

Carolina Barbosa Passig Martins

**HYPERBOLE IN BRAZILIAN AND GERMAN TALKS-IN-
INTERACTION: A CROSS-CULTURAL STUDY**

Belo Horizonte
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INTERACTION: A CROSS-CULTURAL STUDY

BY

CAROLINA BARBOSA PASSIG MARTINS

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Hyperbole in Brazilian and German talk-in-interaction: a cross-cultural study


CAROLINA BARBOSA PASSIG MARTINS

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Aprovada em 31 de agosto de 2017, pela banca constituída pelos membros:


Prof(a). Ulrike Agathe Schröder - Orientadora
UFMG


Prof(a). Elisabetta Santoro
USP


Prof(a). Gustavo Ximenes Cunha
UFMG

Belo Horizonte, 31 de agosto de 2017.

*To my darlings. You know who you are.
Para meus amores. Vocês sabem quem são.*

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“La atmósfera era tan húmeda que los peces hubieran podido entrar por las puertas y salir por las ventanas, navegando en el aire de los aposentos.”

GABRIEL GARCIA MÁRQUEZ, CIEN AÑOS DE SOLEDAD

ABSTRACT

Hyperbole is a frequent and productive resource in everyday talk. Employing it may help enhance one's argument and express ideas and feelings. Based on classical rhetoric, cross-cultural pragmatics, conversation analysis, the notion of communicative styles and recent studies on hyperbole, this thesis investigates exaggeration in the talk-of-interaction of two groups. One of the groups consists of three German individuals and the other, of three Brazilians. Each set of individuals was filmed during approximately one hour while talking about selected topics and spontaneous subjects. The data was transcribed using the GAT 2 system and EXMARaLDA software. The analysis of the production of overstatements in the talk of the German participants showed a relationship between the use of hyperbole and their style of argumentation, especially regarding disagreeing and nulling another speaker's argument. The Brazilian participants, on the other hand, employed hyperbole to build rapport, and show affiliation and expressiveness. Also, regarding communicative styles, whilst the Germans who took part in this study showed an inclination towards trying not to impose, the Brazilians pursued closeness in conversation. The data shows the importance of investigating topics related to expressiveness in conversation in a cross-cultural perspective and points to interesting directions for further studies.

Key-words: Pragmatics, cross-cultural studies, conversation analysis, rhetoric, communicative styles, argumentation, rapport, hyperbole

RESUMO

A hipérbole é um recurso produtivo e frequente no discurso cotidiano. Empregá-la pode ajudar a fortalecer argumentos e expressar ideias e sentimentos. Tendo como base a Retórica Clássica, a Pragmática Cross-cultural, a Análise da Conversa, a noção de estilos comunicativos e estudos recentes sobre hipérbole, esta dissertação investiga o exagero na fala-em-interação de dois grupos. Um desses grupos consiste em três indivíduos alemães e o outro, em três brasileiros. Cada um deles foi filmado durante aproximadamente uma hora durante uma conversa sobre tópicos selecionados e outros assuntos. Os dados foram transcritos usando o sistema GAT 2 e o software EXMARaLDA. A análise da produção de exageros no discurso dos alemães mostrou uma relação entre o uso de hipérboles e seu estilo argumentativo, especialmente em termos de discordância e da tentativa de anular o argumento de outro falante. Os participantes brasileiros, por outro lado, empregaram a hipérbole para construir *rapport* e mostrar afiliação e expressividade. Além disso, em relação a estilos comunicativos, enquanto os alemães que participaram desta pesquisa mostraram uma inclinação a tentar não impor, os brasileiros buscaram proximidade na conversa. Os dados mostraram a importância de se investigar assuntos relacionados à expressividade na conversa sob uma perspectiva cross-cultural e apontam para direções interessantes para pesquisas vindouras.

Palavras-chave: Pragmática, Estudos Cross-culturais, Análise da Conversa, Retórica, estilos comunicativos, argumentação, *rapport*, hipérbole

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

A1, A2, A3	German code names
B1, B2, B2	Brazilian code names
BNC	British National Corpus
CA	Conversation Analysis
CEFALA	Centro de Estudos da Fala, Acústica, Linguagem e Música
COEP	Comitê de Ética em Pesquisa
ECF	Extreme Case Formulation
EXMARaLDA	Extensible Markup Language for Discourse Annotation
FALE	Faculdade de Letras
Full HD	Full High Definition
GAT 2	Gesprächsanalytisches Transkriptionssystem
IMDb	Internet Movie Database
IPA	International Phonetic Alphabet
kHz	Kilohertz
MPEG	Motion Picture Experts Group
MTS	MPEG Transport Stream
NUCOI	Núcleo de Estudos de Comunicação (Inter-)Cultural em Interação
SBC	Santa Barbara Corpus of Spoken American English
SIP	Sociopragmatic interactional principle
UFMG	Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais
WAV	Windows Wave (audio format/file extension)

LIST OF SYMBOLS

\vec{XX}	Vector XX
$\{ \}$	Set
\in	Belongs to
\notin	Does not belong to
$< x$	x is bigger than
$> x$	x is smaller than
$(...)$	Missing, indefinite element of a scale

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1. INTRODUCTION

Overstatement is part of everyday language. One exaggerates facts, sensations and impressions not in order to lie or to deceive, but as to express them vehemently or enthusiastically or to put forward arguments more convincingly. It is the case of the idiomatic phrase “everyone and their dog” in a sentence such as “Everyone and their dog has read Harry Potter”. The term generally used to refer to this kind of occurrence is ‘hyperbole’,¹ a word which can be traced down to the ancient studies of rhetoric in Greece and Rome (ARISTOTLE, *Rhetoric*; QUINTILIAN, *Institutio oratoria* VIII; CICERO, *De partitiones oratoriae*; DONATUS, *Ars maior*) and has been used since then, throughout the Middle Ages and up to the present day. In rhetoric, hyperbole is put in the category of linguistic trope, which also includes more well-known elements such as metaphor, metonymy and irony:

Trope is the word transferred from its proper meaning to a non-proper similarity, for ornamentation or need. There are thirteen tropes: metaphor, catachresis, metalepsis, metonymy, antonomasia, epitheton, synecdoche, onomatopoeia, periphrasis, hyperbaton, hyperbole, allegory and homoeosis (DONATUS, *Ars maior* III, 6).²

In the work of Quintilian, long before the foundation of sociolinguistics or any sciences of the sort, hyperbole was regarded as being widespread and frequent among the population in general: “hyperbole is employed even by peasants and uneducated persons, for the good reason that everybody has an innate passion for exaggeration or attenuation of actual facts, and no one is ever contented with the simple truth” (*Institutio Oratoria*, VIII, VI, 75). Therefore, it makes sense to study hyperbole in everyday language of ordinary individuals, which will be done in this thesis. In order to do so, data consisting of elicited conversations (KASPER, 2008) has been collected, transcribed and analyzed using Conversation Analysis as a methodological tool.³

1 The term hyperbole and what is understood here by the word will be more accurately defined later in Section 2.1.

2 “Tropo é a palavra transferida de sua significação própria para uma semelhança não própria, por causa do ornamento ou da necessidade. São treze os tropos: metáfora, catacrese, metalepse, metonímia, antonomásia, epíteto, sinédoque, onomatopéia, perífrase, hipérbato, hipérbole, alegoria e homeose.” Translation from Latin to Portuguese by Lucas Dezotti (2011) and from Portuguese to English by me (Unless otherwise noted, all translations in footnotes are mine).

3 Further information about the methodological procedures of this study can be found in Section 3. Further information about conversation analysis can be found in Section 2.2.

The study to be conducted here will also investigate exaggeration as an expressive or stylistic strategy in conversation, based on Aristotle's remark that "hyperboles are for young men to use; they show vehemence of character; and this is why angry people use them more than other people" (*Rhetoric*, II, 11) and also in contemporary studies. In that sense, overstatement in conversation will be analyzed using different theories within semantics and pragmatics, such as conversational styles (TANNEN, 2005), scales (HORN, 1972; FAUCONNIER, 1975; DUCROT, 1973), Extreme Case Formulations (POMERANTZ, 1986) and aspects of meaning.

Finally, this thesis will study linguistic behavior towards overstatement in a cross-cultural approach,⁴ because if hyperbole is in fact related to emotions and to everyday speech, it is interesting to raise the question whether its use is truly intrinsic to language itself due to the "innate passion for exaggeration" mentioned by Quintilian or there are cultural factors involved. The studies which have been conducted since the 20th century in the fields of cross-cultural pragmatics and conversation analysis are extremely useful to the analysis of this matter, as will be seen in more detail in Sections 2.2 and 2.3. It is also important to consider the conversational styles which underlie the production of hyperbole in talk (see Section 2.4). Although it is not the scope of this thesis to demonstrate any kind of cognitive or psychological diversity in members of different cultures, identifying variation in overstated language in the speech of these individuals is nevertheless a convenient path to be followed to investigate the cultural role of hyperbole.

The two cultures to be compared here are those of Brazilians and Germans. Previous studies have demonstrated differences in communicative styles between members of these communities. Schröder (2007), for instance, discussed conceptualizations and communicative styles of Brazilian and German individuals and pointed out that the Brazilian subjects of her study tended to use more exaggerations in speech than the German subjects, as can be seen in the following passage:

The Germans' utterances are objective, ontologized and become accessible to introspection and reflection in a much more outstanding way than the Brazilians' ones, in which other language functions predominate, namely wordplay, exaggerations and word elegance (SCHRÖDER, 2007, p. 4).⁵

4 The term 'cross-cultural' is used here as opposed to 'intercultural' (see Section 2.3).

5 "O enunciado dos alemães é objetivado, ontologizado e torna-se acessível para introspecção e reflexão de forma muito mais saliente do que o dos brasileiros, no qual predomina outra função da língua, a saber, o jogo, o exagero e a elegância da palavra."

Schröder (2007) did not attempt to propose a general linguistic trend for each nationality and neither will this study. Instead, two sets of individuals, one composed by Brazilians and the other by Germans will be recorded and their behavior towards hyperbole will be analyzed individually or as a group – not as a people. Considering that Passig (2015) demonstrated that there may be situations in which hyperboles used by Brazilians in an intercultural encounter are not accepted by Germans in conversation, it is expected that, after investigating the matter in each language separately and in more detail, this thesis will provide more information about overstatement in Brazilian Portuguese and German, which might ultimately lead to a better understanding of pragmatic patterns in each of the languages.

1.1. Aim and Objectives

This thesis aims to investigate the pragmatic patterns and linguistic behavior related to the use of hyperbole by Brazilians and Germans and their effects in interaction and in argumentative and expressive aspects of pragmatic performance. This has been done by means of an analysis of the speech styles of two groups of individuals, namely Brazilians and Germans, each of them consisting of three people.

In order to achieve this goal, the following objectives have been set:

- To identify the use of hyperbole in the speech of the participants;
- To analyze the use of hyperbole in context and to investigate the argumentative needs that lead to hyperbolic word choices;
- To analyze the reactions that other participants show after the use of hyperbole by a speaker;
- To describe the communicative styles displayed in the talk by the Brazilians and the Germans;
- To investigate the relationship between communicative styles and the use of hyperboles;
- To investigate manifestations and/or descriptions of emotions during the interaction and relate them to the choice to use hyperbole or not;
- To compare the data collected from each of the groups in order to analyze the differences and similarities found in the use of hyperboles by the Brazilian and German participants.

These objectives will be dealt with throughout the thesis, according to the following structure: in Section 2, the theoretical background of this study will be presented, namely some perspectives on classical rhetoric, conversation analysis and cross-cultural pragmatics, as well as important concepts related to hyperbole, culture, conversational styles and, again, conversation analysis. In Section 3, the methodology of the study and the procedures regarding data collection adopted in this investigation will be introduced. In Section 4, the data will be analyzed and discussed and, finally, Section 5 will consist of a brief conclusion of the results and analyses carried out in this study.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Hyperbole

According to the Oxford Dictionary of English, the word hyperbole comes from the Greek *huperbolē* (sometimes transliterated as *hyperbolē*), or ‘excess’ (from *huper* / *hyper* ‘above’ + *ballein* ‘to throw’). In Roman texts, the word could appear in its Greek transliterated form or in its Latin form, *superlatio* (PORTER, 2001), which means “exaggeration” and therefore, in rhetoric studies, ‘hyperbole’ (FARIA, 1962). It can also be expressed in English by the words ‘overstatement’ and ‘exaggeration’, which will be used interchangeably in this study, except when referring to the term in rhetoric.⁶ Whilst the word itself has remained fairly uncontroversial through the centuries, the same cannot be said about its actual application. In the following subsections, a brief history of hyperbole and different points of view regarding which kind of utterances and phrases could be considered as such will be presented. Then, the definition to be used for this particular study will be introduced.

2.1.1. Ancient rhetoric and hyperbole

According to Schiappa and Hamm (2007), it is generally accepted that the term rhetoric appeared first in Plato’s *Gorgias*, at least among the surviving texts from antiquity. In ancient Greek, *rhētōr* was “a term that was used most typically to refer to politicians who put forth motions in the courts or Assembly” and the word *rhētorikē* was “formed by adding –ikē (meaning art or skill)” (SCHIAPPA; HAMM, 2007, p. 5). In other words, the term rhetoric would mean something similar to “the art of being an orator.”

