

BETWEEN CULTURES: VERBAL, PROSODIC AND GESTURAL CONCEPTUALIZATIONS OF INTERCULTURALITY IN TALK-IN- INTERACTION

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Abstract: *It is still hard to find the examination of real interaction from a cognitive, 'embodied' and multimodal perspective in empirical practice, concurrently maintaining the operational framework of conversation analysis. The following article aims at showing how co-participants in talk-in-interaction co-construct intercultural experience multimodally, that is, on verbal, prosodic and gestural-corporal levels. Based on two sequences taken from the ICMI corpus of the research group Intercultural Communication in Multimodal Interactions, it will be revealed how (inter)cultural conceptualizations are (co-)built by means of iconic, metaphorical and beat gestures, by gaze, posture and body movements, as well as by prosodic cues such as pitch jumps and contours, accents, volume and tempo. Concurrently, all those means serve as contextualization cues to express the interlocutors' involvement, stance, alignment as well as affiliation, and can be conceived as 'points of access' to deeper entrenched schemata related to the participant's (inter)cultural experiences. In this sense, the study aims to bridge the gap between conversational and interactional linguistics, on the one hand, and cognitive and cultural linguistic s, on the other.*

Keywords: interactional linguistics; multimodality; gesture; prosody; cognitive linguistics

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1 Introduction

Despite the hybrid and transcultural effects, that are frequently overemphasized in poststructural approaches to culture, people continue to experience their arrival in a foreign culture in many respects as a shock to their “confidence in the validity of [their] habitual ‘thinking as usual’” (Schütz, 1944: p. 503). Based on a multimodally, conversationally and cognitively oriented fine-grained interactional analysis, the aim of this article is to throw light on the microstructural activities of exchange students who talk about their experiences in and with their target culture.

The theoretical-methodological starting point is built by the assumption that an interface between cognitive linguistics, gesture studies, and conversation analysis would enable the investigation of multimodally co-constructed meaning, and, by doing so, allows access to the cultural conceptualizations of the participants. Since the participants realize (re)enactments on verbal, prosodic and gestural levels and thereby animate their narrated experiences, (inter)cultural conceptualizations become visible. These emerging conceptualizations under no circumstances correspond exclusively to *ad hoc* constructions and can be related to approaches of cognitive and cultural linguistics, as will be shown. This points to the need to go beyond a mere conversationalist approach. As we will see, at the same time, (re)enactments are not only representative but also assume expressive, as well as appellative functions. Therefore, one of the main aims of the study is to show to which extent the tools of interactional linguistics are able to complete the fine-grained analysis of spoken discourse in cognitive linguistics, as carried out especially in gesture studies. A third line of research is given by cultural linguistics and intercultural pragmatics where attempts can also be observed to bring together functional and cognitive approaches.

The following section deals with the theoretical starting point as well as the basic concepts of the subsequent analysis. Thereby the focus will be on the creation of a possible interface of the denominated research areas. The third section gives a brief overview of the research group and the project *(Inter)Cultural Communication in Multimodal Interactions* as conducted at the Federal University of Minas Gerais since 2012. The fourth section is dedicated to the analysis and discussion of two sequences in which exchange students narrate about their intercultural experiences abroad. Finally, concluding remarks are given and the issue to which extent the results can be seen as an important contribution to the so-called ‘interactional turn’ (Zima, Brône, 2015, p. 485) in cognitive linguistics is raised.

2 Theoretical background

Over the last ten years one can observe growing overlaps between different linguistic research areas which were more or less strictly separated before. This is valid especially for approximations of cognitive linguistics, on the one hand, and conversation analysis, as well as interactional linguistics, on the other.

As far as conversation analysis and interactional linguistics are concerned, cognitive issues have found their way reluctantly towards conversation in the nineties when some conversationalists agreed that the conversational ‘machinery’ (Sacks, 1995, p. 169) cannot be described as totally autonomous. Rather, it is the participants themselves who co-construct the communicative patterns with their individual, social and cultural knowledge. This growing interest in the accompanying cognitive aspects could be found in Sacks’ (1992, p. 141-142) differentiation between ‘claiming understanding’ and ‘demonstrating understanding’, Heritage’s (2002) study about *oh* as a ‘change-of-state token’, Auer’s (1996) proposal of ‘syntactic gestalts’ that puts the traditional understanding of syntactic structures also in spoken language on cognitive grounds, the nearly cognitive turn in research on repair (Hayashi, Raymond, Sidnell, 2013),

the study on ‘cognitive shifts’ regarding Japanese complements (Tanaka, 2001) as well as the wide-ranging contributions to the multimodality of ‘tokens of affiliation’ (Goodwin, 2007; Stivers, 2008; Couper-Kuhlen, Selting, 2018a). Notably, the detailed work in interactional linguistics (Couper-Kuhlen, Selting, 2018a; Selting, Couper-Kuhlen, 2001; Hakulinen, Selting, 2005; Couper-Kuhlen, Selting, 1996) has introduced a profound activity on co-occurring prosodic means by following Gumperz’ (1982) insight that we have to conceive prosodic cues as contextual engineers of specific communicative situations. In this context, for the first time narrative aspects of conversation with regard to their prosodic cues come to the fore. Günthner (1999), e.g., shows, how past dialogues are reenacted in activities of accusations and how polyphonic stylization is used to mark these as morally correct or reprehensible. Such evaluations are frequently carried out by means of prosodic, lexical and rhetoric arrangement of the reported speech. Selting (1994) also touches on cognitive matters when she highlights as a special case of rhythmic and intonational stylization the emphatic speech style marked by extensive prosody and large pitch jumps that emerge in narratives. Such an emphatic speech style can therefore be characterized by “peaks of involvement” (Selting, 1994, p. 404). In a similar vein, Goodwin (2015) relies on Goffman’s (1981) deconstructions of the narrator in ‘sounding box’ as well as ‘animator’, and the protagonist in ‘author’, ‘principal’ as well as ‘figure’. Thereby he shows, in what complex way the narrative has to be understood as a “field of action built collaboratively by structurally different actors using a variety of semiotic resources within face-to-face interaction” (Goodwin, 2015, p. 204). Based on multilayered narrative structures, Deppermann (2015) points out to which extent extra-narrative, metanarrative, as well as self-narrative activities are interwoven and co-constitute the narrative design also regarding the positioning of narrator and interlocutor. Despite these developments, a deeper theoretical-methodological discussion around the conceptualization of cognition in talk is still missing, as Deppermann (2012) states. He underpins that it is especially conversation analysis where semantic matters are still abandoned as a research issue in its own right.

