THE RELEVANCE OF CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE IN THE ACHIEVEMENT OF MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING: A PRELIMINARY STUDY

by

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1 Introduction

This paper seeks to investigate, from an empirical perspective, the relevance of speakers’ cultural knowledge for the production and interpretation of talk in foreign language interaction (FLI). This study is a preliminary investigation focusing upon one limited area of participants’ cultural knowledge, i.e. local institutional knowledge. Its goal is to illustrate some of the ways in which future empirical analyses of ‘culture-in-interaction’ (Hinnenkamp 1995:7) could develop.

Data comes from a corpus of audio-recorded service interactions gathered by the researcher at the main Tourist Information Office (TIC) in Barcelona, Catalonia, Spain, between 1997 and 1998. Due to the service nature of these encounters, it is essential that interactants manage to comprehend each other. This is not always an

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1 Following Wagner (1996, 1998), the term foreign language interaction (FLI) is used in this paper to refer to conversations involving at least one non-native speaker of the language of communication. This includes lingua franca interactions, that is conversations where all interactants are non-native speakers of the language of communication.

2 This is in keeping with Hinnenkamp’s claim that ‘whatever layer of the interactional structure we analyze, it
easy task. As participants may be operating under two (or more) distinct cultural systems, a substantial amount of situated inferential work is needed in order to make sense of the ongoing talk. Thus, the data collected is particularly relevant for the analysis of which, of all the elements that are ‘brought along’ in interaction, are actually ‘brought about’, that is, are used as interpretive resources enabling speakers to draw inferences in FL discourse (Hinnenkamp 1995, 1999).

This study builds upon research on the culture-communication link carried out within the conversation analytical (CA) framework (Antaki and Widdicombe 1998; Moerman 1988, 1996; Schegloff 1991; Seedhouse 1998). Following CA, cultural knowledge is viewed in this paper as ‘inhabiting’ the talk rather than as a pre-given (Seedhouse 1998). Accordingly, as it is argued here, the relevance of culture must be demonstrated in the details of each interaction.

This paper is organised as follows. Section 2 contains a critical review of the notion of intercultural communication and the ways in which this term has been used in the literature. Section 3 briefly outlines the theoretical approach adopted in this study. In section 4, a few long extracts from the corpus are examined in great detail. The conclusions summarise the main points of the study and suggest possible avenues for future research.

2 Defining the object of study: Some theoretical considerations on the notion of intercultural communication

The type of verbal interaction this paper focuses upon is frequently referred to as
intercultural communication. Although fairly new as a distinct field of inquiry, the study of intercultural communication has, in the last few years, become a very popular research area. Although, intuitively, the term seems fairly straightforward as to the external reality it denotes as well as to its object of study, on closer examination it appears problematic in a number of ways. One of the objections made to most studies of intercultural communication is that what specifically is understood by ‘culture’ is not clearly defined. Another contentious aspect is how we, as researchers, can empirically know whether cultural knowledge is relevant for the production and interpretation of talk at a specific point in an interaction.

More often than not, the terms ‘cross-cultural’ or ‘intercultural communication’ are treated as being synonymous with ‘native speaker–non-native speaker interaction’. Two related assumptions lie behind this equation of concepts. Firstly, that all native–non-native communication is conceived to be intercultural. Secondly, that all native speaker communication is taken to be intracultural. Thomas defines her use of the term ‘cross-cultural’ in the following ways:

As a shorthand way of describing not just native/non-native interaction, but any communication between two people who, in any particular domain, do not share a common linguistic and cultural background. This might include workers and management, members of ethnic minorities and the police, or (when the domain of discourse is academic writing) university lecturers and new graduate students. (1983:91)

It seems clear from the preceding quotation that not all native speaker communication is viewed as intracultural by some researchers. Obviously, it all depends on the concept of ‘culture’ the analyst operates with. However, as a working definition of culture is almost always non-existent, it is impossible to exactly pin down what the

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3 In this study, the term FLI is preferred to the term intercultural communication, as the former does not pre-establish participants’ membership of a given culture as a relevant interpretive feature in the context examined
categories intercultural and intracultural refer to in a particular piece of research.

Kasper (1997) seems to be somewhat more cautious in her use of the above terms. She hints at the possibility that the equation between intercultural/intracultural communication and native speaker–non-native speaker/native speaker speech respectively may not hold true for all occasions. In that respect her use of the phrase ‘to the extent that’ in the following quotation is very illuminating.