In the *Gorgias*, the character who gives the name to the text engages in a dialog with Socrates and regards himself as a rhetorician. Socrates then inquires what it means to be a rhetorician and what the scope of rhetoric is, to which Gorgias responds that “rhetoric is the art of persuasion in courts of law and other assemblies (...), and about the just and the unjust” (PLATO, *Gorgias*, pos. 1034⁷)⁸. Although Gorgias specifies that the

⁶ See footnote 8 for more detail.

⁷ This text was consulted in its e-book version for Kindle, so that instead of number of pages it offers a position number which locates the citation in the book.

⁸ This concept, as well as other issues regarding the nature of rhetoric, is developed throughout the *Gorgias*, and Socrates rejects the idea of rhetoric as an art (see PLATO, *Gorgias*, pos. 1170), but this discussion

art of oratory is closely connected to political environments, he also points out further in the discussion that the skills of persuasion may also be useful in other contexts:

GORGIAS: (...) On several occasions I have been with my brother Herodicus or some other physician to see one of his patients, who would not allow the physician to give him medicine, or apply the knife or hot iron to him; and I have persuaded him to do for me what he would not do for the physician just by the use of rhetoric. (PLATO, *Gorgias*, pos. 1076)

This idea of rhetoric as the art of persuasion through language is the foundation of rhetoric studies. Treatises of rhetoric written by prominent tutors in ancient Greece and Rome have since then attempted to investigate the nature of oratorical persuasion and to teach the skills of convincing others. It has then become well-established that in order to be a powerful persuader, a man should speak well and employ specific speech techniques which would help him achieve his goal.

According to Aristotle (*Rhetoric*, I, 2), there are three means of persuasion achievable by the spoken word. Firstly, there is the personal character of the speaker (*ethos*), which makes him more credible to the extent that the audience tends to trust a “good man” more than others. Secondly, Aristotle highlights the importance of arousing emotions from the audience (*pathos*):⁹

Persuasion may come through the hearers, when the speech stirs their emotions. Our judgements when we are pleased and friendly are not the same as when we are pained and hostile. It is towards producing these effects, as we maintain, that present-day writers on rhetoric direct the whole of their efforts. (ARISTOTLE, *Rhetoric*, I, 2)

Finally, the speaker should provide arguments convincing enough so that they serve as a proof to the matter in question (*logos*). The observance of these three aspects of persuasion should then lead to successful rhetoric practices.

Considering that, hyperbole is explored in oratory texts as a means to enhance the persuasive power of a speech. It belongs, as already mentioned in the Introduction of this thesis, to the category of tropes, that is, words that have their meanings transferred¹⁰ from

will not be detailed here for scope reasons. The distinction between rhetoric and dialectic will not be dealt with here either.

⁹ Although the words *emotion* and *feeling* are often treated as synonyms (WAITE, 2006), there is a distinction between them in the field of Neurosciences (CARTER et al., 2014, p. 124; 128). In this work, nevertheless, both terms will be used interchangeably in their usual meaning.

¹⁰ The notion of transference of meaning (*metaphora*, in Greek, or *translatio*, in Latin) is fundamental when discussing tropes, because it is often the feature that distinguishes tropes and figures, or hyperbole

other words as to intentionally adorn or make language more vehement, for it is a virtue of the orator to be able to express his arguments not only clearly, but also as if the matter was in front of the hearers' eyes (CICERO, *Partitiones oratoriae*, 20). Quintilian (*Institutio Oratoria*, VIII, VI) states that

It [hyperbole] means an elegant straining of the truth, and may be employed indifferently for exaggeration or attenuation. It can be used in various ways. (...) It is enough to say that hyperbole lies, though without any intention to deceive. (QUINTILIAN, *Institutio Oratoria*, VIII, VI)

It means that, according to that perspective, a speaker may use hyperbole to exaggerate a quantity of a fact or feature up or down: up in utterances such as “He vomited and filled his lap and the whole tribunal with fragments of food” (CICERO, *Phillipica II apud* QUINTILIAN, *Institutio Oratoria*, VIII, VI) and down in statements like ‘*tardior testudine*’¹¹ (PLINY, *Naturalis historia* 8, 121 *apud* DONATUS, *Ars maior* III, 6). Additionally, hyperbole is believed to be a trope of boldness, virtue (QUINTILIAN, *Institutio Oratoria* VIII, VI) and vehemence of character (ARISTOTLE, *Rhetoric*, III, 11), “conferring distinction on style” (QUINTILIAN, *Institutio oratoria* VIII, III). Finally, hyperbole could also serve as to create an intentional comical effect which would show the linguistic resourcefulness of the orator.

Another important notion in rhetoric is amplification, the part of speech in which the arguments of the rhetor are emphasized and expanded by means of different techniques as to arouse feelings from the audience. On that matter, Cicero (*De partitiones oratoriae*, 53) states that amplification is a development of enunciation which provokes emotions and ultimately leads to persuasion. He also mentions the appropriate lexical choices for these moments, such as strong words, hyperboles and metaphors, among others. Amplification is thus of special value both to the emotional aspect of persuasion and the establishment of proof to the arguments. The process of downsizing a fact or a feature in an analogical manner as amplification is called ‘attenuation’.

Quintilian also alludes to the relationship between amplification/attenuation and hyperbole:

and amplification (see QUINTILIAN, *Institutio oratoria* VIII; IX). This is the reason why I will not use ‘overstatement’ or ‘exaggeration’ as synonyms of hyperbole in this context.

¹¹ ‘slower than a turtle’, based on the Portuguese translation by Dezotti (2011).

The first method of amplification or attenuation is to be found in the actual word employed to describe a thing. For example, we may say that a man who was *beaten* was *murdered*, or that a *dishonest* fellow is a *robber* (...). This sort of amplification may be strengthened and made more striking by pointing the comparison between words of stronger meaning and those for which we propose to substitute them (...) (QUINTILIAN VIII, IV).

This method of amplification is called ‘augmentation’ by Quintilian and is considered “most impressive when it lends grandeur even to comparative insignificance” (QUINTILIAN, *Institutio Oratoria*, VIII, IV). By calling a man who is dishonest a worse name, e.g., a robber, the speaker is exaggerating the facts, using therefore a hyperbole. Quintilian acknowledges the similarities between these terms, although he chooses not to develop this discussion for classification reasons:

I know that some may perhaps regard *hyperbole* as a species of *amplification*, since hyperbole can be employed to create an effect in either direction [augmentation and attenuation]. But as the name is also applied to one of the tropes, I must postpone its consideration for the present. (QUINTILIAN, *Institutio Oratoria*, VIII, IV)¹²

Taking the aspects presented in this section into consideration, it is possible to establish a connection between hyperbole, argumentation and emotions in speech, for hyperbole can be employed in order to enhance the persuasiveness of an utterance, to express feelings (e.g. anger) and to arouse emotions in one’s hearers. The following section will discuss these notions in a contemporary point of view and present some different approaches to the matter.

2.1.2. Hyperbole in the contemporary world

In contemporary academic and educational literature, hyperbole is no longer solely part of the studies of rhetoric, a field whose instructional importance declined “upon the advent of Romanticism” (KNOX; McKEOWN, 2013, pos. 21866).¹³ It is for instance also subject of much normative work, such as grammars and mother tongue

12 Quintilian’s twelve-volume *Institutio Oratoria* was his only piece to survive to the present day (KNOX; McKEOWN, 2013), so that it is not possible to know whether he has actually returned to this topic in a later work.

13 This text has been consulted in its e-book version for Kindle, so that instead of number of pages it offers a position number which locates the citation in the book.

textbooks, although even in those publications, the content related to this topic diverges from the ones found in texts by ancient Greek and Roman rhetors.

As already stated in section 2.1.1, employing hyperbole in speech was seen as a virtue of the capable speaker, because it was believed that language itself should be used passionately. On this matter, Aristotle (*Rhetoric*, III, 7) holds that

Your language will be appropriate if it expresses emotion and character, and if it corresponds to its subject. (...) To express emotion, you will employ the language of anger in speaking of outrage; the language of disgust and discreet reluctance to utter a word when speaking of impiety or foulness; the language of exultation for a tale of glory, and that of humiliation for a tale of and so in all other cases. (ARISTOTLE, *Rhetoric*, III, 7)

In current times, however, in contexts that require a professional, scientific or journalistic language, the use of emotions and, consequently, hyperbole is inadvisable. In Brazil, for example, the handbook for journalists who work at *Folha de São Paulo*, one of the biggest-circulating newspapers in the country,¹⁴ advises against overstatements in discourse: “Avoid this figure of speech [hyperbole], which consists in undue exaggeration. (...) A journalistic text should describe facts and phenomena as close to reality as possible” (MANUAL..., 2001, p. 74).¹⁵ This position is due to the fact that nowadays, in most semi-formal and formal registers, language is supposed to be neutral, objective, scientific and precise, even when the objectives are the same as the ones mentioned by the ancient rhetoricians.¹⁶ On this topic, Esselborn-Krumbiegel (2016, p. 65) points out in her handbook of scientific writing for German college students that “Not only overstatements, but also vague characterization is inappropriate, because they lack the necessary clearness and accuracy of scientific statements”.¹⁷

These recommendations against exaggeration in discourse are nevertheless fairly restricted to academic and professional contexts, especially in written language. In everyday spoken communication, overstating remains a usual practice. A corpus-based

14 Information available on the website of Brazilian Associação Nacional de Jornais (National Newspaper Association) at <<http://www.anj.org.br/maiores-jornais-do-brasil/>>. Accessed on January 5th, 2017.

15 “Evite essa figura de linguagem, que consiste no exagero desmedido (...). O texto jornalístico deve descrever fatos e fenômenos do modo mais fiel possível à realidade.” (My translation. All translations in footnotes are mine, unless otherwise indicated.)

16 Such as, for example, “to advise, to praise or blame, to accuse or defend.” (ARISTOTLE, *Rhetoric*, 22).

17 „Nicht nur Übertreibungen, sondern auch vage Charakterisierung sind ungeeignet, weil ihnen die notwendige Klarheit und Genauigkeit wissenschaftlicher Aussagen fehlt.“

study of hyperbole (CLARIDGE, 2011, p. 72) found an average of “one overstated expression per 1,000 words, or one hyperbole every four to ten minutes” in the spoken data available on the *British National Corpus* (BNC). Interestingly, a similar number of 0.97 utterances per 1,000 words was found in the *Santa Barbara Corpus of Spoken American English* (SBC). Claridge’s (2011) analysis also seems to support the idea that some contexts may disfavor hyperbole: in the SBC corpus, 4 of the 14 files did not contain any overstated occurrences, to which she explained that

Three of those files are highly task-related interactions with a concentration on factual communication (...) and two furthermore represent ‘public’, business-like events, in a lawyer’s office (...) and in a bank (...), respectively. Such contexts might inhibit the use of overstatement. The highest amount of hyperbole is found in the SBC in informal conversations between friends (...). (CLARIDGE, 2011, p. 73)

Considering the high frequency of these rhetorical strategies in ordinary language, from the 20th century onward, not only hyperbole but also other tropes, especially metaphor, irony and metonymy, have been studied in their everyday manifestations rather than their artistic usage. In this sense, perhaps one of the most influential texts was *Metaphors we live by*, by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), in which the authors discuss metaphors in everyday language and their basic cognitive conceptualizations. According to them, these conceptual metaphors ultimately represent the most primary form of human expression of reality and understanding of the world. In the field of hyperbole, however, some interesting studies have also been carried out.

Pomerantz (1986) introduces the concept of ‘Extreme Case formulations’ (ECFs), which are defined as overstated utterances employed in order to legitimize claims, especially the ones related to the speech acts (AUSTIN, 1962) of accusing, justifying and defending. In this context, Extreme Case formulations are, for example, utterances containing words and phrases such as “brand new”, “everyone”, “forever”, “never”, “all the time” and “every” when used in a non-literal meaning, in order to enhance the persuasive power of an argument. Claims that contain these extreme lexical items carry therefore judgments of the speaker regarding a particular matter, as, for instance, when a mother complains that her son never calls. If the child in question calls the mother once a month, the word “never” can no longer be literal, assuming that the speaker does not intend to lie. It is possible to understand then that the mother is accusing her son of not

calling as much as she would like or expect. It is important to note that Pomerantz’s text never mentions hyperbole or overstatement, although the concept of Extreme Case formulations is intrinsically hyperbolic.

