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I-Mean First International Conference on Meaning in Interaction
University of the West of England, Bristol, 23-25 April, 2009

Conference Proceedings

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Doctor-Patient Interactions: Accommodation Strategies in a Malaysian Context/ Maya Khemlani David and Chu Geok Bin

Abstract

This study examines the accommodation strategies used in doctor-patient interactions in a private clinic for children in Petaling Jaya, Malaysia. Ten hours of interactions of 104 patients out of 280 visiting patients were recorded. Of the three hours recordings, 38 patients were selected for a line-by-line analysis. This study uses the accommodation theory of Giles and Smith (1979) as its theoretical framework. The findings show that the doctor accommodates and code switches to communicate with patients/caretakers to ensure that her instructions are understood. Motherese or baby talk, and repetition are used when communicating with child patients. Such accommodation in the form of code switching is essential because it ensures diagnosis to the patients and caretakers.

Keywords: accommodation strategies, doctor-patient interactions, code switching, Communication Accommodation Theory

1.0 Introduction

Any communication involves many aspects such as the setting, the person we are interacting with, the purpose of the interaction, the subject matter etc. When we communicate, we tend to converge towards the speech of another person. One of the reasons for this may be politeness, suggesting that the addressee's speech is acceptable and worth imitating (Holmes, 2001). As for other reasons, according to Giles and Coupland (1991:66) "we adjust our communicational behaviour to maintain integrity, distance or identity". They further explain that accommodation can help to build solidarity or create distance with interlocutors. The essence of the accommodation theory lies in the fact that an individual can induce another to evaluate him more favourably by reducing dissimilarities between them, reflecting an

individual's desire for social approval. The individual attempts to modify or disguise his persona in order to make it more acceptable to the listener. The individual in order to make himself understood uses speech accommodation as a device by reflecting the listener's own mode of communication (Giles & Powesland, 1975: 157-159).

In a clinical setting, it is important that the doctor is able to use her linguistic ability to understand her patients' verbalisation of pain correctly. This information will help the doctor diagnose the illness. More specifically, in a paediatrician's clinic, the caretakers play an important role in describing and conveying the nature of the illness of young patients. The caretakers can be parents, grandparents, aunties, uncles or any relative including babysitters. The interactions between the doctor and the caretakers are important to ensure that a proper diagnosis is made.

As not all caretakers in the multilingual Malaysian setting are English speaking, they tend to converse in whatever language or dialect they are comfortable in. This leads to code mixing and code switching if the caretakers speak more than one language or dialect. As a doctor in multilingual Malaysia, it is advantageous to be able to converse in various languages and dialects.

Not only must the doctor understand what the patients/caretakers are telling her, it is also equally vital that they can understand what she says. She must in all circumstances try to explain the medical condition of her patients in layman's terms. Doctors need to be careful and explain the facts clearly so that their patients understand what is being said. Accommodation is necessary, as asymmetrical interaction will occur if the doctor uses medical jargon.

This study of the strategies of accommodation including language choice of a doctor attempts to see how this doctor achieves her objective of being understood and also of understanding what her patients/caretakers say. This study also analyses accommodative strategies of the patients/caretakers, more specifically, their language choices in interaction with the doctor.

1.1 Purpose of the study

This study examines the language choice of a doctor and her patients/caretakers in a clinic in Petaling Jaya in the state of Selangor in Peninsular Malaysia. The objective of the study is to determine how the doctor and her patients/caretakers accommodate each other in their interactions. The clinic is located in a residential site and the patients come both from this locality and neighbouring areas in Petaling Jaya.

1.2 Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study are:

1. To determine whether the doctor and her patients/caretakers accommodate each other's language choice.
2. To examine the strategies used for accommodation.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Accommodation Theory

Speech accommodation theory, developed by Howard Giles and his colleague in the 1960s and 1970s, focuses on the ways in which individuals adjust their speech to one another, either to become more similar or to accentuate their differences. This theory explains the language strategies of interaction processes of convergence and divergence.

Giles (1973) initially developed this theory to explain variation in speech style during interactions. He originally used a sociopsychological model but has since expanded the model extensively into an 'interdisciplinary model of relational and identity processes in communicative interaction' (Coupland & Jaworski, 1977, 241-242). The scope of the theory (now labelled as Communication Accommodation Theory) has expanded to include many other contexts and communication behaviours such as verbal and nonverbal, attitudes and perceptions (Shepard, Giles & Poire, 2001:33). The focus of the premises upon which the communication accommodation theory is based is approximation strategies (convergence, divergence, maintenance and complementary), discourse management, interpretability and interpersonal control (Shepard, Giles & Poire, 2001:34).

Accommodation theory sees maintenance of mutual intelligibility between the interlocutors which results in a speaker's adjustment of his or her speech to that of the addressee. There are two facets of accommodation, one convergent and the other divergent. Speakers will converge towards their interlocutors when they wish to reduce social distance, and create rapport. However, when they wish to increase social distance or emphasise their distinctiveness, they will diverge (i.e., become linguistically less similar).

Convergence can be displayed in a range of communicative behaviour such as accents, idioms, dialects and code switching between languages. Other features include speech rate,

pauses, utterance length, phonological variants, information density and self-disclosure (Shepard, Giles & Poire, 2001: 35). Giles and Smith (1979: 46) state that ‘convergence refers to the processes whereby individual shift their speech styles to become more like that of those with whom they are interacting’. The assumption made in the development of accommodation theory then is that ‘speech style shift is with the purpose of encouraging further communication and decreasing the perceived differences between the interactors’ (Giles & Smith, 1979: 46).

Coupland et al. (1988) pointed out three other strategies of accommodation namely interpretability, discourse management and interpersonal control. Interpretability strategies are manifested by one speaking louder or slower so that the listener understands what is being said more clearly. It focuses upon the listener’s ability to interpret language performance that occurs during the interaction. Discourse management strategies, on the other hand, are concerned with the other party’s conversational needs and accommodating them. These can be manifested in interactions like sharing, topic selection, backchanneling, face maintenance or turn management. Finally, interpersonal control strategies are efforts to direct the way of interaction implicitly or explicitly by means of forms of address or interruptions (Shepard, Giles & Poire, 2001: 36).

Holmes (2001: 230) uses speech accommodation to describe the process whereby each person’s speech converges towards the speech of the other person they are interacting with. She explains that ‘when a technical message is “translated” for the benefit of someone who does not know the jargon, speech accommodation is involved’ (Holmes, 2001: 231). Accommodation may occur consciously or unconsciously, mutually or non-mutually and partially or completely.

Accommodation may play the role of increasing understanding and leads to social identity and bonding, and in sharp contrast the lack of accommodation can be seen as disapproval and distancing. Moreover, the status of the interactors affects the ways they accommodate each other and divergence is often associated with power. This is shown in David’s (2003) courtroom study in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. David shows that situational, metaphorical and pragmatic reasons result in a mixed discourse in the legal setting in order to achieve a range of strategic and professional objectives. Her study reveals rampant asymmetrical or divergent language choice occurs even in formal settings like the courts indicating that ‘non-accommodation of language implies power and control of one party over the other’ (David, 2003: 19).

Discussing language and ethnicity, Giles (1979: 258) says that there are two aspects that language is depicted as an ethnic speech marker. Firstly, it acts as a marker of ethnic identity when the member of minority group chooses to use his or her ingroup language or switches away from it when the interethnic interaction requires implicitly the use of the language of the majority group.

Secondly, it acts as a marker of the relationship existing between ethnic groups when the use of the language of the dominant group is often used by both parties in formal settings. This shows the asymmetrical power of one to another. This is also shown in the study by David (2003) where it is argued that Malay/English code switching is seen as a tool to influence and coerce the interactors in the courtroom and to exert power.

Our data analysis in this study shows that accommodation is manifested in many ways such as code switching, motherese, repetition or echoing, laughter and language simplification. Code switching is the most often used form of accommodation in this study.

2.2 Code switching

Code switching has many meanings for different role and functions. David (2003) defined certain terms for describing the mixing of two languages in the following manner:

- Code-switching – use of more than one language within a turn or utterance.
- Code-mixing - use of two languages in a turn but limited to token use of the second language.
- Code-alternation - when the same speaker code switches between turns i.e. the speaker uses Language 1 in one turn and Language 2 in another turn.

In this study however the term code switching is used to be all inclusive and no differentiation is made between code switching, code mixing and code alternation. The term code switching is used to encompass the use of more than one language within a turn or utterance, the use of two languages in a turn as well as code switches between turns by the same speaker.

Code switches can be categorized into metaphorical and situational switchings (Blom & Gumperz, 1972). Some examples of metaphorical switching provided by Gumperz (1982) are switching to mitigate a face-threatening act, for intimacy, to withhold information or as a

distancing strategy. On the other hand, the determinants of situational code switches are participants, topic and setting.

In multilingual Malaysia, David (1999) explores how Malaysians (Malays, Chinese and Indians) shift from language to language when interacting in service encounters. She examines if Malaysian vendors converge to their customers' languages or vice versa. Her field study of language behaviour in service encounters in the city of Kuala Lumpur discloses that code switching, i.e. the use of two or more codes or languages in an utterance has become an established feature in the Malaysian repertoire of languages. David argues that factors like status, in-group solidarity and linguistic abilities have caused the emergence of a distinct linguistic variety i.e. code switches in the Malaysian speech repertoire.

Kuang (1999) in a study of an urban Malaysian Chinese family examines why the members of the family code switch in interactions. Her study reveals that code switching is used for many reasons such as to indicate a topic change, to show power and distance, to emphasise, to ensure equal voice and to seek attention etc.

2.3 Motherese

The motherese hypothesis refers to short, simple sentences that are uttered with exaggerated intonation and stress and are typically used to talk to young infants. In other words, it is a child-directed speech variety often associated to talk with babies or toddlers and includes slow, simplified speech, a high-pitched voice and much repetition and questions. Gleitman (1987) states that the use of single word utterances, topics that move from one subject to another, falling and rising intonation and simplification of language rules are typical of motherese. Newport, Gleitman & Cleitman, (1977) point out that adults make an unconscious effort to stretch signals, and exaggerate the sounds that capture the attention of the baby.

3.0 Methodology

Ten hours of recordings encompassing 104 patients (accompanied by parents / caretakers) were made. Three tapes of one hour each with the most mix of ethnicity (38 patients) were selected for a detailed line-by-line analysis of the interactions between the doctor, her patients and their caretakers. This study uses the accommodation theory of Howard Giles and Philip Smith (1979) as its theoretical framework.

Two instruments were used in this study. One is the three-hour long recordings, the other is an one hour long interview with the doctor. The conversation between the doctor, patients and caretakers were transcribed. The focus is on the language choice (English, Bahasa Malaysia, Cantonese or Mandarin) of the doctor, patients and caretakers during consultation. In order to validate the results of the analysis, an interview of an hour with the doctor was conducted to confirm the analysis.

4.0 Data analysis

Three tape recordings of one hour each, involving thirty-eight patients of three major races i.e. Chinese, Malays, Indians and others of mixed ethnicity and their interlocutors with a Chinese doctor are analysed. The doctor is multilingual and uses a number of languages which included English, Cantonese, Mandarin and Malay.

The analysis reveals that overall the doctor accommodates more, not only to the parents but also the 'child' patients. While the data on tape 1 consists of the interactions with 10 Chinese patients, tapes 5 and 9 focus on the Malay and Indian patients. Three Indian patients in Tape 5 speak only English to the doctor and there is no code mixing or switching in their interactions. Similarly in Tape 9, two Indians and a Eurasian interact only in English while the Malay patient speaks only Malay. Again, there is no code switching involved.

Code switching only occurs when the doctor is with the Chinese patients. Yet it should be noted that not all the Chinese patients and parents use this strategy. Some of them use only Cantonese while others use a single language i.e. English when interacting with the doctor.

Although there are many ways to accommodate e.g. code switching, topic selection, face maintenance, motherese, rephrasing, simplification, interruptions, repetition, pauses, forms of address etc, the analysis shows dominant use of code switching as an accommodative strategy among the Chinese patients.

4.1 Analysis of Transcripts

Based on the recordings, 63.1% of the strategies of accommodation constitute code switching. The languages used in the code switching include English (E), Mandarin (M), Cantonese (C), Malay (BM) and baby talk (BT). The interlocutors were the father (Pf) of the patient (child), mother of the patient (Pm), the child patient (Pt1) and sibling (Pt2) and the doctor (Dr). Many

other accommodative strategies are noted. These included repeating/echoing, use of address form, motherese, humour and laughter.

In this study, the doctor is multilingual and she can choose to speak in Cantonese, Mandarin, Malay or English. Meanwhile her patient for example an Indian, who is also multilingual, can choose to converse in Tamil, Malay or English. In such a situation, Malay and English can be their common language but English may play a prominent role as the language of their choice. This is especially so in this study when the Indians speak in English with the doctor. Earlier studies show that urban upper and middle class Malaysian Indians are shifting to English (see David (1996) on the Sindhis, Nambiar (2007) on the Malayalees, David, Najib and Kaur (2003) on the Punjabis and Sankar (2004) on the Iyer community).

Although Malay is the dominant language (being the national language and medium of instruction in national schools), the other races especially the Chinese still maintain their own ethnic languages. However they switch to Malay when interacting with Malays (David and Lim 2009).

4.1.1 Repeating/Echoing as an accommodative strategy

The doctor switched between many languages like Malay, English, Cantonese and Mandarin. She even used Mandarin though she was not proficient in Mandarin. This was to accommodate the language choice of the parents of the patient.

In Extract 1, the doctor uses a repeating strategy, by echoing what the father has said in Mandarin (Utterance 5 and Utterance 3 respectively) to the child patient. Her intention was to comfort the child who had just received an injection.

Extract (1)

Utterance	Speaker	Content
3	Pf	<i>Wou ken ni chaing ah pu huei dong, shi bu shi. How liau loh.</i> (I say no pain, right? It's okay already)
4	Pt2	<i>Tong yi tian tian.</i> (There is a little pain).
5	Dr	<i>How liau loh.</i> (It's okay already.)

Pf = Father of the child patient

Pt2 = Sibling of child patient

In Extract 2 the doctor code mixes her discourse with Cantonese so as to accommodate the caretakers of the patient. This fact is confirmed with the doctor during the interview. In extract 2 it is evident that the patient's father is not very proficient in English. The patient's father tries to be involved in the conversation by repeating what has been said in English ("viral infection") and switches to English/Cantonese in utterance 13. He tries to echo the last two words of the discourse of his wife and the doctor who speak mainly in English.

Both the doctor and the patient's father try to accommodate each other. The doctor accommodates by code switching as her interlocutor has a lower proficiency in English (as seen in utterance 6 where he was not able to understand the Doctor's questions). The patient's father on the other hand, uses code switching so that he can be involved in the interaction.

Extract (2)

Utterance	Speaker	Content
5	Dr	Rashes today huh? Any cough or runny nose?
6	Pf	<i>Mei yeh lei kah?</i> (What is it?)
7	Pm	So far no runny nose.
8	Dr	No runny nose.
9	Pm	Cough a little bit because ...
10	Dr	<i>Li ti hai</i> viral infection. (It is viral infection)
13	Pf	Viral infection. <i>Mei yeh virus?</i> (... What virus?)

4.1.2 Use of address forms as an accommodative strategy

Address forms are used to enhance rapport with the young patient. In utterance 8 (Extracts 3 and 4) the doctor uses the term 'Jie-Jie' (elder sister in Cantonese) when she speaks to the child patient about his elder sister. The language choice is to accommodate the child's address form. The emphasis is on the kinship relationship and it also helps the doctor to identify with the child patient by using the term 'Jie-Jie' that he uses to refer to his elder sister.

Extract (3)

Utterance	Speaker	Content
8	Dr	Hmm. Now we'll see <i>Jie-Jie</i> . If Jie-Jie cries, you can laugh at

her. (... elder sister. If your elder sister cries ...)
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Extract (4)

2	Dr	See, hmm. <i>Jie-Jie</i> good, so calm. (... elder sister ...)
3	Pf2	<i>Jie-Jie mei you ku.</i> (Elder sister did not cry.)

4.1.3 To clarify

At times the reason for code switching is to make the message or explanation clearer and to be understood by the interlocutors. Indirectly, it is also an accommodation strategy used by the doctor to satisfy the caretaker’s need to know more about the medical condition of the child patient. In Extract 4, the doctor code switches from English to Cantonese in order to explain clearly the term Roseola. The caretaker was curious to find out what type of measles her child had. The doctor in her discourse introduces a medical term ‘Roseola’ to the parent of her patient, in order to describe the Chinese version of measles.

Extract (4)

Utterance	Speaker	Content
3	Dr	Roseola.
4	Pm	How to spell?
5	Dr	ROSEOLA. This is the real <i>ka mah</i> . This is the real <i>ka mah</i> where you just get fever only and nothing else one, alright. (... ‘fake measles’ ...)

4.1.4 To ensure instructions are understood

Codes witching is used by the doctor to ensure her instructions are understood by her patients/their caretakers. Throughout utterance 9 to 12 in Extract 5, we can see that the doctor accommodates by code switching in English and Cantonese. She uses Cantonese entirely when explaining the need to dilute the milk. When the father of the patient seems to be in doubt, she uses another lexical ‘hei ti’ to ensure understanding. She also gives the reason i.e.

‘easier to drink’ for doing so. By code switching, the doctor ensures that her instructions are understood by the parents. This intention is further confirmed in the interview with the doctor.

Extract (5)

Utterance	Speaker	Content
9	Pm	<i>Last night hei ker milk tou tung zho. Hei tou ng moi.</i> (Last night her milk was already cold. She also didn’t want).
10	Dr	<i>Tou ng moi ho. Chong pok ti-lah kam yong.</i> (She doesn’t want ho. Then dilute the milk.)
11	Pf	<i>Pok ti.</i> (Dilute more)
12	Dr	<i>Hei ti, easier to drink-lah.</i> (Dilute more, ...)

4.1.5 Motherese as an accommodative strategy

Apart from code switching another accommodative strategy noted in the recorded discourse of the doctor is the use of motherese. Motherese takes many forms. These include a simplified form of the language, short sentences, rising and falling intonation, use of compliments, and shifting from topic to topic.

4.1.5a Simplified and short sentences

In Extract 6, the doctor engages baby-talk like the words ‘min-min’ (food) and ‘ah-ah’ (sound to encourage opening the mouth) when dealing with the child patient. The simplification of words like using sounds ‘ah ah’ and repeating strategy is also used by the mother in the same context.

Extract (6)

Utterance	Speaker	Content
13	Dr	Joe no fever. Want <i>min min</i> or not? Open your mouth, ah ah.
14	Pm	Ah ah.

4.1.5b Rising and falling intonation, praise and encouragement

The doctor accommodates by using a cheerful tone most of the time (Koran, 2003) because children like a smiling and cheerful doctor. This can be seen in Extract 7 where the child

patient reports that his sister always does not eat fruits and the doctor responds positively to what he said. Here, the doctor when interacting with the child patient uses rising and falling intonation when responding to the child patient’s comment about his elder sister. The doctor also uses praise or positive adjectives like ‘brave’ and ‘clever’ to encourage the child to take his injection. These are accommodation strategies used by the doctor to make the child feel comfortable before administering the injection. Children like to be praised and complimented and the doctor accommodates by doing so.

Extract (7)

Utterance	Speaker	Content
1	Pt2	She always don’t eat fruits.
2	Dr	Yes ah? Hmm. (Rising and falling intonation)
14	Dr	Okay, you show <i>Jie-Jie</i> how brave you are first. Hmm, clever. (... show your elder sister ...)

4.1.6 Accommodating to the topic of the patients

When dealing with the child patient, the doctor accommodates his topics which move from one subject to another as shown in Extract 8. The child patient moves from talking about a friend to talking about a test. In both instances, the doctor accommodates by showing interest in both topics though unrelated and remote to his illness.

Extract (8)

Utterance	Speaker	Content
9	Pt2	I’m going to tell my friend. (Topic one)
10	Dr	What are you going to tell your friend?
11	Pt2	Tomorrow is my test. (Topic two)
12	Dr	What test?

4.1.7 Laughter as an accommodative strategy

Young patients like smiling doctors rather than serious doctors. The doctor accommodates the young patients by laughing and using playful discourse. In Extract 9, the mother of the patient code switches to tease her fretful baby. The doctor accommodates by being cheerful, and agreeing with the mother’s comments.

Extract (9)

Utterance	Speaker	Content
6	Pm	But she is still active but just <i>lau kai</i> . (But ... just fretful)'
7	Dr	Ha ha, naughty-loh.

4.1.3 Code switching as an accommodative strategy

The caretakers too often accommodated by using code switching in their interactions with the doctor. There are a number of reasons for such accommodation.

5.1 As a private language and to show intimacy

Code switching is used as a private language where caretakers accommodate the doctor's preferred language choice. Code switching is also used to show intimacy (see Extract 10). In this instance, we see that the father switches from Mandarin to English (the doctor's preferred language choice) when he agrees with the doctor that his daughter was tense. Then he shifts from English to Mandarin when he speaks to his daughter. It can be concluded that Mandarin is the language used most frequently at home and the child is comfortable interacting with her father in Mandarin.

Extract (10)

Utterance	Speaker	Content
1	Pf	<i>Chi, ni bu yao zhe yang chi. Fang song bu yao-lah.</i> (Eat, you don't eat like this. Relax, don't lah.)
2	Dr	She's all tensed up.
3	Pf	Yeah. She was struggling. She is all tensed up.
5	Pf	<i>Mei you, mei you tong de, shi bus hi?</i> (Nothing, not painful, right?)

5.2 To save face

Code switching is also used to save face. In Extract 11, we see that the doctor accommodates the language choice of her interlocutors by switching from English to Cantonese and from Cantonese to English respectively according to the situation. She also accommodates the change in the topic of discussion. In utterance 6 and 8 the mother code switches to Cantonese from English and at the same time changes the topic of discussion to save her face as she had reported the medical complaint incorrectly. The mother code switches to Cantonese as a private language with the doctor and by using Cantonese distances the child from the interaction.

The doctor appears to be aware that the child patient speaks only English. She questions him about his headache in English. Although his mother has changed the topic and uses Cantonese, the doctor continues to explain in English to accommodate the child patient and to explain that the cause of his headache is congestion. Then she code switches from English to Cantonese when advising the mother to give the child a soft diet. The reason for the use of English is for the benefit of the child, to enable him to understand her conversation with his mother. This rationale is confirmed later in the interview with the doctor.

Extract (11)

Utterance	Speaker	Content
5	Pm	Where stomach pain?
6	Pt	Where got stomach pain? Head pain, mummy.
7	Dr	(laughter). Very pain huh, the head?
8	Pm	<i>Tak sek fan mou?</i> (Can eat rice or not?)
9	Dr	Congestion-lah.
10	Dr	<i>Sek, lou tong loh.</i> Take soft diet-lah. (Eat with soup, ...)

4.2 Analysis of Interview

The interviews were used to confirm the findings and to validate the reasons for the use of various strategies of accommodation. One major strategy used by the doctor is code

switching which reveals participation, politeness, ease of understanding and reducing the fear and anxiety of the patients.

Participation

The doctor confirms that in Extract 2, the patient's father tries to be involved in the conversation by repeating what has been said in English (viral infection) by switching to English from Cantonese. She confirms that code switching helps to bridge the gap between her and her interlocutors who are not proficient in English. It invites greater participation from the caretakers.

Politeness

The doctor tries to accommodate both the mother and father of the patient by code switching so that neither party is left out during the interaction. This is especially so in cases where one party is not proficient in one of the languages used. According to the doctor speaking entirely in one language or dialect when one party cannot participate is rather impolite and inconsiderate. In Extract 11, for instance, she code switches from Cantonese to English when advising a mother to give the child a soft diet. Her first explanation was in Cantonese. This was followed by a second explanation in English. Her intention was to ensure that the child could understand her conversation with his mother. She confirms that she accommodates both the parents and patients.

Ease of understanding

As the use of medical jargon distances a doctor from her patients and their parents, code switching is used as strategy to explain a medical term. In Extract 5, she uses Cantonese 'hei ti' for the English term 'dilute', so that the patient's father who is not English proficient understands.

As a private language

The doctor says that many young patients are afraid of injections. The doctor confirms that she code switches to reduce fear and anxiety.

5. Conclusion

Doctor-patients interactions require strategies to result in cooperative and successful communication. It is essential for a doctor to obtain correct and sufficient information from

the patient to accurately diagnose the illness. However, interacting with patients who are children can be difficult because the latter may not be able to articulate fully what they feel. In this study of a private clinical setting, the doctor accommodates not only the patients, but also their parents as well as their siblings. The doctor accommodates the child patients in various ways such as baby-talk or motherese, variation in tone, and show interest whenever possible during consultation and when explaining medical conditions to the parents and patients. This linguistic behaviour of accommodation on the part of the doctor in multilingual Malaysia reflects and mirrors Giles's (1979) accommodation theory that says accommodation can occur in various ways including change in language, volume, accent, and code switching. The analysis shows that the nature of accommodation can manifest in various ways during interaction between a multilingual doctor and her multilingual patients and their parents. The accommodation results in a range of strategies which include code switching, motherese echoing (repeating), change of topic and laughter.

The use of code switching as an accommodative strategy is rampant in this study. Such a strategy is used by the doctor to explain the patient's medical condition clearly so that correct medication and care can be provided by the parents of the patients; and at times code switching was used to distance the child patient from interactions between the doctor and the parents of the patient with the objective of reducing fear and worry. Code switching was also used to display politeness by using the language or dialect that the patients/caretakers were most comfortable in.

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Abstract¹

When delivering a speech, politicians exploit the constitutive-of-reality potential of discourse (Wodak 1996) to (re-)construct and negotiate their identities, social roles, views, and interpersonal and institutional relations. Thus they try to impose an interpretative perception of the semantic unity and purposefulness of their discourse which reflects their situationally-motivated communicative goals. This paper explores the resources available for building a coherent subjective representation of a discourse world by investigating some markers of modality in a corpus of speeches of the last three Directors-General of UNESCO at the opening of international conferences and meetings. The analysis of the functions of epistemic modality markers considers their potential to contribute to a coherent discourse interpretation, while discussing variation in the choices of the speakers.

1 Introduction

In political discourse the interpretative process of assigning intentionality and creating meaning involves the (re)construction and negotiation of identities, social roles and views, and the (re)definition of participants' interpersonal and institutional relations. The persuasive force of political talk depends on the speaker's credibility, i.e. "the audience's evaluation of the coherence of 'what has been said' and 'what has been meant'" (Fetzer 2002: 185), which is related to the ability of the politician to create an existentially coherent image of him/herself and the institution he/she represents, i.e. the representation of his/her behaviour and attitude to people, values, facts and ideas as consistent and continuous (Duranti 2006), and on the strategies he/she uses to manipulate others into accepting his/her understanding of reality. According to Chilton and Schäfner (1997: 211-15) as revised in Chilton (2004: 45-46), there are three basic and interrelated 'strategic functions' for which various linguistic expressions may be used in political discourse; these are coercion (claiming authority to select topics, enforce actions and control others' use of language; strategic simulation of affect), (de)legitimization (claiming obedience and approval of self, views and actions, through positive self-representation and negative representation of others), and (mis)representation (claiming control over the representation of reality in terms of quantity

¹ This article is part of the grant project 405/08/0866 *Coherence and Cohesion in English Discourse*, which is supported by the Czech Science Foundation.

and quality of information provided). Since credibility and persuasion are the result of coherent discourse (Fetzer 2002: 185), politicians have to use language means at all planes of discourse to guide the audience towards an intended discourse interpretation which serves best the speaker's communicative intentions with regard to the situational, socio-cultural and pragmatic context in which the interaction takes place.

Discourse coherence, as understood by Bublitz 1997, Seidlhofer & Widdowson 1997, Povolná 2007 and Dontcheva-Navratilova 2009, i.e. the interpretative perception of the semantic unity and purposefulness of discourse, results from an interplay of ideational, interpersonal and textual meanings encoded in text (Halliday & Hasan 1989). While coherence on the ideational plane ('propositional coherence', e.g. Van Dijk 1977, Stubbs 1983) and cohesion on the textual plane (e.g. Halliday & Hasan 1976, 1989, Hoey 1991) have attracted considerable attention, it was not until recently that consistent frameworks were developed for the exploration of 'evaluative coherence' (Thompson & Zhou 2000) on the interpersonal plane, and there still is considerable variation in the terminology used to refer to the expression of speaker's/writer's opinions, attitudes and relationships to the audience, e.g. stance (Conrad & Biber 2000), metadiscourse (Hyland 2005), evaluation (Thompson & Zhou 2000), appraisal (Martin & White 2007). Since in political discourse the expression of personal judgement and attitude and the negotiation of meaning with the audience are key components of the persuasive tactics adopted by the speaker, the study of strategies and language devices used for the management of interpersonal meanings has become the focus of several publications, such as Jucker's (1986) exploration into the strategic use of vagueness and non-commitment and the functional account of modal (un)certainly by Simon-Vandenberg (1997). This paper expands my previous research into aspects of coherence in political discourse (Dontcheva-Navratilova 2007, 2009) by exploring interpersonal meanings expressed by epistemic modality markers.

Within the study of interpersonal meanings in political discourse, modality expressed by various lexical and grammatical forms (e.g. modal auxiliaries and adverbs, lexical verbs, nouns, evaluative adjectives, degree words, mood etc.) has received considerable attention (e.g. Hodge & Kress 1993[1979], Chilton 2004, Simon-Vandenberg 1997); however the contribution of modal markers to discourse coherence has not been explored in detail. This investigation explores the semantic and pragmatic functions of some epistemic modality markers in the discourse of political speeches delivered by the last three Directors-General of UNESCO with the aim of studying the ideological and context-motivated reasons for

differences in the choice of modal meanings made by the three speakers, to investigate the interplay of epistemic and deontic modality and to show how these modal selections enhance evaluative coherence by constructing a consistent subjective representation of a discourse world in the speeches of the three politicians.