If one takes a look at cognitive linguistics, conversely, a growing tendency in turning away from mere introspective matters is observable. Empirical studies have arisen over the last decades, on the one hand, those that are oriented towards corpus linguistics (Stefanowitch, Gries, 2007; Deignan, 2005, 2008; Semino 2017), on the other hand those that are directed towards multimodally, contextually and culturally anchored interaction. Zima and Brône (2015) point to the fact that cognitive linguistics has indeed always represented a ‘usage-based’ approach. However, over a long period of time, it has not taken into account the most basic form of human communication, that is, face-to-face interaction. This scenario is changing currently. Apart from ‘Interactional Construction Grammar’ (Zima, Brône, 2015, p. 486) it is particularly in the field of metaphor and cognition where one can find a growing number of studies¹ that are dedicated to the multimodal aspects of metaphor use in real interaction. One crucial contribution comes from the area of gesture studies and is directed to the processuality of metaphor based on interactions that are recorded and transcribed. These studies show in detail how gestures, whose metaphoricity is no longer perceived on the verbal level, are reactivated. This happens, for example, when the speaker executes a hand movement that corresponds to the lexical item, directs his gaze to it and marks it prosodically (Cienki, Müller, 2008). Gestures highlight certain elements and aspects of a linguistic expression, contextualize them and contribute therefore to the figure-ground organization. By doing so, they serve for information management in face-to-face interaction and guide the attention of the interlocutors: “activation of metaphoricity critically depends upon the dynamic flow of the speaker’s focal attention” (Müller, 2008, p. 219). Müller and Cienki (2009) distinguish between monomodal and multimodal

¹ Cf. for an overview Müller et al. (2013, 2014).

metaphors, the first ones being those that only occur in one mode (verbal or nonverbal) whereas the second ones being those that occur co-expressively in both modes. When metaphoricity is elaborated on both levels – the authors give the example of a woman who describes her teenage love as becoming more and more *clingly* on the verbal plane and concurrently opens her palms and closes them repeatedly –, Müller and Cienki consider the metaphor highly activated. Moreover, Müller (2013) does not only stress the conceptual function of metaphor but also shows how the expressive, appealing, performative, and pragmatic functions become visible in gestural metaphors, which can be seen as a further approach of cognitive semantics towards pragmatic topics. Müller (2008, p. 224; Bressemer, Müller, 2014) and Streeck (2008a; 2008b) show how interlocutors mark certain arguments as obvious by an open hand, or as less plausible by throwing or brushing away an object or how interlocutors mark allocation of turns. With reference to Kendon's (2004) interactional approach, Streeck (2008a, 2017) chooses an ethnographic, conversational and praxeological perspective, and introduces the concept of *(re)enactment* to refer to those gestures that will be analyzed in the following. He states:

But cultural action is individuation, and individuation is the product of enactments of the very practices that also sustain society and culture (and whatever lower-level social organization they partake in). Cultural development is possible because embodied persons adaptively and creatively sustain and reproduce themselves. We must therefore turn to the individual body if we want to understand the reproduction – or re-instantiation and ‘re-inscription’ – of embodied culture. Thus, in the study of embodied communication practices, biological, phenomenological, sociological, linguistic, and anthropological perspectives merge.” (Streeck, 2017, p. 68)

Besides metaphor, metonymy also plays a crucial role in real interaction: According to Mittelberg and Waugh (2014), gestures are *per se* inherently metonymic. The authors illustrate how the transition from literal to metaphorical understanding proceeds in the case of the hand gesture ‘drawing a frame’, though the frame is never drawn as a whole, i.e., mostly only the edges. Thus, the traces in the air have to be interpreted as meaning a frame of some sort. This is the first metonymic step of meaning construction. Then, in a second metaphoric step, this frame might be interpreted as the frame of a story instead of the frame of a picture (Mittelberg, Waugh, 2009, p. 337).

In contrast to the extensive work in the field of gestural metaphor, there is still little work in the field of at the interface of prosody and cognitive linguistics. Traditionally, a lot of findings go back to the work of Bolinger (1983; 1986) and Ohala (1994) who can be seen as the first researchers who investigated the relationship between intonation and gesture pointing to the iconic expression of emotions, although at that time not showing interest in schematically and cognitively motivated gestures (Perlman, Gibbs, 2013). As opposed to this view and in line with a cognitive understanding of prosody as proposed by Langacker (1987), according to Perlman and Gibbs (2013, p. 524), both the semantic and the prosodic poles have to be located in the conceptual domain. The authors map the dynamic and scalar model of gestural metaphors that might be “more or less frozen or defrosted, more or less awake or asleep” (Cienki, 2008, p. 10) onto the iconic relation of the semantic and phonological poles: “When active, these iconic relations become accentuated and take form as vocal gesture.” (Perlman, Gibbs, 2013, p. 524) They illustrate this by means of the elongated pronunciation of the word *sloowly*. Müller and Cienki (2009, p. 299) call this phenomenon ‘oral/aural modality’, respectively ‘spatial/visual modality’. For instance, when intonation rises and falls afterwards, subjects in an experiment interpret this procedure schematically as a CIRCLE whereas a rising intonation is interpreted as a PATH.