Grice (1975) discusses truth and appropriateness in utterances that are not literally true or appropriate. He argues that in order to analyze this kind of occurrences it is necessary to look at the issue in a more in-depth way, because, if it is true that the speakers are cooperating to the continuity of an interaction in its purpose and direction – a behavior that is labeled ‘cooperative principle’ (p. 722) -, then it is logical to assume that there might be an underlying reason for transgressive usages. The author then introduces categories in which the cooperative principle manifests in conversation. These categories are called *conversational maxims* (p. 723) and are presented as follows:

Categories	Supermaxims	Maxims
Quantity	–	1. Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purposes of the exchange). 2. Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.
Quality	Try to make your contribution one that is true.	1. Do not say what you believe to be false. 2. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.
Relation	–	Be relevant. 1. Avoid obscurity of expression.
Manner	Be perspicuous.	2. Avoid ambiguity. 3. Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity). 4. Be orderly.

Table 1 – Grice’s conversational maxims
Source: Grice (1975)

According to this principle, if someone declared that “Everyone and their dog has read Harry Potter”, this statement would break the Quality maxim, because not every person alive has read this book series and dogs simply cannot read. Moreover, the speaker is probably aware of his/her inaccuracy, so that the information stated was never believed to be true. Nevertheless, remarks like this are very often made in contexts in which the speaker has no intentions of lying or opting out of the conversation. In this case, according to Grice, the speaker resorted to a ‘conversational implicature’, which means something

that has not been said, but implied in a logic meaning that is established inside the interaction.

On that matter, Grice (1975) holds that a conversational implicature may be set up “by means of something of the nature of a figure of speech” (p. 727). In these cases, “the hearer is entitled to assume that that maxim, or at least the overall cooperative principle, is observed at the level of what is implicated” (p. 727). As far as hyperbole is concerned, Grice exemplifies this kind of implicature with the sentence “Every nice girl loves a sailor” (p. 728).¹⁸ This example interestingly shows “every” as a source of hyperbole in the same way that Pomerantz (1976) regards it as an Extreme Case formulation, which also supports the possible connection between both terms.

Grice’s text echoed in many other subsequent texts. Gibbs (1994), for instance, compares hyperbole and understatement to irony and points out that they “violate Truthfulness maxims only if one assumes that a speaker’s utterance must be identical to his or her beliefs” (p. 392). The author argues that if a woman says, “My boyfriend is almost ten feet tall”, the truth is not that her boyfriend is “ten feet” tall, but that she **believes** the man is very tall. Gibbs (1994) states then that the analyses of hyperbole and understatement in relation to Truthfulness maxims are not straightforward. In fact, according to him, the beliefs of the speaker should be taken into consideration, because

When making some statement, speakers (a) want to attribute belief in the proposition they express not necessarily to themselves but to someone or some cultural norm and (b) speakers’ statements need not be identical to their own beliefs but need only resemble their beliefs. (GIBBS, 1994, p. 393-394)

Gibbs (1994) also differentiates hyperbole and overstatement on the grounds that the former is produced intentionally and the latter is simpler and happens when “a person unconsciously or unintentionally expresses a proposition that is stronger than the evidence warrants” (p. 391). Although it makes sense to distinguish a conscious exaggeration from an unintended one, Gibbs does not provide any indication of how they could be distinguished from one another, perhaps because, as he stated at the time, “There is [was] no published experimental research in understanding hyperbole and understatement” (p. 393), so that these ideas were not well-established yet. At the present

¹⁸ This example is not followed by any kind of analysis, which is why no further information of the sort will be provided here.

time, I have no knowledge of any study regarding the conscious or unconscious use of hyperbole, although there have been some texts on deliberate and non-deliberate metaphors and irony, some of them conducted by Gibbs himself (see GIBBS, 2012; 2015). Nevertheless, as this kind of study belongs to the realm of cognitive conceptual linguistics, which is not the approach to be used in this study, this aspect of hyperbole will be left aside for the moment.

In a later study based on Pomerantz (1986), Grice (1975) and Gibbs (1994), Norrick (2004) claims that, contrary to Grice's idea, hyperbole does not violate the quality maxim, but the quantity one. This is a reference to Gibbs' (1994) remarks about the truth in hyperbolic utterances, which would lie in the speaker's belief in a given feature rather than in its realization. In other words, in the example previously presented here, that is, "My boyfriend is almost ten feet tall", what is lacking is not the truth – because the woman *does* believe that her boyfriend is tall -, but clarity about how tall the man actually is. This means that the contribution of the speaker is not as informative as it is required, hence flouting the quantity maxim.

Concerning definitions, Norrick (2004) sees hyperbole as a larger entity, which contains the other types of exaggeration, namely overstatement and ECF. In his view, ECFs are formally definable by the presence of the extreme expressions which are characteristic of this kind of usage. Semantically, ECFs are "at the far end of any scale of comparison" (p. 1728). Echoing Gibbs (1994), overstatements are, on the other hand, claims "that are higher (or lower) on some scale than warranted" (p. 1728), but not as high (or low) as ECFs.

The notion of scales applied to the studies of hyperbole mentioned but not expanded on by Norrick (2004), has come to play a vital role in the texts that follow his. In the next section, the developments of this concept will be introduced, as well as the theories and definitions which are going to be used in this research and that relate to the ones already presented in section 2.1.1 and in this one.

2.1.3. Definitions for this study

Considering all the theories and perspectives discussed in sections 2.1.1 and 2.1.2, this study will follow the definitions of hyperbole proposed by Claridge (2011), who developed a multifaceted, corpus-based study of overstatement in English. As her work on hyperbole is the broadest one I have had the opportunity to read so far and as the author

takes into consideration most if not all the discussions presented up to this point, the initial choice of adopting her concepts was also a means of being able to compare the results of hyperbole in Portuguese and German to the ones previously found in English. It must be noted, however, that, as she works with big corpora of natural language and this is a case study of elicited conversations (see Section 3 for more detail), extensive, definite comparisons cannot be made. Also, as will be seen in Section 4.2, other difficulties in comparing results have also arisen.

Claridge (2011) considers hyperbole any kind of exaggeration, including ECFs. Schematically, her definition is as follows:

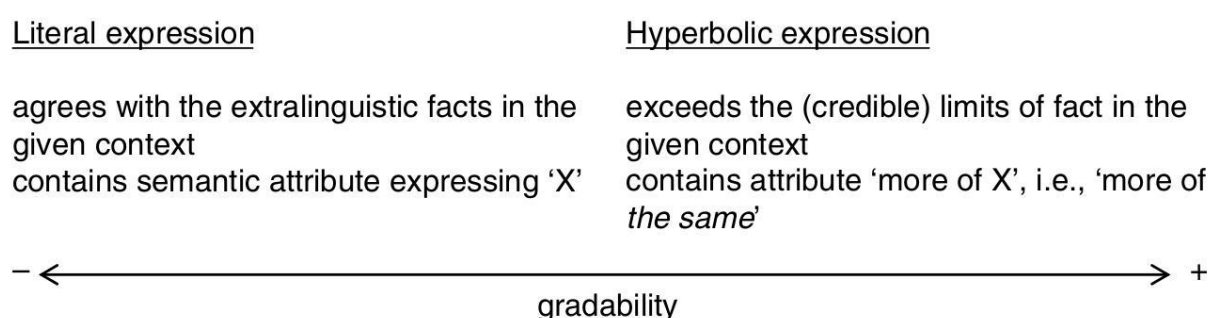


Figure 1 – Preliminary definition of hyperbole
Source: Claridge (2011, p. 5)

As can be seen in Figure 1, hyperbolic realization is related to extralinguistic facts in a way that “at any rate, the establishment of exaggeration is, as a rule, context- and knowledge-bound” (CLARIDGE, 2011, p. 5). This is because one must have in mind what is standard and usual in order to be able to determine what exceeds that and therefore becomes an overstatement. Moreover, it should be noted that the term ‘expression’ is being used here to denote not only words and phrases but also longer texts (p. 5). Additionally, the author presents the term ‘gradability’, shown in Figure 1, by discussing the connection between linguistic scales and hyperbole, which has been explored in other texts as well (see COUPER-KUHLEN; THOMPSON, 2005; NORRICK, 2006, BRDAR-SZABÓ; BRDAR, 2010).

Referring to Schwenter (1999), Couper-Kuhlen and Thompson (2005) point out that scales fall into at least three categories, namely (a) semantic, (b) pragmatic and (c) rhetorical (p. 270). Claridge (2011) also uses this categorization, even though in her text the term ‘rhetorical’ scale appears as ‘argumentative’ scale (p. 7).

Semantic scales, also called quantitative scales (HORN, 1989, p. 231) were famously investigated by Horn (1972) and revisited in Horn (1989), but “the first comprehensive treatment of gradable (scalar) predicates is that in Sapir 1944” (HORN, 1989, p. 244). This phenomenon is defined by Horn (1989) as follows:

(...) quantitative scales are defined by entailment; P_j outranks P_i on a given scale if a statement containing an instance of the former unilaterally entails the corresponding statement containing the latter. As examples of such scales, I can cite those in (47), where (... , P_j P_i ...) indicates that $P_j > P_i$, that is, that P_j outranks (is stronger than) P_i on the relevant scale” (p. 231).

The examples in (47) which Horn (1989) mentions are the following:

<all, most, many, some>	<always, usually, often, sometimes>
<and,or>	<..., 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1>
<must, should, may>	<necessary, (logically) possible>
<certain, {probable/likely}, possible>	<obligatory, permitted>
<boiling, hot, warm>	<freezing, cold, cool, (lukewarm)>
<beautiful, pretty, attractive>	<hideous, ugly, unattractive, plain>
<adore, love, like>	<loathe, hate, dislike>
<excellent, good, OK>	<{terrible/awful}, bad, mediocre>

HORN (1989, p. 232)

Analyzing one of the examples above, which also appears in Horn (1972), if there is the ‘more than’ scale <cool – cold – freezing>, a statement such as “it’s freezing tonight” entails “it’s cold tonight”, but not vice versa, in a way that “it is generally inappropriate to employ the ‘weaker’ term from the left when the ‘stronger’ term from the right applies as well, or – more exactly – when we *know* that the stronger applies” (HORN, 1972, p. 48). If, however, one employs the stronger word in a context in which actually only the weaker one would be appropriate, then the utterance is overstated.

Pragmatic scales, discussed by Fauconnier (1975), refer to pragmatic assumptions made by the interlocutors in a conversation. In a statement such as “The faintest noise bothers my uncle” (p. 361), for instance, one can assume that if a faint noise bothers someone, it implicates that a loud one will as well, based on previous extralinguistic

knowledge which the interlocutors share. This idea can be expressed by means of “a pragmatic scale, ranging from faint to loud, along the dimension noise, (...) associated with the predicate bother” (FAUCONNIER, 1975, p. 361):

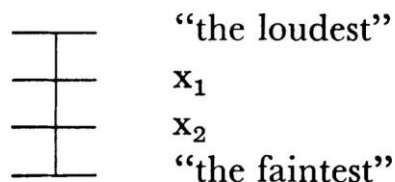


Figure 2 – Pragmatic scale
 Source: Fauconnier, (1975, p. 361)

Therefore, as can be seen in Figure 2, considering two noises, x_1 and x_2 , being x_1 louder than x_2 and consequently occupying a higher position on the scale, if it is true that x_2 bothers y , it will also be true that x_1 bothers y , because the former predicate entails the latter. This leads to the conclusion that “if a proposition is true for the lowest element on the scale, it will be true for all the elements on the scale” (p. 361). In this context, it would be exaggerated to employ a lower element on the scale when in fact only a higher one would be accurate.

Finally, rhetoric (or argumentative) scales (DUCROT, 1973) are concerned with the argumentative strength of statements. This can be seen in the following utterances:

- (a) You should take a jacket with you.
- (b) It’s cold, you should take a jacket with you.
- (c) It’s freezing, you should take a jacket with you.

In (a), (b) and (c), the speaker aims to persuade his or her interlocutor to take a jacket along, having (a) as the basic premise. Therefore, (b) and (c) are arguments in favor of (a), in a way that if (c) is true, (b) is also true, but not vice versa. This means that (c) is a higher assertion than (b) and consequently a stronger argument. Accordingly, if someone states (c) in a context in which only (b) would be appropriate, it is possible to infer that a hyperbole was used in order to increase the strength of the argument which would ultimately convince the interlocutor to take a jacket with him or her.

2.2. Conversation analysis

Conversation analysis (CA) originated from an approach to sociology called *ethnomethodology*, a term proposed by Garfinkel (1967) which refers to the study of practical social actions as “ongoing accomplishments of organized artful practices of everyday life” (p. 11), observing the matter emically,¹⁹ from the point of view of the members of that society, or, more specifically, as Heritage (1984) puts it:

(...) the body of common-sense knowledge and the range of procedures and considerations by means of which the ordinary members of society make sense of, find their way about in, and act on the circumstances in which they find themselves. (p. 4)

CA emerged then as a form of ethnomethodological research and was developed from the idea that talk, formerly seen as chaotic and random, is actually an organized social system which allows formal description (p. 235). Moreover, conversations are not just a means of conveying messages or expressing one’s thoughts, but also a natural interactional activity which engages two or more individuals of a given culture²⁰ in order to achieve efficient communication. Therefore, CA aims to investigate and interpret the underlying system of naturally occurring conversation, namely the “organized procedures, methods and resources which are tied to the contexts in which they are produced, and which are available to participants by virtue of their membership in a natural language community” (HUTCHLY; WOOFFITT, 1998, p. 1).