2 Dimensions of modality

Modality is a semantic category which can be realized in language by different grammatical, lexical and phonological means. Despite the variation in the classifications of modal meaning and in the set of criteria proposed for its definition, it is now generally agreed that modality is the semantic domain pertaining to “the addition of a supplement or overlay of meaning to the most neutral semantic value of the proposition of an utterance” (Bybee & Fleischman 1995: 2), expressing the speaker’s “opinion or attitude towards the proposition that the sentence expresses or the situation that the proposition describes” (Lyons 1977: 452) and covering the domain of essentially subjective and non-factual meanings (Palmer 1986: 14-18). This investigation adopts Palmer’s categorisation of modal meanings in terms of the speaker’s commitment to propositional content (Palmer 1986, 2003) which differentiates three types of modality, namely epistemic, deontic and dynamic. According to this approach, epistemic modality (related to values on the probability/possibility scale) expresses the speaker’s attitude to the status of the proposition in terms of judgement of truth-value, while deontic meanings (associated to the expression of wants and desires and the imposition of one’s value system and will on others) and dynamic meaning (associated to yielding control over events and circumstances to the subject of the sentence) express the potentiality of the events. Since in English the same modal verbs can be used to express both deontic and epistemic meanings, the polysemy of these modal markers is resolved pragmatically in the process of utterance comprehension (Papafragou 2000: 521).

The distinction between subjective and objective meanings is another dimension of modality affected by pragmatic considerations. Epistemic and deontic modality are speaker-related and therefore prototypically subjective (in contrast to the objective character of dynamic modality); they clearly encode the position of the speaker with respect to the

propositional content of the clause, either in terms of epistemic commitment to possibility or probability, or in terms of deontic commitment to obligation or permission. However, while most researchers agree that deontic modality allows for some cases of objective use, some authors question the existence of objective epistemic meanings (e.g. Halliday 1970, Verstraete 2001). Since all epistemic markers in the material express subjectivity, drawing on Langacker (1990) and (Verstraete 2001), this investigation takes into consideration an additional dimension of subjectivity which reflects the presence or absence of explicit speaker-presence. Explicit speaker-presence is associated with the personal intrusion of the speaker into the text (indicated typically by the use of first-person pronouns) and a high degree of commitment to the attitude expressed. In political discourse its role may be to disambiguate the nature of authority claimed by the speaker, i.e. objective knowledge or position of power (Hodge & Kress 1993[1979]: 123). However, the suppression of the source of authority by the use of third-person subject structures, can also be strategically exploited to represent it as depersonalised, impersonal, and therefore difficult to challenge (ibid.: 124).

3 Background, material and method

The present research explores a relatively neglected type of political discourse – diplomatic addresses delivered by high officials of an intergovernmental organization, this means that it studies a highly conventionalised form of discourse in institutional settings. The corpus under investigation includes thirty speeches delivered by three politicians from different cultural backgrounds who were the last to hold the office of Director-General of UNESCO, namely Amadou-Mahtar M’Bow from Senegal, term of office: 1974-1987; Federico Mayor Zaragoza from Spain, term of office: 1987-1999; and Koïchiro Matsuura from Japan, Director-General of UNESCO since 1999. Since variation in the epistemic modal selections and differences between the rhetorical styles of the speakers are ideologically, culturally and contextually motivated, it is necessary to introduce briefly their background, policies and the institutional and global context of their respective terms of office. M’Bow’s political commitment to the ideologically-loaded disarmament process and the cause of developing countries, which he saw as opposed to the interests of developed industrial nations, and his administrative and budgetary practices, triggered strong criticism which led

to several nations leaving the organisation (e.g. USA, UK and Singapore). His successor, Federico Mayor, who took over the leadership of UNESCO with the aim of reunifying the organisation, managed to reduce the ideological tension within the organisation by enhancing the idea of peaceful coexistence and human rights; this was in harmony with changes in the international political climate after the fall of the Iron Curtain. The current Director-General Matsuura, completed the transformation of the organisation by carrying out large scale administrative and financial reform in conformity with the global appeal to cut down expenditure in international bureaucracies.

Since this study undertakes to investigate the pragmatic functions of epistemic modal markers as used by the speakers and their contribution to discourse coherence, the corpus is subdivided into three sub-corpora of approximately the same size, each including ten speeches given by one of the Directors-General; the total size of the corpus is approx. 50,000 words.

The analysis of the material combines quantitative and qualitative approaches. While quantitative analysis has been used to highlight general tendencies in the occurrence of modal markers and motivate the selection of representative sections of speeches, a careful qualitative analysis taking into consideration a number of variables has been applied to reveal the pragmatic functions and strategic uses of the epistemic modal markers under investigation.

4 Epistemic modality in political discourse

Epistemic modality concerns the expression of truth relativised to a speaker; it involves knowledge and beliefs (Lyons 1977: 793) and is connected with conveying meanings on the certainty/uncertainty scale, though, as Halliday (1985: 358) points out, the mere presence of modality markers indicates an element of doubt. Since epistemic meanings are prototypically subjective, they frame the discourse in the personal opinion of the speaker by showing his/her feelings, beliefs and critical thought (Van de Mierop 2007). The importance of epistemic modality in political discourse stems from the fact that “the speaker’s expression of (lack) of commitment to the truth value of propositions is not only (and not even primarily) a reflection of knowledge (how certain they are), but also of their

ideology and their position in the discourse” (Simon-Vandenberg 1997: 342). In addition, politicians can exploit the scalar properties of epistemic modality, which allows them to select different degrees of modality: low, median and high (Givón 1982).

Owing to the constitutive-of-reality potential of discourse, political speakers can use epistemic modal markers to indicate the degree of convergence of the expressed world and the reference world as assessed from the viewpoint of “the epistemic centre, the source of knowledge or the principal deictic point” (Frawley 1992: 412); in the case of judgements and beliefs the self is the centre of epistemic stance, but in the case of hearsay, the centre is located with the other(s). Within Chilton’s (2004) approach to the analysis of political discourse, the ideologically-biased discourse world of the speaker is seen as constructed along three dimensions of deixis – space, time and modality – which position the speaker as the deictic centre, associated with “not only the origin of here and now, but also of epistemic true and deontic right” (Chilton 2004: 59). Since modality – similarly to spatial, temporal and social relations – is conceptualised in terms of remoteness, the epistemic scale may be claimed to represent the speaker’s commitment to the proposition, ranging from confident prediction to near impossibility, and from true (assertion), located near to or co-located with the self, to untrue/false, located with the other(s). Therefore, in agreement with Hodge and Kress (1993[1979]: 157), it can be argued that an ideology is not “a single consistent but biased representation of reality, it normally comes complete with its own negation, in a deeply contradictory set of versions of reality whose contradictions are intrinsic to their function”.

5 Analysis and discussion

The rhetorical genre of addresses presupposes an evaluative treatment of people, actions and events by emphasizing praise or blame (Donahue & Prosser 1997: 4); the politician acts as speaker for the organisation he/she represents, i.e. he/she expresses institutional beliefs and constructs an institutional identity (Van de Mierop 2007), which is positioned as the deictic centre of the discourse world constructed in the speech. In agreement with Chilton’s rightness-wrongness scale, which views epistemic and deontic modality as

closely related (Chilton 2004: 60), this ideologically-biased representation of the world posits the views of the speaker and the institution he/she represents as always true, real, right, and shared by the audience, while the views of those opposing the institutional ideology are presented as false, unreal and wrong.

Since institutional intergovernmental organisations have to synchronise the competitive interests of the parties involved, their officials have to create an image of themselves and the organisation as knowledgeable and reliable political actors confident in their capability to impose the right views and necessary actions, to mitigate internal disagreements and tension within the organisation and to denounce views and prevent actions which contradict or threaten the institutional ideology. It is therefore not surprising that on the interpersonal plane of discourse it is the expression of ‘modal certainty’ (Simon-Vandenberg 1997: 344) that enables the Directors-General of UNESCO to convey a high degree of commitment to the validity of their propositions, thus constructing a coherent subjective representation of their discourse worlds. However, a lesser degree of certainty may be used in contrastive rhetorical structures to juxtapose contrastive views or when dealing with issues on which the member states seem to have diverging opinions.

The following analysis of the functions of epistemic modal markers for the expression of different degrees of (un)certainty in the material focuses primarily on modal auxiliaries (*will, can, could, may, might, cannot*), modal adjectives and adverbs (e.g. *sure, certain, clear, certainly, undoubtedly, surely, truly, probably, perhaps*) and lexical verbs (*know, think, believe, take it, hope*) which can be part of congruent or metaphorical realisations of interpersonal meanings (Halliday 1985: 331). Metaphorical realisations of modality are typically thematic and thus, by consistently making the subjective point of view of the speaker the point of departure of the message, contribute directly to discourse coherence. The continuity of the subjective attitude of the speakers is further enhanced by the occurrence of modal markers in adjacent sentences and clauses to form parallelism or contrastive structures.

A quantitative analysis of the epistemic modality markers under investigation shows that the most frequent markers of epistemic meaning are modal verbs, while the least frequent are lexical verbs (Table 1). The only speaker using a higher rate of lexical verbs is Mayor, who is the only one to construct an expert identity as a scientist and writer in addition to the institutional identity shared by all the three Directors-General. The variety of modal means used by the Directors-General reflects their speaking style; thus the elaborate rhetorical style

of Mayor motivates the widest range of epistemic expressions in his speeches. The variation in the total number of modal expressions reflects the ideology of the speakers as affected by the institutional and global context – the higher level of tension in the general political climate and within the organisation during M’Bow’s and Mayor’s terms of office explains the considerably higher number of modal markers used to express certainty and tentativeness in their speeches.

Table 1: Frequency of use of modal markers by the Directors-General

Modal marker		M’Bow	Mayor	Matsuura	Total	
					Tokens	Rate
Modal verbs		58	34	21	113	56.3%
Adverbials/adjectives		27	27	11	65	32.3%
Lexical verbs		4	13	6	23	11.4%
Total	Tokens	89	74	38	201	100%
	Rate	44.2%	36.8%	19.0%	100	

All the occurrences of epistemic modal markers in the material can be interpreted as subjective modality. Explicit subjectivity is not very frequent; it is typically conveyed by clauses including mental verbs (*think, believe*) and epistemic adjectives (*sure, certain*) using as subject *I* referring to the personal authority of the Director-General, but *we* and *UNESCO* also occur indicating an institutional point of view and thus claiming common ground and solidarity. The choices of the three speakers reflecting the degree of certainty cline (Table 2) indicate that while the speeches of Matsuura and Mayor show an approximately equal distribution of high and low degree modality, in the speeches of M’Bow low certainty modality predominates motivated by the lesser solidarity and agreement within the organisation during his term of office.

Table 2: Degree of modality in the speeches of the Directors-General

Degree of modality	M'Bow		Mayor		Matsuura		Total	
	Tokens	Rate	Tokens	Rate	Tokens	Rate	Tokens	Rate
<i>High</i>	25	27.5%	36	46.1%	18	42.8%	79	37.4%
<i>Median</i>	8	8.7%	10	12.8%	4	9.6%	22	10.4%
<i>Low</i>	58	63.8%	32	41.1%	20	47.6%	110	52.1%
Total	91	100%	78	100%	42	100%	211	100%

Epistemic modal markers are used most frequently in the speeches of all three Directors-General to express a high degree of commitment to the truth of the proposition. While expressing judgments which provide legitimization for the views and actions of UNESCO, the speakers assert their right to impose an ideologically biased discourse world based on solidarity, i.e. they assume that all member states and the audience support and approve of the institutional ideology which is presented as right, real and desirable.

In extract (1) which is taken from Matsuura's speech at the launch of the *United Nations Decade on Education for Sustainable Development* (2005), a high degree of certainty is indicated by a sequence of lexical (*clearly, sure*) and implicit (*shall, will*) epistemic markers which are combined with deontic modals (*must*) to imply high commitment and solidarity. While expressing confidence in the ability of the organisation and its partners to deal with the challenge at hand, the speaker states intentions concerning the course of action to be taken and asserts the power of the institution to assure their realisation.

- (1) Education for Sustainable Development *is a clearly* tremendous challenge but it is one that we *must* all welcome and one that we *must* address together. [...] We *shall* do our utmost to fulfil this responsibility with all the energy, commitment and expertise it deserves. In this task, *I am sure we can* count on

the broad ESD partnership to work closely with us. In addition, UNESCO *will be making* its own programmatic contributions to ESD and the Decade, drawing not only upon its Education sector but also upon its other sectors [...]. (Matsuura)

The persuasive force of Mayor's address to the *International Consultative Forum on Education for All* (1983) (extract 2) stems from the consistent use of epistemic modal markers emphasising a high level of certainty (adverbials: *clearly, no doubt, of course*; modal verbs: *cannot*), which express a coherent subjective point of view, despite his acknowledging the complexity of the issue and the difficulties involved in reaching an agreement on a joint course of action. The dialogic character of the speech is indicated by the emphatic use of *yes, of course*, which typically implies that the audience already knows or will readily accept the information presented by the writer (Biber et al. 1999: 870), and by the clausal marker *I hope* intensified by *do*.

- (2) Current events demonstrate *all too clearly* that basic education for the human race *must* also include those elements that foster tolerance, democratic behaviour, respect for human rights and dignity. *Yes*, it *must* include values. These are essentials that *cannot* be postponed to higher education, nor even to secondary education. *No doubt*, the quality of basic education content is a sensitive area with significant socio-cultural, political and economic overtones. *Of course* this meeting is not expected to agree on some ideal basic education curriculum or general norms to be applied worldwide. *But I do hope* that your deliberations will inspire educators, governments and organizations to give more attention to this crucial aspect of Education for All. (Mayor)

The personal intrusion of the speaker through structures marked by explicit subjectivity shows personal insights, critical thought, and frames the discourse in personal opinion. In extract (3), taken from his speech at the launching of the *United Nations Year for Tolerance* (1995), Mayor echoes a view that is presented as generally accepted but not explicitly attributed, which he decisively denies using strategic simulation of affect indicated by an emphatic *No!* and a subjective median modality marker (*I believe*), which rephrases the negated view by post-modification specifying the period which is to come to an end (*the end of a history dominated by the recourse to war*) and thus reinterprets it in a positive way. In the last sentence of the extract the deontic modal *must* used with *we* as subject to stress an appeal for solidarity, asserts the obligation to deal with the problem and the ability to impose

the ideologically-biased institutional view.

- (3) *It is said* that a clash of cultures and religions is inevitable. *It is said* that we are at the end of history. *No!* We are, *I believe*, coming to the end of a history dominated by the recourse to war. *We must* now learn the ways of tolerance and build a new history - a future history of peace. (Mayor)

A combination of modal markers with a varying degree of certainty may be used in contrastive rhetorical structures to stress that the speaker and the institution he represents are in control of the situation and are certain in their power and ability to bring into existence the desired state of affairs (extract 4). When addressing the *Conference on Globalization and Science and Technology* (2006), Matsuura uses the indicative mood (*is*) and *will* conveying a confident prediction in order to present globalisation as a fact; this fact is initially qualified as relatively desirable, irreversible and probably unstoppable, i.e. as a kind of a threat. The contrast (*however*), empowered by the concessive clause (*while*) introducing the epistemic meaning of *may appear inevitable*, implies a doubt concerning the problematic character of globalization; it reduces the inevitability of the threat by indicating contrary expectations and interacts with deontic modality markers imposing the obligation to deal with the problem and to bring it under control.

- (4) The complex phenomenon of “globalization” *is* – and for the foreseeable future *will continue to be* – a major trend, affecting all spheres and levels of society. The early, often passionate, debates about the relative desirability of globalization, have now given way to the growing recognition that this process is not just irreversible, but also *probably* unstoppable. However, while globalization *may* now appear inevitable, the direction and form it takes is something *we can – and must* – work to shape. (Matsuura)

The commitment of the speaker is affected by the level of solidarity and support for the institutional ideology provided by the member states and the audience. Thus the discourse world constructed in the speech delivered by M’Bow in front of the United Nations General Assembly in New York (1982) reflects ideological conflict (extract 5).

- (5) *It is certain* that if a nuclear conflagration were to break out nothing could then stop it. It is at the very least misguided and dangerous to think that those mad enough to start a nuclear war would then have the wisdom to limit it [...]. Under these circumstances, war *may not only* be beyond the control of those who start it; it *may be* beyond all control and plunge the whole world headlong into an irreversible situation.

The variation in the degree of epistemic modality is used to enhance persuasion by asserting the speaker's ideological view as right and that of his opponents as wrong. In the opening of an extract which presents the view that the hypothetical outbreak of a nuclear conflict would be fatal as right, unquestionable and shared by all discourse participants, this is achieved by the use of an impersonal high certainty marker. However, the use of the modal *may* in the subsequent sentences to express possibility implies the existence of proponents of the opposite view and puts the blame for the hypothetical disaster on 'others' who oppose the institutional ideology, and whose views are presented as false, unreal and wrong.

6 Conclusion

The findings of the present investigation support the view that in political discourse modality has a key role in building up a subjective ideologically-biased discourse world. In the speeches of the Directors-General of UNESCO epistemic modal markers typically emphasise certainty by expressing strong commitment on the part of the speaker to the truth of the proposition and to the (un)desirability of events and actions from the point of view of the institutional ideology. The interplay of epistemic and deontic modal meanings implies a correlation between the imposition of compliance with the institutional ideology and the expression of certainty based on authority and knowledge. While all three Directors-General tend to use modal markers in adjacent sentences and clauses as part of rhetorical devices such as parallelism or contrastive structures, this investigation has shown that differences in the speakers' use of modals are due to ideological and context-motivated reasons.

In conclusion, it can be stated that the consistent construction of the institutional

identity of the speaker and of a subjective point of view contributes to the perception of discourse coherence at the interpersonal plane of discourse. However, further research into the functions of other lexical and grammatical structures expressing interpersonal meanings in the discourse of international governmental organisations is necessary to explain the full extent of the intricacy of discourse coherence.

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Unmentioned, but present: The local negotiation of ‘patriotism’ in the football reception situation/Cornelia Gerhardt

Abstract

This paper investigates talk-in-interaction in the reception situation, i.e. by people watching football on television, with regard to the local construction of ‘patriotism’. Conflict arises between the viewers when one member of the audience shifts his stance towards the media text from that of England supporter to neutral football expert. Furthermore, during England versus Argentina the viewers protest against an alleged reference to the Falklands war by the commentators. The viewers’ idea of ‘patriotism’ does not seem to support such a recasting of the game in political terms, even though this seems all pervasive in the media.

Introduction

This paper is concerned with the media reception situation to explore the co-construction and negotiation of meaning in talk-in-interaction.² In this very specific setting an issue surfaces that does not seem to be satisfactorily explained by current research. First, the concrete local interplay between media discourse and everyday talk-in-interaction seems largely unexplored (cf. Scollon 1998: vii). Based on the transcriptions from video-tapes of people watching football on television, I will study the appropriation of media discourse and trace the immediate uptake of the language and the pictures on television in the talk of the viewers. A special focus is on how the meaning of broader categories, here ‘patriotism’, is negotiated in everyday interaction against the backdrop of the media discourse. For two reasons, the data, the ATTAC-corpus (Analysing The Television Audiences’ Conversations), provide a fruitful basis for work on the negotiation of meaning: First, they represent transcribed talk-in-interaction. Hence, just as in other settings, the participants’ interactional work on meaning construction can be witnessed. Secondly, similar maybe in some respects to intercultural encounters, the topic of other papers in this volume, two realms come together here: On the

² I would like to thank Neal Norrick, Melanie Gros, and Hanna Kiefer for their comments.

one hand, there is the more official or institutionally sanctioned media discourse, i.e. the BBC commentary and the pictures from the international feed. On the other hand, there is the talk-in-interaction by the viewers at home. This allows investigating the actual linguistic practices with which people appropriate media discourse, or in other words, produce meaning based on the televised pictures and language. We will see that in both cases conflicts may arise as to what it means to be for England, to be an England supporter. We will be able to witness the interactional work it takes for the participants to negotiate this role, and hence their meaning of the concept 'patriotism' in this specific setting for these specific people. However, the word 'patriotism' is my choice of terminology for the demarcations which can be found in the data. It is never actually used by the participants and as such also up to debate.

I will start with a general account of talk-in-interaction in this specific setting. In the body of the paper, I will first focus on the negotiation of meaning amongst the viewers. The example shows how the viewers have to carefully (re-)negotiate their positioning (Davies et al. 1990) against the media discourse, because of a sudden frame shift (Goffman 1974) of one of the participants. The following part will illustrate that conflicting ideas about 'patriotism' also exist between the viewers and the commentators. Thus, in the second example the fans at home strongly oppose the alleged stance by the presenters indexing their differing conception of 'patriotism'.

Talk-in-interaction in the reception situation

The interactions of the viewers in the television reception situation (Holly et al. 2001, Klemm 2000, Gerhardt 2009, 2008) can be characterised as an 'open state of talk' (Goffman 1981). The viewers do not have an obligation to talk, but they can talk if they wish. Different 'footings' (Goffman 1979) account for the behaviour of the viewers. For instance, during a story-telling frame the interaction of the viewers does not differ from conversation in general. It is fully coherent and no traces of the televised media text can be found. However, even during those passages a number of 'view signs' (Scollon 1998) such as posture and gaze direction (Gerhardt 2007) signal that the television is part of their 'contextual configuration' (Goodwin 2000). These view signs can be interpreted as an 'embodiment' (Goodwin 2000) of

the constant likelihood of a shift to the ‘watching football’ frame. In other words, such regular conversational talk may potentially be abandoned or interrupted at any given moment because of events on the screen.

These shifts are marked by ‘contextualisation cues’ (Gumperz 1982) such as interjections or rise in volume. ‘Notability’ (Gerhardt 2008), the importance assigned to the mediated events by the participants, licenses e.g. other-interruption or cutting off ‘turn constructional units’ (Sacks et al. 1974) without any markers of dispreference (Pomerantz 1984) in the ensuing talk. Hence, a goal, for instance, is generally ‘notable’ and warrants the speaker e.g. to leave his/her utterance unfinished and start celebrating, or the listener to interrupt e.g. a story-telling phase.

Formally, ‘watching football’ is realised differently depending on the general linguistic behaviour of the recorded groups. The groups of friends talk a lot about different matters such as acquaintances, their work, or the Golden Jubilee of the Queen, which was celebrated concurrently. When these shifts occur in ongoing talk, the frame is often realised through side-sequences (Jefferson 1972). In the more taciturn families, however, the talk consists of ‘free units’ or ‘islands of talk’ (Baldauf 2001) only. Hence, long periods of silence are broken up by single utterances or short passages of talk mainly concerning the mediated contents.

Within the ‘watching football’ frame, the viewers’ talk is only coherent with reference to the media text. The media text or media discourse is understood here as both, the talk on television (football commentary or ‘sports announcer talk’ (SAT, Ferguson 1982) and the transmitted pictures (the international feed). A number of cohesive ties (Halliday et al. 1976) link the talk-in-interaction and the media text. For instance, the 3rd person pronoun *he* or the definite article *the* can be used intertextually by referring to a person just mentioned on television, or multimodally by referring to someone concurrently visible on the screen. Often, the interlocutors also construct coherence interactionally (Schegloff 1990) in this frame, e.g. by backchannelling to utterances on television. At times, they even construct adjacency pairs together with the commentators, for instance when the viewers answer questions put forth on television. At these moments of intense interaction with the television, the viewers also start leaving gaps in their talk to accommodate the SAT.

To conclude, talk in the television reception situation varies enormously ranging from full-blown conversation or storytelling with no traces of the media text to passages where it can only be interpreted coherently by taking the media text into account.

Conflicting stance amongst the viewers

The following example (for a turn-by-turn discussion cf. Gerhardt 2006) illustrates that conflicting ideas exist between the viewers concerning the linguistic behaviour of Englishmen and -women when they watch England play. In the transcript below, one of the viewers, Darrell, changes his footing from that of an ardent England supporter to the more neutral standpoint of a football expert. England are playing Argentina. They are leading 1:0, and it is only ten minutes to go.

Transcript 1

- 1 Henry *I can't watch it eit[her.] {laughing}=*
- 2 Darrell *[no?]*
- 3 Henry *it's dreadful.*
- 4 *(3.4)*
- 5 Darrell *well it's-*
- 6 *but it's fair,*
- 7 *I don't think Argentina deserve to lose.*
- 8 *(0.5)*
- 8 Henry *{coughs}*
- 9 *oh shut up Darrell,=*
- 10 Darrell *=ya-=*
- 11 Wilma *={laughs}=*

- 12 Darrell =well do you?=
 13 =I mean-=
 14 Wilma ={laughs}
 15 (1.3)
 16 I know,=
 17 =I- I think-=
 18 Henry =believe we're being [totally fair.]=
 19 Wilma [I- I-]
 20 Darrell =yeah.

Before the pause (line 4), there is a longer passage (of which only the end is given here) where the viewers all agree that they fear a goal by the Argentines any time because of England's poor performance. Then, lines 5 – 7 indicate a repositioning by Darrell from England fan to neutral football expert *well it's- but it's fair, I don't think Argentina deserve to lose*. This sudden shift of footing causes conflict between him and the other viewers. This is signalled for instance by the long pause (line 8), the coughing (line 8) and the open reprimand (line 9). However, after quite some latching (lines 9 – 20), an indication for the high involvement (Tannen 1984) of the viewers, in lines 18 – 20 the group renegotiates their stance against the media text: since they now evaluate the game as neutral experts and no longer from the standpoint of fans, they also support Darrell. In other words, the participants have negotiated that it is permissible for a Brit to take a stance which indicates that the English team should not win a game in the World Cup. Hence, it is permissible to be patriotic and still take a neutral view on the match played. Note that Henry uses the adjective *fair*, which is traditionally attributed to English national identity (Langford 2000). Hence, *being totally fair* does not contradict being patriotic.

This illustrates that the specific setting of the media reception situation allows tracing conflicting views about the appropriation of media discourse amongst the groups watching. Depending on the positioning of the audience or of different members of the audience, the media text will be read in different ways. The appropriation of media texts by a neutral

football expert is different from that by a biased supporter of England's national team. Both positions are covered by the groups' locally negotiated meaning of 'patriotism'.

Conflicting stance between the viewers and the commentators

In the following I will illustrate conflicting stance between the viewers and the commentators. We will see that the commentator's words are openly criticised by the viewers and rejected as being beside the point or inappropriate. So there are also conflicting views as to the significance of televised discourse, i.e. the football game, between the institutionally sanctioned commentators and "regular folk" at home in their living rooms. Again, the transcript is taken from Argentina against England, and we will see that more than football seems to be at stake.

Transcript 2

1	TV	England a::re,
2		what.
3		(1.5tv)
4		one minute plus stoppage time awa::y=
5		=from avenging,
6		(0.9tv)
7		the last two, =
8	Wilma	=u::h,
9		¹ [don't-] ¹
10	TV	¹ [world cup] ¹ defeats ² [by] ² ³ [Argentina.] ³
11	Wilma	² [don't-] ²
12	Henry	³ [(that's-)] ³
13		it's just a GA::me, =

- 14 =isn't-
- 15 it's just a GA::me, =
- 16 nothing to do with the world cup before,

At the beginning of the transcript, the commentator is giving the time that the two teams still have in the second half: *one minute plus stoppage time* (line 4), an act that can be found frequently on SAT, especially towards the end of games. Note that the commentator is giving that information from the point of view of the English team using *England* as the grammatical subject (line 1), again a position that is often assumed by the commentators in international games (Billings et al. 2004). Also, he uses metonymy, *England*, the country, to refer to the English national football team. This common practice in SAT nevertheless evokes the idea of the English team fighting vicariously for the English nation. Furthermore, officially the game itself is also called England versus Argentina and not the English men's national football team against the Argentinean men's national football team because the squads are officially conceptualized as representatives of their nations. In other words, the World Cup is conceived as a tournament of nations against nations, and the country whose national team wins the final becomes World Champion.

In line 5, the commentator uses the term *avenge* which may have the connotation of righting wrongs (cf. also below). After a short pause (line 6) which may be due to the time it takes the commentator to mentally check whether the following number is indeed correct, he continues *the last two* (line 7). At that point, one of the viewers, Wilma, interrupts by producing a sound *u::h*. It starts with a long drawn out [u:] and finishes in a rounded high front vowel [y]. Once the tongue starts shifting its position, the sound is also accompanied by strong expiration which ends in a slight whistling sound. This sound seems connected to situations where one witnesses some kind of mishap in a position with no control over the situation. Her immediately following quick *don't-* (line 9) is in overlap with the talk on TV. Because of the emergent nature of talk, Wilma at that point has only heard what was said until then. For this reason, her reaction to SAT seems surprising.

First, the language of sports is generally very much marked by the use of vocabulary from the field of war. The SPORTS IS WAR metaphor (cf. Lakoff et al. 1980, Lakoff 1994 COMPETITION IS WAR, Lönneker 2003 SPORTS IS WAR and SPORTS IS FIGHT)

seems inescapable when it comes to sports reporting. For this reason, not a single episode can be found in the ATTAC-corpus where a viewer takes note of this connection. The notions that players attack or defend go completely unnoticed in the corpus (and in general, I assume) since sports is for the most part conceptualised this way. Here however, the unexpected happens: Wilma does react and interrupts the ongoing commentary.

A closer look at the discourse surrounding the World Cup, i.e. the amalgam of sports, politics and the media will be helpful here, especially with a view to this particular pairing. I will show that in England the pairing Argentina against England still today immediately evokes the Falklands war. The following text should underline this point. It is a jocular list of so-called “Actual BBC World Cup guidelines for commentary team” (mrbrown 2001) which was circulated via the internet before

Actual BBC World Cup Guidelines for commentary team

- 1 Within 1 minute of kick off in the opening match (France v Senegal), the commentator must mention England.
- 2 Regardless of what two teams are contesting the final, England have to be mentioned within the first minute.
- 3 The commentator shall refer to the Falkland Isles in passing at some point during the England v Argentina match...
- 8 When Germany are playing, they must be referred to as being arrogant by the commentator on at least 14 occasions. This must refer to their style, their passing, their haircuts and their general footballing ability...
- 9 Should England play Germany, mentions of Winston Churchill, Dambusters, The Luftwaffe and Adolf Hitler will be compulsory. And 1966.
- 10 All Scottish members of our commentary team must continue to refer to England as "we" and "us".
- 11 We must ensure that nationalistic stereotypes are adhered to. Of course, the Germans are arrogant. The Spanish are bottlers, The Nigerians are fast but bad at defending, The Cameroonians are disorganised, The Argentineans are cheats and the French are only good because their best players play in England...