To the extent that NS communication is intracultural communication, its success rate appears to hinge on two properties. [...] (1997:347, my emphasis).

Most of the studies of ‘intercultural communication’ have, as we have said, been conducted within the framework of the interactional sociolinguistics paradigm. Gumperz and Roberts (1991) define their enterprise as an approach that sets out to deal with the linguistic and sociocultural aspects of language use in a unified way. Their definition of ‘cultural knowledge’ is very broad. It encompasses all language-specific sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic conventions, e.g. contextualization cues, such as backchanneling devices, turn-taking norms, code-switching, formulaic expressions, and all sorts of discursive strategies (Meeuwis 1994).

Most research on intercultural communication from this perspective has focused on trying to elucidate how participants’ use of different sociocultural norms of discourse production and interpretation gives rise to communication difficulties. It must be granted that the majority of examples employed to illustrate (mis)communication in intercultural encounters do show that speakers are operating under different cultural frames. Put in other words, that their interaction is of an ‘intercultural’ nature. From these instances of ‘interculture’, the term ‘intercultural’ is

(see Codó i Olsina 1999:3 for further details on this issue).
then extended to all communication between speakers from different sociolinguistic and cultural backgrounds. Several questions spring immediately to mind. How do we know that the fact that speakers belong to different cultural systems is relevant for their process of sense making all through the interactional exchange? Would it not be more appropriate to talk about ‘instances of interculture’ rather than about ‘intercultural communication’? Does intercultural communication always have to do with miscommunication? (Hinnenkamp 1995, 1999) These issues are best dealt with by adopting a CA approach to the concept of ‘interculture’, which we will briefly outline in the following section.

3 The notion of ‘interculture’ within CA: A reflexive relationship between cultural systems and interaction

The approach to the notion of culture adopted within CA is one in which this construct, is seen as ‘inhabiting’ the interaction. That is, cultural systems are not viewed as external structures constraining participants’ conversational interventions. Instead, their procedural relevance (Schegloff 1991) must be demonstrated in the details of the talk.

It is a methodological imperative of CA-based studies of interaction that all analyses be grounded on what it is directly observable from the details of the conversation. Put in other words, it is through participants’ orientations in interaction that we can observe what cultural frames they are operating with. Culture, or for that matter any sense of social context, is dynamically ‘evoked’ by speakers in interaction.

As Schegloff, discussing the relevance of social structure, puts it:

There is still a problem of showing from the details of the talk or other conduct in the materials that we are analyzing that those aspects of the scene are what the parties are oriented to. For that is to show how the parties are embodying for one another the relevancies of the interaction and are thereby producing the social structure. (1991:93, author’s emphasis)

CA does not deny the existence of macro-social structures such as cultural frames or social structure (Seedhouse 1998). Nor does it deny that these constructs may shape
talk in a number of ways. Instead, it claims that their influence cannot, and must not, be taken for granted. The direction in which CA analyses of the relationship between cultural values and talk must proceed is not from the culturally-specific to the spoken words but from the particularities of each utterance to what it tells us about participant’s orientations in the talk. As Moerman argues:

*Invoking a culture or a language cannot account for something being said. We must investigate the particular and peculiar circumstances of its actual saying. There is a logic of particularities and circumstances that meshes with general rules and that requires our investigation (1996:148, my emphasis).*

Cultural frames alone cannot be held responsible for something being said in conversation. It is necessary to investigate what a particular utterance, produced in a specific sequential environment, is seen to accomplish in the social world. At the same time, analysts need to examine each utterance for the social and cultural context it is ‘evoking’. That is, for what the resources and knowledge were that made it intelligible in the first place to those to whom it was addressed (1996:150).

Paralleling Schegloff’s (1991) discussion of the relationship between talk and social structure, Seedhouse (1998:93) argues that there is an ‘indefinite’ number of elements of cultural or social identity which could be potentially relevant for the production and interpretation of a given stretch of talk. According to CA, the only scientific way in which we can go about determining which of these ‘external’ elements are in fact relevant in a given interaction is by limiting ourselves to what the talk actually shows us. That is, by demonstrating, through speakers’ orientations in talk, which of the ‘brought along’ aspects of culture are ‘brought about’ (Hinnenkamp 1999), i.e. are made relevant, in interaction:

The national or ‘cultural characteristics’ of being German and of being a Greek immigrant are not necessarily relevant to every encounter between two such interactants [...] A cultural characteristic is only relevant to a CA analysis if it can be shown to inhabit the details of the talk. (Seedhouse 1998:93, my emphasis)

The relationship that exists between talk and cultural knowledge is described within CA as a reflexive one, in the sense that it is through the use of given linguistic forms and interactional moves that cultural systems are ‘talked into being’, while at the same time the use of those forms is motivated by speakers’ operation within a certain cultural frame (1998:92). It is in that sense that using a CA methodology in FLI research provides analysts with the necessary tools for establishing the link between the micro and the macro aspects of social interaction. Only through a close examination of the micro level of talk-in-interaction are researchers able to establish what macro elements of the social world participants are resorting to in the production of their talk. In the following section we will try to illustrate through several examples from our corpus how speakers’ conversational interventions reveal what cultural frames of reference they are using in making sense of each other’s talk.

### 4 Orienting to two different cultural systems: Evidence from the data

In the introductory section of this paper we argued that the term ‘intercultural communication’ was used all too freely by researchers of FL discourse. It was often employed to designate all communication between speakers from different linguistic and sociocultural backgrounds. We further posited that the use of the term should be restricted to those instances of talk in which speakers could identifiably be seen as using two different cultural frames of reference in producing and interpreting each other’s talk. Consequently, to refer to those identifiable cases of interculturality we advocated the use of the phrase ‘instances of interculture’ instead of the imprecise and ill-defined notion of ‘intercultural encounters’. The aim of this section is to illustrate by means of data examples from our corpus how some instances of interaction between speakers from different sociolinguistic backgrounds can be identified as ‘intercultural’ communication. This identification, according to the
methodological principles of CA, is only possible by attending to participants’ orientations in talk.

The extract below (1) illustrates the sequential development of a potential instance of interculture into an instance of intraculture. The cultural systems of interpretation which speakers’ contributions seem to ‘evoke’ become procedurally relevant for the production and interpretation of each other’s talk.

EXAMPLE 1

AS6 is the service provider. ENQ is the service seeker. She is not a native speaker of Spanish. The interaction has been going on for one minute approximately. ENQ has made a query concerning the French consulate in Barcelona. A few intervening lines (indicated by www) have been omitted from the original transcript as they were not relevant to the analysis.

[...]

01 *AS6: se encuentra más o menos por aquí el consulado.  
%tra: it is located more or less here the consulate.
02 *ENQ: cerca de:::
%tra: next to:::
03 *AS6: cerca de aquí eh ↑ está ↓ sí es el #0_1 en # Ronda Universidad # número veintidós b.  
%tra: it’s near here right ↑ yeah it’s at twenty-two b Ronda Universidad.  
%act: writes address on a piece of paper
04 *ENQ: me puede poner el teléfono por favor?  
%tra: can you write the telephone number please?
05 *AS6: www.
06 *ENQ: www.
07 → *AS6: lo que están abiertos hasta la una eh ↑ aho [/] ahora estará cerrado ya.  
%tra: trouble is they are open until one o’clock right ↑ no [/] now they will be closed.
08 → *ENQ: y abren a qué hora?  
%tra: and do they open at what time then?
09 → *AS6: hasta mañana ya no: # no está abierto.  
%tra: it won’t be open until tomorrow now.
10 → *ENQ: uuiv.
11 AS6: supongo que [/] uhm: si quiere puede llamar # a veces hay contestador automático  
que atienden # las llamadas.  
%tra: I imagine that [/] uhm if you want you can call them # sometimes there is an answering  
machine that receive # phone calls.
12 *ENQ: si veo que está cerrado solamente abre:: muh.  
%tra: so if I see that it is closed it’s only open:: muh.
13 *AS6: +^ sí de nueve a una.  
%tra: yes from nine to one.
14 *AS6: se lo apunto aquí.  
%tra: I write it for you here.
15 *AS6: de nueve # a una.  
%tra: from nine to one.
16 *ENQ: a una okay.  
%tra: to one okay.
[...]


The focus of our analysis here will be the sequence contained between lines 07 and 10. This sequence comes after the enquirer has requested the address and telephone number of the French consulate in Barcelona. So far in the interaction, AS6 has provided ENQ with the relevant address. He has also pointed out to the enquirer the whereabouts of the consulate on a city map (lines 01 and 03). After that, ENQ asks for the consulate’s phone number. AS6 searches for the requested number in a city guide but before giving it to ENQ produces the turn in line 07. Presumably, AS6 has just seen the opening times of the consulate in the guide and warns his interlocutor that the institution in question might already be closed. The reason is that their closing time is one o’clock and it is already later than that time. ENQ responds to AS6’s turn with a question. She wants to know at what time the consulate opens. AS6 responds to ENQ’s question by stating that the consulate will not be open until the following day.