Regarding the methodological procedures of CA, the material for analysis conventionally and preferably consists of audio recordings (and more recently, videos) of authentic discourse,²¹ which take place spontaneously and without interference of the researchers (DURANTI, 1997, p. 247). Kasper (2008, p. 286) points out, however, that in some situations it may be difficult for researchers to collect authentic discourse data for various reasons and because of that they might opt to record arranged interactions instead. In either way, conversations are collected and transcribed so as to provide a written representation of talk which can be revisited and systematically analyzed. The transcripts should represent talk as faithfully as possible, in the manner that it has been

19 Emic is a term from anthropology used here as opposed to etic. An emic approach takes into consideration the perspective of the participants of a system on the social actions according to what they show to one another. The etic research, on the other hand, is conducted from a point of view which is external to the social system. (GARCEZ, 2008, p. 24).

20 The concept of culture will be dealt with here in Section 2.3.

21 See Kasper (2008, p. 282-286) for more detail.

originally produced, “not as it might have been intended or as it ‘should’ have been produced” (HEPBURN; BOLDEN, 2013, p. 58) (see Section 3 for more detail on methodological procedures). This means that it is a fundamental principle of CA that “nothing in talk-in-interaction should be dismissed as trivial or uninteresting before we have subjected it to analysis” (HUTCHBY; WOOFFITT, 1998, p. 23).

Conversation analysis is nowadays a fruitful area of study and much research in different disciplines such as linguistics, psychology and anthropology has been done within this field (HERITAGE, 1984, p. 233). Considering, however, that CA studies conversation on its own regard and focuses on its social actions and mechanisms, it must be noted that in this study CA will be used as a means, not an end. That is to say that the interactional system of the conversations will be described here as to understand under which circumstances hyperbole is produced and moreover, what the reception of the other interlocutors is.

2.2.1. Key concepts in conversation analysis

One of the most widespread founding texts in CA (GARCEZ, 2008, p. 17) was written by Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974) and discussed the organization of **turn-taking** in conversation, namely the systematics which is responsible for establishing that each speaker has their turn in talk and that one party talks at a time, even though there is usually no size or ordering of turns defined beforehand. Their work showed that the succession of speakers “was just as orderly as sequences of phonemes studied by phonologists and sequences of words studied by syntacticians” (DURANTI, 1997, p. 248). This was based on the idea of **sequentiality** in conversations, which highlights how an utterance produced in discourse is connected to another one previously spoken. (SACKS, 1992, p. 3-4). Both these terms are fundamental for the analysis of talk and led to other important concepts of conversation phenomena related to the turn-taking system which I will now present as a foundation of the analysis to be carried out in Section 4.

Adjacency pairs: They are units of exchange occurrences which, as the term suggests, come in pairs. The first pair part elicits (or provides a slot for) a second pair part from another speaker, performing together, therefore, actions such as “question-answer, offer-acceptance, greeting-greeting” (LEVINSON, 2013, p. 107). According to Schegloff and Sacks (1973, p. 74), adjacency pair sequences exhibit five features:

1. two utterance length;
2. adjacent positioning of component utterances;
3. different speakers producing an utterance;
4. relative ordering of parts (i.e., first pair parts precede second pair parts);
5. discriminative relations (i.e., the pair type of which a first pair part is a member is relevant to the selection among second pair parts).²²

Footing: The term was proposed by Goffman (1981) and refers to the features a speaker shows in conversation as to project his or her self, and his or her social position. It is expected, for instance, that a teacher, a president or a flight attendant should behave in a certain way in certain circumstances, but their conversational etiquette may change when they are in a familiar environment instead of a professional one. Footing can be set by means of pitch, tone, posture or register/language/dialect used, among other strategies. Footing shifts are possible to occur when a speaker needs to change his or her attitude in the conversation, whether because the interlocutors have been altered or because another social role is demanded from the speaker.

Overlapping talk: It is the simultaneous talk of two or more speakers. Overlapping talk is usually short, because a primary feature of the turn-taking system is to organize talk as to minimize gaps and overlaps (SACKS; SCHEGLOFF; JEFFERSON, 1974).

Repair: In conversation, conversational errors, inaccuracies, misunderstandings and violations can be corrected by means of repair mechanisms (SACKS; SCHEGLOFF; JEFFERSON, 1974, p. 723). A speaker may repair something in his or her own contribution (self-repair) or repair something said by someone else (other-repair) in an action which usually takes place within three turns of the trouble source (i.e., the point in conversation which needs to be repaired) (POMERANTZ; FEHR, 171). Despite the fact that the terms ‘correction’ and ‘repair’ may appear in some contexts as synonyms, Loder (2008), based on the ideas of Jefferson (1987), states that in conversation analysis they should not be used interchangeably, because repair is a broader concept whose mechanisms may or may not involve correction (which implies switching a sound, a word or a phrase for another). On the other hand, it is also possible to correct someone without

²² These features are being cited *ipsis litteris* from Schegloff and Sacks (1973, p. 74). Nevertheless, they do not appear at once nor in topics, which is why their display do not follow the same pattern of the other direct quotations in this thesis.

performing an interactional action for that specific purpose (that is, with no repair involved).

Preferred/dispreferred responses: This term was introduced by Pomerantz (1984). According to Duranti (1997, p. 260), in conversation, there are social and conversational behaviors that speakers consider normal or expected from one another. Courses of action that one is expected to take in reaction to a given contribution are called preferred responses, as opposed to dispreferred ones. It is important to note, though, that the term is used within the sequence- and turn-organizational structure of conversation, not to psychological features of participants (SCHEGLOFF; JEFFERSON; SACKS, 1977, p. 362). Heritage (1984, p. 268) sets out a table containing some instances of preferred and dispreferred responses to common social actions, which can be seen below:

Action	Preferred Format Response	Dispreferred Format Response
Request	Acceptance	Refusal
Offer/invitation	Acceptance	Refusal
Assessment	Agreement	Disagreement
Self-deprecation	Disagreement	Agreement
Accusation/blaming	Denial	Admission

Table 2 – Preference format of some selected action types
Source: Heritage (1984, p. 269)

In accordance with Table 2, Heritage (1984) also states that preferred responses are usually affiliative (that is, they align with the position of the performer of the original action) and “supportive of social solidarity” (p. 269), whereas dispreferred actions tend to be disaffiliative and “destructive of it [social solidarity]” (p. 269). That means that a person who makes a request, for instance, generally expects an acceptance of that request. If the other participant refuses the request, however, it is possible that he or she will have to justify the refusal,²³ because this response diverges from the standard social procedure. On the other hand, if someone speaks ill of his or herself, it is expected that the interlocutors disagree with the self-deprecating opinion in order to protect the first

²³ This is connected to the idea of accountability, according to which the participants of a social action are required to act in such a way that their actions are justifiable to their conversational partners (LODER; SALIMEN; MÜLLER, 2008, p. 48).

speaker's face.²⁴ Because of this close connection between preferred/dispreferred responses and the social context in which a conversation takes place, Duranti (1997) states that "looking at preference structure is a way of getting to the heart of what makes language such a powerful instrument of culture" (p. 260).

Considering the discussions and concepts presented in this section, it is possible to understand how conversation analysis is also an investigation of culture-based instances and the effect socially established rules and mechanisms have in everyday talk. It is thus necessary to introduce a discussion about what it is considered here as culture and where this study stands in the field of cultural studies, which will be done in the following section.

2.3. Cross-cultural pragmatics

At the beginning of the 20th century, a period which is regarded as the dawn of modern linguistics, Saussure considered that the scope of the subject should be, among other things, "to determine the forces that are permanently and universally at work in all languages, and to deduce the general laws to which all specific historical phenomena can be reduced" (SAUSSURE, 1959, p. 6). The so-called structuralist approach to language, which Saussure developed, was later adopted by other fields in the humanities, such as anthropology/sociology, with Lévi-Strauss (2008; 2013),²⁵ who believed that the structural analysis in both sociology and linguistics seek "general laws"²⁶ in languages and societies (LÉVI-STRAUSS, 2008, p. 60-62) and "universal laws that govern the unconscious activity of the spirit" (p. 91-92),²⁷ because linguistic behavior is unconscious (p.89). In a later work, Lévi-Strauss (2013) states that "both in linguistics and anthropology, the structural method consists in locating invariable forms within different contents" (p. 306).²⁸ Although many other linguistic fields and approaches have been

24 "The term 'face' may be defined as the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact" (GOFFMAN, 1967). Goffman (1967) also discusses "protective maneuvers" that speakers perform in order to show respect and politeness (p. 16-18). Further discussions on politeness and face-work can also be found in Brown and Levinson (1987).

25 The quotations by Lévi-Strauss presented here are based on the Portuguese translation by Beatriz Perrone-Moisés (2008; 2013), Professor of the Department of Anthropology at the University of São Paulo (USP).

26 "leis gerais" (p. 60).

27 "leis universais que regem a atividade inconsciente do espírito".

28 "Tanto em linguística quanto em antropologia, o método estrutural consiste em localizar formas invariantes no seio de conteúdos diferentes".

founded and developed since Saussurean structuralism, the pursuit of general linguistic principles that apply to humankind as a species influenced many subsequent studies both in social science and language – and consequently also in pragmatics, which sought mainly and continuously for the “universals of politeness” and for the “universal maxims of conversation” (WIERZBICKA, 2003, p. v), considering that conversation phenomena could be interpreted pan-culturally (WIERZBICKA, 2006, p. 394).

In the two last decades of the century, however, universalistic approaches in the field of pragmatics started to face opposition of researchers who saw “culture as a key factor determining ways of speaking, and (...) who ventured to link language-specific ways of speaking with different cultural values” (WIERZBICKA, 2003, p. vi). This culture-bound perspective is called ‘cross-cultural pragmatics’ and is based on four principles, namely:

1. In different societies and different communities, people speak differently.
2. These differences in ways of speaking are profound and systematic.
3. These differences reflect different cultural values or at least different hierarchies of values.
4. Different ways of speaking, different communicative styles, can be explained and made sense of, in terms of independently established different cultural values and cultural priorities. (p. 69)

In order to address the culture-specific issues of each language, Wierzbicka (2003) avoids employing terms such as ‘formal’, ‘informal’, ‘direct’, ‘indirect’, ‘self-assertion’, ‘sarcasm’, ‘compliment’ and ‘understatement’, on the grounds that they are excessively “anglocentric” and that in many cases they have no direct equivalent in other languages. The author also opposes to what she believes to be a universal, but at the same time anglocentric,²⁹ treatment of maxims of conversation and politeness, and the concept of ‘face’, especially in the works of Grice (1975), Leech (1983) and Brown and Levinson (1987). She starts developing then what was later called the theory of cultural scripts (GODDARD; WIERZBICKA, 2004). This theory holds that pragmatic phenomena should be explained using around 60 concepts which, according to this perspective, are universal or nearly universal, that is, which have equivalents in all or nearly all languages known, which are shown below in Table 3.

²⁹ See, for example, the following extract: “There would of course be nothing wrong in focussing on universals rather than on culture-specific aspects of language usage - if the search for universals is undertaken from a truly universalist, culture-independent position. But as a number of recent studies have shown, the basic conceptual tools introduced and relied on by Brown and Levinson (in particular, the notion of ‘face’) have in fact a strong anglocentric bias.” (WIERZBICKA, 2003, p. 67)

Substantives	I, YOU, SOMEONE/PERSON, SOMETHING/THING, PEOPLE, BODY
Relational substantives:	KIND, PART
Determiners:	THIS, THE SAME, OTHER/ELSE
Quantifiers:	ONE, TWO, SOME, ALL, MUCH/MANY
Evaluators:	GOOD, BAD
Descriptors:	BIG, SMALL
Mental/experiential predicates:	THINK, KNOW, WANT, FEEL, SEE, HEAR
Speech:	SAY, WORDS, TRUE
Actions, events, movement:	DO, HAPPEN, MOVE
Existence and possession:	THERE IS/EXIST, HAVE
Life and death:	LIVE, DIE
Time:	WHEN/TIME, NOW, BEFORE, AFTER, A LONG TIME, A SHORT TIME, FOR SOME TIME, MOMENT
Space:	WHERE/PLACE, HERE, ABOVE, BELOW, FAR, NEAR, SIDE, INSIDE, TOUCHING
Logical concepts:	NOT, MAYBE, CAN, BECAUSE, IF
Augmentor, intensifier:	VERY, MORE
Similarity:	LIKE (AS, HOW)

Notes: * primes exist as the meanings of lexical units (not at the level of lexemes) * exponents of primes may be words, bound morphemes, or phrasemes * they can be formally, i.e. morphologically, complex * they can have different morphosyntactic properties, including word-class, in different languages * they can have combinatorial variants (allolexes) * each prime has well-specified syntactic (combinatorial) properties

Table 3 – Table of semantic primes
Source: Goddard; Wierzbicka (2004, p. 155)

Therefore, instead of analyzing language phenomena using “Anglo scripts” such as “personal autonomy” [A], “directive” [B] and “suggestion” [C] (p. 156), the theory of cultural employs scripts such as the following:

- [A] [people think like this:]
 when a person is doing something
 it is good if this person can think about it like this:
 ‘I am doing this because I want to do it
 not because someone else wants me to do it’
- [B] [people think like this:]
 when I want someone to do something
 it is not good if I say something like this to this person:
 ‘I want you to do it
 I think that you will do it because of this’
- [C] [people think like this:]
 when I want someone to do something
 it can be good if I say something like this to this person:
 ‘maybe you will want to think about it
 maybe if you think about it you will want to do it’

Figure 3 – Cultural scripts

Source: Goddard; Wierzbicka (2004, p. 156)

Leech (2014) harshly criticizes Wierzbicka’s (2003) position, especially regarding her remarks on his work (p. 82). He also affirms that he had never regarded his model of politeness as universal and that in his 1983 book he expressed his expectation that the paradigm he presented would “provide a framework in which contrastive studies of pragmalinguistic strategies can be undertaken” (LEECH, 2014, p. 82; LEECH, 1983, p. 231). Also, according to Leech (2014), a distinction between universalism, adopted by Brown and Levinson (1987), and relativism, adopted by Wierzbicka (2003), would be senseless nowadays, considering that it is “obvious”, considering both scientific and experiential evidence, that “politeness manifests itself in numerous guises according to the language and culture” (p. 83). He points out, however, that there should be “a common pattern shared by many languages and cultures” otherwise there could be no studies of politeness or face nor an international *Journal of Politeness Research* as the one that exists (p. 83).