These guidelines list some of the typical features of SAT at international competitions such as the tendency to comment from an English perspective (cf. guidelines 1 and 2). Clearly, for such a text to appear humorous, the guidelines mentioned must match the general experience of the readers with SAT. The stereotypes both of SAT (and of the nations in questions) must be general world knowledge. Of special interest here is guideline 3 *The commentator shall refer to the Falkland Isles in passing at some point during the England v Argentina match*. For this guideline to appear humorous, there must be a general notion that the Falklands war is salient when it comes to this specific pairing. To illustrate this point, for instance *The commentator shall refer to Copenhagen in passing at some point during the England v Denmark match* would generally not represent a coherent piece of writing because the Battle of Copenhagen (1801) between England and Denmark is not salient when the two nations pair in football.

To return to England and Argentina in particular, because of the common history between the two nations, this pairing has a particular significance (cf. Alabarces et al. 2001). It is marked by the long history of rivalry both insides and outsides of sports. For instance, Diego Maradona, an Argentinean who can be ranked amongst the best football players ever, scored an illegal, but unpenalised goal via a handball in the quarter final in the World Cup in 1986, kicking England out of the tournament. After the game, Maradona allegedly said that it was “la mano de dios”, i.e. ‘the hand of God’ one could see scoring on the television screens. Furthermore, that quarter-final was preceded by jingoistic reports on both sides of the Atlantic implying that the Falklands war would be fought again on the pitch that afternoon (cf. also below).

A few examples from the English press coverage shall underscore the point that the media and its institutional discourse produces an amalgam between sports, politics and the common history of the nations in question (mostly the common history regarding wars). We will see in the following that rule no. 3 in the guide lines above seems, at least in the following example, to be truly followed by the sports reporters. It suggests that the Falklands war is so very immediate in the discourse of football that it can be mentioned without any apparent reason, solely because the pairing England v Argentina is mentioned. Note that the Spanish, hence Argentinean, name for the islands is Las Malvinas. The following snippet is taken from The Times at the time when Beckham was playing for Real Madrid. The reason for the article was that Beckham had touched his genitals (through his pants) in public (and when cameras were around).

The Times, Dec. 6th, 2003

Most Spanish fans are only dimly aware that the England-Argentina saga is akin to the long and noble mutual loathing enjoyed between Barcelona and Real Madrid. But they instinctively know that the real name for the Falklands is Las Malvinas.

As we can see, there is no exophoric grounding for mentioning the crisis in this commentary. If this connection between the pairing in football and the war is drawn in *The Times*, it is even more popular in tabloids such as *The Sun*. The following quotes from the time of the game illustrate how the Argentineans are stylised as wanting to take revenge on the pitch for their loss of the Falklands war.

The Sun, June 6th, 2002

Teddy Sheringham: I think some of the quotes which have come out of their [i.e. the Argentineans'] camp in the last couple of weeks, about this being revenge for the Falklands War, builds it up for them..."

The Sun, June 6th, 2002

DAVID BECKHAM and his World Cup troops have been told: Don't mention the war.

With England's showdown against Argentina just 48 hours away, the debate over the Falklands conflict is back on the agenda. The Argies still claim the islands they call Las Malvinas belong to them. And FA bosses have warned skipper Becks and Co are likely to be questioned about the disputed territory. A Soho Square source said: "We will make sure the players and the manager are made well aware of the potential pitfalls before they do any interviews." Most of the England squad were only kids when the conflict took place 20 years ago, but one wrong answer could spark an international incident.

The Sun, June 8th, 2002

We have lived through one nightmare after another as the South Americans, bound together as a nation after the Falklands War, took their revenge on the football pitch.

These examples illustrate that matches between England and Argentina immediately evoke the crisis from 1982. Albeit these are all passages taken from the British press coverage, it is the Argentineans who are portrayed as the ones who draw this connection.

To continue with the discussion of the viewers' talk (transcript 2), in the light of the press quotations above, it seems feasible that Wilma's overt forceful protest should be interpreted in this context. She seems to try to prevent the commentators from uttering something foolish or nationalistic with her exclamation. She then breaks off *don't-* (line 9) and repeats her quick

don't- (line 11) at the next transition relevance place (after *defeats* line 10). However, since the commentator continues, again she stops (in this way displaying that she follows the general rules of watching football (cf. the 'watching football frame' above)). At that point, the topic of SAT has crystallised: the commentators are "only" talking about sports, since they now refer explicitly to Argentinean football victories, amongst them the one in 1986 *the last two world cup defeats by Argentina* (lines 7 and 10).

Then Henry, her husband's friend, starts talking immediately after Wilma's second *don't* (line 11) and in overlap with the last word on television *Argentina* (line 10): *that's* (line 12). Since he starts at a point where the commentator has not yet finished, he signals that the commentary should be disregarded. The setting under study allows these shifting participation frameworks (Goffman 1981) constructed by the viewers: either they can listen intently and make space in their own talk to accommodate the commentary, e.g. by respecting the turn-rights of the commentators. In that way the commentators are turned into ratified speakers in the participation framework of the viewers at home. On the other hand, they can also "rudely" interrupt and disregard SAT building their own participation framework with the other viewers as participants only. So Wilma follows the interactional rules of the 'watching football' frame by interrupting herself twice (lines 9 and 11): in the first instance because she realises that she does not manage to insert her words in the pause on TV, and in the second instance because she realises that the journalist means to continue. This very same kind of pattern (lines 8-11) could be found in face-to-face interaction where one person attempts to get the floor because s/he means to challenge the current speaker's position. Henry, however, by starting in the middle of a syntactically, semantically and intonationally unfinished unit, signals that he is at that point disregarding the commentary. Note that he does not, however, interrupt Wilma who (line 12) has already yielded the floor after her second self-interruption. He then voices his anger about this particular piece of commentary through the reiteration of his key sentence *it's just a GA::me* (lines 13 and 15) which he repeats not only verbatim, but also with the same intonation contour and the same tone of voice. As to the semantic content, his utterance does not seem coherent with regards to SAT: TV: *England are one minute... away from avenging the last... world cup defeats by Argentina.* Henry: *It's just a game.* After all, the sportscaster does conceptualise the current game as a football game in the context of earlier games with the same pairing in the same tournament. The expression 'it's just a game' is usually employed to defend football as a simple recreational pastime and straightforward ballgame against more general implications about its significance in society (cf. literature in sociology claiming that sports is NOT just a game Harvey and et al. 1988, Baker et al. 1997, Archetti 1999). Furthermore, it is used to counter excessive emotional reactions during or after ball games. However, neither does the journalist leave the sphere of sports, nor is his announcing here marked by affectivity. Only the term 'avenge' may presuppose an earlier wrong doing in referring to 'retribution' (in contrast to 'revenge' which may entail malicious retaliation) (cf. 'avenge' Oxford English Dictionary 2009). So Henry's protest just like Wilma's seems to be countering a perceived misappropriation of the game in political or societal terms much rather than the actual utterance by the commentator that emerges only when their protests are already being voiced. Henry's last utterance *nothing to do with the world cup before* (line 16) then reframes

Wilma's and his disapproval in the light of the actual utterance by the reporters. Hence, he by then realises that the commentators do not actually mention the Falklands and makes their talk cohere again.

To conclude, the strong resistance voiced by the viewers towards the official reading of the game by the journalists must be seen in the light of this amalgam between sports, politics, and the media, which surrounds football in general and even more so the pairing Argentina vs. England in the World Cup. Albeit on the surface in the end sports only is mentioned, this unparalleled reaction by the participants seems only explicable in that the viewers fear some jingoistic comments and try to shush the journalists. To return to 'patriotism', this transcript illustrates resistance against the reading of the game by the media and uneasiness towards an extension of football into politics. The viewers' linguistic construction of 'patriotism' does not support an interpretation of the football game as a re-enactment of a political crisis between the two nations concerned.

Conclusion

I hope to have shown how an abstract concept like 'patriotism' surfaces in the talk-in-interaction by the viewers. The audience does not use the word itself. However, one can clearly see the imprints or effects of some such concept in this setting. One focus was on how patriotism gets negotiated by the viewers amongst themselves. The example suggests that one of the viewer's linguistic behaviour is first interpreted as being unacceptable for a patriot. However, after the audience repositioning themselves as neutral football experts, his behaviour gets ratified by his co-viewers. In relation to SAT, a fissure appears in the viewers' talk that further supports the existence of such a demarcation. Although the commentator talks about sports only, the mere possibility that he might broach the topic of the Falklands war induces the viewers to distance themselves from this sort of jingoistic, chauvinist patriotism.

Due to lack of space, the connection between the pictures on television and the language in the corpus had to be excluded from the written version of this paper. One interesting perspective regarding the negotiation of meaning in this particular setting opens when the participants see a clash between what is shown in the pictures and what is said in SAT. These multimodal issues have to be treated elsewhere.

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Strategies for the derivation of ironic meaning: the case of non-cancellable irony/Eleni Kapogianni

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to question the traditional account of irony as an implicature and to propose alternative derivation processes for different types of ironic meaning. The theoretical framework used is a post-Gricean, truth conditional one, assuming a Contextualist point of view (Recanati 2005). The structure of the argument is as follows: first, we argue for cancellability as a precondition for implicatures, then, we highlight the existence of ironies which fail to satisfy this precondition (thus being “non-implicated”), moreover, we detect a non-unified mode of derivation of the ironic meaning, which is, finally, attributed to the ability of irony to be present at different stages of meaning derivation.

keywords: cancellability test, implicatures, non-cancellable irony

1. Cancellability test

The Gricean characteristics of implicatures (cancellability, non-detachability, calculability, not being part of the expression’s conventional force, and independence from truth conditions - Grice 1975:57-58) have been often exploited as implicature tests, although Grice himself (1978:115) explained that he does not intend to use them as such. It is noteworthy that, at least until recently, among the different implicature criteria proposed, the most widely accepted was the criterion of cancellability, mainly because of its high degree of applicability and systematicity.³ A preliminary assumption for the present analysis is the consideration of cancellability as a necessary, although not sufficient, condition for implicatures (in agreement with Grice⁴). In other words, a cancellable meaning qualifies as a possible implicature although it may not be one. On the other hand, if a meaning is non-cancellable it cannot be an

* I am grateful to Dr. K. Jaszczolt, Dr. N. Katsos and Dr. B. Clark for their helpful reviews of earlier versions of my argument. I would also like to thank Prof. E. Traugott and Laura Camargo Fernández for their insightful comments.

³ The most influential proposals are those of Levinson (2000), Carston (1988/1998) and Recanati (1989)

⁴ He mentions the case of “loose use” of language, where the loosely applied term can be cancelled, in spite of not being an implicature (Grice 1989:44). For example, we can have the following sentence: France is hexagonal, but it is not really hexagonal, its shape just resembles to a hexagon.

implicature. Therefore, we choose this latter negative statement in order to formulate the criterion as follows:

“A meaning that cannot be cancelled is necessarily not an implicature” (C1)

The most interesting attempt of refutation of the cancellability criterion, which is also triggering the present discussion, comes from a paper by Matthew Weiner (2006). In this paper, the author imagines a “train ride” situation, where a woman who is standing utters to another (obviously “able bodied”) woman who is sprawled across two seats “*I wonder whether it would be physically possible for you to make room for someone else to sit down*”. The following sentences are likely to follow from this utterance (either as inferences or as additional statements):

- (1) You should make room for someone else to sit down.
- (2) Not that you should make room, I am just curious.
- (3) [...] and I really mean that!
- (4) In fact, I am not asking you to make room for someone else to sit down; I was just being ironic, in order to make you feel bad for occupying two seats in a crowded train.

The sentence in (1) is the obvious implicature, while (2) is, for Weiner, unable to cancel the implicature as it would normally be perceived as ironic. But Weiner misses an important point here: the implicature “You should make room” is not directly derived from the literal meaning of the initial utterance, but it is the last part of a “chain” of inferences, the first part being “the speaker is being ironic” [(a) the speaker is being ironic → (b) she uses irony to indirectly request from the hearer to make room for someone else to sit down].

In other words, the basic characteristic of the initial utterance is that it is an ironic speech act. Therefore, it is the recognition of the irony that gives rise to the final implicature – which is obviously the illocutionary meaning of an indirect speech act. Thus, what seems to be non-cancellable is the fact that the utterance is ironic. Even if the speaker went on by adding the utterance in (3) we would still perceive both the initial and the additional utterance as ironic, because it is impossible for her to actually be wondering whether the woman can move. On the other hand, the real implicature can indeed be cancelled: we can easily imagine the speaker uttering (4). To sum up, Weiner’s observation is very interesting, but not for the reasons he believes: the test of cancellability still holds for pure implicatures, but there seem to be some types of irony which fail this test.

But is the cancellability test sufficiently defined so far? What seems to be generally ignored, as Jaszczolt (2009) points out, it is Grice's initial distinction between "explicit" and "contextual" cancellability (Grice 1989:44). The first notion refers to the cancellation of a possible meaning of an utterance in the context of that utterance, while the second notion refers to the cancellation of a possible meaning of a sentence in any imaginable context.

Our first observation is that the second notion is too vague, in the sense that one can imagine (construct) an infinite number of contexts in an infinite number of possible worlds, where any meaning can be cancelled. To give an example, even a nonimplicated and automatic enrichment of the semantic content (or an "explicature", in Relevance Theory terms) such as that of the phrase "I haven't eaten", normally contextually enriched as "I haven't eaten *today/the last few hours*" could be cancelled in an imaginary context where the speaker is an android that has never been fed. On the other hand, since particularized conversational implicatures are inherently context dependent, there is no point whatsoever in trying to transfer the implicatures of an utterance out of their original context.⁵ Therefore, the cancellability test, not only is not a conjunction of the two Gricean versions (as Jaszczolt 2009 points out) but it should strictly refer to the "explicit" type of cancellation, which leads us to enrich the above presented criterion (C1) as follows:

"A meaning that cannot be cancelled *in its given context* is necessarily not an implicature"
(C2)

2. Defining Irony

Before we proceed to the presentation and discussion of further examples of irony, we need to set the criteria which define our object of study. This is not an easy task; as Muecke (1969:3) poetically put it, "getting to grips with irony seems to have something in common with gathering the mist". What makes the detection and delineation of the phenomenon of verbal irony even more difficult, it is the discrepancy between its traditional (of literary origin) definition of irony as "a mode of speech in which the meaning is contrary to the words" (Dr. Johnson-reproduced in Wilson and Sperber 1992:296) and the various theory-

⁵ That is where Bloome-Tillman's (2008) attempt to reply to Weiner's hypothesis fails, as his argument relies on "contextual" cancellability.

dependent accounts of the phenomenon presented by modern linguists, the most prominent of which treat irony as negation (Grice 1975/ Giora 1995), echoic mention (Wilson and Sperber 1992, 1995/ Wilson 2006), pretence (Clark and Gerrig 1984), and inappropriateness (Attardo 2000). The evident disadvantage of these linguistic theories is that each refers to a different set of ironic examples, capturing a particular ironic device and not the phenomenon in its entirety (Kapogianni 2008).

The question remains: what are the necessary conditions and what the indications leading to the classification of an utterance as ironic?

The existence of contrast is a prerequisite for the whole natural class of ironic phenomena (dramatic/situational and verbal). This can be manifested either as conflict between the goals/beliefs of the ironist and those of his target (victim) or as discrepancy between hopes/expectations (of the ironist or, most commonly, of his target) and the reality.

As we will see in the discussed examples (ex. 5-10), another necessary condition for the presence of irony is unexpectedness: The ironic utterance is not what a competent speaker would be expected to say in the given situation, as it does not conform to the assumptions and the expectations created by the context.

Normally, the ironic meaning (which deviates from the sentence meaning) is not the main intended meaning. The fact that the speaker did not choose a conventional (and easier) way of expressing the same meaning, means that she is being ironic for a reason. This reason must be the intention of conveying an additional meaning (usually the expression of an attitude, as Sperber and Wilson 1995:239 note).

In discourse, there are usually extralinguistic indications for irony. These may be standardized (such as some culture-specific gestures and facial expressions) or not (often being dependent on the act of pretending, ironic utterances may be combined with exaggerated intonational characteristics of the pretended act e.g. exaggerated exclamation).

Finally, one should bear in mind that irony “varies in force” (Leech 1983:143-4) from the more comic (light mockery) to the more bitter/ sarcastic. This means that the speaker’s specific intentions should not be considered as a criterion for recognizing irony as they may vary from praise to severe criticism or self-sarcasm.

A corpus of ironic expressions, which is the source of the examples presented in this analysis, was compiled with the use of the above conditions as criteria, while also having them cross-checked with speakers’ intuitions (which seem quite accurate in recognizing and responding to ironic utterances). The examples (mainly in Modern Greek) come from

contextual environments both natural (radio/tv talk shows) and constructed (literature/comedies/cartoons).

3. The non-cancellable type of irony

The train-ride scenario discussed in section one, provided us with an example of what appears to be a non-cancellable type of irony. We now need to examine more evidence for the existence of such an ironic type and we will do so by describing three different ironic devices.⁶

a. Contextually irrelevant/unrealistic statement.

The ironist makes a comment, the truth conditional content of which (along with any logical entailments or presuppositions) is totally incompatible with any logical assumptions that hold for the given context (and the real world in general). This is the case with the train ride scenario: no mentally sane, logically thinking person would ever wonder if an obviously (by observation) “able bodied” person is able to move (because the ability to move is part of being “able bodied”). An even more illustrative example is the following (from Greek):

- (5) (son) *baba, thelo na ziso se mia kinonia me diafania,*
dadVOC want1PS to live in one society with transparency⁷
isopolitia, anthropia ke dikeosini
egalitarianism humanism and justice
‘Dad, I want to live in a society of transparency, egalitarianism,
humanitarianism and justice’
- (father) *ke se pion planiti skeftese na metakomisis pedi mu?*
and to whichACC planetACC think2PS to move childVOC my
‘And to which planet are you thinking of moving, child?’

⁶ I deliberately leave out of the discussion any conventionalized ironic expressions (although their meaning could as well be considered as non-cancellable) because their structure and function substantially differs from that of “novel” ironies.

It is obvious, here (in an everyday context of father and son conversation), that a cancellation phrase could not be accepted under real-world assumptions. Hence, it is not possible for a speaker using this device to refrain from its ironic character.

b. Literal treatment of conventionalized meaning.

This is an easily identifiable and almost predictable irony tactic, as it arises in a very specific kind of context and it is driven by a more or less standard speaker's intention. The ironist responds to the literal meaning of conventionalized expressions (or to the "minimal proposition" in the case of expressions the meaning of which arises by necessary pragmatic enrichments – see Bach 1994:134-5), exhibiting a (pragmatic) behavior which could be characterized as irrational.

(6) (grandmother) *etroyes?*

eat2PSPAST

'Were you eating?'

(grandson) *oxi, ixa oro!*

no have1PSPAST dripACC

'No, I was on a drip'

(7) *γirises?*

return2PSPAST

'Are you back?'

oxi, sto δromo ime akoma

no to.the wayACC be1PS still

'No, I am still on the(my) way'

In (6) the question is normally enriched to mean "were you eating well enough?", while the question in (7) is not an actual question but meant as a remark. It is obvious that neither in (6), in the context of which it is given that the grandson is perfectly healthy and has just returned from vacations nor in (7), where the interlocutors are both in the same house, is it possible for the ironic meaning to be cancelled. The common communicated meaning in this kind of examples is that the other person is making dull remarks/asking dull questions.

⁷ Grammatical Abbreviations: 1/2PS = 1st / 2nd person singular, GEN = Genitive case, ACC = Accusative case, VOC = Vocative case, PAST = Past tense, SUPRL = Superlative. Whenever tense is not marked it is Present.

c. *Oxymoron (internal contradiction)*.

This term, which is also used in the literary analysis, describes a polar contradiction between the literal meanings of two of the components of the utterance. In this case, the necessity of nonliteral interpretation arises as early as in a sub-propositional level, since no truth conditions can be assigned, unless one of the terms is interpreted ironically.

- (8) *tu zitisa tris meres adia ke ekinos mu apadise*
heGEN ask1PSPAST three days leave and he meGEN answer2PSPAST
me ena poli evyeniko xideo vrisidi
with one very polite gross insult
'I asked him [my boss] a three-day leave and he responded with a very polite gross insult'

- (9) (narration fragment) *mia oreotati odiniri apotixia*
one beautiful^{SUPRL} painful failure
'A very beautiful painful failure'

The impossibility of the cancellation of the ironic meaning in (8) and (9) is even more obvious than in the previous devices, as a literal interpretation of both contradictory terms would deprive the sentence of any truth conditional content (as the truth of the one term entails the falsity of the other).

To sum up, any literal (non-ironic) interpretation of the above examples is impossible. According to the cancellability criterion (C2), the non-cancellable ironic meaning of these utterances cannot be an implicature. What remains to be seen is whether this conclusion can be applied to the whole of the phenomenon of verbal irony. The apparent answer is that it cannot. This is because, apart from these specific devices (which, of course, do not exhaust the possibility of production of non-cancellable ironies), there also exist other, most common and frequently mentioned devices, which give rise to cancellable ironies.

- (10) (John) The party was great!

(Mary) No, I really mean it was great, we had a great time.

John's initial utterance in (10) is ambiguous to someone who does not have any factual knowledge about the referred event and that is why an ironic interpretation may arise. John can then cancel that false ironic interpretation without any difficulties.

If we were to draw some rougher lines in order to categorize the above examples, we could argue that we are left with three general ironic types: “sub-propositional” irony, “propositional non-cancellable” irony and cancellable irony. We shall now proceed to examine whether the split performance of ironies at the cancellability test is reflected in the way their meaning is derived.

4. Ironic meaning derivation

Let us begin with ironies that appear to arise at the sub-propositional level (ex. 8,9). We may arguably suppose that in a sentence containing words with incompatible literal meanings, there are local processes, applying to the nonliterally (ironically) used component, which modulate its meaning in order to make the whole utterance truth evaluable. For this to happen, we do not need to have heard the whole utterance: once we detect the “discrepancy”, we proceed to the modulation of the meaning of the problematic term. This kind of “on line” processing also suggests that we possess a cognitive/conceptual mechanism which is able to “mutate” a given concept so that it acquires ironic meaning. Thus, we may accept an analysis of meaning modulation (in this case “meaning shift”) as the one proposed by Carston (2002 / Wilson & Carston: 2007), where the outcome of the process is a new “ad hoc” concept.

Moving on to the rest of non-cancellable ironies (examples 5, 6 and 7), we notice that the truth value of their literal counterparts is “fixed” to being false at the given context, condemning the literal interpretation to functional futility. This anomaly should lead to an obligatory inferential process, which gives rise to a new proposition, containing the ironic meaning. In this case, the derived proposition (let us call it [q]) *substitutes* the initial proposition [p] (which was conditioned by the Logical Form). This derived (“higher level”) proposition may be used in any further processes of the utterance meaning. This hypothesis is strongly supported by the fact that exactly the same (ironic) meaning could have been conveyed by the use of a totally different proposition [r], which would have also been substituted by the same “higher level” proposition [q]. For example, in (5) when the son talks about his unrealistic (according to his father) will to live in an ideal society, the father could have said “you mean in a parallel universe, of course!” (another non-cancellable irony) without altering the ironic meaning (which in this example is something like “what you are saying cannot happen”).

As for the typical cancellable type of ironic meaning, we could accept the Gricean account: among the various additional (implicated) meanings that may follow an utterance at a specific context, there is a possible ironic interpretation. This interpretation may or may not become evident to the addressee, depending on her contextual assumptions and it may also be cancelled by the speaker, in case she did not intend to convey such a meaning.

However, a concern that emerges at this stage refers back to our formulation of the cancellability criterion (C2): although the fact that they are not cancellable excludes “sub-propositional” and “non-cancellable propositional” ironies from being implicatures, cancellability of the third type of ironies does not determine their being characterized as implicatures. In fact, it should not remain unnoticed that, despite their divergence in terms of cancellability, all ironic meaning derivation types share the same character, namely they are all inferential in nature. According to Wilson and Carston (2007:24) conceptual modulation is of inferential nature. So is the process of “proposition substitution” that we described for the case of “propositional non-cancellable” ironies. The crucial difference between these two and the “standard” type of ironic meaning is that for the former the inferential processes are obligatory, while for the latter they are optional. One possible way to unify the three types of ironic meaning would be the adoption of a communication-oriented model which would consider the derivation of the cancellable type of ironic meaning as necessary for the success of the interaction, leading us to regard all ironic meaning derivations as obligatory inferences (rather than implicatures). Nevertheless, in the present analysis we do not have enough evidence to support such a point of view.

5. Conclusion

After providing arguments in support of the criterion of cancellability, which was reformulated in order to function as a test for exclusion of derived meanings from the category of implicature, we presented evidence for ironic interpretations that cannot be cancelled (and, therefore, contrary to the traditional analysis, they cannot be considered as implicatures). The ironic devices that we compared, seemed to ultimately fall into three categories the “sub-propositional” the “non-cancellable propositional” and the “cancellable”, which were then associated with three different modes of meaning derivation. This three-way distinction is interesting because it corresponds to three different levels of meaning derivation (the sub-propositional, the propositional and the post-propositional). Consequently, the

phenomenon of irony can be seen under a new perspective, as it seems to be present in all the three levels (and not just the post-propositional one, as it was previously assumed). The unifying factor of ironic meaning derivations in all three levels seems to be their inferential nature, but what remains to be studied is the hypothesis that irony arises as an obligatory inference at all levels.

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Gender, language and occupational roles: Exploring male nurses' linguistic behaviour/Joanne McDowell

Abstract

Sociolinguistic research has illustrated that a speaker's linguistic behaviour can be affected by their surrounding context, such as their workplace. This paper is built on new findings by McDowell (2008) that examined the workplace discourse of nurses, specifically within *nurse-nurse* interactions. *Male* nurses were the main focus of the study as they are the minority gender in this occupational role. This paper offers an analytical sample of data extracted from McDowell (2008) to discuss the applicability of male speech stereotypes to the communicative context of nursing. Using qualitative methods for analysis, results indicate that the male nurses' discursive behaviour does not differ from that which sociolinguistic literature has repeatedly classed as 'feminine'. These findings are explained by the Community of Practice approach, as a nurse's language fulfils discourse tasks essential to their work role. The men were 'doing being a nurse'.

Key words: Gendered occupations, workplace discourse, feminine, masculine, community of practice.

Introduction

For over thirty years, language and gender scholars have professed that men and women speak differently. Research on linguistics presupposed the analytic relevance of gender when examining speech differences; and voluminous amounts of literature stereotyped features as typical of either male or female discourse. Men and women were depicted as two separate, homogenous groups, and as a result, speech differences were examined *between* the two groups but not *within* them (Cameron 2007, Holmes 2006).

Controversy now surrounds the generalisation of linguistic devices claimed to reflect male and female speech. The notion that men talk one way and women another has been challenged, as scholars argue that speech cannot be classed as 'women's talk' or 'men's talk' simply because of sex (Coates 2006, Holyoake 2001). Research began to examine discursive behaviour *within* groups of women and men across different contexts and cultures (Coates 2004, Cameron 2001). New theoretical developments (i.e. social constructionism, the

Community of Practice approach) have moved away from gendered differentiations of linguistic features and more toward a focus on conversational setting (Coates 2004, Eckert & McConnell-Ginet 2003, Holmes & Meyerhoff 1999). One such area of study is that of workplace discourse.

This paper highlights a selection of findings by McDowell (2008) who examined the use of hedging, overlap, and interruption by male nurses while at work. Such a context of study is relatively untypical when investigating workplace language for two reasons. Firstly, the majority of research in this area focuses upon *women's* linguistic behaviour in non-traditional jobs (i.e. engineering, construction work, and police). Secondly, although research has investigated male nurses, the focus has been on their non-verbal behaviour and their experiences as a nurse. Using qualitative interviews, literature has highlighted the various strategies that men adopt to maintain and emphasise their hegemonic masculinity (Cross & Bagihole 2006, Nilsson & Larsson 2005, Whittock & Leonard 2003, Holyoake 2001, Evans 1999, Williams 1995). Little detailed attention however, has been given to the discourse of such contexts. To date, only a small number of studies have observed the linguistic behaviour of men in occupations deemed to be “feminine” (Holmes & Schnurr 2006).

“Feminine” workplaces often focus on building supportive social relationships; they are open, non-hierarchical and collaborative. Nursing is an example of a “female” occupation as its main duty revolves around stereotypical ‘feminine’ attributes, such as caring, being gentle and nurturing. Therefore, societal expectations of ‘a nurse’ governs that this role is appropriate only for those with feminine characteristics; it is defined in opposition to masculinity (Whittock & Leonard 2003). As a result, nursing is an occupation that is highly associated with women with a staff composition that is predominately female (Evans 1999, Williams 1995).

Aims and Objectives

To question whether stereotypes regarding gendered linguistic features are applicable to workplace situations when one gender numerically dominates the other, male nurses are examined by investigating their use of hedging during interactions with other nurses. This feature was chosen due to the large amount of documentation that suggests certain functions

of hedging to be gendered (stereotypic of women's speech). Data is examined to investigate if the men employed hedging in ways that have been quantitatively described as 'feminine'.

Methods

A qualitative case study approach was utilised to gather conversational data from the three male nurses. These participants, recruited from a volunteer sample, wore audio-recording equipment to collect their interactions for a period of one year.⁸ In total, 1360 minutes of spoken interaction was gathered, providing numerous examples of the features under study. Conversations occurred in various contexts (staff rooms, meetings, shift hand-over, canteen) and covered different topics (work and personal). Talk also took place in mixed and single sex groups; and levels of speaker status differed (charge nurse or staff nurse). Material gathered was orthographically transcribed and analysed using non-gendered frameworks compiled from previous sociolinguistic language and gender research (Holmes 1995, 1982, Coates 1994).

Results and Discussion

Data demonstrated the male nurses employing a variety of hedges that function to build a collaborative, non-hierarchical floor. This paper presents examples of *two* of the hedging functions that frequently occurred:

- hedging to mitigate and soften directives;

⁸ Nurse Participant Key

MnA 34 years old at time of data collection; worked as a staff nurse for 8 years and spent over 2 years as a charge nurse. He is a general care nurse working on a ward that specializes in rectal colon surgery after care. He cares for young and old patients. He is from Belfast.