To sum up, the critical turning point of these multimodal studies brings into the field of cognitive linguistics the transposition from discourse with its focus on written language to interaction with its focus on spoken language:

All these studies are intrinsically dialogic in orientation and put the actual, embodied speaker and his/her gestures, gazes, postures, facial expressions, etc. into the focus of attention, i.e., the data are no longer depersonalized corpus instances that are stripped of any reference to actual speakers. (Zima, Brône, 2015, p. 487)

Finally, the cultural impact of cognition and interaction will also be taken up in the empirical analysis. On the one hand, besides cross-cultural pragmatics, over the last decade, intercultural pragmatics has been established as a research area in the realm of pragmatics that brings together functional and cognitive-semantic issues especially in the pioneering work carried out by Istvan Kecskés (2014). On the other hand, since the groundbreaking work of Gary Palmer (1996), cultural linguistics has grown as a blending of cognitive and anthropological linguistics that frequently takes as a starting point classical image schemas such as PATH, CONTAINER, BALANCE or primary metaphors such as UP and DOWN, but does not put universal principles of human cognition in the focus of attention. In contrast, it is cultural variation and the notion of ‘cultural conceptualizations’ including schemata, categories, prototypes, metaphors, metonymies, etc., that are analyzed but conceived as not distributed homogeneously but disparately in a given culture. Sharifian (2015) proposes to describe them as dynamic since they emerge in interaction and always have to be re-negotiated over and over again although they are constitutive for the participants of a certain community. Similar to the dialectical and dynamic socio-cognitive approach (SCA) of intercultural pragmatics, that assumes that cultural marking influences the actual situational context (Kecskés 2014), cultural linguistics conceptualizes the emergence of interculturalities: these are co-constructed, and this process contains elements from the participants’ existing cultural background as well as *ad hoc* created elements, connecting individual cognition with situated cognition (Sharifian, 2013, p. 68). In the sequence analysis, we will see examples of such conceptualizations.

In the following section, the research center ICMI – *Intercultural Communication in Multimodal Interactions* as well as its projects will be introduced. The major aim of the specific project we will introduce here is to bring together the three research areas that have been outlined in this section. In empirical terms, this is carried out by the analysis of sequences of (inter)cultural communication, that is, by conversations in which exchange students talk about their expectations and real experiences in a foreign culture. Before it will be shown how functional and conceptual levels come together in real communication and lay open cognitive processes on verbal, vocal and gestural-corporal planes, the methodological procedure of the research group ICMI will be presented.

3 The research project ICMI and the methodological procedure

The research center *Intercultural Communication in Multimodal Interaction*² initiated its activities in 2010 at the Federal University of Minas Gerais with a pilot project (Project 1) and aims at recording interactions between participants with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds as well as those between participants with the same background for comparative purposes. Today, the research center is an

² <http://www.lettras.ufmg.br/icmi/>

internationally growing network and counts with the participation of researchers from the Federal University of Minas Gerais, the University of Potsdam (Germany), the University of Gießen (Germany), the University of Alberta (Canada), the University of Leeds (UK) and the University of Sheffield (UK). The studies conducted so far by the group take as a starting point a theoretical framework which seeks to integrate four principal areas of research: (a) conversation analysis as well as interactional linguistics; (b) cognitive and cultural linguistics; (c) gesture studies, and (d) intercultural pragmatics. The interactions are based on elicited, institutional, and natural interactions.

The following sequences are part of Project II *Intercultural communication in extended contacts: linguistic and (self)reflexive processes* that is based on arranged, elicited interactions (Kasper, 2008, p. 287-288; Senft, 1995, p. 579-580). Intercultural topics formulated on question cards served as stimuli for the discussions between exchange students in the beginning and at the end of their stay in the target culture. The questions were the same but referred in the first discussion to their expectations regarding university/school, family, friendship, communication, society, etc., and after their stay abroad to their real experiences. The discussions took between 60 and 90 minutes each. Sequence 4.1 was recorded at the University of Münster with four Brazilian exchange students at the end of their one-year stay there (the second recording) within the program *Ciências sem Fronteiras* in 2014. Sequence 4.2 was recorded in 2013 with three exchange students, two Germans and a Swedish, who participated in the program *Youth for Understanding* in Uberlândia in the state of Minas Gerais in Brazil. The conversation was recorded four weeks after their arrival and is carried out in English as a *Lingua Franca*.³ Analyzing communication in ELF should always take into consideration that ELF is by definition intercultural in nature since ELF communication is defined as involving speakers from different linguacultures. ELF users typically draw on multiple cultural frames of reference in the same conversation, and move between and across local, national and global contexts in dynamic ways (Baker 2018).

After recording, the videotapes of all interactions belonging to the ICMI corpus are transcribed in the software program EXMARaLDA (Schmidt, Wörner, 2009)⁴ following the conventions of GAT 2 (Selting et al., 2011). At the present moment, the corpus is comprised of about 2,496 minutes of videotaped interactions with a total of 56,164 intonation units. In methodological terms, the GAT 2 (*Gesprächsanalytisches Transkriptionssystem*) and therefore some basic theoretical pillars of interactional linguistics have become relevant for the projects the ICMI group has developed so far as well as for the ICMI corpus (<http://www.letras.ufmg.br/icmi/>). Interactional linguistics has been initiated as a new research field in the nineties as a result of joining elements of conversation analysis, functionalism, and interactional sociolinguistics as a key subarea of anthropological linguistics (Couper-Kuhlen, Selting, 1996; Selting, Couper-Kuhlen, 2001; Hakulinen, Selting, 2005; Couper-Kuhlen, Selting, 2018a). Its main merit consists in the systematic integration of linguistic resources such as prosodic and syntactic means in talk and the co-construction of meaning by means of an online perspective with respect to the turn-constructive units, understood as “*emergent* in real time and as *interactional achievements*” (Couper-Kuhlen, Selting, 2018a, p. 22). They have called attention for the role hesitation particles, sound stretching, cut-offs, in-breaths, laughter, pausing, stress and intonation play in discourse as well as the importance of prosody for conversational management, sequencing, and framing (Couper-Kuhlen, Selting,

³ All interactants who were recorded received and signed a consent form declaring that they agree with the scientific use of the data for analysis as well as the disclosure of the videos and transcriptions for academic purposes. This also includes the use of images in academic articles. These sequences are part of the Project II “Comunicação intercultural em contatos de duração maior: processos linguísticos e (auto)reflexivos” that was approved by the COEP (Comitê de Ética em Pesquisa) in 2014 and is registered accordingly by the CAAEE 11680913.6.0000.5149.