Other authors that study specifically cross-cultural issues share the principles proposed by Wierzbicka (2003), but not necessarily her methods and scope. It is the case of Spencer-Oatey (2008), who employs the term ‘cross-cultural’ simply to refer to studies which use comparative data collected from two or more independent sets of individuals from different cultures, as opposed to ‘intercultural’ studies, in which the data consists of people from diverse cultural backgrounds interacting with one another (p. 6). This

definition is therefore connected to Leech's (2014) view in the sense that neither of them see problems in the terms and concepts of politeness and maxims *per se*.³⁰ In their point of view, therefore, this theoretical background can be employed in comparative linguistic studies as long as they take the interactants' cultural background into consideration. In other words, they do not hold that the concepts of politeness or maxims should not be used or are not valid, but that those concepts are culture-bound, sometimes language specific and, therefore, highly variable. What is polite, relevant, clear, true or informative, for instance, may change drastically from culture to culture. This thesis adopts Spencer-Oatey (2008) view on cross-cultural pragmatics, as well as her definition of culture itself, which is shown below:

Culture is a fuzzy set of basic assumptions and values, orientations to life, beliefs, policies, procedures and behavioural conventions that are shared by a group of people, and that influence (but do not determine) each member's behaviour and his/her interpretations of the 'meaning' of other people's behaviour. (p. 3)

Culture is therefore employed here as a complex concept which is intrinsically related to a wide range of aspects of social everyday life, but not in a way that members of a given group cannot differ or drift from what is usually the norm.

It is important to point out that both Wierzbicka (2003) and Spencer-Oatey (2008) use the term 'cross-cultural pragmatics' as referring to a field of linguistics which investigates conversation action i) taking into consideration the cultural framework of the speakers, ii) comparing how and in which aspects the usages of one group are similar or different from the other one and iii) analyzing the practical consequences of such similarities and dissimilarities in conversation exchanges and meaning conveyance. Therefore, some remarks and studies carried out by Wierzbicka (2003) remain interesting regardless of the terminological differences and will be considered here in the data analysis (see Section 4.2.2).

In the next section, I will introduce some concepts related to styles in talk, which provide an interesting perspective to a culturally-oriented study of talks-in-interaction and

³⁰ Leech (1983) proposed a Politeness Principle (PP) based on Grice's Cooperative Principle (CP). The Politeness Principle is subclassified into six maxims, which are not the same as Grice's. These maxims are (i) the Tact Maxim, (ii) the Generosity Maxim, (iii) the Approbation Maxim, (iv) the Modesty Maxim, (v) the Agreement Maxim and (vi) the Sympathy Maxim (LEECH, 2014, p. 35). Even though these concepts are interesting and worth investigating, they will not be dealt with in this thesis for scope reasons.

which will offer a sounder base to the comparative analyses of German and Brazilian behavior in conversation which will be conducted here.

2.4. Communicative/conversational styles

Speech or conversational styles (TANNEN, 2005) are the way speakers behave in conversation, not just regarding footing (see Section 2.2.1), but also their natural characteristics. As Tannen (2005) puts it,

Anything you say must be said at a certain rate, at a certain pitch and amplitude, with certain intonation, at a certain point in an interaction. All of these and countless other choices determine the effect of an utterance in interaction and influence judgments that are made both about what is said and about the speaker who says it. All of these and countless other necessary choices determine a speaker's style. In other words, style is not something extra added on like frosting on a cake. It is the stuff of which the linguistic cake is made. (p. 13-14)

Therefore, any choice that speakers make in conversation, whether conscious or not, as well as any behavior displayed when they interact with other human beings is considered a style. Tannen (2005, p. 17) holds that styles are a result of the continuous use of linguistic devices motivated by strategies called Rules of Rapport (or Rules of Politeness), introduced by Lakoff (1973 *apud* TANNEN, 2005, p. 17). According to this view, these strategies are a universal, broader logic which speakers follow when they choose to employ specific linguistic mechanisms in order to establish connection and understanding in interaction. **Table 3** shows the three Rules of Rapport as a logic principle, their definition and the stylistic effect they cause in discourse.

Rules of Rapport	Definition	Stylistic effect
1. Don't impose	There is a separation between the interactants or between them and their subject.	Distance
2. Give options	The speaker gives the option of decision to his or her interlocutor.	Deference
3. Be friendly	The speaker seeks closeness to his or her interlocutor. A person who tends to use R1 strategy (don't impose) might feel pushed by R3	Camaraderie

Table 4 – Rules of rapport
Source: Lakoff *apud* Tannen (2005, p. 17-18)

As can be seen, ‘Distance’ is the style of a speaker who wishes to avoid imposing his or her will on others. It can be employed in formal contexts and technical situations by form of an indirect expression of preference, for example (p. 17-18). ‘Deference’ is displayed in interaction when people choose not to make a choice on any given subject so as to give their interlocutor the opportunity to make the decision instead. Finally, ‘Camaraderie’ is the attempt to show closeness in interaction by means of devices such as touching, for instance. Style is thus a pursuit for rapport in one way or another, and the more people understand and share each other’s style and therefore their ways of conveying meaning without necessarily speaking them up explicitly, the more likely it is that they share background and context (p. 36).

Based on those ideas, Tannen (2005) describes two different kinds of styles. High-involvement is a closeness-oriented style and consists of a fast-paced speech, with fast turn taking and a low tolerance for silence, because it is regarded as lack of rapport. A speaker who exhibits this style also tends to change the topics of conversation abruptly and to show a preference for personal topics, expressive narrative strategies, storytelling and exaggeration of contributions by means of prosodic shifts and dramatizations rather than lexicalizations. Finally, high-involvement also consists of cooperative overlap and participatory listenership (p. 40-41). High-considerateness, on the other hand, is a style which leans towards the desire not to impose. It displays a slow-paced speech, a higher tolerance for silence, slower turn-taking, subtle humor and fewer narratives. Tannen (2005, p. 181-182) also defined some features which allow a systematic identification and analysis of style in interactions.

1. Relative personal focus on topic	–
2. Paralinguistic features (absolute use and use of marking shifts)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. loudness b. pitch c. causes d. voice quality and tone
3. Expectation that enthusiasm be overtly demonstrated, for example, through	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. quickness of response b. paralinguistic features c. free offer of related material d. use of questions (information, echo, etc.)
4. Use of questions, including	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. echo questions as back-channel

5. Pacing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. information questions a. cooperative versus obstructive overlap b. timing of contribution, relative to previous contribution c. rate of speech d. floor-getting devices (increased amplitude, repetition of words)
6. Use of repetition, for example	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. to finish another's statement or add to another's line of argument b. to incorporate another's offer into original statement or argument
7. Topic cohesion (and tolerance for diffuse topics)	–
8. Tolerance for noise versus silence	–
9. Laughter (when, how much)	–

Table 5 – Summary of style features
Source: Tannen (2005, p. 181-182)

Spencer-Oatey (2008) also addresses styles, which she calls not “conversational” like Tannen (2005), but “communicative”. In her view, styles are fundamentally connected to two Sociopragmatic interactional principles (SIPs) (p. 16), namely ‘equity’ and ‘association’. ‘Equity’ is the belief that others should treat us fairly and respect our personal space and autonomy. It is linked with “individualism and to an independent construal of self” (p. 16). ‘Association’, on the other hand, is the belief that we should be socially involved with other people and is related to “collectivism and to an interdependent”, social construal of self (p. 16).

Among the pairs of possibilities for different styles presented by Spencer-Oatey (2008), it is interesting to highlight the ‘expressiveness-restraint’ one (p. 28-29). Taking into consideration the work of Scollon and Scollon (1995 *apud* Spencer-Oatey, 2008), the expressive style is considered to display some linguistic strategies such as attempting to notice and show care for the hearer, exaggerating interest, approval or sympathy for the hearer, claiming in-group membership with the hearer, being optimistic, assuming hearer’s wants and needs, claiming a common point of view and using given names and nicknames. By contrast, the restrained style displays strategies such as avoiding assumptions about hearer’s wants, apologizing, being pessimistic, dissociating speaker and hearer from discourse, giving hearer option not to do the act and using family names and titles (p. 29).

Regarding Brazilians and Germans specifically, Schröder (2003; 2005) points out that the communicative style of the Brazilians she interviewed tended to be more expressive and that the subjects usually expressed their emotions by dramatizing their talk. According to her, they also stressed the phatic function of speech by accentuating the socially shared experience that creates a social bond between interlocutors and between interlocutor and society. In this sense, presenting the proper self in terms of originality in speech was not their primary goal and it was rather common to reproduce current wisdom, which is why this style is compared to an actor playing a role on stage according to a well-known script. On that regard, Schröder (2008) states that “Dramaturgy, exaggeration, quoting proverbs and lecturing about life are all stylistic means that obey public rules and that are ritualized to a high degree in Brazil” (p. 307-308).³¹ In contrast, the conversational style of the Germans interviewed by Schröder (2003; 2005) tended to be, still using theatrical metaphors, more similar to the one of a spectator, that is, someone who tries to distance themselves from the social action of conversation (or from the action that happens on stage). A spectator seeks therefore authenticity and individuality in conversation and objectiveness is valued over emotional involvement.

31 “Dramaturgia, exageros, citar provérbios e palestrar sobre a vida são todos meios estilísticos que obedecem a regras públicas e que são ritualizados em alto grau no Brasil.” (p. 307-308)

3. METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

The methodology regarding data collection and data processing to be presented in this section is consonant with the standard procedures for analyses of interactions adopted by the *Núcleo de Estudos de Comunicação (Inter-)Cultural em Interação* (NUCOI),³² coordinated by Professor Ulrike Schröder at the Faculty of Humanities of the Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG) in Belo Horizonte, Brazil. Until August 2016, NUCOI was a smaller research group named *Comunicação (Inter-)Cultural em Interação*,³³ so that this thesis began to be carried out as part of the latter, but all ongoing projects of the previous group were automatically transferred to the new one. This means that at the present time the research described here is a constituent of the work of NUCOI, which is currently developing a larger research project named *Conceitos (inter-)culturais chave na interface entre interação, cognição e variação*.³⁴

The data for this study consists of two elicited conversations, a term which “refers to any conversation staged for the purpose of data collection” (KASPER, 2008, p. 287), as opposed to authentic discourse and role play. In this study, the participants have been requested to talk about specific topics determined by the researcher, which also falls into a subcategory of elicited conversations, namely conversation tasks (KASPER, 2008, p. 287), although they were free to discuss any other topics they wished throughout the interaction. They have been recorded in audio and video and transcribed according to the GAT 2 transcription conventions (SELTING et al., 2011), as will be seen later in this section. Each conversation involved three participants, all of them Germans in the first interaction and all of them Brazilians in the second one. As the data collection involved human subjects, even though taking part in the research was not potentially harmful to the participants, it was necessary to apply for a research permit issued by the *Comitê de Ética em Pesquisa* (COEP),³⁵ which has been done.

32 Research Group for (Inter-)Cultural Communication in Interaction

33 (Inter-)Cultural Communication in Interaction

34 (Inter-)cultural key concepts in the interface between interaction, cognition and variation. Further information on the research developed by NUCOI can be found on NUCOI website at <www.lettras.ufmg.br/nucleos/nucoi/>.