MnB 35 years old at time of data collection; worked as a staff nurse for 10 years. He is a general care staff nurse working on a ward that specializes in care for elderly patients. He is from the Philippines and has lived in Belfast for 15 years.

MnC 38 years old at time of data collection; worked as a nurse for 4 years. He is a general care staff nurse working in a ward that specializes in liver disease and transplant surgery after care. Patients are mainly elderly. He is from Belfast.

- hedging to attribute shared knowledge and create a collective nursing identity.

Hedging to mitigate directives

By softening directives or requests with hedges, the speaker can reduce the imposition of their face threatening act (FTA), and the chance that they may offend their fellow conversationalists (Brown & Levinson 1987). This hedging function aims to protect both the speaker and addressee's face, and reduce any status difference to maintain a collaborative floor. Where direct speech is typically associated with men and seen as an essential leadership skill (Holmes 2006, Coates 2003, 1996), hedging to make speech indirect has been stereotyped as a "feminine" linguistic feature. Results from this current study however, support recent research on workplace language that claims male speakers can be indirect depending on their situation (Holmes 2006, Holmes & Schnurr 2006, Stubbe et al 2003). The data presents evidence of all three male nurses employing hedges to mitigate their directives regardless of their audience's gender (both females and other males), or status. MnA, who has higher status, continually mitigates orders with various hedges when talking with subordinate nurses, male or female.

The extract below occurs during a conversation between MnA (who has the higher status in this interaction), and a female first year nurse. MnA is informing the female of her mistakes during a medical procedure:

(1) Context: Male nurse is correcting procedural mistakes made by the first year nurse

Line

- 1 MnA: can I show you a *wee* thing
- 2 Fn: <?>
- 3 MnA: are you the house [from 6C]
- 4 Fn: [mhm mhmm]
- 5 MnA: see the way you've disconnected his fluids here (.) *w.w.we* have to dump that
- 6 *just*
- 7 Fn: sorry
- 8 MnA: you're alright (3.0) it's *just* contaminated *so if you say instead* of doing that
- 9 again we put a needle on the end of that *we* could reuse it again
- 10 Fn: put what on it

- 11 MnA: a needle (.) *just* a sterile needle (.) as you take it off
- 12 Fn: right
- 13 MnA: and then hang it (.) we can re-use it (.) but as it is we had to dump it
- 14 Fn: sorry
- 15 MnA: you're alright (.) it's okay
- 16 Fn: I won't do it again <?> washin things up
(mobile rings)
- 17 MnA: I think that's your mobile going there (.) do you want to answer it
- 18 Fn: oh sorry
- 19 MnA: it's alright

In this extract, MnA hedges in order to reduce the status difference between the two interactants. Beginning with the tentative modal verb 'can' (line 1), MnA asks the female if he can demonstrate something to her (Palmer 1979). This is followed by the minimising hedge 'wee'. This decreases the potential threat to the female's face by curtailing the level of imposition made by his request (Holmes 1995, Brown & Levinson 1987).

Rather than directly refer to the female nurse throughout his instruction, MnA makes use of the inclusive pronoun 'we' on various occasions (lines 5, 9 and 13). Said to be a strategy commonly employed by female superiors when instructing their subordinates (Holmes 2006), this was a tactic frequently used by the male throughout the extract. By including himself in his own instruction, he can mitigate his directive; '*we put a needle on the end of that*'. Lines 5, 8 and 9 demonstrate MnA justifying his criticisms of his addressee's work. Classified as a politeness strategy (Holmes 1995, Brown & Levinson 1987), he is offering her various explanations for his imposition and request. He explains that if she would have done the procedure in a different way, the other nurses could have re-used the needle rather than '*dumping*' it. By referring to a collective of nurses ('we' representing all the nursing staff on that ward); '*w.w.we have to dump that*', '*we could re-use it*', he suggests that by following the correct procedure, the female would be helping all her nurse colleagues rather than simply following his orders. His slight stammer in line 5 ('*w.w.we*') further softens his criticisms by reducing the force of his utterance (Coates 1996). Further evidence of mitigation is found in MnA's comments designed to reassure his listener. In lines 8 and 9 he informs her that

she's *'alright'* after she continually apologises for her actions. Also in line 8, we see MnA making a suggestion rather than giving a direct order, *'so, if you say instead of doing that...'*

In example 2 below, MnA is requesting a favour of a female nurse, who is his subordinate. This section of speech occurs within a mixed gender group where women numerically dominate the male at a ratio of 2:1:

(2) Context: MnA is asking a female nurse to look for an IV order

Line

- 1 Fn: [<?>]
2 MnA: [th]that's returns there (.) you wouldn't bring that [with ya wou]ld ya [please]
3 Fn2: [dead on] [no both]er
4 MnA: ri[ght] (.) you'll have a wee look for the IV order then when you go down
6 Fn2: [no prob]lem
7 sure
8 MnA: thank you

MnA utilizes the affective softening tag question *'would \ya'* to soften his order (Holmes 1982). His negation of the modal verb *'would'* in line 2 indicates that he is not making an assumption that the female will fulfil his request. Instead, he demonstrates that he is pessimistic - *'you wouldn't bring that with ya'* (Holmes 1995, Brown & Levinson 1987). Using modal verbs allows him to point out his own doubt that his listener will do what he asks, exhibiting politeness to the female's negative face.

He then asks a second favour where he again uses negative politeness strategies. This time he reduces his imposition with the minimiser *'wee,'* to portray his request as modest:

- 4 MnA: ri[ght] (.) you'll have a *wee* look for the IV order *then* when you go down

Minimizing and reducing the request in this way decreases the size of the imposition, making it less detrimental to both the speaker and the addressee's face (Brown & Levinson 1987). Without this hedge, his utterance could otherwise have been taken as a direct command *'you'll have a look'*.

This particular function of hedging has been deemed a trait typical of women's speech. It is frequently employed in feminine workplaces by female superiors to their subordinates (Holmes 2006). Instead of giving a direct order, noted as a typical "male" strategy (Coates 1996, Holmes 1995), all three male nurses mitigate the majority of their directives. Various types of hedging were used to reduce the force of directives and change orders into requests including modals, tag questions, and various politeness strategies. For example, negative politeness strategies such as minimisers e.g. 'give us a *wee* hand', 'do us a *small* favour', 'can you take a *wee* look at my patient' were commonly used to reduce potential damage of the FTA. Similar findings were evident when the male participants interacted in both mixed gender groups and in single sex dyads. The results support other research where men have been found to use a range of mitigations when giving directives in the workplace (Holmes et al 2003, Vine 2001, Mullany 2000).

Attributing knowledge and creating an 'in-group' of nurses

Attributing knowledge can function to create a bond between speakers. It demonstrates mutual knowledge and common understanding between speakers based upon their shared experience. Both male and female nurses frequently created, or positioned themselves within, an 'in group' in opposition to 'others'. 'Others' included doctors, healthcare workers, social workers, and occasionally nurses who worked on a different ward. To create such a group, the nurses regularly used hedging to attribute shared knowledge to one another. For example, knowledge that their listener would only have acquired through their general work as a nurse (i.e. medical knowledge, lack of beds, being short staffed); or more specific information obtained from working on the same ward (i.e. difficult patients, patient details, other members of staff).

(3) *Context: Two male nurses (MnB and another male) discussing how busy the ward can get*

Line

- 1 MnB: (1.0) ay (1.1) so you have to run (.) and give out all tablets (.) and beds and <?>
- 2 you know what I mean so (.) you have to be quick[er]
- 3 Mn: [it's] frustrating isn't \it
- 4 MnB: ay

- 5 Mn: ay
- 6 MnB: (4.0) and there's one sick here like (1.) Martha and (0.9) you know what I mean
 7 (0.5) so (.) that's the case yesterday was alright cause (.) Maria was here (13.00) what
 8 you looking now
- 9 Mn: the methadone

In example 3, MnB is complaining about the problems that arise from a busy ward to another male staff nurse. As he is criticising how hectic the ward can be when they are short staffed, he mitigates his thoughts with '*you know what I mean*' on two occasions. By doing so, MnB petitions the addressee for some form of agreement with his critical comments. The lack of a substantial pause between MnB's utterances reveals that whilst he is not passing the turn, he does he expect anything more than an acknowledgement. Therefore, his hedging here acts as a 'world view check' (Coates 1996: 160), with the assumption that his listener will agree with his point. This addressee-orientated function demonstrates positive politeness to MnB's male addressee. MnB is assuming a certain amount of shared knowledge between himself and the other male. He presupposes that his listener will be aware of the aforementioned problem as he is also a nurse. Further evidence of attribution is located in the other male's response (line 3). He acknowledges MnB's check by demonstrating his agreement, '*it's frustrating*', whilst the facilitative tag '*isn't it*' acts as a facilitator, passing the turn back to MnB. The falling intonation on this tag suggests that the male nurse did not expect MnB to disagree with his statement that '*it's frustrating*'. He is making a declaration rather than seeking reassurance:

- 1 MnB: (1.0) ay (1.1) so you have to run (.) and give out all tablets (.) and beds and <?>
 2 you know what I mean so (.) you have to be quick[er]
- 3 Mn: [it's] frustrating isn't \it

This tag also indicates a shared knowledge of busy wards and the problem of being short staffed. The male nurse acknowledges MnB's position as a nurse; therefore, he expects that he will also find these problems '*frustrating*'. Both speakers work together to interact collaboratively in this extract, considering each other's opinions by softening their own to create a collective voice (Coates 1996). This function of hedging is claimed to be typical of all "female" talk, but this extract provides evidence of two males, in a single sex dyad,

making use of this strategy. By accrediting each other with shared knowledge, they indicate a sense of belonging that unites them as nurses, reinforcing their nursing identity.

In extract 4, which is taken from a mixed sex conversation, MnC refers to an 'us', 'we' and 'they', to form two distinct groups and differentiate his party from the 'others'. The hedging within this example allows the nurses to hedge their negative, critical opinion of the 'others', whilst simultaneously seeking consolidation and from fellow group members:

(4) *Context: Two male nurses (MnC and another male nurse) and one female nurse are talking about a patient who needs extra treatment*

Line

- 1 MnC: surely the community people have to provide the pressurising mattress
2 wouldn't they/
3 Fn: yeah
4 Mn: the district nurses <?> have they nothing better to do that ring us up asking us
5 when was the last time we had seen the patient/ I rang them back on the phone and
6 says we are enquiring ... [and] <?> will need a a mattress when goes home from
7 [here]
8 MnC: [ay] [I know] if
9 someone went home with me they would soon ring [us]
10 Mn: [oh] definitely
11 MnC: wouldn't they/ why did this patient (.) why weren't we informed
12 Fn: but I suppose then maybe they wouldn't know if it was there or not would they\ in
13 this case or not (.) because they would have no reason to see it
14 Mn: <?>
15 Fn: yeah
16 Mn: cause then the family weren't letting them into the house for while [either]
17 Fn: [where they
18 not/]
19 Mn: no
20 MnC: that would make it very difficult like (.) [you know/]

In lines 1 and 4, the two male nurses clearly define the outside group (with whom they are all annoyed) as the '*community people*', also referred to as '*the district nurses*'. The three conversationalists present themselves as a united group distinct from the 'outsiders' who they are criticising. Evidence for this is found in MnC's recurrent use of '*we*' and '*us*' that acts to form an alliance between all three participants (lines 4-6, 9 and 11), whilst the district nurses are referred to repeatedly as '*they*' (lines 2, 4, 9, 11-13, and 16). This concept of *us* vs. *them* establishes a connection between the speakers based on the knowledge they share as a result of their nurse identity. District nurses have a partially different occupational role than that of ward nurses. Ward nurses work with patients within a hospital, whereas district nurses work with patients in the outside community. Based on this difference, the nurses in this extract form an alliance, and openly criticise the '*community people*' as the 'other' that are causing problems in regards to a particular patient. By highlighting the unison of the speakers in the group, MnC is creating a sense of mutual agreement (shared anger at the community group), reducing the likelihood of offending his listeners when making negative comments.

Alongside this, the nurses hedge to soften the force of their opinions as a precautionary measure (if a group member *is* affronted). They use hedges to mitigate their criticisms toward the outside group. MnC's tag question, for example, '*wouldn't they*' seeks agreement with his suggestion that the '*community people*' should be providing the equipment needed for the patient:

1 MnC: *surely* the community people have to provide the pressurising mattress *wouldn't they/*

He later hedges when he critiques the district nurse behaviour in line 11:

8 MnC: [ay] [I know] if
 9 someone went home with me they would soon ring [us]
 10 Mn: [oh] definitely
 11 MnC: wouldn't they/ why did this patient (.) why weren't we informed

Collaborative agreement is evident in the nurses' use of overlap throughout the conversation. The two males in particular overlap each other to show their agreement and support for one another's' comments, especially when negative remarks are made. The female however, remains relatively quiet until line 12. At this point, she appears to provide an excuse for the

community nurses' behaviour. She introduces her thoughts with two hedges to soften her opinion in case her two colleagues disagree:

12 Fn: but *I suppose* then *maybe they* wouldn't know if it was there or not *would they* in
13 this case or not (.) because *they* would have no reason to see it

Following this, a second set of 'others' are brought in to the conversation (line 16). MnC learns that '*the family*' of the patient under discussion has acted as a barrier to the '*community people*' as they have not permitted access into the patient's house:

16 Mn: cause then the family weren't letting them into the house for while [either]
17 Fn: [where they
18 not/]
19 Mn: no
20 MnC: that would make it very difficult like (.) [you know/]

As a result, MnC begins to empathize with the district nurses (line 20), as understands that the family's behaviour has perhaps hindered them from doing their job. It appears that the nurses now identify with the original outside group (who they have more in common with than '*the family*'); and see the second outside group as the source of the difficulties they have encountered.

In contrast to the literature that reports male nurses differentiating themselves from their female colleagues in order to establish their masculinity (Cross & Bagihole 2006, Simpson 2004, Williams 1995), the three male nurses in this study used language to form a close group with their female nurse colleagues. They created a collaborative floor to share opinions (Coates 2006) and emphasise a shared nursing identity.

Adopting the Community of Practice Approach

Evidence of adapting one's language to the surrounding context has been found in studies of the workplace (Holmes 2006, Cameron 2000). Individuals continually renegotiate their identity and communication styles to reflect or adhere to the social structure within which they work (Holmes 2006, Eckert & McConnell-Ginet 2003, Holmes et al 2003). Speakers

appear to use the most effective form of communication by choosing from a stylistic repertoire based on their surrounding context (i.e. workplace and job role). Considering this, the Community of Practice (CoP) approach is a beneficial framework to explore work environments where participants may be adapting to non-traditional fields. For this reason, CoP is applicable to male nurses and may provide a basis to study reasons behind their linguistic behaviour. As nurses, their performance could be determined by their mutual workplace culture, the contextual influence upon their linguistic choices, and the shared linguistic repertoire of their setting.

The CoP paradigm, which started out as a social learning theory, has been imported into sociolinguistics and altered the way in which some scholars have theorised gendered identity (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet 2003). Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1999) state that:

A Community of Practice is an aggregate of people who, united by a common enterprise, develop and share ways of doing things, ways of talking, beliefs, and values-in short practices.
(Eckert & McConnell-Ginet 1999 186).

These practices relate to the discursive strategies and interaction styles specific to each particular CoP (Schnurr 2008, Eckert & McConnell-Ginet 2003). Of key importance to the CoP approach is that people mutually engage in joint negotiated enterprise, thus creating a shared repertoire of resources (Holmes 2006).

The CoP framework allows us to address the context of nursing where we studied linguistic behaviour. Communication is a vitally important tool in nursing, affecting the standards of the care given and patient well-being. As a member of this CoP, nurses have a range of acceptable linguistic resources that must be learnt. The skills that they require can be found in teaching resources that aim to equip them with the various strategies needed to communicate effectively and professionally with both colleagues and patients (for example Murray-Grohar & DiCroce's 1997 book *Leadership and Management in Nursing*).

What is seen to be acceptable communicative behaviour within the nursing CoP is a direct result of the occupational role of a nurse, the ideology behind nursing, and how nurses are expected to behave. Stereotyped to be non-assertive, caring and gentle, nurses are expected

to create a positive socio-emotional climate. In contrast to the societal stereotype of uncaring behaviour as assertive and aggressive, nurses are supposed to be pleasant and non-assertive (Timmens & McCabe 2005). This is not to say that nurses do not possess forceful skills. Nurses can be firm if necessary, but must be careful that they distinguish between assertion and aggression (Murray & DiCroce 1997: 55), and be wary of the context in which they use such behaviour. Maintaining a harmonious nursing group is an important element of the ward environment. As a result, nurses are required to maintain solidarity and form a collaborative group with their co-workers (Marquis & Huston 1998, Murray & DiCroce 1997). Group conflict is perceived as negative in this context, so attempts are made to avoid confrontation (Timmons & McCabe 2005, Marquis & Huston 1998). The fear of offending work colleagues or patients has been argued to be the main barrier to nurses making use of any assertive behaviour (Marquis & Huston 1998). They are advised to 'be mindful of the tone as well as the words of the message' (Grohar -Murray & DiCroce 1997: 51). Since conflicts between workers interfere with teamwork, how nurses manage conflict is of key importance to the nursing environment (Marquis & Huston 1998, Murray & DiCroce 1997). If "normative masculine strategies" are not effective in the nursing CoP (i.e. aggressiveness, competitive, controlling), one could argue that the male participants have adopted strategies to maintain a harmonious group and not cause offence. Their use of hedges have been shown to build a collaborative floor; keep a collective group; mitigate orders; and reduce hierarchy; all of which aim to reduce potential conflict that may arise on the ward (Coates 2004).

Nurses in a managerial role need skills that allow them to negotiate internal conflict through their leadership style and choice of linguistic strategies (Hendal et al 2005). Although stereotypical leadership skills were traditionally associated with masculine characteristics, (i.e. directness, unmitigated directives, and competitiveness), the skills needed for nurse managers are arguably the opposite of this, as research has shown that good leaders in a nursing context are not aggressive (ibid). MnA's speech has portrayed him as a democratic leader with suitable skills for the area in which he works. He did not exert his authoritative status, but minimised the social distance between himself and his subordinates using hedges. He kept communication open and all members involved in the conversation, a notable speaker skill according to Marquis and Huston (1998).

Conclusion

Exploration into these findings reveals that the CoP approach can explain the men's use of linguistic strategies that are characteristic of "normative female language" and fulfil functions deemed typical of "female talk". Their language performs discourse tasks essential to their profession (dealing with vulnerable patients, being non assertive, forming a positive and collaborative relationship with other nurses). Their speech is not reflective of their gender, but a result of the nursing environment and the work roles they carry out. Nursing gives men the contextual license to use, or even coerces them into using, this linguistic repertoire.

These results contribute to current language and gender debates as they lend support to existing arguments that gender is not the only influencing variable on speech; that typecasting is not applicable to all speech situations; and that linguistic features need to be 'de-gendered' (Cameron 2007, Holmes 2006, Eckert & McConnell-Ginet 2003). Despite the study of occupational language being an area of modern language and gender studies, more research is needed on linguistic behaviour in non-traditional jobs. This study begins to address this gap.

Transcription Conventions

=	Next speakers turn begins with no break after current speakers
[...]	Square brackets indicate overlapped speech
<?>	Indecipherable speech
//	Point at which speech is interrupted
(.)	Indicates very brief pause
(.5)	Indicates pause, with length in seconds
(laughs)	Single round brackets indicate paralinguistic feature
/	Rising intonation on word or part or syllable
\	Falling intonation on word or part or syllable
∨	Falling-rising intonation on word or syllable
∧	Rising-falling intonation on ward or syllable

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Forced self-positioning as part of identity construction in narratives about the workplace/Marlene Miglbauer

Abstract

This paper addresses the issue of conflicting gender and professional identities in the workplace and contributes to research (e.g. Mullany 2006, Jorgenson 2002) by using data from South-Eastern Europe. By applying Positioning Theory (Harré and van Langenhove 1999, Bamberg 1997; 2004), two narratives from research interviews with a Croat and a Serb working at international companies in Croatia and Serbia respectively are used for the analysis of how these two female employees counter discourses and positionings that are projected onto them by superiors and clients. The analysis shows that positioning of others triggers forced self-positioning and both employees successfully manage to reject the projected gender identities by referring to their commitment and expertise and highlighting their professional identities.

Keywords: narrative, positioning, gender, professional identity

Introduction

One of the principles of poststructuralism is subjectivity, which means that individuals are always being 'subject' to cultural forces or discursive practices. More specifically, subjectivity as part of identity construction is "determined by a range of 'subject positions' ('ways of being'), approved by their culture, and made available to them by means of the particular discourses operating within a given discursive context" (Baxter 2003:25). Identity construction is a continuous process, which is accomplished through actions and words within and across different discourses, resulting in individuals being shaped by multiple subject positions. Additionally, power relations are also critical for identity constructions because they constantly shift and thus so do subject positions.

These subject positions, which are made available by discourses, are either adopted, resisted or offered by speakers, and this processes can be referred to as positioning. Positioning Theory developed and adapted by Harré and van Langenhove (1999) and

Bamberg (1997; 2004) approaches subject positioning and subject positions by analysing the co-construction of identity between speakers and their audiences as well as the connection between subject positioning and social power relations. Particularly in recent years positioning theory has been applied to narratives (Bamberg 2004, Georgakopoulou 2000, Lucius-Hoene and Deppermann 2004, Wortham and Gadsden 2006) because speakers construct identities or 'storied selves' (Sarbin 1986) in narratives as well as articulate descriptions and evaluations of themselves and others.

This paper addresses two aspects. First, the narratives or stories that are presented by the speakers consist of conversations they had with some other person at some point in the past. These stories involve positioning strategies that were practiced within the conversations that are presented, which means that these narratives consist of conversations within conversations (Schrauf 2000: 129). Second, the analysis of these narratives focuses on various forms of intentional positioning, with particular reference to forced self-positioning (Harré and van Langenhove (1999:24). There are four forms of intentional positioning: *Deliberate self-positioning*, which occurs in every conversation where someone wants to express their identity by stressing their agency, by referring to their point of view or to events in their biography; *forced self-positioning* occurs when the initiative does not lie with the person involved but with someone else. This form of positioning may be triggered by a person representing an institution or from people within institutions (such as superiors, clients, consultants and co-workers) in order to classify people who are expected to function within institutions; *deliberate positioning of others*, which can be done either when the person being positioned is present or absent (such as the act of gossiping), and *forced positioning of others*, which occurs when the person intentionally being positioned is either present or absent and its most dramatic form is a court trial.

The narratives chosen for this paper are stories which are part of research interviews that were conducted with Croats and Serbs who work at international companies in Croatia or Serbia respectively. The first narrative is a story told by Anna, who is a Croatian working in the field of finance, and the second narrative is from an interview with Maria, who is a Serbian working at an international NGO in Belgrade.⁹The setting is interesting insofar as Croatia and Serbia belong to the Eastern and South-Eastern European countries which entered the phase of transformation between 1989 and 1991. Due to the changes in the

economic system and a large number of foreign companies entering the markets, new kinds of jobs have been introduced, so-called ‘postsocialist globalised workplaces’. Working habits and job requirements different from the ones before 1991 as well as English being used as the work language contribute to the fact that these workplaces are specific to the postsocialist transformation in the economic sector.

The second important change is linked to the rejection of everything that could be connected with the state-socialist era. One of the communist ideologies and thus official politics was the equality of sexes, but as research has shown traditional gender roles did prevail (Gal and Kligman 2000). The important change occurred right after the end of the state-socialist era when gender equality was almost immediately erased from the political agenda and traditional gender roles were advocated officially by state politics.

Women and men working in postsocialist globalised workplaces find themselves confronted with at least two aspects: on the one hand, they are faced with a capitalist work system without the securities of the state-socialist era, and on the other hand, particularly female employees are confronted with insufficient support when they become mothers, a fact which results in clashes of multiple and conflicting identities in the workplaces.

This paper provides such examples of clashing and conflicting identities and contributes to research on gender and professional identities in the workplace (e.g. Jorgenson 2002, Linstead and Thomas 2002, Baxter 2003, Mullany 2006). The examples taken from the interview data focus on gender and professional identities, more specifically on gender identities that are projected onto the employees, which they could or would not accept in the workplace setting. The stories or rather the conversations that are recounted show how the employees were positioned by bosses, clients or co-workers, and how these positionings were resisted by different and differing forms of forced self-positioning. Thus next to deliberate self-positioning (positioning themselves in the interview setting when replying to questions, providing opinions and telling stories), the focus of the analysis is on forced self-positioning (as reaction to being positioned by their conversation partners in the story) and deliberate positioning of others (positioning of their conversation partners in the story).

⁹ These names are fictitious in order to guarantee anonymity.

Analysis

Example 1- Anna's conversation with her superior

The first example consists of a conversation that Anna had with her superior. Her story (as well as Maria's story below) shows manifest intertextuality (Sunderland 2004) as the interviewee is recalling the conversation by using direct speech and reported speech. The example shows how Anna is positioned by her superior as a working mother, whereas she counters this positioning by positioning herself as a professional working mother. For analytic purposes, the interview extracts have been divided into several sections.

1 in this past seven years I always had to put (.) an extra effort (.) just to be on the same level (.) with my male

2 colleagues (..) and even eh (.) even eh in my conversation with my superior (.) eh he said that he would always 3 ask additional effort from me because (.) there is always ehm (..) a probability which is higher with me than

4 with my male colleagues that I will come one day and say okay I had enough I want to (.) you know sit home

5 and be with my baby

In lines 1 and 2, by deliberate self-positioning, Anna positions herself as a female employee who shows high dedication and commitment to her work in order to be regarded as equal to her male co-workers. In fact, inserting the story in the interview is in itself deliberate self-positioning because it emphasises Anna's positioning towards her audience, the interviewer. In line 2, she starts recounting the conversation she had with her boss, which underlines her self-positioning due to her superior's expectation of her being a highly committed employee. By giving the reason for his expectations in lines 3-5, the boss does not only position Anna as a woman but also as a mother who may jeopardise her position as employee by prioritising her identity as mother. Thus she is positioned as a non-reliable subordinate as well as 'other' compared to the male subordinates. This sequence also shows

that two discourses are present: both Anna and the boss draw upon the ‘work more to be equal’ – discourse, whereas the boss supports and Anna resists the ‘women are the sole carers of children’ – discourse (see Miglbauer 2009 for a detailed analysis). In the superior’s opinion both identities clash in the workplace, which positions himself as being doubtful and conservative by fearing that Anna may interrupt working by taking maternity leave.

5 and be with my baby (.) and then I said well that's not the case because I eh I was showing you for past seven

6 years my commitment and eh (.) my eh really willingness to to accept (..) this kind of job and eh because this 7 is REALLY extremely eh stressful and really hard job especially for women (.) you need to really be focussed

8 and it's a huge amount of stress because you work really like twelve hours a day and it's really it's really hard

Anna’s reply to the superior’s opinion in lines 5 and 6 is her reaction to her being positioned by the boss and is thus a form of forced self-positioning. Anna positions herself as a highly-committed worker who is willing to do a time and energy-consuming job. She tries to emphasise her professional identity in the workplace, whereas her boss emphasises her gender identity. By positioning herself, the boss is also positioned as being sceptical of female employees who are mothers and as someone who needs to be reminded of the performance Anna has shown over the last few years. The fact that women are non-reliable employees due to their motherhood is a consequence of both the altered official discourse of gender and the altered economic system with new requirements of employees in workplaces that did not exist before 1989.

In lines 7 and 8 she leaves the story world by positioning herself as an interviewee who gives information on the kind of job and thus positions the interviewer as someone who lacks this knowledge. She deliberately positions herself in the interview as a hard working woman by pointing out the workload and the stress that goes along with it, which in her opinion poses difficulties particularly for women. Leaving the story world to provide some background information and a more general opinion is also indicated by the pronoun change (from the pronoun ‘I’ to the generic ‘you’).

9 so I told him I mean it's ehm the probability is lower that I will ehm (.) decide to (.) stay home because I was 10 eh (.) you know (.) proving you year after year so please leave that to me to decide what is best for me

In lines 9 and 10, forced self-positioning continues by again highlighting and pointing out her professional identity. Anna positions herself as a dedicated and committed employee by referring to her commitment in the past like in lines 5 and 6 above. Hence, her gender identity will not be a 'threat' to her professional identity because she will not decide to take maternity leave. Her forced self-positioning also again includes opposing the dominant discourse of 'mothers being full-time carers of their children', which her boss draws upon in lines 3-5. In line 10 she positions herself as a very self-confident person, who is demanding agency regarding her life and the decisions she needs to make. This sentence is interesting in so far as she positions herself as powerful by not being willing to accept the powerful position her boss has as being her superior in the workplace.

Example 2- Maria's interview with the deputy minister

The next example is taken from the interview with Maria, who works in the field of explosives. The sequence shows how Maria, by being employed at an NGO, is positioned by others as a person who does not do proper work and as a woman with no knowledge about weapons. She positions herself as an expert as well as a caring person in the conversation with the deputy minister she is interviewing. In the introduction to her story she provides some background information about why she had to react in a specific way and why the story in fact turns out to be a funny story after all.

1 I mean it can get complicated on on (.) certain levels of communication (.) the fact (.) eh in THIS field and

2 that's a that's a completely different you know s- (..) issue for discussion ehm (.) if you're a woman and then

3 you get into the the issue that (.) deals with (.) munitions weapons (.) you know weapons industry eh (.)

4 contamination with like unexploded ordinance in Serbia military issues security issues (.)
YOU mm get or you 5 you get to experience many weird situations because eh people have
many special like comprehensions of

6 NGOs here in Serbia and then this whole thing about women and then (..) this VERY
special comprehension

7 or not existing distinction between (.) s- state security issues and issues of individual
security or safety (.)