⁴ <www.exmaralda.org>, last accessed on March 26, 2019.

1996). The emphasis interactional linguistics gives on the co-occurrences of syntactic, pragmatic, and prosodic cues has also led to the development of new transcription conventions, namely the system GAT 2, based on the classical transcription system of CA (Jefferson 2004), but now focusing on the integration of three levels of granularity and on the representation of more linguistic means such as prosody, additionally adopting major iconicity and legibility.⁵ According to interactional linguistics and as an autosegmental basis for every transcription, ‘intonation units’ or ‘intonation phrases’ are prosodic chunks with a coherent intonational contour and at least one prosodically prominent syllable, typically followed by a (micro)pause and anacrustic syllables. Additionally, they can be marked by tempo changes, final lengthening, change in pitch level and/or pitch direction, changes in loudness and voice quality as well as rhythmic breaks. (Barth-Weingarten, 2011). Thus, a segment/line in the transcriptions corresponds to (a) an intonation phrase including initial or segment-internal delay (e.g. ‘stuttering’); (b) an intonation phrase and elements prosodically dependent on it (incremented or prefaced); (c) an incomplete intonation phrase; (d) a pause or (e) a visible bodily action (Selting et al. 2011, p. 12). The transcription conventions can be found in the appendix.

The discovery of the pivotal role prosody plays in talk has marked the first step in direction to multimodality that, in a second step, has resulted in a substitution of audio by video, more and more frequent in studies on talk-in-interaction. Although there have always been works directed towards multimodality,⁶ the democratization of technological innovation such as access to video cameras have led to a new research paradigm that draws its attention more and more to corporal-visual resources, such as gaze, gesture, posture, corporal orientation, movement, incorporated action, object manipulation, facial expression, and interactional space, all of those means of communication seen as a cluster of global *gestalts* (Mondada 2013, 2014) that constitute face-to-face interactions.

4 Analysis of two multimodal narratives about intercultural experiences

4.1 The driver will curse at you

The first sequence was recorded in July 2014 with four Brazilian exchange students at the University of Münster in Germany shortly before their return to Brazil after a one-year stay abroad with the program *Ciências sem Fronteiras*. They had already participated in an initial conversation in September 2013 about their expectations. In the following sequence, one exchange student reports her experience regarding German social conventions of sanctioning inappropriate behavior in public as opposed to Brazilian habits:

Sequence 1

2014MueBr01 ((27:22-28:11))⁷

01 B2: [((smiles))]
02 B3: [<<smiling> dePENde.>]
it depends
03 B4: [o que ‘acon`TEce aqui é;]

⁵ The GAT 2 system was translated to English in 2011 and to Portuguese in 2016 by the ICMI group (Schröder et al. 2016).

⁶ Cf., among others, the pioneering studies conducted by Goodwin (1981). For an overview see Mondada (2013, 2014).

⁷ The video can be accessed at <https://youtu.be/BMhDMxNFzDM>

- 25 B4: [lidar com conFLItO.]
deal with conflict
- 26 B3: m_HUM.
- 27 B4: TIpo; ;
like
- 28 [é aquela o exemplo que ela ↑uSOU.=]
that's the example she used
- 29 B2: [é assim que o conflito todo FOR] [ma,]
that's what the conflict was like
- 30 B4: [=SAbe;=]
you see
- 31 =no no: Ônibus.=
on the bus
- 32 =povo escutando música ALta.
people listening to loud music
- 33 <<slaps with both fists rhythmically on her thighs> e↑xiste a REgra;=
there is a rule
- 34 =não pode escuTAR [música] a:lta.
you can't listen to loud music
- 35 B2: [é.]
right
- 36 B4: tá escrito lá não ouvir m_música sem FOne.>
it's written there that you can't listen to music without headphones
- 37 <<opening both arms laterally with open palms upwards>
↑↑MAS todo mundo escUta;=
but everybody listens
- 38 =e o trocador não fala 'NAda,=>
and the fare collector doesn't say anything
- 39 <<repeating the gesture> =e o: [e o motorista do ônibus não fala 'NAda,]>
and the bus driver doesn't say anything
- 40 B2: [é o lugar pra GRÁvida.]
that's the place for pregnant women
- 41 B3: [m_HUM;]
- 42 B4: <<letting the forwarded arm falling down> [a] ↑qui velho (.) se
cê fizer uma coisa DESSas;
hey dude if you do something like that here
- 43 o motorista [do ônibus ↑!VAI! te xingar;=↑sAbe.]>
the bus driver will curse at you you know
- 44 [((B1, B2 and B3 laugh))]
- 45 B4: [qual'quEr] `COIsa.
for anything
- 46 B3: [eu fiz ISso.]
i did that
- 47 ((B1 and B2 laugh))

Rather than an exception, this example represents a nearly prototypical sequence of the ICMI corpus with regard to the Brazilian exchange students' narrative style for the construction of intercultural

experience. The narrative itself is composed of the students' own experiences as well as a report of another Brazilian's experience as published in an online blog (L08, 14, 16, 17). Whereas B4 refers to the category 'Brazilian' explicitly through the personal deictic reference *a gente* ("we"; L09, 11), the categorization of the Germans is made by the local deixis *aqui* ("here"; L03, 16, 42). The differentiation is established by contrastive 'category-bound activities' (Sacks, 1992): while the Brazilians do not say anything when someone violates public norms (L08, 11, 31-39), Germans tend to openly express their opinion and disagreement with someone's violation of social conventions (L03-05, 42-43). This different cultural pattern is announced on the gestural plane by a raised right forefinger (L04-06):



<<acc, raised right forefinger> **que**
se você esti↑VER fazendo alguma
coisa errA:da-
 if you're doing something wrong

(L04)

a pes todo mundo
 the per/everybody

vai intromeTER.=°h>
 will interfere

(L05)

Figure 1: Raised right forefinger (Sequence 1; L04-L06)

According to Bressemer and Müller (2014, p. 1583), the 'stretched index finger – held' represents a recurrent gesture, whose semantic core is to call attention, and whose illocutionary force can be described by its cataphoric function since it draws the attention of other participants to new important topics of conversation.