35 Commission of Research Ethics

3.1. The interactions

3.1.1. Equipment and place of interaction

Both conversations have been recorded in a soundproof room in the laboratory of *Centro de Estudos da Fala, Acústica, Linguagem e Música (CEFALA)*,³⁶ located in the Engineering building at UFMG. All the equipment, which consisted of two iPads for audio recording and two cameras for videotaping, has been set up with the assistance of Professor Hani Camille Yehia, one of the coordinators of CEFALA, who has experience in audio-recorded data collection. The audios have been recorded in WAV PCM 44kHz, a format which “retains most of the original, uncompressed audio information” (CASTELAN; KHODJA, 2015, p. 51). The videos have been recorded in Full HD, in a proportion of 1920 x 1080 pixels and 30 frames per second. The format of the videos was the standard option of the camera, namely MTS. All these conditions have been defined in order to obtain the best audio and video quality possible.

As the participants arrived at the laboratory of CEFALA, they were introduced to the soundproof room, where water and snacks were made available in order to make the subjects feel at ease and comfortable. There were also three chairs, one for each participant, on which they could sit as they pleased. Other objects in the room included some equipment belonging to CEFALA which had no relation to this study.

Before the interactions started to be filmed, all subjects were informed that i) they were supposed to have a normal conversation with each other, ii) they would find conversation topics in their mother tongue in the cards and anyone could pick a card at any time and read the topics to the others, iii) they were free to talk about other topics as well, iv) using all the cards was not compulsory, v) the interaction was meant to last for approximately one hour, but they could end the conversation and leave at any time, vi) their language use and opinions were not being judged, so they could behave naturally, vii) they were supposed to use their first language to communicate and their knowledge of a foreign language was not being analyzed. Then, they were left alone to proceed with the interaction as they pleased. There was no interference from the researcher, apart from one interruption to hand more water/snacks to the participants in each of the interactions. The recordings of such interruptions were discarded.

36 Center for Research on Speech, Acoustics, Language and Music

3.1.2 Cards and conversation topics

Apart from the recording equipment in the room, there were also cards containing conversational topics to be discussed by the subjects. These cards were designed so as to stimulate participants to converse about their feelings and have been inspired by Aristotle's idea that the use of hyperbole is connected to the emotions of the speaker or to the sentiments that he wishes to arouse in his interlocutors (see Section 2.1). Accordingly, out of the ten cards offered to the participants, eight intended to elicit emotions and two – namely the first ones – were icebreakers aimed at making the participants introduce themselves to the others and feel relaxed. The feelings that the cards were supposed to elicit³⁷ are mostly a variation of some of the emotions found in Aristotle (*Rhetoric*, II, 1-11). This modification was necessary so as to allow the topics to be more casual (e.g. talking about embarrassment is more casual than talking about shame and dishonor). The emotions that have been dealt with in the cards, as well as their Aristotelian inspirations can be seen as follows:

- **Anger.** According to Bini (2013, p. 123), the word Aristotle uses (οργης, or *orges*) has the specific meaning of wrath, but also carries the sense of inner emotional unsettlement and can be understood likewise as indignation, irritation and/or anger. In the *Rhetoric*, wrath is said to be “always” felt towards someone rather than towards mankind and for the reason that the person “has done or intended to do something to him [to the individual who experiences the feeling] or one of his friends”. This emotion also carries “a certain pleasure which arises from the expectation of revenge” (ARISTOTLE, *Rhetoric*, II, 2). In this study, however, the concept of anger that led to the question in the card is closer to the meaning this word has nowadays, namely of annoyance or irritation.
- **Love.** In Aristotle, it is described as a broad feeling of friendship (Φιλία, or *filia*) rather than sexual attraction (ερωσ, or *eros*) (BINI, 2013, p. 132-133), but the card which elicits love is based on the concept of romantic/erotic love because of the important role it has been playing in Western society since the Middle Ages (ROUGEMONT, 1988).

³⁷ Each card has a specific emotion to be elicited, but this is a concept for the research itself. The participants had no access to this information and the only text in the cards in the moment of the interaction were the questions of the conversation topics.

- **Benevolence.** In ancient Greek, the concept of ‘benevolence’ (χαρις or *kharis*) is very broad, meaning to wish someone well and to do good things, and also grace, favor, tolerance, agreement and reward (BINI, 2013, p. 147). Aristotle (*Rhetoric*, II, 7) defines this term as being helpful to someone without expecting anything in return, which is also the meaning used in this study, even though the question about benevolence addresses the desire to be helpful (wish someone well) rather than a concrete action (do good things) (see Sections 3.1.3 and 3.1.4).
- **Compassion.** Aristotle describes it as a “feeling of pain caused by the sight of some evil, destructive or painful, which befalls one who does not deserve it, and which we might expect to befall ourselves or some friend of ours” (*Rhetoric*, II, 8). According to him, compassion is especially powerful when an individual can relate to the person who is suffering, because “what we fear for ourselves excites our pity when it happens to others” (*Rhetoric*, II, 8). So as to differentiate the question about compassion from the one about benevolence, the question in the compassion card focused on the feelings participants experience when asked about the (social/economic/academic) privilege they have and others do not.
- **Fear.** It “may be defined as a pain or disturbance due to a mental picture of some destructive or painful evil in the future” (ARISTOTLE, *Rhetoric*, II, 5). This fear is not a concern for others, but for oneself and also their family, namely parents, wife and children (*Rhetoric*, II, 8).
- **Embarrassment.** Shame is a feeling described by Aristotle as the pain which an individual experiences when he acknowledges his bad actions and knows that these actions are to his discredit (*Rhetoric*, II, 6) or bring dishonor upon him. When the question of the card was being formulated, it was decided to change shame, which is indeed a painful and perhaps deep feeling, to embarrassment, something more casual and potentially amusing to the speakers.
- **Calmness.** Aristotle holds that calmness is the opposite of anger. It can be related to the feeling of calming down after being annoyed or after obtaining revenge. It can also be the state of mind that come when people are “enjoying freedom from pain, or inoffensive pleasure, or justifiable hope” (*Rhetoric*, II, 3). The latter concept was the one used to formulate the question contained in the card of calmness. Also, calmness has been thought as opposed to stress rather than anger.

- **Admiration.** Aristotle (*Rhetoric*, II, 11) writes about emulation, which is a good kind of envy. An envious man feels pain when others have things he does not or cannot have, whereas a man who experiences emulation feels pain only because he does not have the things he desires yet. Thus, emulation serves as an inspiration to an individual to achieve his goals. In this way, this concept has been used in the sense of admiration when formulating the question of the card.

According to the aforementioned selection of feelings to be elicited in the cards and their respective adaptations, the cards were designed as to contain one long question or several short questions/icebreakers. In both the Brazilian and the German interactions, the cards were placed on a spot which granted all participants equally easy access to them. The order of the cards also remained the same for both conversations. The structure of the cards can be seen in Sections 3.1.3 and 3.1.4, which discuss the German and the Brazilian interactions individually.

3.1.3 The German interaction

Due to the difficulty in finding German subjects in Brazil, their interaction was the first one to be filmed, so that it was possible to invite Germans to the research without outlining a specific subject profile. Then, in order to ensure that one interaction could be linked and compared to the other in a reliable way, the Brazilian subject profile was outlined so as to match the ones of the individuals who had already taken part in the research. There was nevertheless an aspect to be verified when selecting the German subjects, namely how long they had been in Brazil – the less, the better -, so as to exclude variables related to a possible interference of a foreign language (in this case, Portuguese) in their mother tongue. Ultimately, the three subjects who agreed to take part in the research were two female exchange students and a male DAAD³⁸ visiting lecturer. Their profile is as follows in Table 6:

Code name	Gender	Place of birth	Age	Occupation	Field of study	Time in Brazil
A1	Male	Werneck, Germany	41	Professor	Languages	1 year 9 months
A2	Female	Schaffhausen, Germany	28	Student	Languages	2 months

³⁸ Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (German Academic Exchange Service). Further information on the organization can be found at DAAD website at <<https://www.daad.org/en/>>.

Table 6 – The German participants

In order to protect the participants’ identities and also as a standard procedure of NUCOI, their names have been changed to a code formed by the letter A followed by a number from 1 to 3. A stands for *alemão* (German, in Portuguese), a reference to their nationality, and the numbers are related to the seat each participant occupied in the room at the moment of the interaction. The arrangement of the German subjects is shown in Figure 4:

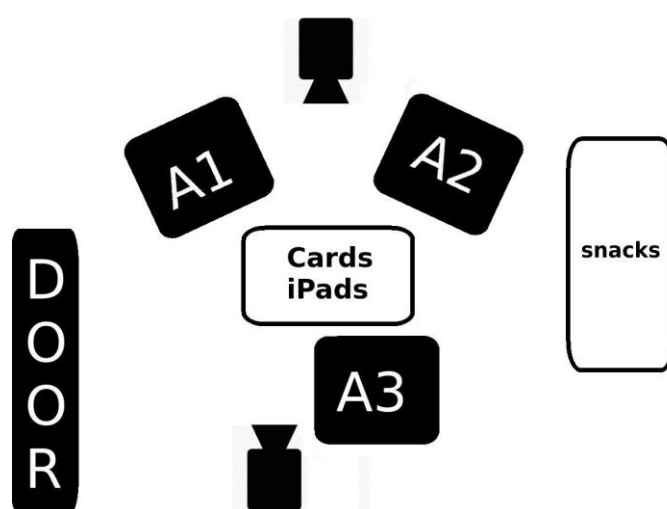


Figure 4 – Arrangement of the German participants

The German conversation took place on May 04th 2016 at 15.00 and the video of the interaction is 01 hour, 03 minutes and 19 seconds long. The participants used all the cards available and ended the conversation after discussing the topic of the last card. The structure of the cards can be seen in Table 7, which shows the conversation topics in German, as well as their English translation and the function that each of the cards has in the data collection, namely the feelings that they are supposed to elicit or, in the case of the two first cards, the function of breaking the ice.

Functions of the cards	Questions in German	English translation
Icebreaker	Wie heißt du? Woher kommst du? Wie alt bist du? Was studierst du?/ Was machst du beruflich?	What is your name? Where are you from? How old are you? What do you study? What do you do professionally?

Icebreaker	Was machst du gern in deiner Freizeit? Welche Musik hörst du gerne? Was ist dein Lieblingsfilm? Was ist deine Lieblingsserie? Was ist dein Lieblingsbuch?	What do you enjoy doing in your free time? What kind of music do you like listening to? What is your favorite film? What is your favorite TV series? What is your favorite book?
Anger	Was ärgert dich am meisten? Ist dir in letzter Zeit etwas passiert, was dich verärgert hat? Wenn ja, was?	What makes you most angry? Have you been involved in situations which made you angry recently? What happened?
Love	Erzähl was über deine „erste Liebe“.	Tell [the others] something about your first love.
Benevolence	Ein großer Teil der Menschen weltweit hat nichts zu essen und auch keinen Zugang zum Gesundheitswesen, zu Bildung oder Wohnung. Was sind deiner Meinung nach die Gründe für die extreme Armut in der Welt? Gibt es etwas, was du tun kannst, um die Situation zu ändern?	A large number of people in the world has nothing to eat and also no access to health care, education or housing. In your opinion, what is the reason for extreme poverty in the world? Is there anything you can do to change this situation?
Compassion	Denkst du, dass du aufgrund der Dinge, zu denen du Zugang hast (und andere nicht), privilegiert bist?	Do you think that you are privileged because of the things that you have access to (and others do not)?
Fear	Europa erlebt heute eine steigende Angst vor Terroranschlägen. Glaubst du, dass diese Angst begründet ist?	Europa lives increasingly in fear of terror attacks. Do you believe that this fear is reasonable?
Embarrassment	Familie bringt einem sehr viel Freude, aber auch peinliche Situationen. Was ist das Peinlichste, was dir wegen deiner Familie jemals passiert ist? Und war dir wegen ihnen schon mal etwas peinlich?	Family brings a lot of joy, but also embarrassing situations. What is the most embarrassing situation you have been through because of your family or what was the most embarrassing moment you made someone from your family go through? What happened?
Calmness	Was machst du gegen Stress? Wie entspannst du dich im Alltag? Und in den Ferien/ im Urlaub? Warum sind solche Sachen entspannend?	What do you do to fight stress? How do you relax in your everyday life? And on vacation? Why are these things relaxing?
Admiration	Zu wem blickst du auf? Warum? Denkst du, dass du ein bisschen wie diese Person bist? Warum?	Who do you admire the most? Why? Do you consider to be somewhat like that person? Why?

Table 7 – Conversation topics made available to the German group

3.1.4. The Brazilian interaction

As already mentioned in Section 3.1, it was established for this research that the Brazilian participants should match the profile of the German subjects. At first, it was attempted to find individuals of identical age, occupation and field of study to the Germans. It was not possible to do so, although it was managed to gather subjects with a

fairly similar profile (see Section 3.1.5). Table 8 shows general information about the three selected Brazilian participants.