8 it's it's a total mess-up

This extract starts with using the pronoun 'I' and the discourse marker 'I mean', hence Maria positions herself as an interviewee who replies to the interviewer's question by giving background information and expressing her opinion. Like in the previous quote, the data shows that more general issues and opinions are very often articulated by using the generic 'you' instead of the singular and plural first person pronouns. The deliberate positioning of herself as an interviewee occurs in line 1 by uttering an opinion and in line 2 by saying 'that's a completely different issue of discussion'. In lines 2-4 Maria positions herself as a woman whose job involves dealing with the field of weapons, and who has encountered difficult situations due to the fact that the combination of her sex and weapons is not common. In a way, it can be argued that due to her working in this field, she counters the dominant discourse of 'weapons are men's toys only'. In lines 5 and 6, she is positioned by other people as an NGO employee as well as a Serb by referring to the place ('here in Serbia'). As a Serbian NGO employee she is perceived in a particular and not necessarily positive way. What kinds of comprehensions some people have of NGOs in Serbia are mentioned in the story she recounts in the interview later.¹⁰ She provides the background of the issues she has to face due to the discrepancy between state security issues and individual safety, although she does not go into detail what exactly this entails. In line 8 she positions herself as an interviewee again as she states her opinion by evaluating the general situation. She also positions herself as a female employee who is slightly frustrated about the whole situation and behaviour towards her in the workplace. This introduction to the story shows how she is

¹⁰ During the Milosevic era, NGOs were successfully disqualified by state-controlled media because they were perceived a threat to the regime. It was, thus, claimed that their work was oriented against the interests of the nation, and that they are in favour of foreign economic and political domination (Grødeland 2006).

positioned by others, which provides the background about why she is forced to self-position herself in the story she is about to tell the interviewer.

9 I mean I have I've been a witness or a subject to so many weird like :treatments: ((smiling)) and and situations 10 it's (.) it's quite funny (.) you know but ehm (.) yeah I had one interview once in (.) in the ministry of health 11 (.) and the guy wouldn't talk to me at first because he just said it's it was a deputy minister at that time and he 12 said to me ehm (.) no but I don't really have that much time to waste on you people from NGOs you just

13 come in here all the time you want to do something you want to write something down and it's not important 14 there is no result in that

In line 9 Maria refers to herself as being positioned as a victim due to people's perceptions about women working in the field of explosives. The fact that she is smiling when she says the word 'treatments' positions her as someone who is not very happy about finding herself in such situations. She also underlines this positioning by mentioning that these situations are 'quite funny' in line 10 and thus points to the upcoming story as being a funny story. At the beginning of her story (line 10) she positions herself as an NGO employee who went to meet someone in the Ministry of Health. By deliberate positioning of others, she positions the person she met quite informally as a 'guy' but re-positions him as the deputy minister. As the deputy minister would not talk to her, the aspects of hierarchy and authority as well as power relations are disclosed here. The deputy minister is positioned as being sceptical of people from NGOs in lines 12 to 14. At this point, the perceptions people have about NGOs in Serbia are also revealed by Maria using the deputy minister's words in the form of direct speech. By referring to 'people from NGOs', he positions Maria as one of the annoying people who are employed at NGOs and who do not present results in their work. In this extract, the deputy minister does not position her as a woman in the first place but refers to and highlights her professional identity.

15 and then I told him okay but (.) this is something different and you're personally involved you're from [town 16 in Serbia] you're a forensic pathologist you've been there you've seen it so I want you to tell me and he is a 17 bit shocked that I know (.) you know about him because I'm just a stupid w- woman from an NGO (.)

Maria starts trying to overcome the obstacle of being rejected of getting the interview she would like to conduct with the deputy minister. She starts to position herself as a committed NGO employee, who is not giving in to the deputy minister's negative attitude towards her by demanding some decisive information she needs for her work (line 16). Before she utters her demand, she gives reasons and thus positions him as being a native of a particular town in Serbia, as being a forensic pathologist and someone who is an expert on explosives because he was there when the town was bombed in 1999. This sequence is quite interesting because by emphasising their mutual interest in discovering what exactly happened in 1999, she violates the norm of this formal conversational setting and positions herself as a caring person. She does not address him as deputy minister but as a private person who had to deal with the effects of explosives on the inhabitants of the specific town. Therefore, as indicated in line 17, he is surprised about the fact that she knows some private information about him. She explains his reaction by emphasising how she is positioned by other people and by the deputy minister by articulating their opinion about employees and more specifically about female employees at NGOs (line 17).

18 and then I explained to him the nature of cluster bombs and I did it on purpose I actually studied the whole 19 thing (.) the technical stuff I studied it all because I knew that I would get a lot of you know putting down

20 because I'm a woman who wants to talk to people about (.) weapons ((laughs)) (.) and he just stared at me

21 and I I told him everything about the technical characteristics of the weapons that were used in his hometown 22 and he just stared at me and then he said (.) have you been in the army ((laughs))

23 Interviewer: ((laughs))

24 and he he really forgot for a second that women actually do not serve in the army in Serbia but (.) you

25 know he was just and then he talked to me afterwards and he gave me all the you know facts that I needed

In line 18, Maria positions herself as an expert on cluster munitions and by inserting some background information (lines 18 to 20), she states the reason for this forced self-

positioning. In fact, forced self-positioning happened even before the interview with the deputy minister took place, because she acquired specific knowledge about explosives as she knew that she would be positioned as a non-expert due to her sex, which she states in line 20. Her laughing indicates knowledge of her self-positioning ‘violating’ the dominant discourse. The deputy minister’s body language, i.e. staring at her, as reaction to her expertise also underlines this violation as does his verbal reaction by posing the question if she has been to the army (line 22). This sentence shows that he has indeed positioned her as a woman during their conversation but it is only here that it becomes obvious. Her laughing shows the funny aspect of the situation. In line 23, the interviewer joins her laughing, grasping the funny aspect of the deputy minister’s question. Both, the interviewee and the interviewer, display knowledge about the fact that in Serbia women do not serve in the army as well as that the interviewee’s forced self-positioning has been successful by catching the deputy minister off guard and overcoming the obstacle of not being able to do the interview.

In line 24, by deliberate positioning of others, she positions him as not having knowledge about women and the army in Serbia. But this positioning is a consequence of her successful self-positioning in this conversation because she points out his ‘temporary forgetfulness’ and him being surprised as effect of her knowledge and behaviour. Simultaneously she is positioned as an expert on cluster munitions who has succeeded in convincing her interview partner about her expertise and in being taken seriously. In lines 24 and 25 she is also positioned as powerful because she has got the information she wanted from the deputy minister.

Concluding Remarks

The two stories show different kinds of self-positioning and positioning of others. In both examples deliberate positioning of others triggers forced self-positioning, which is necessary to counter dominant discourses and both women apply different methods of doing so. The first example consists of a conversation between Anna and her boss, in which the superior positions her as a mother instead of an employee. This position is rejected by Anna as she

positions herself as a committed employee and a self-confident woman. Thus her professional identity is highlighted by emphasising her performance in the workplace.

The second example is about a conversation between Maria and, broadly speaking, a client. The client, who is a deputy minister, does not position Maria as a woman in the first place but as an NGO employee who he is sceptical about. Only after having herself positioned as a female expert on explosives and his reaction of being surprised about it, does it become obvious that Maria is indeed positioned as a woman, thus her gender identity was after all salient with the deputy minister during the conversation.

Both examples also show the shift in power relations; from being powerless to being powerful. In the first example, Anna clearly demands agency for her life and her professional career and in the second example, Maria succeeds in being taken seriously. This shift occurs due to successful forced self-positioning and both women use different ways of doing that: whereas Anna draws upon her commitment and performance she has shown over the last few years, Maria displays her expertise for getting what she wants. However, both women position themselves as experts, as valuable and highly-committed employees, and thus highlight their professional identities in the workplaces.

In contrast to women who lived and had jobs during the state-socialist era, female employees, particularly in postsocialist globalised workplaces, have to counter various societal discourses and negotiate their positions in the workplace. The examples presented in this paper show that women have to deal and indeed deal successfully with conflicting gender and professional identities in the workplace in various ways.

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Appendices

Transcription Conventions

- (.) indicates a pause of one second or less
- (..) indicates a pause of two seconds or more
- (word) best guess when material was difficult to make out
- (xxx) indicates speech that was impossible to make out
- ((laughs)) additional information
- LAUGHING capital letters indicate emphasis
- beco- dash indicates word was cut off by speaker

eh, ehm fillers

The GENTT Corpus of Specialised Genres: Meaning and Interaction within Specialised Translation/Pilar Ordóñez López

Abstract

Genre is the core element of the investigation carried out by the research group GENTT. GENTT's interdisciplinary approach confers a dynamic and multidimensional nature to genre. As a result of this, the main defining features of specialised communication are embedded in genres. With this theoretical background, the GENTT research group has developed a specialised multilingual corpus aimed at becoming a useful tool for specialised translators. The purpose of this contribution is, on the one hand, to reveal the appropriateness of the use of genres in the study of specialised translation, and on the other hand, to analyse the role played by the GENTT corpus in different tasks performed by specialised translators, in order to determine its usefulness.

1. Introduction

Textual genres, considered “conventionalised forms of texts” (Hatim & Mason, 1990), reflect the interaction that takes place in particular social situations in the different frameworks of specialised communication and thus are a key concept in the study of specialised discourse.

In the GENTT (Géneros textuales para la traducción/Textual Genres for Translation, www.gentt.uji.es) group's approach, genre is defined as a dynamic category which changes according to the evolution of socio-professional and cultural parameters that confer meaning to specialised communication. Furthermore, genre is conceived as an interface between text

and context (Montalt, 2003), allowing translators to breach the distance between their position as outsiders (García Izquierdo & Montalt, 2002) and the insider knowledge required for specialised frameworks.

With this theoretical background, the research group GENTT, based at the Universitat Jaume I, in Castellón (Spain), is developing a multilingual specialised corpus¹¹ covering the legal, medical and technical fields of specialism. On the one hand, this corpus is aimed at providing researchers with a comprehensive sample of texts for the purpose of discourse analysis. On the other hand, this corpus is intended as a useful and dynamic tool for specialised translators.

In this contribution, I intend to examine the relevance of genre in specialised discourse by first, reviewing the theoretical background of the GENTT's investigation and second, analysing the role of the corpus in the translating process performed by specialised translators.

2. GENTT's approach to textual genre

2.1. The concept of textual genre in specialised communication

[Genres] are conventionalised forms of texts which reflect the functions and goals involved in particular social occasions as well as the purposes of the participants in them. (Hatim & Mason, 1990: 69)

Departing from the definition of genre provided by Hatim and Mason (1990), the GENTT group conceives genre as a dynamic category. Dynamism is the result of the constant changes experienced by the socio-professional and cultural parameters which configure each field of

specialisation (García-Izquierdo, 2005). Furthermore, genres represent an interface between text and context (both source and target) (Montalt, 2003), which enables translators to tackle the distance between their position as outsiders (García-Izquierdo & Montalt, 2002) and the specialised professional frameworks the texts they translate belong to. At the same time, genres enable translators to become aware of the professional and social interactions that take place in the different specialised fields. In other words, textual genres help translators to become aware of, and familiar with, the socio-professional conventions (both linguistic and extra-linguistic) of different fields within specialised communication.

2.2. GENTT's approach to genre within the area of specialised communication

As mentioned above, GENTT's investigation covers three fields of specialism: legal, medical and technical. Each of these fields presents its own characteristics, all of which go beyond purely linguistic aspects, such as terminology, phraseology, etc. Specialised languages are defined by Cabré (1993) as follows:

Specialised languages are subsets of general language, pragmatically characterised by three variables: subject, user and communicative situation. (Cabré, 1993: 139)¹²

From GENTT's perspective, amongst the numerous studies examining specialised languages and how these are related to natural languages (e.g. Schiffko, 2001; Cabré, 2002, Cabré and Estopa, 2005), work acknowledging the role of textual genre as a fundamental component of specialised languages is especially relevant (García-Izquierdo, 2007). GENTT's approach to genre incorporates the three variables cited in the above definition of specialised languages. These three variables are notable examples of interaction and conventionalised meaning within specialised communication. In GENTT's investigation, genres are thus understood to

¹¹ Research project funded by the Spanish Ministry of Education, 2000-09 (HUM2006-05581/FILO).

¹² My translation.

play a crucial role in the configuration of specialised languages and genre is, therefore, a key element in the analysis of specialised communication.

Furthermore, textual genre constitutes an important instrument of socialisation (Monzó, 2003), enabling the translator to focus not only on linguistic and functional aspects, but also on the cultural conventions characterising each genre (“genre conventions”) that specialised professionals in any area share. In principle, the specialised translator is positioned as an outsider (Montalt, 2003) in comparison to the specialists in the field and, to a certain extent, frequently regarded by them as an “intruder”. Genres, as categories shaped by cultural and professional conventions resulting from socio-professional interaction taking place within the different specialised fields, enable and facilitate the process of socialisation undergone by the specialised translator.

3. Specialised translation

“Specialised translation” can be defined as translation in which the translator is required to have certain specialised knowledge in a particular field in order to perform his/her task. Traditionally, research on specialised translation has focused almost exclusively on the study of terminology. However, in recent years the relevance of other aspects, such as the thematic field and genre, has been acknowledged. The following table links Gamero’s (1998) characterisation of specialised texts with the respective skills required to work as a specialised translator.

CHARACTERISTICS RELATED TO TEXTUAL ASPECTS	SKILLS REQUIRED TO WORK AS A SPECIALISED TRANSLATOR	
Importance of thematic field	Thematic knowledge	

Specialised terminology	Terminological knowledge	Skills to access the necessary resources and information
Most common genres	Knowledge of specific genres	

Fig. 1: Characteristics of specialised translation (Gamero, 1998: 100)¹³

The increasing specialisation and segmentation of the market demands an ever-greater degree of specialisation from translators. Such a degree of specialisation makes it indispensable for translators to have the necessary skills to easily access the required information in order to broaden or consolidate their thematic and terminological knowledge. Genre is a core instrument in the transfer of this knowledge. Based on the concept of genre, the GENTT group has been working on the creation of a corpus in which thematic, terminological and, in short, ‘generic knowledge’ is made easily accessible. As a result of this, the documentation stage, comprising repetitive tasks such as the search for glossaries and parallel texts, is rendered more dynamic and efficient.

4. The GENTT Corpus of Specialised Genres

The GENTT research group is constructing a multilingual specialised corpus, based on textual genre. On the one hand, the use of genres as a basis for the creation of a knowledge management system in the area of specialised translation offers important benefits for translators and writers of specialised texts; on the other hand, working with the concept of genre makes it possible to create “a mixed knowledge management system which combines translation-related knowledge with electronic management and information recovery systems”¹⁴ (Borja, 2005). The compilation of the GENTT corpus was initiated in year 2000,

¹³My translation.

¹⁴My translation.

with the aim of providing specialised translators with a useful working tool. In addition, the GENTT corpus represents the practical application of the theoretical investigation of the concept of genre undertaken by GENTT. The corpus currently includes more than 1,000 textual occurrences, which is equivalent to more than two million words. The identification and compilation of each genre and subgenre is based on the analysis of “the function of the cultural context, the situational context and the existence of a differentiated linguistic materialisation”¹⁵ (Borja, 2005: 16), thus applying an empirical-descriptive methodology. The GENTT corpus of specialised texts has the following features:

- Specialised: The GENTT corpus covers three fields of specialisation: legal, medical and technical.

- Multilingual: It contains texts written in five languages: Spanish, Catalan, English, German and French.

- Textual: Complete texts are included.

- Dynamic: The architecture of the corpus and the addition of new data are open processes, in constant development in order to incorporate the socio-professional changes experienced by each field of specialisation.

- Synchronic: All the texts contained in the corpus are contemporary.

- Online: At the moment, it is not possible to access the entire corpus on the internet, but only a provisional demo version which appears on the GENTT group’s webpage. The structure of the corpus and its IT design and functionality are currently being reviewed and updated, with

¹⁵ My translation.

the aim of providing a greater degree of interaction and collaboration amongst researchers working on genre within the area of specialised communication. Once the update and review process has been completed, users will be able to access the corpus and retrieve the information they wish, according to the permissions they receive when registering.

- Comparable: The GENTT corpus is a compilation of original documents in five languages as well as a small number of translations. Comparable corpora make it possible to compare genres in the different languages, which is of great value for translators. Ultimately, the GENTT group aims to transform it into a parallel corpus, so that translated versions of the original texts are also included.

- Annotated: At the moment, annotation is limited to the header, in which the following information is provided: the language the texts is written in; whether the document is original or translated; whether there are any other versions of the document included in the corpus, either translated versions or parallel texts; the author, year and place of publication; the mode and text type (argumentative, instructive or expository); the format; the genre and subgenre (if applicable); the field, using the classification established by the Library of Congress; the name of the researcher who added the document to the corpus, as well as the name of the person who verified this process. Body mark-up and lematization are currently being discussed in order to find out how elements of annotation can best be incorporated into the new IT design.

- User-friendly: The GENTT corpus can be used in a very straightforward and intuitive manner.

Descripció general del document

Nom d'aquest arxiu: M0002C

Creat per: P Ferrer

Revisat per: M. Calzada Pérez

1) En quina llengua està escrit aquest document?

Oriental Occidental No marcat

2) Aquest document és l'original?

3) Hi ha al corpus alguna altra versió d'aquest document, siga original, traducció o document paral·lel?

4) Quin n'és el títol? Els diversos papers del metge

5) Qui n'és l'autor? Xavier Bonfill

6) Quina n'és la font? Annals de Medicina

7) On es publica? L'estat espanyol

8) En quin any? 2000

9) Quin n'és el mode? escrit

10) Quin n'és el format original? paper

11) Quin n'és el tipus textual? argumentatiu

12) Seleccioneu-ne els gèneres i subgèneres:

13) Seleccioneu-ne el camp temàtic:

Fig.2: GENTT's header

At the moment, searches can be conducted through the GENTT search engine. The current search engine allows for searches within the following criteria: title, genre, thematic field, language, original/translated documents, author, translator, source, place and year of publication, and text type. The search engine allows the retrieval of complete texts. Besides, the study of collocations, frequencies and phraseology can also be undertaken within the GENTT corpus, as shown in the demo version on the GENTT website.

Before concluding this section, it is important to say a few words about genre trees: Each field of specialism covered in the GENTT project has a corresponding genre tree with the purpose mapping the corresponding specialised fields. The genre trees provide information regarding the cognitive aspects involved in every genre (how genres interact with each other, how different cultures, or languages, have different ways of mapping specialised knowledge, etc.). As is the case for the whole corpus, the construction of these genre trees is in constant evolution, reflecting the socio-professional changes taking place in the different areas of specialism.

5. The GENTT corpus in the translating process

The GENTT project is based on the assumption that textual genre is a relevant instrument for the analysis of specialised communication and, thus, for the study of specialised translation. The GENTT group aims to provide translators with a useful working tool (the GENTT corpus), assisting the translator in performing the tasks required as part of the translation process. It is a particularly useful tool for the pre-translation stage, facilitating the search for parallel texts or glossaries. Whilst the GENTT corpus has a wider range of applications, being a valuable resource in areas such as translator training and research on translation, this article focuses on the role played by the corpus in the work of specialised translators.

5.1. *The translating process*

The translating process is defined as “the mental process which allows the transmission of a text written in a particular language, using the means of a different one” (Hurtado Albir, 2001: 640)¹⁶. The study of the translating process is not a simple task, as it involves analysing the mental processes performed by a translator when he/she is translating. Primarily due to this intrinsic difficulty, previous approaches by various scholars, some of which will be reviewed below, generally lack solid empirical evidence.

Hurtado Albir’s (1996: 64-65) model of analysis of the translating process combines aspects taken from other proposals, such as Delisle’s (1982) interpretative model, Bell’s (1991) informative model, and Hatim and Mason’s (1990) model based on discourse analysis. Hurtado Albir’s comprehensive approach incorporates elements typical of discourse analysis, which are extremely useful to break down the process performed into separate stages, consciously and/or unconsciously, by the translator. Within each of the three stages of the translating process, Hurtado Albir further distinguishes four separate levels: the morpho-syntactic, the semiotic, the pragmatic and the semantic one. This model is especially relevant

¹⁶ My translation.

here, as it distinguishes four different levels of analysis and synthesis, which will help us to carry out a more detailed analysis of the role played by the GENTT corpus in facilitating the translator's task.

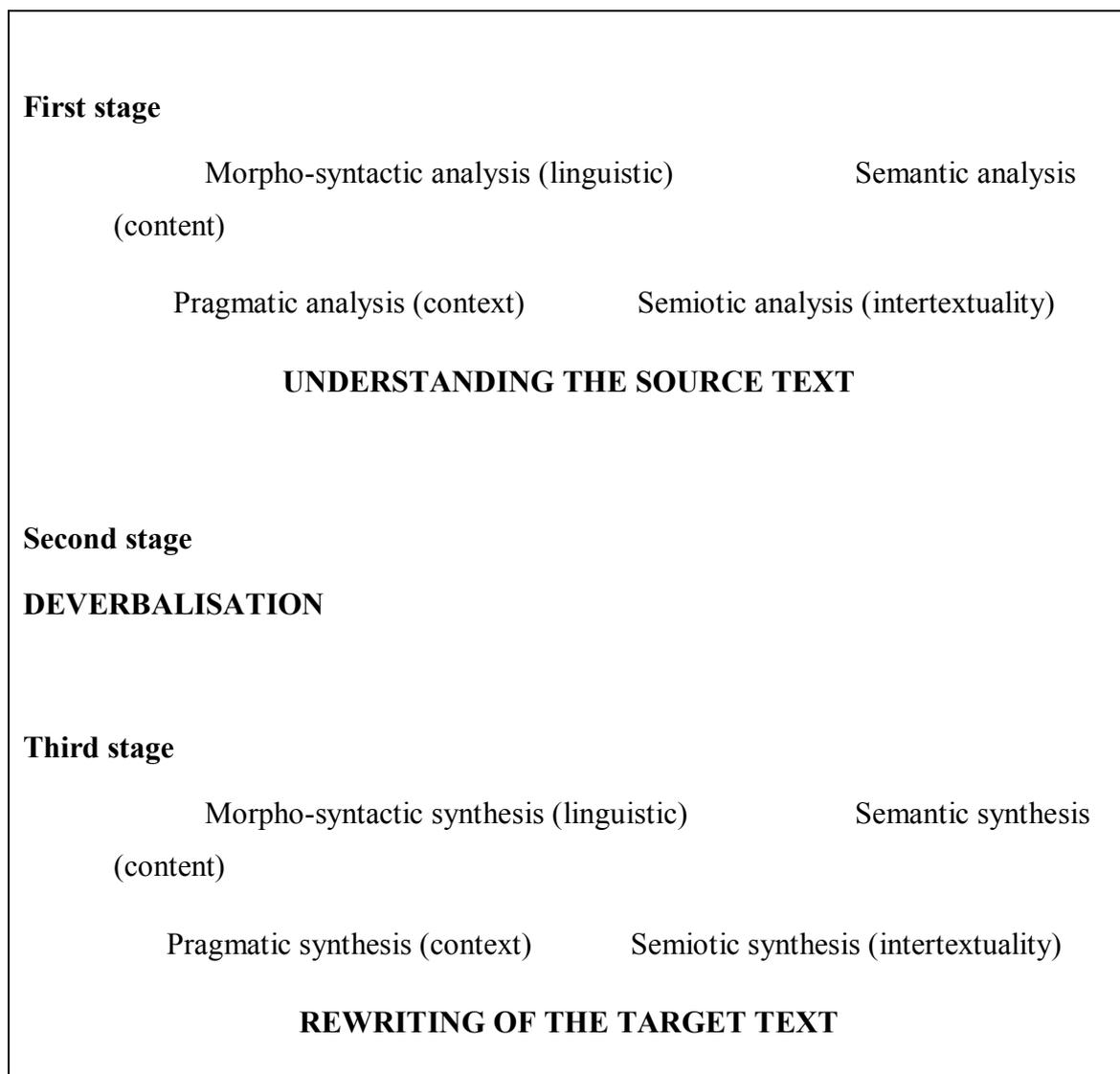


Fig. 3: Hurtado Albir's model of the translating process (1996: 64-65)¹⁷

¹⁷ My translation.

5.2. *The GENTT corpus and specialised translation*

In order to determine the usefulness of the GENTT corpus in assisting and facilitating the task of specialised translators, the contribution of the corpus to the performance of each stage of the translating process will now be examined. Three basic stages can be distinguished: before the complete reading of the text, during reading the text, and after having read the text. These three stages will be analysed according to Hurtado Albir's description of the translation process.

a) Before the complete reading of the source text

In specialised translation, when a translator is presented with the source text for the first time, he/she will probably try to answer the question: "What is it?", attempting to identify the document through the activation of his/her knowledge in the field. The GENTT corpus plays an important role as a body of reference at this stage. Genres make it possible to quickly identify specialised texts, which constitutes a fundamental step in the textual analysis performed by translators.

[The concept of genre] constitutes a meeting point of aspects related to register, text pragmatics and text semiotics, which are fundamental components of a comprehensive textual analysis, an indispensable stage in the translating process. (García Izquierdo, 2002)¹⁸

By entering the title or genre of the document in GENTT's search engine, it is possible to obtain pragmatic and contextual information about its genre or subgenre. Only the search criteria listed in Section 4. above can be used. Access to genre trees is, at the moment, restricted. However, as soon as the updated version of the corpus is ready, genre trees will be

¹⁸ My translation.

available to all the registered users of the corpus. Genre trees provide the translator with a general overview of the conceptual organisation of the field. Furthermore, thanks to the genre tree, the translator can immediately categorise the source text and visualise the position occupied by it within the mapping of the corresponding field, enabling him/her to identify the genre and/or subgenre of the text and to recognise the different interrelations between the genre or subgenre the text belongs to on the one hand, and other possibly related genres on the other. These identification processes make it possible to perform of the semiotic analysis (Hurtado Albir, 1996).

Once the text has been identified, the translator can use the GENTT search engine to find similar texts. In the header annotation associated with each document, information about contextual aspects (such as the source or author of the text) can be found, which helps the translator carry out the pragmatic analysis of the text (Hurtado Albir, 1996). The identification of the genre implies an automatic activation of the translator's conceptual, semiotic, linguistic and pragmatic knowledge. Moreover, access to documents belonging to the same genre as the original text enables the translator to identify the most characteristic, representative features of that genre, the genre conventions. The identification of genre conventions provides him/her with information about aspects such as the typical phraseology of each genre, which in turn facilitates semantic and morpho-syntactic analysis (Hurtado Albir, 1996).

In addition, the conceptual categorisation of the source text implies the conscious or unconscious formulation, on the part of the translator, of a series of expectations as well as the anticipation of the problems the translation will face him with.

b) While reading the source text

While reading the source text, translators will be able to recognise the genre conventions identified previously in other documents included in the GENTT corpus (pragmatic analysis, Hurtado Albir, 1996). Reading the text, the translator will identify the main ideas (semantic analysis, Hurtado Albir, 1996) and recognise the textual structure (morpho-syntactic analysis,

Hurtado Albir, 1996). These analyses contribute to a thorough understanding of the source text and allow the specialised translator to detect examples of lack of equivalence, to anticipate solutions and to conceive a strategy to solve them. During this stage, decisions regarding the use of a certain method of translation are made, both on the basis of the respective analyses and the function of the translation.

c) After reading the source text

According to the model of the translating process described in Section 5.1. above, a stage of deverbalisation follows the understanding of the text. During deverbalisation, the GENTT corpus helps translators to build a conceptual bridge between the source and the target text, or between the source and the target genre. At the moment, the corpus does not include any referential information about the conceptual part of genres, i.e. no description or characterisation of genres. However, it is planned to include conceptual information as well as bibliography resources for each genre in the near future.

After the stage of deverbalisation, the synthesis or re-writing stage is performed. During this stage, the translator activates his/her linguistic and thematic knowledge of the corresponding genre. The translator can access the semiotic aspects (intertextuality) of the corresponding genre in the target language, which allows him/her to categorise the text in the specialised target framework. By doing so, the translator is able to determine the degree of equivalence between the two genres involved. Given that total equivalence or a complete lack of equivalence are naturally not the only possibilities, the genre tree also reflects partial equivalence and any nuances existing between the two specialised fields the translation brings together. Parallel documents can also be accessed in the GENTT corpus, which helps to perform semantic and morpho-syntactic synthesis (Hurtado Albir, 1996). Moreover, through the GENTT header, the translator has access to contextual information regarding the target genre, provided that there are any similar documents included in the corpus. Using the data provided, translators can carry out the pragmatic synthesis (Hurtado Albir, 1996), as well as identifying the corresponding genre conventions.

By bringing a representative sample of specialised texts belonging to three different specialised frameworks within the translator's grasp, the GENTT corpus saves him/her from having to undertake a laborious and repetitive documentary search, speeding up his task significantly. In addition, the corpus can be used to retrieve information about formal aspects and macro-structure by making it possible to access related genres and subgenres.

6. Conclusions

The main features characterising specialised communication are reflected in the concept of textual genre provided by the GENTT group. The practical application of GENTT's theoretical research, combined with elements from corpus linguistics, has resulted in the creation of the GENTT corpus. As shown in this article, the GENTT corpus makes the translating process performed by specialised translators more dynamic – not only in terms of accessing data, but also by providing translators with a constantly updated mapping of the specialised frameworks involved in translation.

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Abstract

Ellipsis is a phenomenon whereby constituents which are normally obligatory in the grammar are omitted. The contribution of ellipsis in the context is twofold. First, ellipsis serves to create cohesion in text, along with other types of cohesive ties. Secondly, ellipsis contributes to communicative appropriateness in terms of interpersonal relationships. The present study analyses ellipsis in relation to the interpersonal functions. Utterances which give instructions in both English and Japanese map task dialogues are observed and categorised, based on the idea of forms and functions in systemic functional linguistics. The result shows that the use of ellipsis makes some contribution to adjusting the speaker's commitment to the instruction, but is also affected by grammar and pragmatics of the language.

Key words: ellipsis, pragmatics, comparative description, task-oriented dialogues

1 Introduction

A great deal of work has been done on ellipsis, from various perspectives: syntax (e.g., deletion, licensing), text linguistics (e.g., cohesion, referential chains) and pragmatics (e.g., as an indicator of formal/informal speech). The focus of much of this research includes various types of omission, based on taxonomies of ellipsis such as whether ellipsed items can be reconstructed verbatim (strong/weak ellipsis), and whether ellipsed items can be reconstructed linguistically or non-linguistically (textual/situational ellipsis) (Quirk et al. 1985). Accordingly, ellipsis phenomena have been identified by a wide range of terms, such as VP ellipsis, sluicing, gapping, inter/intrasentential ellipsis, and so on.

