchrony is desirable? At least one study suggests that *moderately* rhythmic social interactions are evaluated most positively (Warner et al., 1987). Is it possible to predict which behaviors will synchronize with which other behaviors at which times? What is the best method of measuring these minute behavioral changes (Gatewood & Rosenwein, 1981; McDowall, 1978a, 1978b; Rosenfeld, 1981)?



SUMMARY

Although gestures are difficult to define, we often seem to know what movements a person is using to communicate and what movements are merely nervous mannerisms, expressions associated with emotion, and task-related movements. Gestures help us communicate in many ways: They replace speech when we cannot or do not want to talk, help us regulate the back-and-forth flow of interaction, establish and maintain attention, add emphasis to our speech, and assist in making memorable the content of our speech. Although we do gesture when interaction partners are not visible (over the telephone), gestures are more frequent when both interactants are visible to one another. We seem to use more gestures when we are knowledgeable about the topic being discussed, highly motivated to have our listener(s) understand our message, trying to dominate a conversation, excited and enthusiastic about the topic being discussed, and speaking about manual activities. Gestures also play an important role in word retrieval and speech production. So the absence of gestures may negatively affect the speaker's message as well as a listener's comprehension.

Two major types of gestures were discussed: speech independent and speech related. Speech-independent gestures are operationally defined as gestures that 70% of the usage community decodes in a similar way. They have an almost direct verbal definition. We are normally very aware of using this type of gesture. Culture affects the number, frequency, and meanings associated with speech-independent gestures. Although no universal gestures of this type have been found (that is, having the same meaning and form in every culture studied), the most likely candidates would be "affirmation," "negation," "stop," "don't know," "sleeping," "eating," and "drinking." Some speech-independent gestures

are culture specific (not found in the same form in other cultures); many gestures have basically the same form but different meanings from culture to culture. These different meanings are often the source of cross-cultural misunderstandings.

The other major category of gestures is called speech-related gestures. Some of these gestures characterize the content of speech; some show the speaker's relationship to the referent by indicating whether the speaker is certain or uncertain, embracing an idea or distancing herself or himself from it, and the like; some are used to accent or emphasize speech units. Interactive gestures, unlike the other speech-related gestures, focus on the dialogue rather than the speaker's monologue. Interactive gestures focus on the ongoing involvement of the interactants and their shared roles.

The last part of this chapter examined the coordination and synchrony of speech and body movements. This synchrony between the larger and smaller units of speech and body is called self-synchrony. Gesture and speech, then, seem to be different outward manifestations of a process controlled and guided by the same part of the brain. Gesture and speech both play a role in communicating the same content. In addition to a self-synchrony, interactants also seem to display coordinated exchanges of behavior in many ways that suggest the existence of an interaction synchrony as well. Interaction synchrony can manifest itself through matching behavior—similar behavior occurring at the same time (postural congruence or motor mimicry) or similar behavior occurring in sequence (one speaker raises his or her voice, followed by the next speaker raising his or her voice). Interaction synchrony can also manifest itself in the moment-to-moment coordination of changes in the direction and timing of speech and movement—even though we do not yet know exactly what behaviors will change and how they will change.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Spend some time during the day interacting without using hand gestures. What does your experience tell you about the relationship of gestures and speech?
2. Some researchers have found matching behavior to be associated with rapport between the interactants. Can you think of a situation in which rapport would not involve matching behavior?
3. Can you think of any instance in which gestures might pose a challenge to the doctrine of freedom of speech?
4. Select a speech-independent gesture. Discuss the meaning of this gesture when accompanied by different facial expressions and speech.

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