In line with Selting (1994), what follows is a strong emphatic speech style marked by rhythmic as well as intonational stylization, extra strong accents, lengthening, and high volume serving to emotionalize the experience of intercultural divergence. In lines 03, 08, and 45 one can find strong falling and rising pitch movements and even more attention is called by the high frequency of pitch jumps upwards (L 04, 08, 11, 14, 17, 19, 20, 28, 33, 37 42, 43). In L36-37, for instance, B4 explains regarding Brazil: *tá escrito lá não ouvir m_música sem FOne* ("it's written there that you can't listen to music without headphones", Figure 2) and presents the cultural habit that is quite different from the German one by a quite markable pitch jump on the adversative adverb *but* that expresses that opposition: *↑↑MAS todo mundo escUta;=.* ("but everybody listens", Figure 3). Such prosodic means metaphorically highlight the distance between the two cultures, and the intercultural experience of locating oneself between the two poles without any longer being able to place oneself neither in one's own nor in the new culture but rather between those two in an intercultural space (Kecskés, 2014).

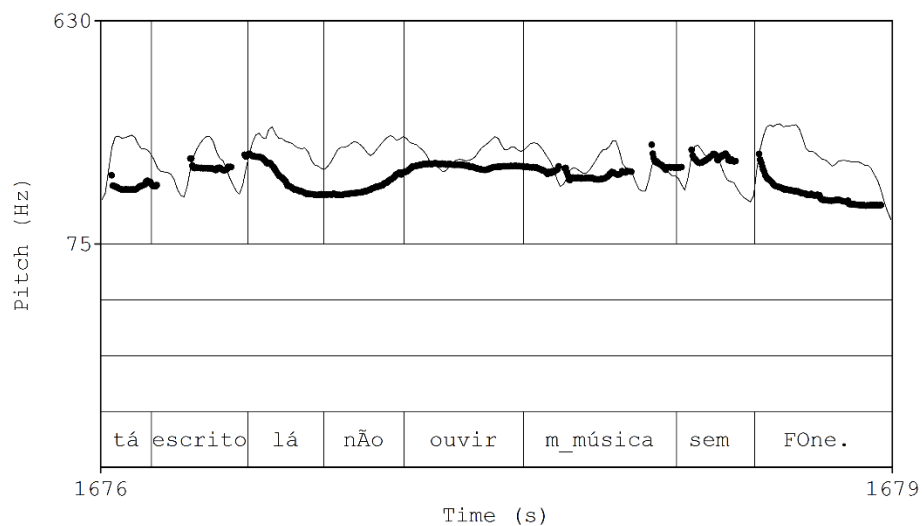


Figure 2: Introducing a cultural habit from Brazil

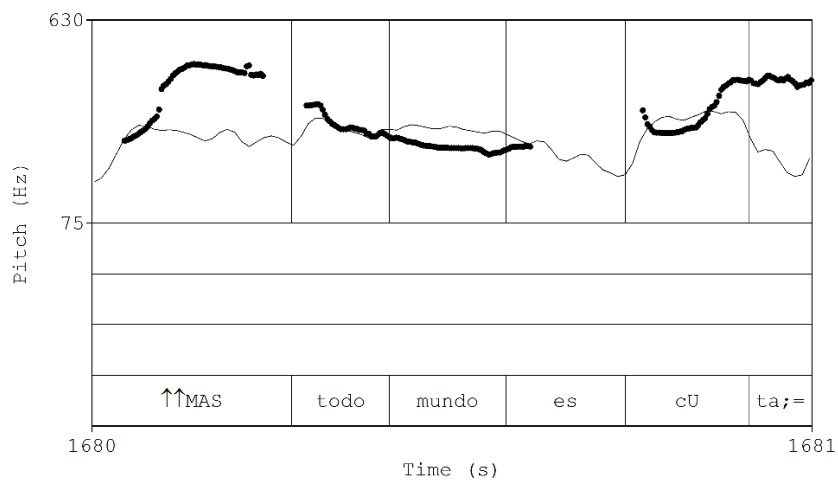


Figure 3: Pitch jump as an intonational contrast marker

A similar contrast is built incrementally by prosodic means in L11 (e a gente <<f> ↑!NÃO!.>). This opposition is additionally highlighted by an extra strong accent in L19: é ↑ver!DA!de; and in L43: o motorista do ônibus ↑!VAI! te xingar;=↑sAbe. (Figure 4):

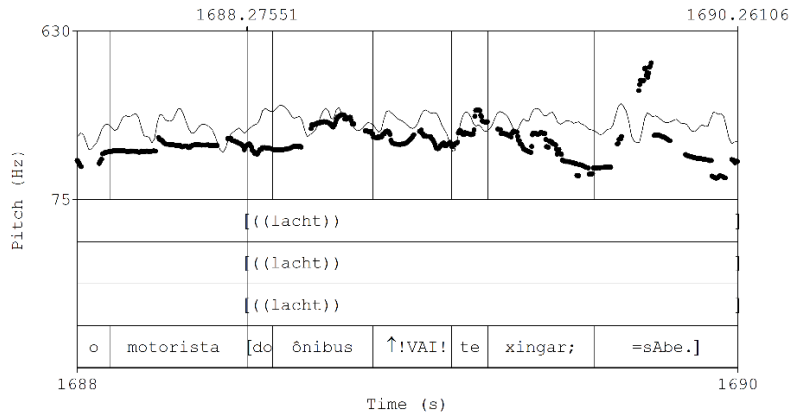
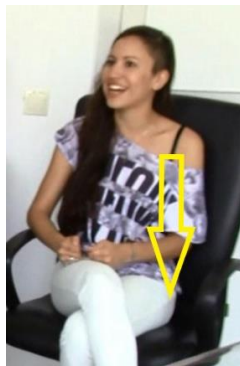