The main function of ellipsis appears to be its contribution to referential chains. It is cross-linguistically claimed that a topic is established by full noun phrases and maintained by pronouns or zero pronouns (i.e. ellipsis) (Fox 1987; 1996; Givón 1983; Hinds 1983).

However, there seems to be another effect of ellipsis: interpersonal effects. Ellipsis is a “deviated” form of the sentence which is prescribed in the grammar of the language.

In the light of the relation between forms and functions, it seems that particular speech functions are apt to take particular forms; in other words, there are typical realisations of particular speech act. For instance, initiating utterances (e.g., question utterances) are typically in full sentences, while responding utterances (e.g., answer utterances) are elliptical; just as statements are typically realised in the declarative and questions as in interrogatives (Eggins 1994). Needless to say, however, this is not always the case. Question utterances are often observed in declaratives, such as *I was wondering whether the fridge has been fixed*

already. Eggins (1994) notes that one of the reasons why we use atypical forms to accomplish particular speech acts could be as an adjustment of the modality, or in other words, an alteration of the speaker's degree of commitment to the proposition. In this light, ellipsis can be considered to be a deviation from the norm, used when speakers would like to indicate their attitudes towards their utterances. In other words, the use of an atypical form, such as ellipsis, in actual communications can bring about interpersonal effects. For instance, the subject is usually not ellipted in English sentences, and if it is ellipted, there could be an effect which indicates a particular occasion (for example, the speaker feels closer to the interlocutor).

There has been little study of effects of ellipsis in communication, especially the interpersonal effects of ellipsis in spoken discourse. Among the existing references to the effects associated with ellipsis is the "luring" effect in narrative which indicates that ellipsis, when it is used from a unified viewpoint, contributes to readers being assimilated into the emotional state of characters (Makino 1993; Georgakopoulou and Goutsos 1997).

The aim of this paper is to investigate which kinds of interpersonal effects of ellipsis can be observed in task-oriented dialogues in Japanese, compared with English, from a corpus of Map Task dialogues. These two languages have a quite different grammar and pragmatics which derives from the cultural background of each. English grammar is more rigid than Japanese, which does not require every constituent to be in a particular word order in the sentence all the time. Also, Japanese seems to have a more developed system related to social relationships among speakers than English (e.g., honorifics, developed speech levels for different formality). To examine how ellipsis contributes to the interactions between interlocutors, I will look at ellipsis used in one of the key speech acts in the map task dialogues: instruction-giving. Instruction-giving is a speech act, whereby a person gives instructions so that another person can take some action according to the instructions in performing a task.

2 Key facts about ellipsis

2.1 Interpersonal effects of ellipsis

Effects of ellipsis are frequently discussed in the context of informality (Nariyama 2004). It is also suggested, however, that informality is not the decisive factor, but genre should be

considered too, as narrative genre does not contain many occurrences of ellipsis no matter how informal the context is (Carter and McCarthy 1995).

Discussions of interpersonal effects of ellipsis often centre around closeness between interlocutors. The use of ellipsis can create rapport between speakers as the indirectness derived from ellipsis gives “a sense of involvement through mutual participation in sense-making” (Tannen 1989: 23). The association of the use of ellipsis with close human relationship is also the case with Japanese ellipsis. The ellipited elements are filled by making use of shared knowledge between interlocutors when they are close (Yoneha 2003).

2.2 Facilitators of ellipsis in Japanese discourse

Japanese is well-known to be highly elliptical. It is reported that about 74% of subjects in Japanese conversations are ellipited (National Language Research Institute 1955). There are factors which facilitate ellipsis: efficiency, emphasis/contrast, and even the Japanese cultural preference for subtlety (Nariyama 2003). In addition to these factors, the relative lack of syntactic restrictions and highly developed systems for identifying the referent of ellipited constituents can also be facilitators of ellipsis in Japanese discourse. These systems include honorific language and beneficial verbs; for instance, Japanese honorifics allow the subjects of sentences to be ellipited as they indicate which way respect goes in the communication; also, some beneficial expressions, such as the complex verb *shite-ageru* ‘to do-give.the.favour’, shows the direction of doing the favour, which makes it possible to ellipit subjects and indirect objects.

As with ellipsis in English, ellipsis in Japanese discourse is also associated with closeness between interlocutors. There are also effects which are specific to Japanese. Among them is politeness for redressing face threatening acts. By using ellipsis, the expression can be incomplete and sound less imposing to the interlocutor (McGloin 1990).

3 The Map Task Corpus

3.1 Two map task corpora

The data used for the analysis consists of two map task corpora: the HCRC Map Task Corpus (Anderson et al. 1991) and the Chiba Japanese Map Task Dialogue Corpus (Horiuchi et al. 1997). The former was produced in 1990s through a project by Human Communication Research Centre (HCRC), the joint research body of the University of Edinburgh and the University of Glasgow. The HCRC Map Task Corpus is a collection of dialogues produced as speakers undertake a “map task”. In this task, two participants are given a map each; one participant plays the role of the Instruction Giver (henceforth the Giver), and the other the Instruction Follower (henceforth the Follower). Whereas the Giver’s map contains a route as well as several landmarks, the Follower’s map contains only landmarks. The Giver gives instructions to the Follower so that the Follower can reproduce the route on his or her own map.

The Chiba Map Task Dialogue Corpus is the Japanese version of the HCRC Map Task Corpus. The design of the two corpora is almost the same, including the variables (i.e. availability of eye contact between the participants during the task, participant familiarity and participant role). The arrangement and presentation of the transcripts differed in that annotation of moves is only available in the English map task transcripts. Since information about the relation between the ellipsis types and their associated functions is essential for this study, the same type of annotation was provided by way of addition to the original transcript of the Japanese map task transcripts.

The reason why the map task dialogues were chosen as data is that since ellipsis is a product of form, function and context, it is necessary for comparative research to have data which was collected under the same conditions between languages. Although the map task dialogue is a specific genre and it is necessary to be cautious for generalisation of the results, the advantages offered by the controlled conditions go some way to make up for the specificity of the genre.

3.2 Organisation of the map task dialogues

The discourse structure of the map task dialogues shows a similarity to the pre-request sequence with a four position structure in the conversation analysis approach (Levinson 1983). The process of performing the task starts with a question by the Giver about whether there is a particular landmark on the Follower’s map (“pre-request”), to which the Follower’s answers are often positive (“go ahead”). Based on the answer, the Giver gives instructions to the Follower (“request”), who acknowledges the instructions (“compliance”). Sometimes, after the instruction has been issued, the Follower asks for more detailed information about the instruction (“insertion question”). These speech acts are commonly observed in the map task dialogues in both languages.

Figure 1 shows the organisation of the map task dialogues. There are three stages in a dialogue: Opening, Task-performance and Closing. The Task-performance stage is the main part of the dialogue and contains the speech acts mentioned above.

Figure 1 Organisation of the map task dialogues

$(Opening) \wedge Task-performance [((Querying landmarks))^n] \wedge Giving instructions$ $\wedge \{(Quervig instructions)\}^n]^n \wedge Closing$
--

- Round brackets (): stage in it is optional
- Square bracket [] and curly bracket { } : stage in the latter resides in the stage in the former
- Symbol \wedge : one stage follows another
- Bracket with superscript, e.g., ()ⁿ: the stage in it is recursive

As the legend in Figure 1 indicates, the Opening stage and two substages (Querying landmarks and Querying instructions) in the Task-performance stage are optional. Among the speech acts observed in the map task dialogues, the speech act instruction-giving which is found in the Giving instructions substage is mandatory, as it is the key speech act for performing the task. This act is associated with the move [instruct] in the corpus annotation scheme, as the [instruct] move ‘commands the partner to carry out an action’ (Carletta et al. 1997: 16). All the speech acts are represented by twelve moves: [instruct], [explain], [check], [align], [query-yn], [query-w], [acknowledge], [reply-y], [reply-n], [reply-w], [clarify] and [ready]. For instance, the landmark-querying speech act in the Querying landmarks substage is generally related with the [query-yn] move.

4 Results and discussion

4.1 Definition of ellipsis

In this analysis, an elliptical clause is defined as ‘a clause which does not contain one or more of the following: Subject, Finite, Predicator, Complement and Adjunct’.¹⁹ The ellipsed constituents are recovered from linguistic or non-linguistic context. These syntactic categories are the terms used within systemic functional grammar. This theoretical framework allows us to look at the paradigmatic aspects of languages as well as offering formal categories which allow comparative analyses to be carried out.

Sixteen dialogues were chosen from each corpus. The clauses in each were counted, and elliptical clauses were identified.

4.2 Ellipsis types

Table 1 shows the types of ellipsis which are observable in the English and Japanese dialogues. Whereas five types of ellipsis commonly occur in both the English and Japanese dialogues, three types of ellipsis are only found in the English dialogues and two types of ellipsis are only observed in the Japanese dialogues.

Table 1 Ellipsis types in the English and Japanese map task dialogues

English	Japanese
Subject (S)	Subject (S)
Finite (F)	Finite (F)
Predicator (P)	Predicator (P)

¹⁹ Subject, Finite, Predictor, Complement and Adjunct are syntactic categories in systemic functional grammar. They are roughly equivalent to subject for Subject, operator for Finite, non-finite form of the verb for Predicator, direct/indirect object and complement for Complement and prepositional phrases and adverbials for Adjunct in other approaches.

Subject+Finite (SF)	Subject+Finite (SF)
Subject+Finite+Predicator (SFP)	Subject+Finite+Predicator (SFP)
Predicator+Complement (PC)	
Subject+Finite+Predicator +Adjunct (SFPA)	
Subject+Finite+Predicator +Complement (SFPC)	
	Subject+Complement (SC)
	Finite+Predicator (FP)
(Others)	(Others)

The ellipsis types commonly found in both languages are major types of ellipsis; they are the ones mainly observed in the dialogues. In contrast, the ellipsis types unique to each language are not frequently observed.

4.3 Ellipsis in the instruction-giving speech act

The speech act, instruction-giving, is associated with the [instruct] move. All the clauses and elliptical clauses in this move were counted, and the percentage of elliptical clauses in the move was calculated. In the English dialogues, 91 out of 625 clauses in the [instruct] move are elliptical; elliptical clauses account for 14.6% of all the clauses in the [instruct] move. In the Japanese dialogues, 310 out of 450 clauses in the [instruct] move are elliptical; elliptical clauses account for 66.9% in the [instruct] move. Different types of ellipsis contribute to the elliptical clauses in the move. Figure 2 and Table 2 below indicate the contribution of different ellipsis types to the total clauses in the [instruct] move (i.e. for the instruction-giving speech act) in the English and Japanese map task dialogues.

Figure 2 Elliptical clauses in the [instruct] move

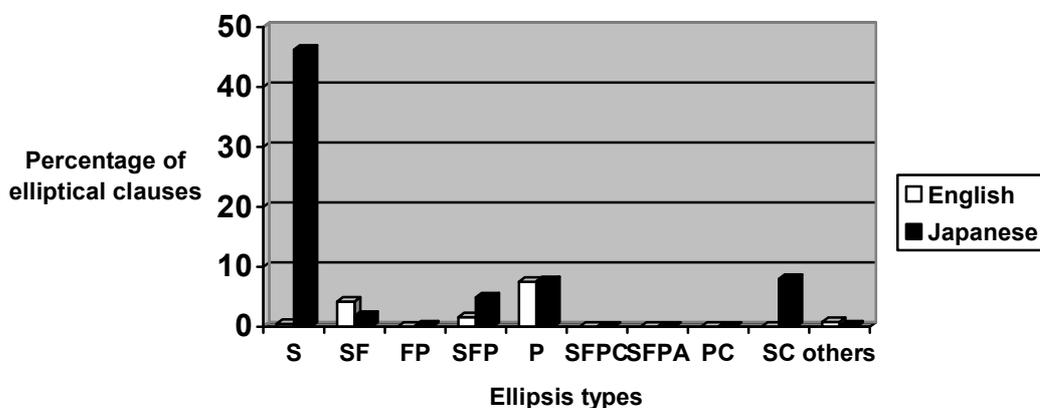


Table 2 Percentage of elliptical clauses in the [instruct] move

	S	SF	FP	SFP	P	SFPC	SFPA	PC	SC	Others
English	0.5%	4.2%	0%	1.6%	7.5%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0.8%
Japanese	46.2%	1.8%	0.2%	4.9%	7.6%	0%	0%	0%	8.0%	0.2%

Since only 14.6% of the total clauses are elliptical in this move in the English dialogues, the contribution of each type of ellipsis is quite small. Also, there are uneven contributions of ellipsis types; some types of ellipsis, such as Predicator+Complement ellipsis, are never observed. This is also the case with the Japanese dialogues. The striking difference in contribution of each ellipsis type to the [instruct] move between the English and Japanese dialogues is found in the contribution of Subject ellipsis and Subject+Complement ellipsis. Whereas there is almost no example of either of these types of ellipsis in the English dialogues, in the Japanese dialogues, they make a rather major contribution to the realisation of the instruction-giving speech act in the Japanese dialogues. In order to investigate ellipsis in the [instruct] move more closely, we can now compare the ways of giving instructions in the English and Japanese dialogues.

4.4 Giving instructions with ellipsis

The following excerpt (1) includes an example of instruction-giving by the Japanese Giver. The Giver is giving an instruction to the Follower, using a landmark *yuuhodoo* ‘public footpath’.

- (1) Move 172 instruct, the Giver
Maa tabun yuuhodoo no ue-o<...> no migi haji gurai
well perhaps public.footpath GEN above-ACC GEN right edge about
‘Well, perhaps above the public footpath...to the right edge of the “public footpath”, (I) want (you) to go straight.’

made massugu itte hoshii n desu ne
to straight go want NMLS HON(T) FP_c

Move 173 acknowledge, the Follower

Hai
right
‘Right.’

Move 174 acknowledge, the Follower

Hai
right
‘Right.’

Dialogue j3e5

The last part of the utterance in Move 172 as seen in (2) is elliptical.

- (2) *massugu itte hoshii n desu ne*
straight go want NMLS HON(T) FP_c

(I) want (you) to go straight.

From the form of this clause, there is no knowing who the agents of the actions indicated by two verbs are: *iku* (<*itte*) ‘go’ and *hoshii* ‘want’. In other words, the subjects of both matrix and embedded clauses are ellipted; Subject and Complement are ellipted. What makes the clause practicable is the context of the situation; the state of affairs of performing the map task enables the participants to work out the identification of the missing agents.

It should be noted is that the Givers in the map task do not give commands but simply instructions. However, giving instructions can sound quite command-like in the sense that

information about a route is possessed only by the Giver, who is supposed to make the Follower reproduce the route on the map. By making these two subjects covert, the Giver can make the agents of the action denoted by the verbs *hoshii* ‘want’ and *iku* ‘go’ obscure; in other words, the Giver can make unclear who wishes the action of drawing a route and who is supposed to draw a route, which can be considered to serve to mitigate the command-like flavour of giving instructions. Additionally, by having implicit subjects, the Giver actually seems to try to even create a cooperative atmosphere with regard to performing the task, as, using ellipsis, it feels to the participants that the wish is shared by the Giver and Follower.

To put this another way, it seems that the Giver, by ellipting these two subjects, indicates a low degree of commitment to the instruction. She does not make it clear that it is she who is making the Follower draw a route according to her instructions; she does not specify who takes the role which is assigned to her to perform the task because she does not like to sound as if she is superior. This observation will be noticeable by looking at the manner of giving instructions in the English map task dialogues, shown in (3).

(3) Move 34 query-yn, the Giver

Do you have indian country ?

Move 35 reply-y, the Follower

Yeah

Move 36 instruct, the Giver

I want you to go ... due south ... until ... and then ... just go due south

Move 37 acknowledge, the Follower

Mmhmm

Dialogue q3ec7

The clause in Move 34 *I want you to go ... due south ... until ... and then ... just go due south* indicates that the Giver in the English map task dialogues is more assertive about the agents of the actions. The two subjects for the matrix and embedded clauses are explicit; the two agents for the actions denoted by *want* and *go* are overtly stated. The Giver is assertive about

her role in the task. It can then be speculated that the explicit subjects indicate the Giver's higher degree of commitment to the instruction, or the task itself, compared with the Japanese Givers.

The two examples of the instruction-giving speech act show that the realisation of this speech act reflects the difference in grammar and pragmatics between English and Japanese. English grammar allows the subject of the embedded clause to be covert as long as it is identical with the one of the matrix clause. However, it does not allow the subject of the matrix clause to be covert. Thus, the agents of the action are specified by the grammar. In contrast, Japanese grammar allows any subjects in the sentence to be covert, because of the lack of grammatical constraints which are observed in English. And in spite of this lack of grammatical control over covert agents, interlocutors can identify the ellipted agents from the context. It is the interlocutor, not the grammar, that identifies the ellipted subjects.

5 Conclusion

The differences in grammar and pragmatics between English and Japanese determine the forms for this particular speech act, i.e. giving instructions, in the map task dialogues. This difference could be considered from the viewpoint of positive and negative politeness strategies (Brown and Levinson 1987). In English, having explicit agents in the sentences could show that the speaker has a high degree of commitment to the proposition. It seems to indicate that speakers show more commitment to the assigned role in carrying out the task. This commitment is strong enough to make it clear who is the person that gives instructions and who is the person that follows the instructions. The Japanese Givers do not specify the agents of the actions required to perform the task. However, this does not mean that they are not dedicated enough to make their division of roles explicit. Not clearly defining the separate roles for the task participants is their strategy to perform the task efficiently.

The present study aimed to shed light on the interpersonal effects associated with ellipsis. Ellipsis in the Japanese dialogues can serve to make the instruction sound less command-like by altering the speaker's degree of commitment to the instruction. Although from the viewpoint of English it appears that elliptical utterances show the Japanese participants as having lesser commitment to the task, the use of elliptical utterances seems to be the comfortable way of communication in this specific type of dialogue for the Japanese participants.

Abbreviations:

ACC	accusative particle
FP _c	final particle (confirmation)
GEN	genitive particle
NMLS	nominaliser
HON(T)	honorific expressions (<i>teinei go</i> ('polite language'))

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Txtng in three European languages: does the linguistic typology differ?²⁰/Rachel Panckhurst

Abstract:

We have conducted research on computer-mediated communication within a French University since 1996. Discourse appearing in email messages, forums, chat sessions is shaped in a particular way, precisely because one uses a computer. The computer becomes a tool, a sort of mediator, indirectly modifying the discourse. A new discourse ‘genre’ which we call *mediated electronic discourse* is created. Our research has recently included texting or SMS-type writing strategies either through computer or mobile telephone usage. Based on French and Belgian research, we have devised a new typology for French SMS writing (Panckhurst, 2009). Student corpora comparing French, Spanish and Italian allows plurilingual verification in order to reveal any variations. SMS and “dialogical interactions” are the next step for this research.

Keywords: SMS, txtng, computer-mediated discourse, mediated electronic discourse.

1. Introduction

1.1. Mediated electronic discourse

Mediated electronic discourse (MED) (including electronic mail, forums, chats, blogs, etc.) is characterised by several phenomena which appear below (*cf.* Panckhurst 2006a, b, 2007, Véronis & Guimier de Neef, in Sabah, 2006).

Main MED features:

smileys to introduce non-verbal semiological aspects; specific typography: words in uppercase, lengthening or repetition of letters, (which, in certain cases may simulate intonation, and therefore indicate some paraverbal information), marks such as ‘>’ or ‘|’ (indicating a repetition of discourse between sender and recipient);

spelling, grammatical mistakes and absence (or reduction) of punctuation (*cf.* Panckhurst, 1998; Véronis & Guimier de Neef, in Sabah, 2006);

neology or neography (*cf.* Véronis & Guimier de Neef, in Sabah, 2006), for instance, SMS abbreviations or words borrowed from foreign languages.

²⁰ We would like to thank the following students, friends & colleagues who have provided useful information on French, Spanish and Italian texting usage: Dorian Boudrique, H el ene Catapano, Mark Chu, Flavia Coassin, St ephanie Doston, George Ferzoco, Delphine Fr ejaville, Sonia Pollet, Teresa Stabile, Elisabetta Tortorella, Bertrand Verine.

More linguistic features include:

predominant usage of the present tense (often over 60-70%) as opposed to imperfect/past, future, conditional, imperative;

high usage of first person deictic pronouns (as compared to second and third person pronouns);

lower percentage of verbs (often under 20-25%) compared to other more traditional written forms (over 20-25%), and among verbs used, frequent usage of modals (between 20 and 30% of overall verb usage);

increased usage of ellipsis (for instance: *Vous remerciant/Thanking you; Impossible de trouver le document à enregistrer sur clef USB/Impossible to find the document to save on flash drive*)

Other more extra-linguistic aspects which are typical of online communication include:

relational: conciseness, rapidity, anguish/worry (if a long silence is observed before responding to messages), aggressiveness, impulsiveness, an (illusionary) impression of proximity, protective barriers (no direct face-to-face contact), etc.

communication context: reduction or absence of introductions and closures, non-observance of conversational rules (turn-taking, floor-taking, adjacency pairing, etc).

More recently (2005-2008), we have expanded our research to include mobile-telephone SMS messages (*cf.* Panckhurst, 2009). The following table shows how syntactic categories vary greatly according to the type of communication tool used:

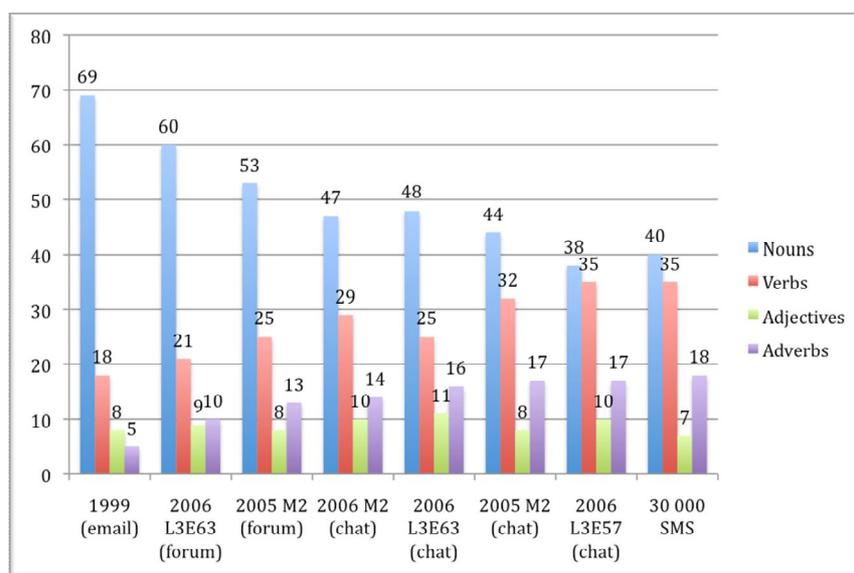


Table 1: Percentage of syntactic categories (tokens) used between 1999 and 2006 (email, forum, chat, SMS)

Until 2004, our corpora showed that syntactic category usage for nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs used in MED situations was similar to more conventional written forms (i.e. a high percentage of nouns and few verbs). However, from 2005 up until now, a radical change has occurred: noun usage has decreased, adjectives remain stable, but verb and adverb usage has increased dramatically. This shows a significant linguistic evolution: MED can be either more closely linked to written forms, or oral forms, according to the communication tool used. In Table 1, chats and SMS usage²¹ appear to be more “oral” whereas email and forums remain linked to more “written” forms.

1.2. eSMS or txtng

Following on from the above classification for MED, analysis of SMS or txtng-style writing (in French, I have created the term *eSMS* for “*écriture* de type SMS” or “*écrit* SMS” (cf. Panckhurst, 2009), which I shall continue to use here), offers new perspectives for the study of language in evolution:

“Some people dislike texting. Some are bemused by it. Some love it. I am fascinated by it, for it is the latest manifestation of the human ability to be linguistically creative and to adapt language to suit the demands of diverse settings. In texting we are seeing, in a small way, language in evolution”. Crystal (2008, p. 175)

Neology (lexical creativity, essentially foreign languages and colloquial/slang usage (also “*verlan*” in French) and *neography* (innovative spelling) are of the utmost importance as they are features which are frequently used in *eSMS*.

In this article, a typology for French is presented (Panckhurst, 2009) and is then confronted with data from Italian and Spanish. This allows plurilingual verification in order to reveal any variations, and subsequently adjust the typology accordingly.

2. Typology

In previous research (Panckhurst, 2009), we have justified devising a new typology for French eSMS following on from other proposals (Anis, 2004, Fairon *et al.* 2006b, Liénard, 2007, Véronis et Guimier de Neef, 2006) for several reasons. These are mainly linked to: varying terminology for identical phenomena, complex category confusions, (phonetic, graphical, etc.) descriptions which are placed on the same level as the resulting meaning/interpretation of the messages, sole categories which are used to highlight a

²¹ The right-hand column in Table 1 shows results from analysis of SMS data. We submitted 30,000 text messages which had been transcribed into standard French (see Fairon *et al.*, 2004-2007) to a French computational linguistics tool (Cordial, Synapse) and we then extracted results for noun, verb, adjective and adverb usage.

particular phenomenon but include examples which can also belong to another category, etc. As these aspects are detailed in the previous research, we prefer directly presenting our typology for French here and then confronting it with two other languages: Spanish and Italian.

In the following typology for French we exclude *neology*. *Neography* is first presented feature by feature (see Table 2), and then combinations are included (*cf.* § 2.1). This is in order to avoid confusion as eSMS often includes complex features.

2.1. French eSMS typology

I. Substitutions

1. phonetic:

1. entire: a sound is replaced by one character (letter or number) The spelling of the lexeme is entirely modified: *o* (**eau**), *7* (**cet**).

2. partial: replacement of digrams and trigrams, corresponding to phonemes. Spelling of the lexeme is partially modified: *ossi* (**aussi**), *allé* (**aller**), *bo* (**beau**) ; intervocalic “s”: *bizes* (**bises**)

3. with variation: *bisoo* (**bisou**)

2. graphical:

1. elision, typography, capitals/lower case: replacement of the French apostrophe or hyphen by spaces: « m en » (m'en), « est ce que » (est-ce que) ; capitalising whole messages or substituting capitals with lower case or vice versa.

2. icons, mathematical symbols, special characters, rebuses, pictograms, logograms: (*, + = => @); *à +* (**à plus**), *de grandes @* (**de grandes oreilles**)

3. with variation: *bisoux* (**bisous**) *mwa* (**moi**)

II. Reductions

1. phonetic:

1. morpho-lexical shortenings:

1.1. truncations: *ordi* (ordinateur, apocope), *'lut*, *Net* (salut, Internet, aphaeresis).

1.2. initialisms (alphabetisms & acronyms): all letters are omitted except the first: *ASV* (âge, sexe, ville), *mdr* (mort de rire), *tvb* (tout va bien), *tlm* (tout le monde), *lol* (laughing out loud).

2. variation: *ui* (*oui*), *i* (*il*)

2. graphical:

1. suppression of mute 1) word-endings 2) beginnings: 1) *échange* (échanges), *vou* (vous), *peu* (peut), *chian* (chiant), *fou* (« m'en fous »), **drop of the unstable e:** *douch* (douche); 2) *ôtel* (hôtel)

2. consonant contractions/clippings & abbreviations: *dc* (donc), *pr* (pour), *ds* (dans); **double consonants:** *ele* (elle), *poura* (pourra); **semantic abbreviations/initialisms** (abbreviations reduced to initials): *t* (te/tu) *p* (peux/pas).

3. agglutinations: *jattends* (j'attends).

III. Suppression/absence or rarefying:

1. graphical:

1. typography & punctuation

2. diacritic signs: *ca* (ça), *voila* (voilà)

IV. Augmentations & additions:

1. graphical:

1. repetition of characters and/or punctuation: *suuuuupppeeerrr !!!!!*

2. semiological representations (Smileys/emoticons) :-)

3. character increase: *oki* (ok), *les zamours* (les amours)

4. onomatopoeia: *mouarf*, *arfff*, *bof*.

Table 2: typology of simple eSMS phenomena for French.

2.1.1. Complex phenomena. Table 2 is insufficient for dealing with all cases of neography, as, in many instances, eSMS involves combinations of two or more graphical and/or phonetic substitutions, reductions, suppressions, rarefying and additions. Some examples follow:

agglutination (II.2.3) + suppression of mute word-endings (II.2.1) + entire phonetic substitution (I.1.1) : *7éta* “cet état”;

multiple entire phonetic substitution (1.1.1) : *2manD* (demander), *6T* (citer), *A2MI* (à demain);

character increase (IV.1.3.) and graphical substitution with variation (I.2.3.): *mwouah*, *moua* (moi)

A recent student study (Fréjaille & Doston, 2009), conducted on analysis of 300 text messages exchanged between people aged between 17 and 32 in French, has shown that the 4

most frequent combinations (including 2 or 3 phenomena), in descending order, are as follows:

substitution & reduction:

substitution (phonetic, partial) & reduction (graphical, agglutination): *javé* (avais > avé; j' > j); *kon* (qu'on: qu' > qu > k);

substitution (phonetic, partiel) & reduction (graphical, mute word-endings): *vrémen* (vraiment: ai > é; t > ø);

reduction & reduction:

reduction (graphical, initialism) & reduction (graphical, agglutination): *sfera* (se > s; se fera > sfera); *jpense* (je > j; je pense > jpense);

substitution & reduction & reduction:

cke (c'est que: que > ke (phonetic, partial); c'est > c (graphical, semantic abbreviation); c'est que > cke (graphical, agglutination));

jfiniré (je finirai: ai > é (phonetic, partial); je > j (graphical, initialism); je finirai > jfiniré (agglutination));

ti (t'y: y > i (graphical, with variation); te > t (graphical, semantic abbreviation); t'y > ti (agglutination))

reduction & reduction & reduction:

reduction (graphical, semantic abbreviation) & reduction (graphical, mute word-endings) & reduction (agglutination): *ta* (tu as: tu > t; as > a; tu as > ta); *jdevien* (je deviens: je > j; deviens > devien; je deviens > jdevien);

2.2 French eSMS compared to Spanish and Italian

In order to check the validity of the typology for French eSMS in comparison to Spanish and Italian, two other student studies were initiated (Boudrique *et al*, 2008 — analysis of 84 Spanish text messages; Stabile & Tortorella, 2008 — analysis of 208 Italian text messages). The following results (see Table 3, parts 1-3) show that the features stipulated in Table 2 can generally also be used in these languages. However, several specific situations do differ.