AS6’s reply in turn 09 is highly significant. When I first came across this intervention, it struck me as being somewhat odd, as something I would most probably not have said had I been in the same situation. The reason is that in the sociocultural context in which the consulate is located it is the norm that government offices and similar institutions are only open in the morning. Had somebody asked me that same question, I would have replied something like ‘they open at nine o’clock’[^4]. The reason is that, in making sense of ENQ’s query, which is fairly non-specific in terms of time reference, I would have been using my own cultural interpretation frame. However, aware of the different sociocultural system the service seeker may be operating with, AS6 replies that the consulate will not be open until the following day.

It is a fundamental principle of CA that participants display in their current turns their understanding of the previous speaker’s turn (Sacks et al. 1974). AS6’s intervention, therefore, displays that he has understood ENQ’s previous move as a question about the time at which the consulate will be open in the afternoon. Such an interpretation can only be arrived at, it seems to me, if the service provider operates, or tries to, under the same system of cultural presuppositions as the enquirer[^5], that is, in this case, one in which such institutions are also open in the afternoons. The success of AS6’s ‘intercultural intuitions’ are borne out by ENQ’s next turn in line 09, where it becomes evident that the service seeker had all along been assuming that the consulate would be open during the afternoon. Her expression of displeasure (uuiy) is highly illuminating in that respect.

The previous extract has provided us with an instance of intercultural communication which became, as it were, an instance of intracultural communication. This was an interactional accomplishment of the parties at talk. The ambiguity of ENQ’s question in line 08 required a high degree of inferencing on the recipient’s part. AS6 could have used his own cultural system of interpretation to make sense of his interlocutor’s talk. But he does not. AS6’s interactional move in line 09 ‘evokes’ a culture which is clearly not his own; and he is highly successful. In this case, AS6’s orientation to his interlocutor’s culture prevents miscommunication from taking place. To the extent that intercultural talk is turned into intracultural communication through participants’ local management of talk, the chances of achieving intersubjective understanding are enhanced. However, as we shall see later, miscommunication need not always be the logical consequence of all instances of intercultural talk.

The ensuing example (2) illustrates the sequential development and interactional enactment of an instance of ‘interculture’. The situated ways in which participants manage the tasks of formulating and complying with a service request bring the intercultural character of their encounter to the interactional foreground.

**EXAMPLE 2**

Beginning of a service interaction between AS6 (the service provider) and EN1 and EN2 (the service seekers). Both EN1 and EN2 are native speakers of English. AS6 is a non-native speaker of English.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>01</th>
<th>*AS6:</th>
<th>hola.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%tra:</td>
<td>hello.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02</td>
<td>*EN1:</td>
<td>hola.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%tra:</td>
<td>hello.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03</td>
<td>→</td>
<td>*EN1:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[^4]: My intuitions as a member of AS6’s cultural system, which made me aware of the oddity of his reply in the interactional context under analysis, were ratified by several native members of the same culture.