Code name	Gender	Place of birth	Age	Occupation	Field of study
B1	Female	Vespasiano, Brazil	19	Student	Languages
B2	Female	Belo Horizonte, Brazil	26	Unemployed/ Journalist	Communication
B3	Male	Belo Horizonte, Brazil	51	Professor	Communication

Table 8 – Brazilian participants

It should be noted that once again the names of the participants have been changed to a code, formed this time by the letter B followed by a number from 1 to 3. *B* stands for *brasileiro* (Brazilian, in Portuguese), a reference to their nationality, and the numbers correspond to the seat each participant occupied in the room at the moment of the interaction. The arrangement of the Brazilian subjects, as well as the other objects in the room, is shown in Figure 5:

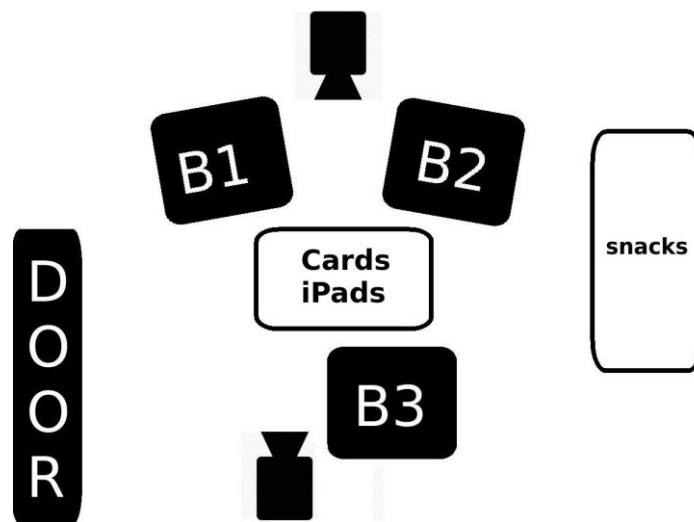


Figure 5 – Arrangement of the Brazilian participants

The Brazilian interaction took place on January 23rd, 2017 at 15.00 and the video lasted for 1 hour, 8 minutes and 54 seconds. The participants were not willing to end the conversation, but were driven to do so after the cameras beeped and they noticed that the footage might have been interrupted, which was accurate, because the memory cards inserted in the cameras had gotten full. Nevertheless, one of the cameras had beeped

before the other one, which ultimately led to a difference of 02m26s between the videos of that interaction. Considering, however, that the audio was still being recorded and the other camera was still filming, it was decided not to discard this data, even though the image of B1 and B2 on that period has been lost. The participants continued to chat even after the researcher entered the room and turned the equipment down. For this reason, the audio recorder on the iPad is significantly longer than the videos, but the extra material collected after the cameras had been shut down was discarded for the analysis.

Table 9 shows the content of the cards with the conversation topics, made available to the Brazilian participants during their conversation. Differently from the German group, they did not discuss all the cards, namely the fear, shame, calmness and emulation ones.

Emotion to be elicited	Question in Portuguese	English translation
Icebreaker	Como você se chama? De onde você é? Quantos anos você tem? O que você estuda? O que você faz profissionalmente?	What is your name? Where are you from? How old are you? What do you study? What do you do professionally?
Icebreaker	O que você gosta de fazer no seu tempo livre? Que tipo de música você gosta de ouvir? Qual é o seu filme favorito? Qual é a sua série favorita? Qual é o seu livro favorito?	What do you enjoy doing in your free time? What kind of music do you like listening to? What is your favorite movie? What is your favorite TV series? What is your favorite book?
Anger	O que deixa você com raiva? Você passou por situações que o deixaram com raiva ultimamente? O que aconteceu?	What makes you angry? Have you been involved in situations which made you angry recently? What happened?
Love	Conte sobre seu primeiro amor.	Talk about your first love.
Benevolence	Uma grande parte das pessoas do mundo não tem o que comer e não tem acesso a saúde, educação ou moradia. Na sua opinião, qual é a razão para a extrema pobreza no mundo? Há algo que você possa fazer para combatê-la?	A great part of people in the world does not have anything to eat and do not have access to healthcare, education or housing. In your opinion, what is the reason for the extreme poverty in the world? Is there anything you can do to fight against it?
Compassion	Você se sente privilegiado pelas coisas às quais tem acesso (e outros não)?	Do you feel privileged because of the things you have access to (and others do not)?
Fear	O Brasil vive, hoje, uma crise econômica, política e social. Qual é o seu maior medo em relação ao futuro do país? Por quê? Você acha que esse medo tem fundamento?	Brazil faces today an economic, political and social crisis. What is your biggest fear regarding the future of the country? Why? Do you believe that this fear is reasonable?
Embarrassment	A família é fonte de muitas alegrias na vida, mas também de muito constrangimento. Qual foi a maior	Family is the source of much joy, but also a lot of embarrassment. What is the most embarrassing situation you have

	vergonha que sua família já fez você passar ou qual foi a maior vergonha que você já os fez passar? O que aconteceu?	been through because of your family or what was the most embarrassing moment you made someone from your family go through? What happened?
Calmness	O que você faz quando está estressado e precisa se acalmar? Como você relaxa no seu cotidiano e como repõe suas energias durante as férias? Por que essas coisas o deixam mais calmo?	What do you do when you are stressed out and need to calm down? How do you relax in your daily routine and how to recharge your batteries on vacation? Why do these things make you feel calmer?
Admiration	Quem é a pessoa que você mais admira? Por quê? Você se considera um pouco como ela? Por quê?	Who do you admire the most? Why? Do you consider to be somewhat like that person? Why?

Table 9 – Conversation topics made available to the Brazilian group

3.1.5. Remarks on the comparability of the interactions

As already mentioned in Section 3.1.3, when selecting the Brazilian participants to take part in the research, it was essential to ensure that the interactions would be comparable with each other, so that it was attempted to reproduce the same conditions in both interactions as far as it was possible. It also meant searching individuals with similar characteristics in order to exclude as many biasing variables as possible. It is naturally impractical to obtain identical conditions in this kind of data collection, but even so, extra care has been taken with that regard.

The schema in Figure 6 shows the criteria which led to the selection of B1, B2 e B3 as Brazilian subjects, that is, their similarities to the German participants as individuals and as a group.



Figure 6 – German and Brazilian participants' profile comparison

In this way, A1's profile matches B3's in the extent that both are male university lecturers who are older than the other two female participants. B3, who is 51 years old, is nevertheless ten years older than A1, even though their age difference was not considered significant enough to exclude B3 from the list of possible subjects. A2's profile, on its turn, corresponds to B2's because of their similar age – A2 is 28 and B2 is 26 – and gender, despite their occupation dissimilarity. Finally, A3 and B1 are of similar age – A3 is 21 and B1 is 19 – and both of them are female college students. Another point in common in both groups is that the lecturer of the interaction teaches courses in the same field of study in which one of the other participants majored/is majoring. Also, all participants, German and Brazilians, study/have studied either Languages or Communication.

There were nevertheless some differences in profile. Apart from the ones already mentioned, it is a fact that all three Germans were living abroad at the moment of the interaction and, after the conversation, when they had to fill in and sign their Personal Information Sheets and Acceptance Terms (see Appendix A), all of them claimed to speak four or five foreign languages. They also come from different parts of Germany. The Brazilians, on the other hand, speak mostly fewer foreign languages – all of them claimed to speak two or three. Also, none of the Brazilian participants have lived abroad and all of them were born in the metropolitan area of Belo Horizonte. Nevertheless, these differences in the subjects profiles are not sufficient to hinder the study to be carried out here for three reasons: (i) each group was supposed to speak only in their own native language, (ii) this study proposes a cross-cultural analysis rather than an intercultural one (see Section 2.3), so that the intercultural competence of the participants is not the scope of this research, (iii) the word “Brazilian” is being employed as a counterpart of “German”, because it would not be practicable to compare Germans and Mineiros³⁹ and (iv) as already mentioned, this study aims to show a trend in the talk of three individuals of each nationality and compare the results rather than determine how Brazilians in general speak. Therefore, later quantitative research on the matter – especially using big corpora – may be able to provide more accurate information on the use of hyperboles by Brazilians.

39 Citizens of the Brazilian state of Minas Gerais.

3.2. Transcription

3.2.1. Transcription conventions

When a conversation takes place, it is impossible for the researcher to take notes of everything that is being said and done during the interaction, because spoken words, gestures and looks may appear and disappear too fast and at the same time. In this perspective, Duranti (1998) considers the term ‘transcription’ to be “the process of inscribing social action and transcript for the finished, although by no means definitive, product of such a process” (p. 137). The author adds that, in his point of view, inscribing is “a process whereby some of the characteristics of an action in real time and space (e.g. something someone said) are fixed into a record that will outlast the fleeting moment of real-life performance” (p. 137). In short, transcribing is preserving a moment that does not last so as to have it for future analysis and in order to do so, it is necessary to interpret the data and transform intangible social actions into written texts that are possible to be analyzed. Therefore, for Duranti (1998), the transcript is “itself a form of analysis” (p. 137). Accordingly, transcripts are not data *per se*, but a complement and a written representation of the data which has been previously collected. On that matter, Hepburn and Bolden (2013) state that “transcripts are necessarily selective in the details that are represented and thus are never treated by conversation analysts as a replacement for the data” (p. 57).

Considering these definitions, it is necessary to establish criteria and conventions that allow conversation analysts to represent social action in written form in a systematic way that fits their scope and methods of research, which is why the transcription system to be adopted in a given research should be chosen carefully. Furthermore, transcripts should be read and understood by other analysts and members of the scientific community, and not only by the researcher or group of researchers who transcribed the data.

In this study, the transcription system to be adopted is GAT 2 (SELTING et al., 2011),⁴⁰ a revised version of a previous system developed by a group of German researchers in 1998 (p. 1). It has been designed to be legible, unambiguous (i.e., each of the symbols represents only one phenomenon), iconic (i.e., to use non-arbitrary symbols as far as possible) and relevant (i.e., the system should describe phenomena which have

40 GAT is “an acronym which stands for *Gesprächsanalytisches Transkriptionssystem* (discourse and conversation-analytic transcription system)” (SELTING et al., p. 12)

been useful in previous research). Moreover, the system aims to represent non-verbal phenomena factually instead of interpretively. Another interesting feature of GAT 2 is its multilayer principle, or “onion skin”, which means that the discourse representation may vary in complexity according to the aim of the researcher. There are three possible types of transcript, namely minimal, basic and fine. In this thesis, I will use mostly the basic one, which represents not only the gestures and words that are being said, but also prosodic phenomena. I will also use some elements of the fine transcript which detail prosodic information, such as secondary accents and pitch variations.

In order to work with prosodic features of talk, GAT 2 subdivides the contribution of each speaker into smaller units called ‘intonation phrases’, which are “perceived as a single unit because of its cohesive pitch” (p. 18). Therefore, all intonation units need to have a final pitch movement which can rise, fall or remain at the same level. These units are noted taking only prosodic features into consideration and consequently they may or may not correspond entirely to syntactic units.

Regarding orthography, GAT 2 also has different levels of phonetic spelling detail, which means that a researcher may opt to use standard orthography in the transcriptions, to modify the spelling moderately, to transcribe the intonation phrases as “eye dialect” (p. 11) or even to use IPA⁴¹ symbols. For this research, I will use standard orthography, because dialectal phenomena will not be analyzed here. Finally, GAT 2 also does not allow hyphenation nor capital letters in words, for the reason that these are used for other occurrences. The most important GAT 2 transcription conventions according to Selting et al. (2011) can be found in Appendix B. **Excerpt (0)** shows an example which illustrates how the transcript fragments will be presented in this thesis.

Excerpt (0): ((Brazilians 00:00:10-00:00:19))

```
01  B2  quem quer comeÇAR,
      Who wants to start,
02      <<p> pode comeÇAR;>
      You can start;
03  B1  euPOS[so?          ]
      Can I?
04  B2      [<<nodding> hm_hm]
      hm, hm.
```

41 International Phonetic Alphabet, developed by the International Phonetic Association. Further information on the organization can be found at IPA website at <<https://www.internationalphonetic-association.org/>>.

05 B1 entÃ:õ: como vocÊ se CHAmA,
So what is your name,
06 → eu me chamo be:U:M,
My name is B1,
07 não precisa falar o nome compLEto né;
It's not necessary to say the full name, right;
08 B2 <<smiling> FA:la;>
Say it;

The header displays the number of the excerpt in the thesis, the title of the interaction (which is ‘Brazilians’ in this case) and the time of the video in which the dialog occurred. The lines are numbered according to the intonation phrases, not the contribution of each speaker. The name of the speakers come three spaces after the number of the line and the text starts three spaces after the name of the speaker. The arrow (→) represents relevant lines to the analysis and between each intonation phrase there is a free English translation for the readers’ convenience.

3.2.2. Transcription software

Transcribing data using only a text editor and a video/audio player is a laborious, unrewarding task. That was indeed my first experience with transcription in 2009 in the undergraduate research project which would later become NUCOI. Fortunately, as the project itself developed, different transcription applications were tested and ultimately EXMARaLDA (SCHMIDT; WÖRNER, 2014)⁴² was chosen as the standard tool of the research group (VITERBO LAGE, 2013). In 2015, I attended a minicourse on transcription methods and practice offered by Professor Ulrike Schröder and Mariana Carneiro Mendes⁴³ at FALE/UFMG and it became clear to me that the use of specific software is essential to transcribe interactions optimally. Therefore, due to the familiarity I have with EXMARaLDA, I will use it to transcribe the data for this research.⁴⁴

EXMARaLDA supports audio and video files which can be played, paused and repeated through the software. For WAV files, there is also an oscillogram which is useful

42 EXMARaLDA stands for “**Extensible Markup Language for Discourse Annotation**” (SCHMIDT; WÖRNER, 2014, p. 565)

43 Professor Ulrike Schröder and Mariana Carneiro Mendes are respectively head and assistant coordinator of NUCOI. Professor Schröder is my adviser and Ms. Mendes was then a doctoral candidate at UFMG.