2.2.1. *Substitution of trigrams.* As pronunciation and spelling are much closer in Spanish and Italian compared to French, it is not surprising that trigram simplification does not appear in those languages, as it does in French: “beau” > “bo”.

2.2.2. *Phonetic substitution: double to single letter modification: bu > w; ll > y; ch > x (Spanish)*. Phonetic variation seems more popular in the Spanish and Italian corpora than in French. Some phenomena may be of interest. For instance, the letter “w” is very rare in standard Spanish, only normally existing in foreign words. It is however also used in some regions/countries and in varying sociolects. In many eSMS examples, “bu” is replaced by “w”: bueno > weno; guapa > wapa, this corresponds to an economical measure when using the mobile telephone. Even if the letter “w” is rarely used in standard Spanish, the corresponding pronunciation does exist: huera is normally pronounced wera. This tendency needs to be confirmed with intercultural differences; for instance, in other (Latin American) countries, a word like *huera* may more often be pronounced *gwera*.

The double “ll” at the onset of a word is fairly systematically replaced with “y” since the pronunciation is fairly similar (in Argentina, for instance, “ll” is systematically pronounced “y”) and the economical character of the mobile telephone keyboard is a factor (*llave > yave, llamo > yamo*). It is not necessarily the case for intervocalics; the following words were written as such in the Spanish corpus: “ella”, “allí”, “pollito”. “Ch” > “x” is borrowed from Catalan, in which “x” is pronounced “ch” (*chiquitina > xiquitina*). This enables the user to press one instead of two keys on the mobile phone.

Single letter modification (Spanish). *Although “v” is often pronounced “b” in standard Spanish (there are of course geographical variations for this), in eSMS the replacement is not often used, probably because the key-pressing on the mobile phone is almost the same. The following example was the only one found in the whole Spanish corpus:*

Pdrs bnir a brme ? (¿Podrás venir a verme ?; Will you be able to come and see me?)

2.2.3. *Suppression of final characters*. Surprisingly enough, single characters of (pronounced) word-endings are sometimes suppressed; however, in the Italian corpus this only seems to occur in dialectal situations (Napolitano in the present instance), where the full word is not pronounced in oral Italian in the first place; therefore this situation may be identical in spoken dialectal Italian and eSMS: scem (scema), avert (averti) (Italian). This may be similar in some regions of Spain (Andalucía) where pronounced word endings are omitted orally (final “s” dropped: eres > ere, vamos > vamo, etc.). Regional corpora should allow verification of these phenomena.

2.2.4. *Mute word-endings (French)/beginnings (French, Spanish, Italian)*. In the section on reductions, “suppression of mute word-endings” is non applicable for Spanish and Italian, as this phenomenon does not exist in either language, simply because all characters (apart from the “h” for Spanish/Italian) are pronounced.

In Spanish, mute word-beginnings may be suppressed in the situation of the silent “h” (one must note, however, that in certain regions and countries “s” is pronounced as an aspirate “h”). For instance: *hermanos* (brothers) is often written either “ermanos” or “rmanos” (even if the latter possibility should technically be pronounced “erre”+“manos”) in eSMS; “hemos” is also written “emos” in eSMS. These are the only two examples encountered in the Spanish corpus. In the Italian corpus, however, all instances of the mute “h” appear intact, as such (*ha, ho, hai, hanno*).

2.2.5. Apostrophes & agglutination (French). Apostrophes are not used in Spanish, so for instance, there is no elision possible for “me acuerdo” and it would therefore not be shortened to “*m’acuerdo”. In French, of course, it is very frequent: “m’aime”, “j’aime” but also with determiners and nouns: “l’apostrophe”. In Italian, apostrophes are used with reflexive verbs, clitic pronouns or determiners + nouns, etc. The agglutination factor often revealed in French eSMS seems less frequent in Spanish or in Italian: *jattends* (I’m waiting), *jy* (j’y, as in *j’y vais*: I’m going there), *nai* (n’ai, as in *je n’ai pas*: I don’t have). In the Italian corpus, not one example of apostrophe reduction combined with agglutination is apparent, but this may need to be confronted with further corpora.

In French, agglutination in eSMS also appears in situations where apostrophes are not used in standard French, for instance: *jregarde* (*je regarde*), *jtravaille* (*je travaille*), etc. In Spanish, no agglutination examples using pronominals or reflexives (subject pronouns are of course not used in unstressed Spanish or Italian) appear in the corpus; a space is systematically inserted with initialism abbreviations: *m aburro* (*me aburro*), *s nvian* (*se envian*). In fact, very few examples of agglutination appear in the Spanish corpus; the three following were observed: 1) prepositions & nouns (*dtus padres* > *de tus padres*); 2) interrogative adverb & verb combinations (*d donderes ?* > *¿De dónde eres ?*); 3) expressions with or without subject pronouns: *noseke* (*no sé qué*), *yokese* (*yo qué sé*). In the Italian corpus, the only example of agglutination is: *vabbè* (*va bene*), but this also involves consonant doubling and apocope, and since it is typical in oral Italian, it is not a particular feature of eSMS.

2.2.6. Double consonant simplification (Spanish & Italian). In both Spanish and Italian, usage of double consonants is less frequent than in French. In French the simplification is frequent: *elle* > *ele* (she); *pourra* > *poura* (will be able to) In Spanish, the main consonants which are doubled are: ll, rr, cc, and nn. Since the “ll” is often replaced by “y” (word-beginnings), that leaves three other main possibilities: the only double “nn” encountered in the corpus is when *mañana* (tomorrow) is condensed to *mñn*, which is not once simplified to *mñ*; 1 occurrence of the double “rr” is encountered: *arreglo*, but without simplification; the double “cc” is not apparent.

2.2.7. Diacritic signs and punctuation (Spanish). Diacritic signs are often used in written Spanish and these are often suppressed in eSMS. This may lead to ambiguity, as certain words can be indirect exclamations or interrogatives, depending on the context: *quien/quién*

(who), *donde/dónde* (where), *cuando/cuándo* (when). Initial punctuation, which does not exist in either French or Italian, is systematically suppressed (*i, ù*) in Spanish text messages.

2.2.8 Complex phenomena variations (Spanish & Italian)

In both Spanish and Italian, consonant doubling is used in combination with initialisms: *gg* (*giorno*, Italian), *aa* (*años*, Spanish), *dd* (*días*, Spanish). This does not seem to have an equivalent in French, where double consonants usually appear in consonant contractions, for instance: *qq* which may sometimes be used for “*quelques*”, *bb* for “*bébé*”, *cc* for “*coucou*”, *mm* for “*meme*”, *nn* for “*non*”, *pp* for “*pépé*”, *ss* for “*sans*”, *tt* for “*tout*”, etc. However both consonants exist in the original words, which differentiates the case from both Spanish and Italian.

In Spanish, substitution may originate from mainstream Spanish (*todos* (all) becomes *to2* — since “*dos*” also means “*two*”) or in some cases is possibly influenced by Catalan (*adios* (goodbye) becomes *a2* (because in Catalan “*déu*” means God and is similar to the plural “*dues*” meaning “*two*” — for a foreigner this may be confusing, as *a2* could be interpreted as meaning “*ados*” which of course does not exist).

2.3. Trilingual eSMS typology: French, Spanish, Italian

Table 3 (part 1): typology of simple eSMS phenomena across three languages: French, Spanish, Italian

I. substitutions

1. phonetic

1. entire: a sound is replaced by one character (letter or number); the spelling of the lexeme is entirely modified

French: *o* (**eau**), *7* (**cet**); possible in complex neology: *6T* (**citer**)

Spanish: *c* (**sé**), *s* (**es**); possible in complex neology: *to2* (**todos**), *a2* (**adios** from *adéu*, possible Catalan influence)

Italian: *c* (**ce**), *6* (**sei**=pronoun, *you*); possible in complex neology: *3no* (**treno**)

2. partial: replacement of 1) digrams and 2) trigrams, corresponding to phonemes; spelling of the lexeme is partially modified

French: 1) *ossi* (**aussi**), *allé* (**aller**); 2) *bo* (**beau**); intervocalic “s”: *bizes* (bises)

Spanish: 1) *yamar* (**llamar**), *yave* (**llave**), *chikitina* (**chiquitina**), *xiquitina* (**chiquitina**, from catalan); 2) N.A.; intervocalic “s”: *bezos* (besos)

Italian: 1) *kiudere* (**chiudere**); 2) N.A.

3. with variation:

French: *bisoo* (bisou)

Spanish: *weno* (**bueno**), *wapa* (**guapa**)

Italian: *poxo* (posso) — from Latin: “x” became “ss”.

2. graphical

1. elision, typography, capitals/lower case: 1) replacement of apostrophe or hyphen by spaces; 2) capitalising whole messages or substituting capitals with lower case or vice versa

French: 1) *m en* (m’**en**), *est ce que* (est-ce **que**); 2) upper/lower case substitution apparent

Spanish: 1) no hyphen or apostrophe in literary Spanish; 2) upper/lower case substitution apparent

Italian: 1) no hyphen in Italian; *l ho* (l’**ho**) 2) upper/lower case substitution apparent

2. icons, mathematical symbols, special characters, rebuses, pictograms, logograms: (*, + ==> @)

French: *à +* (à **plus**), *de grandes @* (de grandes **oreilles**); partial substitution not encountered in French corpora

Spanish: + (**más**), - (**menos**), @ (email), x (**por**); also partial substitution: *xq* (**porque**), *xo* (**pero**), *xa* (**para**)

Italian: + (**più**), - (**meno**), x (**per**); also partial substitution: *xso* (**perso**), *xciò* (**perciò**), *xché* (**perché**)

3. with variation

French: *bisoux* (bisous) *mwa* (**moi**);

Spanish: not encountered in corpus

Italian: not encountered in corpus

Table 3 (part 2): typology of simple eSMS phenomena across three languages: French, Spanish, Italian

II. reductions

1. phonetic

1. morpho-lexical shortenings

1.1. truncations: 1) apocope; 2) aphaeresis

French: 1) *ordi* (ordinateur); 2) *'lut*, *Net* (salut, Internet)

Spanish: 1) *peli* (película); 2) *stoy* (estoy), *stas* (estas)

Italian: 1) *scem* (scema), *avert* (averti), *veng* (vengo), *capi* (capito), *appunt* (appuntamento); 2) *na* (una), *sto* (questo)

1.2. initialisms: 1) alphabetisms & 2) acronyms: all letters are omitted except the first of each word

French: 1) *ASV* (âge, sexe, ville), *mdr* (mort de rire), *tvb* (*tout va bien*), *tlm* (*tout le monde*); 2) *lol* (laughing out loud) sic., used in French

Spanish: 1) *tqm* (te quiero mucho); 2) *vab* (¿Vienes a buscarme ?)

Italian: 1) *tvb* (ti voglio bene);

2. with variation

French: *ui* (oui), *i* (il)

Spanish: only encountered in complex neology: *a2* (adios)

Italian: not encountered in corpus

2. graphical

1. suppression of mute 1) word-endings; 2) word-beginnings

French: *échange* (échanges), *vou* (vous), *peu* (peut), *chian* (chiant), *fou* (m'en fous); drop of the unstable *e*: *douch* (douche) ; 2) *ôtel* (hôtel)

Spanish: N.A.; 2) *emos* (hemos), *rmanos* (hermanos) : normally, “r” is pronounced “erre” (+ phonetic variation); *n* (en), *l* (el) (+ phonetic variation)

Italian: N.A.; not encountered in corpus, all mute “h” forms apparent: *ha*,

ho, hai, hanno

2. 1) consonant contractions/clippings & abbreviations; 2) double consonants; 3) semantic abbreviations/initialisms (abbreviations reduced to initials)

French: 1) *dc* (donc), *pr* (pour), *ds* (dans); 2) *ele* (elle), *poura* (pourra); 3) *t* (te/tu) *p* (peux/pas)

Spanish: 1) *mñn* (mañana), *pq* (porque), *hcr* (hacer), *td* (todo); 2) not encountered in corpus; 3) *q* (que/qué), *t* (te/tu)

Italian: 1) *dmn* (domani), *tnt* (tanto), *scs* (scusa), *ttt* (tutto); 2) not encountered in corpus; 3) *c* (ce/ci), *s* (si/stare)

3. agglutinations

French: *jattends* (j'attends), *jy* (j'y), *nai* (n'ai), *ten* (t'en), *lascenseur* (l'ascenseur); *jmange* (je mange)

Spanish: N.A. for apostrophe; *dtus* (de tus), *poray* (por ahi — ex. with phon. Variation), *yokese* (yo qué sé), *noseke* (no sé qué) — ex. with phon. variation & diacritic réduction.

Italian: all apostrophes maintained in corpus; phenomenon could exist: *lho* (l'ho) — private communication

Table 3 (part 3): typology of simple eSMS phenomena across three languages: French, Spanish, Italian

III. suppression/absence or rarefying

1. graphical

1. typography & punctuation

French, Spanish, Italian: in general, typography & punctuation are diminished. In Spanish, initial punctuation (*¡*, *¿*) is systematically suppressed.

2. diacritic signs

French: *ca* (ça), *voila* (voilà)

Spanish: suppression can lead to ambiguity between interrogative & indirect exclamations, so context is required: *quien/quién* (who), *donde/dónde*

(where), *cuando/cuándo* (when)

Italian: accents are less frequent. Sometimes suppressed: *ne* (né), but not systematically; “è” is quite frequent in corpus

IV. augmentations & additions

1. graphical

1. repetition of characters and/or punctuation

French: *suuuuuppppeerrr !!!!!* (super !)

Spanish: *holaaaaaaaa* (hola)

Italian: *arrivoooooooo* (arrivo)

2. semiological representations (Smileys/emoticons)

French, Spanish, Italian: :-), :-D, etc.

3. character increase

French: *oki* (ok), *les zamours* (les amours)

Spanish: not encountered in corpus (*okis* for *ok* used in Andalusian, private communication)

Italian: not encountered in isolation; only combined with agglutination — *sennò* (se no)

4. onomatopoeia

French: *mouarf*, *arfff*, *bof*

Spanish: *zzz*

Italian: *mhmh*, *ahahahah*

3. Conclusion

In the present article, we have presented a typology for describing txtng (or eSMS for “écriture de type SMS”, or “écrit SMS”, SMS-writing). It was initiated for a study conducted on the French language (Panckhurst, 2009), following on from previous research (Anis, 2004,

Fairon *et al.* 2006b, Liénard, 2007, Véronis et Guimier de Neef, 2006). Student SMS data was then compiled for Spanish and Italian (Boudrique *et al.*, 2008; Stabile & Tortorella, 2008), allowing plurilingual verification in order to reveal any variations, and thus modify typology structure, within the context of intercultural pragmatics. The typology presented here details “simple phenomena” before introducing “complex phenomena” (*cf.* student work, Fréjaville & Doston, 2009). It was first necessary to understand how eSMS forms are devised, for each of the three languages, by carefully splitting up each word into (relatively) isolated linguistic phenomena. However, most words used in text messages combine several features of the above categories (see tables 2 & 3). Although categories vary slightly from one language to another, many features are multilingual & multicultural. However, other languages incorporating other alphabets also need to be researched. For instance, in Arabic, the first letter of the name *Ayeshah/Aïcha* “آيشاء” is “ع”. As this is similar to a mirrored letter “3”, this number is often used as graphical replacement in text messages. Many more examples need to be investigated further.

Determining typology is a crucial step, before one can branch out and explore “dialogical interactions” or asynchronous SMS “conversations” in depth. In order to do so, a crucial factor is of course collecting sufficient data in interactional situations, which is itself a difficulty in this domain. More student txtng corpora have recently been compiled and analysed (Catapano, 2009, Fontaine, 2009) in order to determine how sSMS interaction takes place (usage of anaphora, ambiguity, discursive variation, terms of address, verb tense usage, contextual situations, etc.). A further step will lead to more precise intercultural & interactional pragmatics issues with analysis of multilingual & multicultural corpora.

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Interpreting meaning in spoken interaction: the case of *I mean*/Renata Povolná

Abstract²²

Spoken interaction is a cooperative process in which permanent negotiation of meaning between all participants takes place. In this ongoing process the current speaker can use some guiding signals mostly labelled discourse markers to enable the current hearer(s) to arrive at an interpretation which comes as close as possible to the speaker's communicative intentions in a given situation.

Based on her quantitative as well as qualitative analysis of texts taken from two corpora representing academic spoken discourse (LLC and MICASE), the author discusses how the clausal form *I mean* can enhance the hearer's coherent interpretation and understanding of the message to be communicated, thus contributing to discourse coherence, which is understood as a dynamic, hearer-oriented and interpretative notion (Bublitz 1997).

Key words

academic spoken discourse, discourse markers, negotiation of meaning, coherent interpretation

Introduction

Authentic spoken interaction including interaction used in academic settings is governed by two main principles: 1. speakers cooperate and 2. speakers take turns (Stenström 1994). Interactants in this cooperative achievement can be helped by some guiding signals frequently labelled discourse markers (DMs) in the relevant literature (e.g. Schiffrin 1987, Stenström 1994, Lenk 1995, Jucker and Ziv 1998, Aijmer 2002). (For a broad discussion of the terms commonly used to refer to DMs, see Povolná 2008 and 2009.) These signals are used by the current speaker in order to enhance the smooth flow of interaction, which Miššiková (2007), for example, calls "the process of efficient communication" and which consists above all in the current hearer's adequate interpretation and understanding of the message to be conveyed. Under ideal circumstances, the current hearer's interpretation of the message comes as close as possible to the current speaker's communicative intentions, i.e. the hearer's understanding is coherent with what the speaker intends to communicate in a given conversation (cf. "conversational coherence" in Lenk 1995). The interactants' attempts at

²² This article is part of the grant project 405/08/0866 *Coherence and Cohesion in English Discourse*, which is supported by the Czech Science Foundation.

achieving coherent interpretation and understanding in the ongoing process of negotiation of meaning are connected with the establishment and maintenance of discourse coherence which as one of the seven standards of textuality (de Beaugrande and Dressler 1981) is crucial for all human communication, including communication in academic settings, which is at the core of the present study. Since coherence is understood in conformity with Bublitz (1997) as a hearer/reader-oriented, comprehension-based and interpretative notion, it follows that it is not a text-inherent and invariant property; by contrast, it is viewed as a dynamic notion which comes into being as a result of the success of the inferential process and permanent negotiation of meaning between all discourse participants in spoken interaction (cf. Povolná 2007).

Previous research

Since the paper deals with the clausal form *I mean* only, the following section attempts to show how this marker is viewed by some linguists whose research is considered relevant here.

Although *I mean* can be referred to by many different terms, it is often discussed together with comment clauses (CCs) (e.g. Leech and Svartvik 1994, Crystal 1995, Stenström 1995, Biber et al. 1999). Quirk et al. (1985: 1112-1118), who, in my opinion, provide the most comprehensive classification of CCs do not list *I mean* together with CCs at all; they mention it in connection with reformulation as a means of ‘mistake editing’ used “in order to correct a phonological or semantic mistake (which is common enough in impromptu speech)” (Quirk et al. 1985: 1313) and exemplify it by *Then you add the peaches – I mean, the apricots ...*, which clearly shows *I mean* in the function of ‘mistake editing’. However, based on my results it can be stated that it is difficult to find such obvious examples and so it is assumed that *I mean* mostly introduces something that can be considered clarification or reformulation rather than ‘editing a mistake’.

Leech and Svartvik (1994: 10-19) view *I mean* as a filler, stressing that “when we speak we often fill in gaps with ‘fillers’ (like *you know, you see, I mean, kind of, sort of*) to allow us to think of what next to say, or just to indicate that we intended to go on talking”. These features typical of authentic informal interaction are called discourse items by the authors, who put them under three headings, indicating a scale from ‘purely interactive’ (above all characteristic of conversation) to ‘also interactive’ functions (more grammatical and frequently used also in public speaking and writing). *I mean* is placed somewhere in the middle of the scale and considered a ‘mainly interactive’ discourse item.

Biber et al. (1999) regard CCs, notably *I mean* and *you know*, as inserts, stating that they comment on a thought rather than the delivery of wording. They provide an example which includes several tokens of *I mean*: *I mean it’s, it’s general I suppose I mean if it would be better to switch it on and off which you can do and er, you know, I mean we can’t sit here*

continually talking (Biber et al. 1999: 197). In addition, they believe that CCs are closely related to DMs, which, as they state,

tend to occur at the beginning of a turn or utterance, and to combine two roles: (a) to signal a transition in the evolving process of the conversation, and (b) to signal an interactive relationship between speaker, hearer, and message (Biber et al. 1999: 1086).

However, as will be illustrated below, it is impossible to claim that *I mean* tends to occur at the beginning of a turn or utterance, although a few tokens in this position have been found in my data (see Tables 2a and 2b below).

In their discussion of the language of conversation, Crystal and Davy (1969: 48) remark on the high proportion of parenthetical clauses such as *I mean* and *you know*, “which may be embedded in the main clause, or may occur in sequence with it”. Later, when exploring the most important characteristics of conversational English and the ways in which sentences can be connected, Crystal (1975) distinguishes three main functions of connectives: (1) connectives interpreted as reinforcing, or specifically supplementing, the whole or part of the meaning of what has immediately preceded; (2) connectives interpreted as diminishing, or retracting the whole or part of the meaning of what has preceded, among which *I mean* is listed; (3) softening connectives or softeners, exemplified by *you know*, *I mean*, and *you see*, which maintain the continuity of discourse and seem to be used “to alter the stylistic force of a sentence, so as to express the attitude of the speaker to his listener, or to express his assessment of the conversational situation as informal” (Crystal 1975: 85).

Edmondson (1981: 153-156), who introduces the term ‘fumbles’ for standardized expressions or fixed formulae the main function of which is “to plug speaking-turn-internal conversational gaps” used by the speaker to gain time, holds the view that “in performing communicative acts speakers hesitate, pause, cannot find the right word”; he conceives of fumbles as “conventionalized ways of plugging such potential gaps” (Edmondson 1981: 154), with the result that in fact no such gaps are perceived by interactants. One of the five groups of fumbles he distinguishes is a group of let-me-explains, among which *I mean* is considered to be most common; it is used “to communicate the fact that I’m trying to communicate” (Edmondson 1981: 154-155).

Stenström (1994: 131-132), who uses the term monitor for *I mean*, maintains that “sometimes the speaker needs to make a new start or rephrase what s/he was going to say in the middle of a turn, often because the listener shows that s/he cannot follow or is not convinced”. In such cases “*I mean* comes in handy” and tends to co-occur with *well* and sometimes even with *you know* or *you see*. Similar co-occurrences of *I mean* and some other markers have been found in my data, too (see examples below).

It is also worth mentioning Swan (1995: 329), who claims that *I mean* is used “to introduce explanations or additional details” and belongs among other correcting and softening DMs, such as *I think*, *I feel*, *I suppose*, *I guess*, *so to speak* (Swan 1995: 156-157). He gives two examples in which *I mean* is used: *Let’s meet next Monday - I mean Tuesday* and *She is not*

very nice. *I mean, I know some people like her, but ...* The former illustrates the correcting and the latter the softening function of DMs as understood by Swan (ibid.).

Material

This study is based on the analysis of texts taken from two different corpora, namely the *London-Lund Corpus* (LLC) and the *Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English* (MICASE). The texts from the former corpus (each amounting to 5,000 words) represent private face-to-face conversation among native speakers of British English, namely academics, undergraduate students and secretaries. These surreptitiously recorded face-to-face conversations (altogether 15,000 words) take place in an academic environment, thus representing academic spoken discourse. The texts from the latter corpus (altogether slightly more than 47,000 words) represent academic spoken discourse, too, as the title of the corpus itself suggests. The interactants – university teachers and undergraduate students – are native speakers of American English. The texts are taken from three different speech situations, namely office hours, discussion sections, and study groups, with each speech situation amounting to about 15,000 words. Two texts from office hours (17,201 words) concern instructions given mostly by a graduate student on some specific topic or project; two texts from discussion sections (15,542 words) are additional sections of a lecture designed for maximum student participation; and one text from study groups (15,483 words) represents informal student-led study groups. Although the total extent of the text under examination from MICASE is more than three times greater than that from LLC, it can be stated that the average frequency of occurrence of the marker *I mean* per 1,000 words is approximately the same (2.46 in LLC and 2.22 in MICASE). Since the main objective of the investigation has not been a comparison of the two corpora (LLC and MICASE) but above all of possible pragmatic functions of *I mean*, differences between the texts analysed, such as those in the tenor of discourse and in length of the texts, are not considered relevant here.

Pragmatic functions of *I mean*: results

When identifying possible pragmatic functions of *I mean* in spoken discourse, the present investigation has taken into account the following factors: the position of *I mean* within the turn, the position of the turn in which the marker occurs within the sequence of turns, the co-occurrence of *I mean* with other markers (e.g. *well, you know, so*) and hesitation phenomena (e.g. repetitions, false starts, slips of the tongue, pauses), the entire situational context, which includes the discourse participants themselves, their mutual relationship and the background knowledge they share, since all the elements of the act of communication “determine the

character of the exchange of meaning [and thus the negotiation of meaning] in the context of the communicative situation” (Dontcheva-Navratilova 2004: 26). After application of the above-listed criteria, the following pragmatic functions of *I mean* have been recognized: explanation, delay device, and reformulation.

Table 1a: Pragmatic functions of *I mean* in LLC

Pragmatic functions of <i>I mean</i>	Texts (15,000 words)			Total	
	S.1.1 (5,000)	S.1.6 (5,000)	S.1.8 (5,000)	No.	%
Explanation	7	4	7	18	48.7
Delay device	8	1	3	12	32.4
Reformulation	3	2	2	7	18.9
Total	18	7	12	37	100.00

Table 1b: Pragmatic functions of *I mean* in MICASE

Pragmatic functions of <i>I mean</i>	Speech situations (47,201 words)			Total	
	Office Hours (16,176)	Discussion Sections (15,542)	Study Groups (15,483)	No.	%
Explanation	5	17	32	54	51.4
Delay device	3	5	27	35	33.3
Reformulation	6	1	9	16	15.2
Total	13	23	68	105	100.00

Tables 1a and 1b give overall results from the two corpora under examination. Since these results are proportionally similar, let me comment on them together. It is evident that speakers use *I mean* above all when introducing explanation or clarification (18 occurrences in LLC and 54 in MICASE; for exemplifications, see Examples 1a and 1b in Section 4 below), which in MICASE in particular is closely connected with particular speech situations, in which, for example, graduate students frequently ask their teachers or more experienced

students for explanation, further details and/or clarification. Accordingly about 50 per cent of all tokens of *I mean* found in my data perform what is called here the function of explanation.

Although there are some differences between individual texts, the second most common function tends to be that of delay device (12 occurrences in LLC and 35 in MICASE; see Examples 2a and 2b in Section 4 below). *I mean* in this function is close to what some linguists prefer to label ‘filler’ or ‘insert’ (cf. Leech and Svartvik 1994, Biber et al. 1999). Although the marker *I mean* in its ‘filling’ function can often be viewed as a disturbing element, it is argued that even in the function of delay device *I mean* can contribute to the establishment of discourse coherence as understood in my study. It reflects on-the-spot planning on the part of the current speaker, which is typical in particular of impromptu discourse, and thus contributes to the structural organisation of further discourse.

Last but not least in the order of frequency of occurrence comes the marker *I mean* when used for reformulation. Its frequency is the lowest in my study (only 7 occurrences in LLC and 16 in MICASE; see Examples 3a and 3b in Section 4 below). The interactants use *I mean* in particular when they think that what they have just uttered may not be clear to their hearer(s) or when they can see that the hearer(s) may have problems with coherent interpretation and understanding; this should not be surprising in the type of discourse ‘created on the spot’ which is the subject of my investigation.

Finally, it must be noted that differences in the frequency of occurrence of *I mean* between the individual conversational texts taken from LLC and those between different speech situations chosen from MICASE are not considered relevant since it is assumed that they are due in particular to differences in communicative habits and preferences of individual speakers rather than differences in communicative and/or speech situations. What seems more relevant are the differences between the pragmatic functions *I mean* can perform in spoken discourse.

Table 2a: Pragmatic functions of *I mean* with regard to turn position (LLC)

Pragmatic functions of <i>I mean</i>	Turn position			Total
	I	M	F	No.
Explanation	2	16	0	18
Delay device	1	11	0	12
Reformulation	0	7	0	7
Total	3	34	0	37

Table 2b: Pragmatic functions of *I mean* with regard to turn position (MICASE)

Pragmatic functions of <i>I mean</i>	Turn position			Total
	I	M	F	No.
Explanation	10	43	1	54
Delay device	3	31	1	35
Reformulation	0	16	0	16
Total	13	90	2	105

As regards the turn position of *I mean*, in accordance with Stenström (1995) and Erman (1986), three positions within the turn are distinguished: 1. at the very beginning of a turn; 2. within the turn; 3. at the very end of a turn. By the ‘turn’ is understood everything a particular speaker says before the next speaker takes over. Tables 2a and 2b provide evidence that the overwhelming majority of occurrences of *I mean* in the data occur in medial (M) position within the turn (34 cases in LLC and 90 in MICASE). The preference for the placement of *I mean* in M position has also been proved by Erman (1986). Both his and my results indicate that apart from the M position *I mean* tends to be placed in initial (I) position, although it is found in this position in my material a few times only (3 tokens in LLC and 13 in MICASE). As for final (F) position, I agree with Erman (1986: 132) that when *I mean* occurs in F position, it is because of interruption on the part of the new speaker. This conclusion is evidenced by the two occurrences of *I mean* in F position found in my data, since in both of them the current speaker has been interrupted by his/her interlocutor. (The turn position of *I mean* will be further commented on in Section 5 below.)

5 Pragmatic functions of *I mean*: exemplifications

Let me now illustrate the individual pragmatic functions of *I mean* as recognized in my study and add a few remarks on their use.