[^5]: Moerman (1996:150) defines culture as ‘composed of the knowledge, logic, presuppositions and other processes that made the talk sensible and intelligible for those whose talk it was’.
04  AS6: to send eh letters?
05  EN1: +^ yeah yeah.
06  AS6: yes?
07  AS6: eh:
      %tra: uh:
08  EN1: +^ <have you got a guide> [=! faster]?
09  AS6: normal letter?
10  EN2: no ↓ postcard?
11  EN1: a postcard.
12  AS6: a postcard yes # normal postcards yes.
13  EN1: yeah yeah.
14  AS6: if if you go up by these stairs.
15  EN1: yeah.
16  AS6: and cross the street.
17  EN1: yeah.
      %act: assistant unfolds a map.
18  AS6: yes?
19  AS6: now you are here you cross this street <#> [>] in front <you> [>] can find
      a postbox.
20  EN1: <mhm> [<] <mhm> [<].
21  EN2: <ah okay> [>].
22  EN1: <alright okay> [<>].
23  AS6: <you can> [<>] # send the letter there.
24  EN2: where do we get stamps from though?
      %tra: to buy stamps uhm: in the Corte Inglés could it.
      %add: EN2/RES
26  RES: +^ em sembla que en venen.
      %tra: I think they sell stamps there.
27  AS6: in in El Corte Inglés.
28  EN1: mhm.
29  AS6: inside El Corte Inglés <you can buy stamps> [<>].
30  EN1: <alright okay> [<>].
31  EN2: okay.
32  EN1: you’ve guides #0_1 for Barcelona?
The previous extract is taken from the beginning of a service interaction between AS6 and EN1 and EN2, two English-speaking enquirers. After exchanging greeting formulae, the enquirers produce their first service request (line 03). They ask about where to find a post office, presumably in the vicinity of the tourist information centre. AS6 does not provide an answer to the enquirers’ query but instead responds with another question (line 04). It seems that he is trying to obtain further information about the enquirers’ purpose in looking for a post office (to send eh letters?). The enquirers confirm the assistant’s intuitions about their aim (line 05). However, AS6 does not seem totally satisfied with his interlocutors’ response. He decides to make further enquiries about the exact type of letter his co-participants intend to post (line 09). Eventually, it emerges that what the enquirers want to send are a few postcards. The assistant is now ready to provide an answer to EN1’s initial question.

This reply expands over three turns (lines 14, 16, 19 and 20), interspersed with several continuers (Hutchby and Wooffitt 1998) produced by the service seekers. In lines 19 and 20 we can observe what AS6’s answer to EN1’s service request is. Instead of providing enquirers with the address of the nearest post office, he has directed them to the nearest letterbox. In line 24 he makes the connection between his reply and the enquirer’s request explicit by indicating that they will be able to send their postcards from there. The enquirers’ next move (line 25) reveals, however, that the assistant’s reply does not satisfy their service needs entirely (where do we get stamps from though?). This mismatch is solved when the enquirers are told that they can buy stamps from a large department store located opposite the tourist information centre. The enquirers signal their satisfaction with the assistant’s responses by moving on interactionally. Thus, in line 33 they formulate their second service request, which had already been briefly announced in line 08.

In the sequential management of talk we can see how the previous encounter (2) is experienced by participants as an instance of cross-cultural communication. Indeed, like example 1, example 2 reveals that the service provider is aware of the different local institutional knowledge his interlocutors may be using in producing their talk. He shows his orientation to it in line 04. This turn questions the way in which the enquirers’ service needs are formulated into a service request, i.e. concerning the location of a post office. In questioning the ‘legitimacy’ of their request, AS6 is setting himself and his own cultural context apart from the cultural system the enquirers have evoked through their talk. In line 04 he is categorising his interlocutors in a particular way (Mondada, forthcoming), i.e. as members of a different culture who are probably not familiar with the sociocultural practices of the context in which they are now immersed. Had EN1 and EN2 been members of the same cultural group, AS6’s interactional move in line 04 would have been perceived as inquisitional, if not rude. However, as far as we can observe, it does not seem to have gone down in a particularly negative way in this interaction.

As we stated earlier, AS6’s question is prompted by the fact that the enquirers are perceived as ‘foreigners’. It might well be that in the cultural context where the enquirers come from the role post offices fulfil socially is much more prominent than in the current context. So much so that AS6 seems to be assuming (line 04) that the enquirers inhabit a ‘culture’ where an individual would go to a post office to merely put a letter in the postbox. Any other services a post office would provide in connection with the sending of letters, e.g.

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6 Incidentally, both examples (1 and 2) feature the same service provider (AS6). This might be sheer coincidence or it might be indicative of this person’s particularly high degree of ‘intercultural awareness’. Surprisingly, AS6 was not one of the office’s senior employees, but a trainee.

7 It must be granted that AS6’s reaction in line 04 may also have been influenced by the fact that there is no post office located near the tourist information office.

8 Note, however, the enquirer’s use of the conjunction though at the end of his intervention in line 25. It seems as if he was trying to establish the relevance of his initial request after AS6’s implicit dismissal of it (lines 19 and 20).

9 The enquirers’ accent was, to me, unmistakably British. In my own experience of British culture, the post office is a central element in any, however small, inhabited area. Contrast this to, for example, Spain or other English-speaking countries such as the USA or South-Africa, where post offices are miles apart.
buying stamps or weighing letters, are completely disregarded by the service provider. In that respect it must be granted that his orientation to the ‘otherness’ of his interlocutors’ cultural system is a bit too simplistic.