Figure 4: Contrast to the cultural habit in Germany

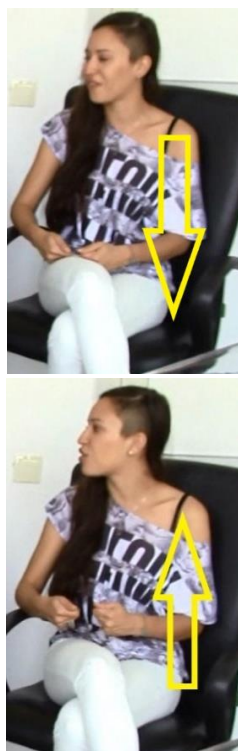
In both cases, the extra strong accent corresponds to what Höhle (1992) calls ‘verum accent’, that is, the validity and factuality of the proposition is emphasized. In the second case, the verum accent is introduced to build a contrast to the Brazilian reaction (L38: ‘NAda) by the auxiliary verb ↑!VAI! (“will”), followed by an ‘extreme case formulation’ (Pomerantz, 1986): qual´quEr`COIsa (“for anything”). In the first case, the verum accent has an iconic effect since it is reflected prosodically what is expressed semantically, additionally underscored on the gestural level over a longer stretch of talk by the beat gesture (19-22; 33-36) when B4 accompanies her talk by the rhythmic hitting of both fists on her thighs as illustrated in Figure 5:



<<hitting her thighs with with both fists rhythmically> e é ↑ver!DA!de.=
and that’s true
(L19)



=brasileiro ↑nãO sAbe
brazilians can’t
(L20)



dizEr `NÃO.=
say no
(L20)

=não SA:be:;>
doesn't know
(L22)

Figure 5: Beat gesture: Both fists moving up and down on B4's thighs (Sequence 1; L19-22)

Beat gestures typically have two movement phases. In the present case, the gesture goes up and down, and, by doing so, accompanies the speech rhythmically and marks the phrases as significant for their discourse-pragmatic content (cf. Cienki 2008; McNeill, 1992, p. 15). Thus, this gesture, which is repeated later in this sequence (33-36) in conjunction with the verum accent, again highlights the experienced intercultural contrast. In line with this gestural beat is also the prosodic rhythm of the emphatic speech style which has its onset in L19 and is characterized by high accent density in L20, a phenomenon called by Auer, Couper-Kuhlen and Müller (1999) “scansions”: =brasileiro †nãO sAbe dizEr [`NÃO.=] (“Brazilians don’t know how to say no”). The authors explain:

These [scansions, US] are produced in a highly salient, rhythmically regular pattern—for instance, by lining up a number of phonetically strongly marked primary lexical stresses in a continued series of isochronously recurring beats. They appear as ordered and marked stretches of speech within the construction of what is (usually) an extended turn. (Auer, Couper-Kuhlen, Müller, 1999, p. 153)

With this staccato-like beat, the pattern like behavior of a stereotypical Brazilian is reflected metaphorically. Since such beat clashes are regularly avoided, their occurrence frequently serves the intensification of the corresponding speech acts (Schwitalla, 2012, p. 62).

4.2 Brazilian Nazi salute

In the following sequence, three college students, a Swedish female student, and two German male students talk about their expectations and first experiences after a month in the Brazilian town Uberaba in

Minas Gerais where they were studying for a year, supported by the scholarship *Youth for Understanding*. After having broached the issue of how their classmates reacted to them as exchange students, the Swedish participant introduces a particularly delicate issue. During the whole conversation, they chose to talk in English as a lingua franca:

2013UbAlSu01 ((56:39-57:25))⁸
01 S1: those ↑PEOPLE say heil ↓hITler to ~yOu,
02 ((stares at G1))
03 G1: [my_my PHY? my phYsics teacher did.]
04 S1: [((stares at G1))]
05 G1: (.) [like (.) he came to 'ME,]
06 S1: [((stops her movements, wide open eyes))]
07 G2: <<stretching his right arm in parallel to his head> heil>
08 [<<holding his right hand in front of his face, smiling> HITler;>]
09 G1: [you're at the]
first hour and (.) where you ↑ASK me-
10 [who i ↑AM-]
11 G2: [<<whispering> oh my GOD;>]
12 G1: i'm GERman and then he did <<stretching his right arm forward in
parallel to his head with wide open eyes and frozen movements> heil
HITler;>
13 i was- ((looking to S1 and G2 with wide open eyes, pointed mouth
and congealed posture))
14 [<<whispering> NO:Ssa.>]
15 G2: [<<forwarded, rhythmically vibrating hands> wow wow `WOW.>]
16 eh by me too by me TOO.
17 S1: REALLY;
18 G2: ehm (--) no not like THAT but,
19 (.) MAny people ask me like;
20 <<mannered, h> Everybody looks like you in GERmany,>
21 [and this bit <<stumbling, laughing> is ↑HITler (.) is hITler like
eh (-) is hitler still the-]
22 G1: [((laughs))]
23 S1: [((laughs))]
24 G2: (.) the chancellor of GERma[ny?]
25 S1: [↑!WHAT!-]
26 S1: (-) well (.) my [friends (.) yah:;]

⁸ This sequence can be accessed on: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mtargULa0_A&feature=youtu.be

27 G2: [((incomprehensible, 0.7 sec))]
28 S1: my ↑FRIEND'S (.) `fA:ther did like heil hitler (trick),
29 and i was like <<rolling her eyes, h> ↑hAhA that's so FUNny
haha;>
30 <<all> because i was just (--) oh my gOd he's so `STUpid;>
31 <<laughing> i'm not even from ↑!GER!many.>
32 [it's like;]
33 G1: [laughs]
34 G2: [laughs]
35 S1: [<<p> blond hair>;]
36 G2: [blond hair and blue `EYE;]
37 that' s ↑GOOD.