Examples with *I mean* used for explanation:

(1a) (LLC, S.1.6.147-164)

A *that I got this lecturing job in a teacher's training college –*

B *[m] .*

A *which is quite fun I mean they're not university calibre obviously the students on the whole but – [əm] in some way they're more fun in other ways some of them are . the brighter sparks are I think you know because they're not aiming at so much in a way and therefore they – they can *let their back hair down a bit more**

B *they relax several sylls* [m] –*

(1b) (MICASE, OFC355SU094.9)²³

S2 *and she suggested that, all of my participants, come from either, this country, or the countries where they speak, their native languages. so, she's*

S1 *as opposed to what? where are they supposed to come from?*

S2 *well no no no, I'm saying that, people who either, speak German and live in the United States, are native speakers of German who live in the United States, rather than, my native speakers of German coming from Switzerland and my native speakers of Chinese coming from Ann Arbor*

S1 *well I mean you're not going to be able, to distinguish, the part that's, that's due to German and the part that's due to American culture?*

S2 *exactly*

Examples 1a and 1b include *I mean* in one of its most important functions in spoken discourse, notably when used to introduce explanation. *I mean* in this function is close to what Edmondson (1981) calls a let-me-explain, i.e. a type of fumble (cf. Section 3 above). When *I mean* introduces explanation and/or additional details, it usually appears in the middle of a turn since it tends to be used when the current speaker can see that the current hearer(s) cannot arrive at an appropriate interpretation and cannot understand the message as it is being conveyed. Similarly to *I mean* used for reformulation (see below), *I mean* used for explanation clearly contributes to the planning and organisation of discourse; it fosters the smooth flow of interaction and encourages the inferential process in the current hearer, thus contributing to discourse coherence.

²³ Short pauses are indicated by dots in the examples from both the corpora analysed, while long pauses are indicated by dashes in LLC and commas in MICASE texts.

Examples with *I mean* used as delay device:

(2a) (LLC, S.1.1.290-307)

B [ə] *I haven't heard no but [ə] I mean I should go for it only if it's -- language --- I mean my idea would be to -- to teach language and hire somebody to do the literature sort of thing you see whereas . if . Roy Peel went I suppose he'd do the literature and hire somebody to do the language that's what it would amount to isn't it -- but I'd plan to get *somebody I to 2 sylls**

A *well he wouldn't have to hire somebody you see . he'd have you build in .*

B *well I mean *we've got we've we've got the*

A **2 to 3 sylls**

A *people there already *to do* the literature*

B **[m]**

(2b) (MICASE, SGR 999SU146.30)

S2 *well no but I can't even I can't e- like if um you wanted to talk to me about a topic that I feel like I've had a lot of classes in like equality or just like liberal thought in [S3: mhm] general or something like that, like, I w- don't think I'd be very good at the conversation.*

S1 *I doubt that*

S3 *see like I mean, like maybe I don't know um I mean I think that you know a lot more about ac- like Detroit than I do and like things going on there and like, I don't know.*

S2 *I know specific yeah like I know specific things but like philosophical or political wise I can't*

S3 *but have you taken mo- like I think you've taken more specific classes.*

Another function of *I mean* recognized in my study is that of delay device (see Examples 2a and 2b). The marker in this function usually occurs in M and sometimes in I position when the current speaker cannot find an appropriate word or an adequate way of expressing his/her communicative intentions, or when he/she can see that the current hearer(s) cannot follow what has been uttered. *I mean* is used to allow the current speaker to think of what next to say and/or just to indicate that he/she wants to go on talking (cf. 'fillers' in Leech and Svartvik 1994 and 'inserts' in Biber et al. 1999, both mentioned above). *I mean* in this function frequently co-occurs with hesitation features, such as *um*, *like* (both shown in Example 2b),

kind of, sort of, false starts and pauses (see Example 2a above). Markers such as *I mean*, especially what is regarded here as delay devices, indicate that the current speaker is busy planning what to say as he/she goes along, and as such they are connected with planning and organisation of discourse. According to Stenström (1994), there are two main hesitation areas, at the beginning of a turn and at what looks like the end but is in fact the middle of a turn. These are evidenced by the occurrences of *I mean* in my data. The former case, i.e. the hesitation area at the beginning of a turn, is shown in Example 2a above.

Examples with *I mean* used for reformulation:

(3a) (LLC, S.1.8.837-860)

C (. laughs) *what fun*

A *that's really* nice . the face jumps out of the painting – but I can't at all tell you what I do I only paint what's there you know if it's pink I paint it pink and if it's green I paint it green – – and of course I have no [ə] command I mean I don't know how to paint a mouth or anything so there's always something terrible – in a picture I do . I I love it I'd paint *for I'd paint forever . if I

C *[m] – [m m]*

A had the time* – – I used to paint about five years ago oil painting but I haven't done it for ages

(3b) (MICASE, OFC355SU094.7)

S2 hm. okay.

S1 okay. yeah I've I've sat through lots of talk by um, by Mark and uh, uh, Giles, and, I think I understand what they're doing when I'm watching them do it, but then I go off and try to do it and I think why am I going to all this trouble? I mean what's it getting me? It looks more like, <GESTURING> that, than this. <GESTURING> <S2: LAUGH> that's gonna be hard to capture on the tape probably. <LAUGH> [S2: hand gestures.] <LAUGH> oh well. details.

Examples 3a and 3b show *I mean* in the function of reformulation. With its only seven occurrences in LLC texts and 16 tokens in MICASE texts, it is the least represented function of all in my material. Speakers use *I mean* in this function in order to modify what they want to say, either because they are not sure that what they have just said is quite clear to their hearer(s), i.e. they want to make a new start or rephrase what has already been uttered, or because they want to specify it, either narrowing (cf. the diminishing force of *I mean* mentioned in Section 2 above) or softening the propositional content of what they have just said while often indicating that the whole conversational situation is to be considered

informal (cf. Crystal 1975, Swan 1995, both discussed above). When speakers use *I mean* for reformulation, as a rule they place it in M position within the turn, i.e. after the part of the text they intend to restructure. So it is obvious that *I mean* in this function can be found in M position. Finally, it can be stated that *I mean* used for reformulation is similar to what Quirk et al. (1985: 1313) label ‘mistake editing’; it participates in planning and organising discourse, thus fostering coherent interpretation and discourse coherence as discussed in Section 1 above.

Conclusion

The investigation into the use of *I mean* in two different corpora has proved that the marker in its different pragmatic functions can enable the current hearer to make a coherent interpretation and thus foster the negotiation of meaning between discourse participants. Speakers use the marker *I mean* in particular when planning and organising discourse in order to indicate to the current hearer(s) that they should pay attention to some further explanation or reformulation or simply to gain more time when searching for the most appropriate expression and/or the best way to formulate their ideas. Although there are some differences between the pragmatic functions *I mean* can perform in spoken discourse, they have one thing in common: they enhance the smooth flow of spoken interaction and thus contribute to the establishment of discourse coherence.

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Abstract

Alluding to the third wave variation studies, this paper aims to investigate the ways native Athenians employ speech style as a resource for constructing social meaning (Eckert 2005: 24) in interaction. The data analysis is based on interactional sociolinguistics (Goffman 1981; Gumperz 1982) of the use of the Modern Greek variable *ia/ja* informed by a variationist sociolinguistic analysis of this variable on the basis of social, internal and interactional factors. While the former analytical approach can afford us the fleshing out and subsequent understanding of the nuanced meanings of the interaction, the latter provides the microanalysis with the big picture of how this variable behaves throughout the interaction, i.e. not just in the fleeting moments analyzed at the micro level.

1. Introduction – theoretical framework

The third wave of variationist studies focuses on the social meaning of variables (Eckert 2005). It views styles rather than variables as directly associated with social meaning, and it explores the contributions of variables to styles. In so doing, it departs from the dialect-based approach of the first two waves, and views variables as located in layered communities. Since it takes social meaning as primary, it examines not just variables that are of prior interest to linguists (e.g., changes in progress) but any linguistic material that serves a social/stylistic purpose. The studies belonging to this strand of research focus on fleshing out social meanings of variation, namely why people choose to say one thing in a specific manner or style and not in another. Style is exactly the activity in which people create social meaning (Eckert 2001; 2003; 2005: 24). In a nutshell, what we actually see in this type of studies compared to the previous type of studies, i.e. first and second waves (Eckert 2005), is that identities are not assigned to speakers by the researchers. On the contrary, individual users of

²⁴ This study has been funded by the Greek State Scholarships Foundation (IKY), the Alexander S. Onassis Public Benefit Foundation, and the Foundation for Education & European Culture (ΙΠΕΠ). To these institutions I remain indebted. In addition, special thanks go to Devyani Sharma, Alexandra Georgakopoulou and the audience of the imean conference for useful feedback. Any errors remaining are my own.

speech deploy varieties and variation in their speech styles in a strategic way to affiliate themselves with groups with which they may from time to time wish to be associated, or conversely, to be distinguished from groups with which they want no such identification. These acts of (dis)affiliation (Theodoropoulou 2009b) are scrutinised through the analytical lens of interactional sociolinguistics (henceforth IS), which is in line with the aforementioned focus of the third wave on social meaning at the micro level.

IS is a qualitative research strategy, which emphasises an inductive approach to the relationship between theory and research, in which the emphasis is placed on the generation of theories. In addition, it focuses not only on the ways in which individuals interpret their social world (epistemological orientation), but it also embodies a view of social reality as a constantly shifting emergent property of individuals' creation (ontological orientation) (Bryman 2001: 20).

In this paper, I draw on Deborah Schiffrin's take on IS (1994: 97-136), which could be epitomised under the idea of bridging the macro with the micro in the study of communicative practices (Hanks 1996). The latter are seen as the discursive practices of actors acting in pursuit of their everyday goals and aspirations (Gumperz 1999: 454). To be more specific about how communicative practices fit into the macro-micro opposition, on the one hand they are treated as shaped by *habitus*: "embodied dispositions to act and perceive the world that directly reflect the macrosocietal conditions, political and economic forces, and relationships in which they were acquired" (Bourdieu 1991: 86; Gumperz 1999: 453). On the other hand, the more constructivist approach towards communicative practices is identified with the understanding of the ways in which localised interactive processes work.

IS tries to bridge this gap by dealing with interaction, i.e. communicative practice, as an ongoing process of negotiation, to infer what others intend to convey and to monitor how one's own contributions are received. In interaction the participants use talk to achieve their communicative goals in real life situations by paying attention to the meaning making processes and the taken-for-granted background assumptions that underlie the negotiation of shared interpretations (ibid. 454).

The focus variable of this paper is the under-researched one *ia/ja*. The variable *ia/ja* is a syllable nucleus and as such it is a phonetic one, contrary to the previous morphosyntactic ones. The variant *ja* [ja] with the semivowel [j]²⁵ is the product of *synesis*

²⁵ For phonetic problems associated with semivowels in Modern Greek as distinct segments, see the discussion in Joseph & Philippaki-Warbuton (1987: 233-6).

(Eleftheriades 1985: 46) of the consecutive vowels [i] and [a]. In close juncture, two consecutive vowels within a word, primarily the vowel /i/ and less frequently the vowel /e/ followed by another vowel, may be pronounced together in one syllable. This phenomenon is called synesis. Some words may be pronounced with or without synesis, like e.g., *ἀδεια* [‘aðja] (= empty) – *ἀδεια* [‘aðia] (permission), and it is on them that the focus of my variationist analysis has been put. This phenomenon is created by the fact that Standard Greek vocabulary and with it some morphological and phonological patterns have been derived from two different varieties, Dimotiki and Katharevousa. Vocabulary derived from Dimotiki follows the rule that /i/ becomes [j]/[ç] if unstressed and next to a vowel, while vocabulary from Katharevousa resists this rule (Holton et al. 1997: 8).

2. Methodology and data

The group, whose data are analyzed below, have been researched upon ethnographically (Theodoropoulou 2009a: 63-72); more specifically, my methodology includes ethnographic participant observation (Emerson et al. 2001), ethnographic interviews (Bucholtz 2007) and self recorded conversational data from semi structured conversations with the participants. The latter, which are also the focus of analysis in this paper, include casual conversations, in which the participants are asked to discuss on a given agenda (Alim 2004: 26-8), while the researcher is not present. As opposed to sociolinguistic interviews, they can be treated as more felicitous not only because of their ability to achieve a high level of spontaneous interaction (and thus, to minimise the perennial milestone of the ‘observer’s paradox’),²⁶ but mainly due to the researchers’ ability to use ethnographic insights to preselect a topic that speakers find interesting in their daily lives (cf. Schilling-Estes 2007: 172-3) The combination of these methods and data sets aims at ‘informing the analysis of language produced independently of the researcher’s immediate involvement’ (Tusting & Maybin 2007: 579).

3. Data analysis

The participants, Mitsos, Katerina and Spiros, are people from a stereotypically seen as working class western suburban (henceforth DP) area, Peristeri, discussing the rivalry between their own area and the culture associated with it and the traditionally seen as posh northern suburban (henceforth VP) Athens. They do not hold any university degrees and all three of them have been good friends for over 15 years. They discuss the topic ‘Gucci dress’, the title of a popular hip hop song, whose lyrics are based on the rivalry between the VP and DP. The participants use it as a point of departure to refer to popular culture sources in general, which take up this concept and represent its meaning. In this particular excerpt, they focus on some Greek TV series, such as Parapente (line 4) and, mainly, the Lover from the Western suburbs (Εραστής Δυτικών Προαστίων) against the backdrop of which they are trying to flesh out patterns of behaviour of the characters of these series, whom they treat as representatives of the VP and DP culture. The focus of analysis will be on the variants marked in bold.²⁷

Excerpt 1

Original text in Greek	English translation
1 M: ανέβηκε λίγο προς τα πάνω δηλαδή οι δια φορές παίζουνε	1 M: she moved further up (into the VP) that means that differences [ɔja] are relevant (sl.)
2 K: σωστό	2 K: right
3 M: εε γενικότερα η τηλεόραση έχει δώσει πάρα πολλά	3 M: in general, TV has provided us with lots of info (on the differences between DP-VP)
4 πράγματα το Παρά Πέντε όντως ήταν μία εξαιρετική εκπομπή που είπες κι εσύ η	4 Parapente that you mentioned was indeed a [mia] brilliant show, which had the woman
5 που είχε την τύπισσα την ξανθιά τη Ντάλια	5 this blond one Ntalia [lia] and it also had

²⁶ The paradox is that ‘our goal is to observe the way people use language when they are not being observed’ (Labov 1972: 113).

²⁷ Since the analysis focuses on the social meaning of the variable ia/ja, the data have been broadly transcribed. Nonetheless, the two transcription conventions used are the following:

@@ transcription impossible

(()) transcriber’s comments

<p>κι είχε και την άλλη την κοπέλα</p> <p>6 οποία ήλθε από την Πελοπόννησο και ήρθε να κάνει την τύχη της στην Αθήνα (.) ή</p> <p>7 την άλλη τη γριά πώς τη λέγανε τη Ζουμπουλία η οποία είχε κατέβει απ' το κωλοχώρι</p> <p>8 κι είχε κατέβει κάτω και είχε μπει σ' ένα σπίτι στο Κολωνάκι κι είχε πάθε σοκ (.) αλλά</p> <p>9 γενικότερα τα πρότυπα που βγαίνουν προς τα έξω @@@</p> <p>10 Σ: ο Εραστής Δυτικών Προαστίων είναι σειρά</p> <p>11 Μ: ε είδες πόσο ξέρω ας πούμε</p> <p>12 Σ: ναι τώρα Μαμάδες Βορείων Προαστίων</p> <p>13 Μ: αυτό ήταν βιβλίο ήταν μπεστ-σέλερ μάλιστα</p> <p>14 Σ μάλιστα δεν το 'χω διαβάσει γιατί δεν πολυδιαβάζω ((laughing))</p> <p>15 διαβάζω μόνο περιοδικά</p> <p>16 Κ μάλιστα</p> <p>17 Σ: αν και θα 'πρεπε να διαβάζω κάνα βιβλίο γιατί (.) και βέβαια ο Εραστής το σίριαλ</p> <p>18 Μ: η υπόθεση ποια είναι βασικά;</p>	<p>this other girl who came from Peloponnese</p> <p>6 and she came to Athens to find a better life (.) or</p> <p>7 the other old lady what was her name Zoumpoulia, who had come down from the bloody village</p> <p>8 she had come down (to Athens) and as soon as she entered a house in Kolonaki she got shocked (.)</p> <p>9 but in general all these models that are projected</p> <p>10 S: the Lover from the Western Suburbs (DP) is a TV series</p> <p>11 M: ee well you can see how much I know of these things</p> <p>12 S: yeah now Mommies from the Northern Suburbs</p> <p>13 M: that was a book in fact it was a best seller</p> <p>14 S: right I haven't read it [δja] because I don't read [δja] that much ((laughing))</p> <p>15 I only read [δja] magazines</p> <p>16 K: right</p> <p>17 S: even though I should read [δja] books because (.) and of course the Lover the TV series</p>
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<p>19 Σ: είναι μια κοπέλα των βορείων προαστίων με τον αδελφό της και ((creaky voice))</p> <p>20 μια κατάσταση άλφα που μένουν στην Εκάλη και και και και και δεν ξέρω ‘γω τι</p> <p>21M: ναι</p> <p>22 Σ: η οποία ε δε θυμάμαι για ποιο λόγο γνωρίζει ένα παιδί απ’ τα δυτικά προάστια τα</p> <p>23 οποία ουσιαστικά δεν έχουνε ιδιαίτερες διαφορές έτσι απλά ο ένας βγαίνει στο</p> <p>24 Μπουρνάζι ενώ ο άλλος βγαίνει και πάει στο tennis club στην Πολιτεία ξέρω ‘γω</p> <p>25 M: μμ</p> <p>26 Σ: να παίξει τένις και εε ή σε κάποια δεξίωση όπου είναι στο σπίτι που ‘ναι μες στο</p> <p>27 μπιγλιμπίδι ξέρω ‘γω</p> <p>28 K: η απόλυτη χλίδα μιλάμε</p> <p>29 M: @@@</p> <p>30 Σ: ναι ναι έχει μια δεξίωση ξέρω ‘γω ο μπαμπάς της κοπελιάς και πάνε τα παιδιά να</p> <p>31 δουλέψουν σερβιτόροι</p>	<p>18 M: what is the plot anyway?</p> <p>19 S: it’s this [mja] girl from the northern suburbs with her brother and ((creaky voice))</p> <p>20 a [mja] situation A where they live in Ekali and and and and and I don’t know what</p> <p>21 M: yeah</p> <p>22 S: who I don’t remember why gets to know with a guy from the western suburbs, an area</p> <p>23 which is not essentially different [dia] (from the VP); it’s just that one of these guys hangs out in</p> <p>24 Bournazi while the other (the brother) likes hanging out in Politeia tennis club or something</p> <p>25 M: mm</p> <p>26 S: in order to play tennis and ee at a reception that takes place in a house</p> <p>27 full of ornaments or something</p> <p>28 K: we are talking major luxury here</p> <p>29 M: @@@</p> <p>30 S: yeah yeah there is a reception and everything the girl’s dad and the guys (from the DP)</p> <p>31 go there to work as waiters</p>
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In line 1, Mitsos is talking about the differences between people from the VP and DP areas through making the claim that they exist. He is using the non standard variant *ja* as a contextualisation cue (Gumperz 1982: 18) in a key concept, which is the word *διαφορές* (differences) and through this choice he makes a communicative choice by taking an interpersonal stance, namely he positions himself in a friendly and intimate way vis-a-vis his interlocutors. In addition, through the non standard variant he makes a claim about how he sees these differences: from his own DP, both linguistically and life-stylistically non standard perspective. This perspective comes into stark opposition with line 4, where the same speaker is using the standard variant *ia* (in the indefinite article *mia*) next to the adjective *εξαιρετική* (brilliant); the latter is a formal adjective and my guess is that it is this formality of the adjective that has led Mitsos to use the standard variant as its modifier. At this point, he makes a case for the success of the TV series *Parapente*²⁸ by referring to various characters, who came to Athens from the country in search for a better life. Even though the example does not refer directly to the VP-DP opposition, Mitsos is using it as an analogy, in order to lay emphasis on the existence of sharp differences between VP (identified with the standard Athenians) and DP (identified with the non standard people from the country).

In the realm of providing examples of popular culture genres that deal with the differences between VP and DP, Spiros brings up the book ‘*Mamades Voreion Proastion*’²⁹ which nevertheless he has not read. In fact, he not only admits that he has not read it (line 14), but he is also looking for justification of his abstinence from book reading (line 14), and he goes on reflecting upon this behaviour (line 17) by suggesting that he should read

²⁸ *Parapente* is a very popular comedy-drama TV series, which was broadcast by Mega Channel from 2005 until 2007. The series deals with a ruthless and powerful person who aims to eliminate some people connected with a murder that happened 30 years ago (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sto_Para_Pente, accessed on 27/10/2009).

²⁹ This chick lit book, authored by Pavlina Nasioutzik (2006), is built around the friendship of five women, aged between 30 and 40 years of age, living in the northern suburban Athens, whose already luxurious, but immensely fragile, life gets muddled by a man, who enters into their lives. The aspect of the book that is of interest for the purposes of this paper is not so much the love story that is being developed between this man and some of the female protagonists, as the author’s descriptions of their respective lives and autobiographies. To be more specific, she devotes story lines for various types of women, like married or divorced or single mothers, beautiful or ugly, loyal or infidel, educated or uneducated. Nevertheless, the main emphasis on these women’s description remains their social class origin, which is seen as a *sine qua non* for these women’s positioning within the imagined community (Anderson 2006) of VP people. The VP type ramification suggested by Nasioutzik contains women of noble origin, humble origin (mainly the ones, who originate from the western suburban Athens or from the country), the second and third generation rich, who are characterised as ‘new-rich’ women. The allocation of these labels is made not only on the basis of these women’s actual origin, but it is also in accordance with their current or ex husbands’ social status. In addition, there are constant references to the DP lifestyle, which is seen as decadent, ridiculous and humble, led by men from these areas, especially from

books. On all occasions, he is using the non standard variant *ja* not only because he talks for himself, whom he sees in general as a core Peristeri person, hence as a non standard one, but through the choice of the non standard variant in such critical points in his talk could be also interpreted as his admitting that not reading books is the non standard practice, i.e. something which is not right. In other words, he is framing (Tannen & Wallat 1999: 348-9; Theodoropoulou 2009c: 84-93), namely he makes explicit how he means what he says about, the practice of not reading as the non standard one through the use of the non standard variant. A claim like this is supported not only by the use of the non standard variant but also by the content of line 17, in which even though speech is not clear he is trying to justify why reading books is a good and worthwhile thing to do.

By contrast, in the subsequent lines (19-20, 22-4, 26-7, 30-1), Spiros exhibits his knowledge of the plot of the TV series ‘Erastis Dytikon Proastion’.³⁰ Throughout the whole description of the plot Spiros is using the non standard variant only, regardless of whether he refers to VP or DP people. The social meaning of his stylistic choice, which is also enhanced by the use of creaky voice, could be seen as identical with that of an effort to sound slang and in this way to take a negative stance towards the VP culture. Particularly in the bits, in which he refers to the VP people of the plot, the use of general words (*μια κατάσταση* [= a situation]) or the sequence of an unusually high number of juxtaposed discourse markers in line 20, point to an effort not to provide too much information, in order to underestimate the value of somebody living in Ekali.³¹ The same pattern with a discourse marker used to mitigate the value of symbols of the VP culture can also be found in lines 24 and 27; the use of *ξέρω* ‘γω (I don’t know), put immediately after the reference to Politeia tennis club³² and to the description of the house,³³ where a reception takes place,

Peristeri, who are represented as macho, ‘real’ and authentic men, as opposed to the ‘sober’ and boring VP ones (see Theodoropoulou 2009a).

³⁰ The story line of the romance series ‘Erastis Dytikon Proastion’ is the mutual falling in love of Spiros, a young man who works at his family’s flower shop in Peristeri, and Lisa, who comes from a very rich family in Ekali, a very leafy northern suburb. The love story between the two is not without challenges and difficulties, as their respective families and circles of friends are not willing to accept Spiros and Lisa’s romance due to the unbridgeable socioeconomic gap that exists between them. Eventually, they compromise and Spiros and Lisa get married.

³¹ A very posh area, located in the VP.

³² A famous tennis club located in the VP neighborhood of Politeia. It is considered to be a ‘must’ meeting place for the people living in the northern suburbs, who play tennis. According to my ethnographic notes, by some hard core VP people, Politeia tennis club is considered of a lower status than Ekali club.

³³ The venue of the reception is basically a mansion and not a house; the choice of the word *σπίτι* (house) as opposed to *βίλα* or *μέγαρο* or the more formal *έπαυλη* (mansion) is also used as a strategy to ease the resonance of these symbols.

aims at pulverizing the prestige of these places, maybe because all the speakers either do not like them or the VP culture is the envy of them.

Overall, through these mechanisms which are encapsulated in the use of the non standard variant *ja* throughout the whole excerpt, an attempt is made by the speakers, and by Spiros in particular, to construct both his own persona as a non standard one and the VP culture as something negative.

Having provided an interactional sociolinguistic analysis of the use of variable *ja/ia* in a selected excerpt from a semi-structured conversation among three participants from the working class area of Peristeri (micro level), I now come to discuss how it chimes with the ‘big picture’ of the use of the variable in all of the DP participants semi-structured conversational data, i.e. the Varbrul analysis (Tagliamonte 2006) of the variable, which has considered internal, i.e. linguistic, social and interactional factors.³⁴ The basic argument is that this micro level analysis reflects the Varbrul analysis of the variable, and in this way it can be treated as generalisable, a feature which is crucial and which is missing from analyses that restrict themselves to just the qualitative aspect, that is to say the fleshing out of the stylistic manoeuvres in interaction.

The following table offers the Varbrul results of the use of the variable:

Table 1: Final results for the use of *ja* (DP participants)

Log likelihood= -105.637 Significance= 0.043

	Factor weights	%	N
Conversation topic			
Coffee	.82	66.7	12
Gucci dress	.66	66.7	4
Bournazi	.66	61.8	47
Jobs	.56	48.5	32
Gianna	.37	40.0	2
VP	.16	18.6	11
<i>R</i>	.66		

³⁴ See Theodoropoulou 2009a.

Stance towards the VP-DP rivalry			
Anti VP	.81	74.3	55
Pro DP	.74	63.2	12
Anti DP	.38	44.0	22
Pro VP	.23	21.8	19
<i>R</i>	58		
Phonetic environment before ja			
$\beta/\delta/\gamma$.70	61.4	35
f/ θ/χ	.64	50.0	7
s/z	.63	41.7	10
p/t/k	.42	45.5	25
l/r	.41	41.9	18
m/n	.30	35.1	13
<i>R</i>	40		
Type of word containing ja			
Verb	.80	50.0	10
Adjective	.59	44.0	11
Pronoun	.53	44.4	8
Noun	.46	45.9	62
Adverb	.46	53.1	17
<i>R</i>	34		
Origin of the word			
Dimotiki	.62	56.0	79
Katharevousa	.32	32.6	29
<i>R</i>	30		
Educational background			
-university title	.64	58.0	47
+university title	.42	40.9	61

<i>R</i>	22		
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The factors that have been found statistically significant at the level of $p < 0.043$ for the use of the variant *ja* on behalf of the DP speakers are the following (in constraint hierarchy): the interactional factors of the conversation topic and the stance towards the VP-DP rivalry, the internal factor groups of the phonetic environment preceding *ja*, the type and the origin of the word containing the variant, and finally, the social factor group of educational background. With respect to the strongest constraint, namely the conversation topic, the variationist analysis suggests that topics, such as coffee, Gucci dress and Bournazi, which are considered to be the ‘light’ ones, in the sense that they do not require much of intellectual knowledge since they either refer to mundane issues for these people (coffee, Bournazi) or to the widely accessible and thus known popular culture (Gucci dress), favour the use of the non standard variant *ja*. Relatively high in the constraint hierarchy figures the phonetic environment preceding *ja*. However, contrary to the use of *ja* by the VP people, in which the nasal environment seemed to favour *ja* the most, in the case of DP people it is the voiced fricatives that favour *ja* the most and the nasals favour *ja* the least. Another internal factor, which constrains the use of *ja* for the DP people, is the type of word containing the variant, and, according to Table 1, it is mainly verbs, adjectives and pronouns, which prefer *ja* as opposed to nouns and adverbs. The preference of verbs is reflected in the majority of the examples of the use of *ja* in the extract analysed above.

An interesting as well as expected observation is that words of Dimotiki favour the use of *ja* as opposed to those of Katharevousa origin. This result accords with Mackridge’s comment (1985: 31) on the pronunciation of *ja* and *ia* on the basis of their respective origin.

Finally, the results of the social factor of educational background lend support to the fact that the DP participants without university education favour the use of *ja* as opposed to the ones holding university titles. In this way, the education factor provides a greater divide for the DP than for the VP participants.³⁵

³⁵ See Theodoropoulou (2009a: 108-11), where education has not been found statistically significant for the VP participants of the study.

4. Conclusion

The tendency for favouring the use of the non standard variant *ja* in ‘light’ conversation topics is evident in excerpt 1, where, as I have already shown in section 3, it is employed by the participants to index their own DP perspective regarding the opposition between the VP and DP cultures and the ways it is represented in popular culture. By the same token, the second strongest constraint, namely the stance towards the VP-DP rivalry, indicates that the non standard variant *ja* is very much preferred when the stance is anti VP or pro DP. This tendency is again illustrated through the micro level interactional sociolinguistic analysis throughout the whole excerpt, and especially in lines 19-20, 22-4, 26-7, 30-1, in which it has been shown that the non standard variant *ja* is used, in order to index these people’s negative stance towards the VP culture.

In conclusion, the interactional sociolinguistic analysis of the fleeting moments of the construction of social meaning through the variable *ja* by three native DP people informed by a macro level variationist analysis of the same variable across 12 DP people in their semi-structured conversations has been argued to enhance the variable’s generalisability on behalf of DP people, and in this way could be treated as a plausible analytical combination, which can bridge the micro with the macro level of sociolinguistic analysis.

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