The reflexive relationship between culture and talk, mentioned in the previous section, becomes clear in this excerpt by looking at the way the particular service request under analysis is complied with. An instance of interpersonal communication has, thus, become an observable piece of intercultural communication.

Note, however, that in this example the enactment of an instance of ‘interculture’ does not lead to miscommunication. On the contrary, by bringing speakers’ use of two different cultural systems to the foreground of the interaction, AS6 is able to provide a better service than otherwise. Had he not been aware of the cultural differences, no major communication problem would have occurred. Enquirers would have had to walk to the nearest post office (a fifteen-minute walk) but that would have been it. The widely-accepted link between intercultural communication and miscommunication is called into question by examples such as the above.

A final point needs to be made here about methodology. The previous example has shown how a culturally contexted analysis is compatible with the methodological tenets of CA. Cultural characteristics cannot be assumed to work as relevant interpretive resources all along. Only through a detailed examination of talk and through the uncovering of participants’ orientations in it can we start making claims about the relevance of cultural knowledge.

5 Conclusion

This paper has addressed the relationship between cultural systems and talk. In particular, our aim has been to elucidate the extent to which the fact that participants belong to different ‘cultures’ becomes relevant for their process of interpretation of each other’s talk in FLI. In that respect, we have challenged researchers’ use of the term ‘intercultural communication’. Our main line of argument has been that the relevance for the interpretation of talk of cultural frames of reference must be demonstrated in the details of the interactional exchange. Following Seedhouse (1998) the relationship between culture and talk has been described as a reflexive one. Speakers’ use of certain linguistic and interactional forms is motivated by the fact that they are operating within a given cultural frame, while at the same time the

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10 This is undoubtedly what motivates the enquirers’ use of though in line 25 to which I have referred to in a previous footnote.

11 However, it must be conceded that in the Spanish cultural context stamps are hardly ever bought at post offices but, rather, at tobacconists’. This might explain why AS6 does not seem to contemplate this possibility.

12 The need for a culturally-contexted version of CA has been mostly advocated by Moerman (1988). Among researchers of FLI, Seedhouse is the scholar who has most strongly argued for it. This is what he refers to as ‘the current CA perspective’ (1998:86).
employment of these forms ‘talks culture into being’.

The examples presented have exemplified how researchers can go about identifying what cultural systems are ‘evoked’ in FLI through participants’ local management of talk. In addition, they have called into question the frequent association between intercultural communication and miscommunication. In fact, we have shown how by bringing participants’ use of different cultural systems to the foreground of the interactional exchange, the chances of achieving intersubjective understanding are greatly enhanced.

As we already pointed out in the introduction, this is but a preliminary study dealing with one specific aspect of ‘culture’, i.e. local institutional knowledge. Further research is needed which investigates the ways in which those aspects of cultural knowledge that have long been considered relevant within pragmatics, e.g. expectations of ‘interactional conduct’, are actually employed by speakers as interpretive frames in interaction.

**Transcription procedures**

The conversations analysed in this paper have been transcribed following the procedures established in the *LIDES Coding Manual* (LIPPS Group, forthcoming). Participants’ interventions are reproduced on the main tier (lines beginning with an asterisk (*) and a 3-letter ID code (e.g. AS1) ) by means of standard orthography. A free English translation is provided on a dependent tier (%tra) located below each main tier. An attempt has been made on the %tra tier to reproduce ungrammatical or ‘broken’ language usage whenever possible. Other dependent tiers, used to provide additional information about the main tier, are listed below. Unlike in LIDES, distinct fonts are used to identify the different languages spoken.
Bold indicates stretch in English

Plain indicates stretch in Spanish

*Italicics* indicates stretch in Catalan

Underlined indicates undecidable language

+^ latched utterance xxx unintelligible material

# pause ## longer pause (>1 sec)

# figure length of pause (min 1 sec) [=! text] paralinguistics, prosodics

[>] overlap follows [<] overlap precedes

[/-] false start without retracing [/] retracing without correction

<> scope symbols [!] stressing

:lengthened vowel :: longer lengthening of vowel

www untranscribed material ,, tag question

↑↓ marked falling or rising intonation shifts

*XXX: indicates undecidable speaker; used to represent periods of non-speech.

%act: describes participants’ actions while talk is produced

%com: contains researcher’s comments on the main tier

References