The Swedish participant initiates her turn by the deictic expression *those* ↑PEOpLe, followed by a generalization that can be read as an ‘extreme case formulation’ (Pomerantz, 1986). As indicated by the previous context and cotext, by *those people* she is referring to Brazilians, although it is unclear whether she is only referring to the classmates or whether her reference also includes teachers and her hosts etc. However, the choice of the demonstrative pronoun *those* in conjunction with the impersonal plural noun *people* indicates distance and implicates a negative stance with regard to the apparently unproblematic and obviously prevalent use of Nazi references in Brazil in contexts with foreigners who are associated with this origin. G1 takes the next turn and narrates an anecdote he experienced shortly after his arrival at his Brazilian school by reconstructing a scenario of his physics class. He ‘zooms’ in and re-enacts the dialogue (Günthner, 2011, 2002) between him and his physics teacher by re-staging how the teacher asked him about his country of origin and imitated the Nazi salute when he told him that he comes from Germany. For all three exchange students, this Brazilian reaction is experienced as a cultural shock, which is reflected on the prosodic and gestural-corporal level: at first, G1’s narrative is infiltrated by laugh particles (Clift, 2012, p. 1303), but suddenly turns into seriousness: When he imitates his teacher’s Nazi salute gesture, he executes this gesture polyphonically, that is to say, the gesture has to be interpreted in a Bakhtinian sense of ‘layering of voices’ (Bakhtin, 1981 [1930], p. 337-338; Günthner, 2002): Due to a shift in footing (Couper-Kuhlen, Selting, 2018b) G1 enacts the teacher’s gesture but assumes his own stance (L12-13):



i'm GERman and then he did
<<stretching his right arm forward
in parallel to his head
with wide open eyes and frozen
movements > **heil HITler;**>
(Z12)

i was- ((looking to S1 and G2 with
wide open eyes, pointed mouth and
congealed posture))
(Z13)

Figure 6: Nazi salute (Sequence 2; L12-13)

More precisely, the two enactments reflect a representative and a commenting gesture at the same time since the Nazi salute is re-enacted iconically, and stands metonymically for the whole events of the Third Reich. However, concurrently the gesture brings to the fore G1's own stance by the frozen movement and the wide-open eyes that reflect, again metonymically, the cultural shock experience. This stance with its frozen posture and the wide-open eyes continues in the second gesture, additionally highlighted by a pointed mouth and a 'Holding away' gesture that indicates refusal and rejection (Bressem, Müller, 2014, p. 1582). According to the participation framework (Goffman, 1981; Couper-Kuhlen, Selting, 2018b; Goodwin 2007), the three speaker's roles are united in this gesture: that of the 'author' (Hitler) as the origin of the salute, that of the animator (teacher) as the one who mouths the words of the utterance, and that of the 'principal' (G1) as the one whose position the utterance attests to. At the end, G1 completes his comment by whispering the Brazilian interjection *NO:SSa*. (*my God*, L14) that is described by Marcuschi (2006, p. 41), in conjunction with other interjections such as *poxa*, as a conversational discourse marker having exclusively exclamative and emphatic function by calibrating the reciprocal attunement and engagement of the interlocutors. For this key scenario to be reenacted in a schematic and emotional way, the speaker achieves what Meyer, Streeck and Jordan (2017, p. xl) call with reference to Erving Goffman 'empathetic insertion'. In fact, the co-participants co-construct the narrative and express their propositional and affective alignment with the stance performed by G1: G2 anticipates in L07-08 the peak of the story by enacting the Nazi salute, partially smiling and partially covering his face behind his right hand. In the aforementioned sense of Mittelberg and Waugh (2009), this gesture of

holding his hand on his forehead, foremost metonymically stands, in one sense, for hiding, and represents, in another sense, the metaphor SHAME IS HIDING AWAY FROM THE WORLD (Kövecses, 2003, p. 32). In her study on the conceptualization of SHAME in English, covering a period of over more than 500 years, Heli Tissari (2006) claims in reference to the work of Lewis (2004, p. 629) that the schematic basis for this metaphor has to do with the fact that people who experience shame wish to disappear and therefore appear to shrink; shrinking being the opposite to pride, which would be represented by an erect posture:

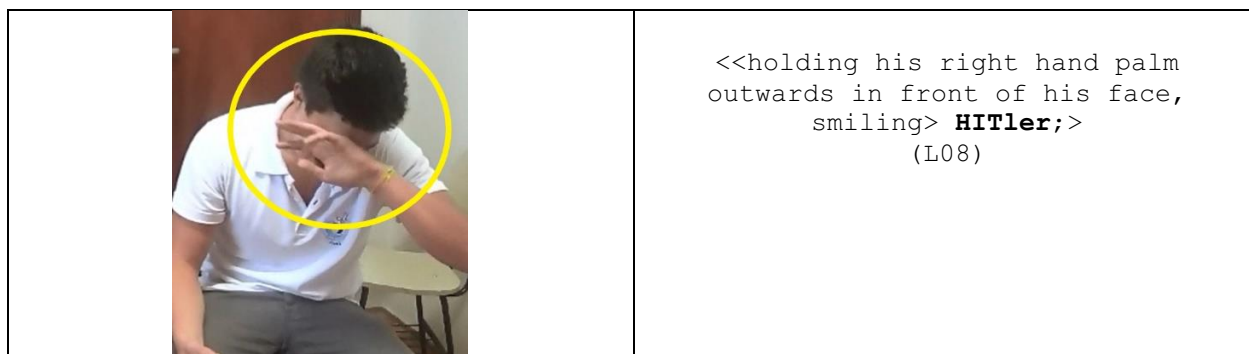


Figure7: Metaphoric SHAME gesture (Sequence 2; L08)

Also the congealed facial expressions of S1, as well as the stretched arms and the rhythmic *wow wow* *WOW* (L15), uttered by G2 as a reaction to the story told by G1 illustrate the obvious speechlessness of the co-participants. Finally, G1 says that many people (L19) had asked if Hitler was still the German chancellor. This story does not represent an anecdote but rather a generic scenario (Günthner 1997b, p. 229), that is, no special characters are animated. Then G2 offers a partial typified ‘choral dialogue’ (Tannen 2007 [1989], p. 114-115), by which the Brazilians are mimicked when they asked G2 a prototypical question that is related to his non-prototypical German look: <<mannered, h> Everybody looks like you in GERmany> (L20). Günthner (2002; 1997a) points to the fact that stylized talk with moral intention is frequently marked with exaggerated and degrading voice that expects as a reaction an indignation. In fact, S2 replies with ↑↑!WHAT!- (L25) and constructs her turn by her own narrative that even she was associated with Hitler although she is Swedish. In L29 she inserts a metacomment that brings together two voices by imitating false laughter as her reaction to the Nazi salute, by which a friend’s father welcomed her, while concurrently marking prosodically and gesturally her internal reaction at that moment (Tannen, 2007 [1989], p. 115): Introduced by the ‘like’-construction (and i was like, L29),⁹ she rolls her eyes and reports the scenario in high pitch with the effect that her own voice sounds ridiculous. The fast tempo in L30-31 shows the switch to an explicit metacomment:

- 29 and i was like <<rolling her eyes, h> ↑hAhA that's so FUNny
 haha;>
- 30 <<all> because i was just (--) oh my gOd he's so 'STUpid;>

⁹ Bückner (2009) calls constructions such as *nach dem Motto* in German (“[it’s] like”) ‘quotative constructions’ (*Quotativ-Konstruktionen*). The use of “it’s like” or “it/I was like” in this and similar sequences in the ICMI corpus is comparable with the German use of *nach dem Motto*: Bückner shows that the function of such constructions lies in the introduction of narrative reconstructions without quoting something that was really said. Rather, what counts is the visualization of prototypical or stereotypical attitudes and world views of certain people or social/cultural groups.

31 <<laughing> i'm not even from ↑!GER!many.>

S1 is supported by G2 who shows alignment and affiliation by adding that, apparently, in Brazil it is not important if someone really comes from Germany but that it is already sufficient if someone has blond hair and blue eyes (L32-36).

Interestingly, the ‘membership categorization’ of this conversational situation is constituted exclusively by the situational conditions (exchange students in Brazil) as well as by the context (intercultural experience).¹⁰ Schegloff (2007, p. 474) points to the fact that membership categorization device does not have to be explicitly present and that ‘membership’, in the end, has to be conceived as a situationally constructed category. The shared experience of living with a Brazilian family as an exchange student and going to a Brazilian school as well as the topics that have been discussed together are sufficient for establishing a Northern European ‘situational co-membership’ (Erickson, Shultz, 1982, p. 35-37) excluding possible differences, e.g., between Swedes and Germans.¹¹

5 Concluding remarks

Based on two examples of elicited conversations on intercultural experiences from the ICMI corpus it was the aim of this article to analyze moments of interactive co-construction of intercultural experience on the verbal, vocal, and visual-corporal plane. Thereby, it was shown how theoretical-methodological perspectives from conversation analysis and interactional linguistics, on the one hand, as well as approaches from cognitive and cultural linguistics, on the other, could create fruitful interfaces. The following results have been revealed: In real conversation, different multimodal cues densify into schemata or patterns of meaning and are co-constructed, confirmed, and reinforced by the participants. One can observe how co-occurrences of paraverbal and prosodic means, lexical expressions such as metaphors, intensifying adjectives and interjections, as well as facial expression, gaze, posture, movements and gestures serve as “one interactive expressive movement unit which emerges in the ongoing interaction from an interrelated, dynamic creation and shaping of shared affect” (Horst et al., 2014, p. 2119). As we have seen, these are frequently used to re-enact the experienced cultural contrast or to point to the experience of interculturality in its own right. Hence, functional and conceptual questions are tightly interwoven. This shows how semantics and pragmatics in the context of studies about language in interaction are inseparable. Merely a detailed dense description of interaction based on video recorded conversations and their transcription allow a fine-grained analysis that for its part serves as a ‘point of access’ (Langacker, 1987, p. 163-164; Kecskés, 2012, p. 180) to the encyclopedic and cultural knowledge of the interlocutors. This has been shown in the first analysis by the different prosodic and gestural means used to extend and intensify the distance between the Brazilian and German culture: the emphasis on inscribed cultural scripts by the beat gesture, the stretched index finger, the pitch jumps, the accent density as well as the verum accents. In the second case, we have seen how intercultural conceptualizations were constructed, how the exchange students position themselves when conventional taboos are broken in intercultural contacts, how cultural schemata such as SHAME are activated on the gestural plane, how congealed movements and facial expressions as well as wide open eyes iconically and metonymically

¹⁰ This can also be shown in other sequences of this conversation (Schröder, 2015).

¹¹ Cf. about different German and Swedish conversational styles the studies conducted by Röcklingsberg (2009) and Breckle (2003).

reflect cultural shock experiences and serve as contextualization cues for indicating that the own worldview has been shaken. In that line of research, this study should be understood as a contribution to the recent field of intercultural pragmatics as well as to the ‘interactional turn’ (Zima, Brône, 2015) in cognitive linguistics.

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APPENDIX: TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS¹²

| | |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| [] | overlap and simultaneous talk |
| [] | |
| = | fast, immediate continuation with a new turn or segment (latching) |
| and_uh | cliticizations within units |
| hm_hm | bi-syllabic tokens |
| (.) | micro pause, up to 0.2 sec. |
| (-) | short pause of 0.2-0.5 sec. |
| (--) | intermediary pause of 0.5-0.8 sec. |
| (2.0) | measured pause of 2.0 sec. |
| :, ::, ::: | lengthening (0.2-0.5 sec.; 0.5-0.8 sec.; 0.8-1.0 sec.) |
| ((laughs)) | non-verbal vocal actions and events |
| <<laughing> > | para-verbal and non-verbal action as accompanying speech with indication of scope |
| <<acc> | accelerando |
| (may i) | assumed wording |
| (i say/let's say) | possible alternatives |
| °hh hh° | in- and outbreaths |
| (xxx) | one unintelligible syllable |
| acCENT | focus accent |
| accEnt | secondary accent |
| ac!CENT! | extra strong accent |
| ? | rising to high final pitch movement of intonation unit |
| , | rising to mid final pitch movement of intonation unit |
| - | level final pitch movement of intonation unit |
| ; | falling to mid final pitch movement of intonation unit |
| . | falling to low final pitch movement of intonation unit |
| ^SO | rising-falling accent pitch movement |
| ˘SO | falling-rising accent pitch movement |
| ´SO | rising accent pitch movement |
| ˘SO | falling accent pitch movement |
| ↑ | pitch upstep |
| ↓ | pitch downstep |

¹² Short, adopted version of GAT 2 according to Selting et al. (2011).