44 EXMARaLDA is a software collection for *corpora* creation and management and its transcription tool is called Partitur-Editor. The other tools will not be used at this moment.

to identify pitch variations and measure the duration of pauses. The layout of the program can be seen in Figure 7.

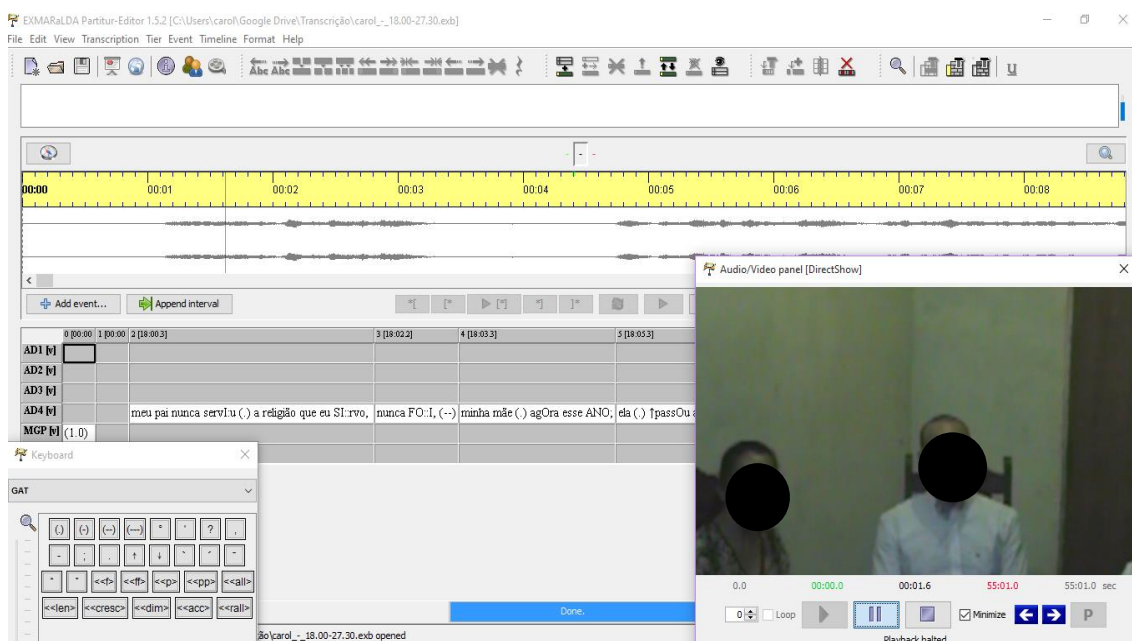


Figure 7 – Example of a Partitur-Editor screen.

As can be seen, the transcript is subdivided into tiers, one for each speaker,⁴⁵ and each contribution is placed according to the point it belongs on the timeline. According to the instructions document on EXMARaLDA website, “the fundamental unit in an EXMARaLDA transcription is the event. An event consists of a piece of text describing some incident in the transcribed recording” (UNDERSTANDING..., 2016, p. 2). In the transcriptions for this study, each event corresponds mostly to an intonation phrase, but in situations of overlapping, the events which extend along each other are separated from the rest of the units of each speaker.

At the end of the transcription process, the sections of transcripts which will be analyzed in the body text of this thesis will be exported to a .txt file, which will require minor formatting corrections so as to display a structure such as shown in Excerpt (0) (see Section 3.2.2). The complete transcript will also be made available on NUCOI website in the future.

⁴⁵ It is also possible to add tiers with other functions, such as gesture annotation, but it has not been done for this study.

3.3. Identification of hyperboles

Once the data collection and processing are done, the audios, videos and transcripts will be analyzed and the occurrences of hyperbole will be identified. The criteria for hyperbole identification to be adopted here are the ones proposed by McCarthy and Carter (2004) based on the concept of Extreme Case formulations (see Section 2.1.2) and also on previous studies on overstatement (Swartz, 1976; Norrick, 1982; Bhaya, 1985; Clark, 1996; Clift, 1999 *apud* McCarthy and Carter, 2004). Therefore, for an expression to be considered hyperbolic, it must fall into at least three of the eight categories shown in Table 10, which have been numbered so as to facilitate the analysis on Section 4, even though the numbers do not indicate any order of importance or priority.

Number	Criterion	Definition
1	Disjunction with context	The speaker's utterance seems at odds with the general context (e.g. when it is unlikely that a domestic do-it-yourself practitioner will drill 'hundreds' of holes in the wall of their apartment).
2	Shifts in footing (see Section 2.2.1)	There is evidence (e.g. discourse marking) that a shift in footing is occurring to a conversational frame where impossible worlds or plainly counterfactual claims may appropriately occur.
3	Counterfactuality	The listener accepts without challenge a statement which is obviously counterfactual (e.g. when a speaker asserts that there were millions of people in a shop).
4	Impossible worlds	Speaker and listener between them engage in the construction of fictitious worlds where impossible, exaggerated events take place (e.g. when speakers create an absurdly impossible world after a nuclear disaster).
5	Listener take-up	The listener reacts with supportive behaviour such as laughter or assenting back-channel markers and/or contributes further to the counterfactuality, impossibility, contextual disjunction.
6	Extreme Case formulations and intensification	The assertion is expressed in the most extreme way (e.g. adjectives such as 'endless', 'massive') and/or extreme intensifiers such as 'literally', 'nearly', 'totally' are used. These are not necessarily counterfactuals or absurd worlds, as many may be heard as (semi-) conventional metaphors (e.g. someone being absolutely covered in mud/grease/etc).
7	Syntactic support	Syntactic devices (e.g. polysyndeton, as in 'loads and loads and loads', or complex modification such as 'really great big long pole') are used to underline the amplification of the expression.

8	Relevant interpretability	The trope is interpretable as relevant to the speech act being performed and is interpreted as figurative within its context, though there may also be evidence of literal interpretations being exploited for interactive/affective purposes.
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Table 10 – Criteria for labeling hyperbole
Adapted from McCarthy; Carter (2004, p. 162-163)

After the process of hyperbole identification is over, the instances of hyperbole found in each language studied here were listed for my own control, together with the contexts in which they appear and the speaker who performs them. Subsequently, the hyperboles found in each interaction have been divided into three groups, namely (a) borderline occurrences, which may or may not be a hyperbole, (b) hyperboles with a high degree of context independence and (c) hyperboles with a low degree of context independence. The hyperbolic instances compiled in the list were then interpreted within their context, taking into consideration the implicatures, argumentation strategies and pragmatic features involved in their production. After that, I analyzed the relationship between overstatements and the communicative styles displayed by each group, especially regarding expressiveness and rapport (see Table 4). The latter was determined by means of the features of styles presented by Tannen (2005) and Spencer-Oatey (2008) (see Section 2.4).

Finally, the data, results and analyses of Brazilians and Germans were compared and the differences and similarities between the use of hyperboles by both groups were discussed under a cross-cultural pragmatic perspective.

4. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE DATA

In this Section, the hyperboles found in the conversations of both Brazilians and Germans will be discussed. First, a description of each interaction will be presented in order to introduce the general mood and atmosphere of the conversations. Then, some challenges and impediments regarding a potential quantitative analysis of overstatements will be discussed. Following that, different types and manifestations of hyperbole will be introduced and, finally, questions of rapport communicative styles and emotions will be addressed.

4.1. The interactions

An overall comprehension of the conversations is essential to understand the specificities which will be discussed from Section 4.2 onward. That being the case, the interactions will be described here regarding the participants' task management, topics discussed, duration of the discussions and general conversational features that the interactants displayed as a group. The German interaction will be presented first, considering that, as already mentioned in Section 3.1, it set the tone to the Brazilian one in many aspects.

4.1.1. The German interaction

The contemporary German language has two different singular address pronouns, namely “du”, familiar and more informal, and “Sie”, which shows politeness and a greater degree of formality. According to Brown and Gilman (1970), this system is present in many Indo-European languages, such as French, Spanish, Italian and, diachronically, Latin. In their study, these scholars proposed the symbols ‘T’ and ‘V’ (from the Latin forms “tu” and “vos”) to refer to these forms of address pronoun. Therefore, in the case of German, “du” would be the T form and “Sie”, the V form.

That being so, V forms reflect an asymmetry in social interactions regarding aspects such as power, age, work position etc. This means that, in the past, when social relationships were more power-oriented, there were more situations in which one speaker addressed the other with a T while his or her interlocutor answered with a V, for example. The present trend is, however, to seek symmetrical social attributes and use either a mutual T or a mutual V. In this case, the preference for one address form over the other

among equals may vary, therefore, according to the extent speakers relate to each other and see each other as members of the same group, which is called ‘solidarity’ (BROWN; GILMAN, 1970, p. 258). In an equal and not solidary relationship, such as in cases of social membership/position differences, a mutual V is preferred. On the other hand, in an equal and solidary relationship, a mutual T is preferred. A non-reciprocal address form is thus dispreferred in most cases. According to Kretzenbacher and Schüpbach et al. (2006), the T form is preferred in German among fellow students and individuals of similar age, whilst the V form is preferred to address professors and older people, even though in some cases there are conflicting rules and preferences that may lead to conflicts in conversation.

In the German interaction recorded for this study, interactants automatically used the T form to address one another, as can be seen in Excerpt (1). This extract shows the first seconds of interaction, in which the participants decide who picks the card first, read the first question and introduce themselves to one another.

Excerpt (1): ((Germans 00:00:01-00:00:14))

001 A1: <<laughing> oKAY;
Okay

002 dann nehmen wir halt von den lustigen KÄRTchen hier,>
Then let’s pick one of these funny little cards here

003 [((laughs))]

004 A2: [((laughs))] wissen wir am [WEnigstens worum] es
geht;
Let’s at least know what it’s about

005 → A3: [<<pp> du darfst ANfangen;>]
You can start

006 → A2: ((laughs)) du DARFST an[fangen;]
You can start

007 A1: [((laughs))] geNAU;
Right

008 mal gucken was es so spannendes GIbt,
Let’s see what’s exciting here

009 oKAY;

010 → <<reading aloud> wie HEIßt du,>
what’s your name?

011 (.)

012 → A2: A2;

013 (--)

014 → A1: und DU,
And you

015 (.)

016 → A3: A3;
 017 (.)
 018 → A1: ich bin A1;
 I'm A1

Considering that A2 and A3 had already met before the interaction took place, were in a class together and are of similar age, a preference for the T form is expected, as mentioned before. Their choice to address A1 as “du” in lines 005 and 006 is not, however, necessarily so straightforward, because A1 is their senior and also a professor at the University, two aspects which might have led them to prefer the V form. Still, at that moment neither A2 nor A3 had this information, because it would only be shared by A1 later in conversation. Therefore, the choice of both interactants for the “du” form suggests that in that first moment A2 and A3 propose solidarity and see the conversation as an exchange among equals. This form of address is then confirmed by the first card, read by A1 in line 010, which also brings a question with “du”. After that, A2 and A3 introduce themselves by their first names, which also suggests a more informal environment. It is also possible to notice that there is no indication on A1’s part that would suggest annoyance at being addressed as “du” and the matter is not brought up during the interaction. He also introduces himself by his first name.

Even though A1 accepts the solidarity introduced by the card and also by A2 and A3 in the interaction, he suggests later in conversation that in his professional environment, his students address him as “Sie” or at least that they are expected to do so, as shown in Excerpt (2):

Excerpt (2): ((Germans 00:02:08-00:02:19))

001 A1: na was ich GAR nicht kann ist das stimmhafte ess halten,=
 =ne;
 Well what I absolutely can't make is the voiced S
 002 weil das spricht bei uns kein MENSCH,
 Because no one speaks like that among us
 003 ((laughs))und die stu[denten MER]ken das manchmal;=
 And the students notice that sometimes
 004 A3: [JA;]
 Yeah
 005 → A1: =die sagen dann herr A1,
 Then they say Mr. A1 [last name]
 006 A3: [MERken was;]
 Notice something
 007 → A1: [sie sagen][überhaupt nicht SONne]und sowas;

You [V-form] absolutely don't say [z]Sonne⁴⁶ or anything

008 A3: [man MERkt was so;]
You notice something like that

009 A1: und ich NÖ;
And I'm like nah

010 es ist nicht so WICHTig;
That's not so important

011 [((lacht))]
((laughs))

012 A2: [((lacht))]
((laughs))

Here, the participants are discussing different German accents and dialects. A1 then talks about the reaction of his students when they notice that he does not pronounce the [z] sound in the beginning of words like “Sonne”, but makes an [s] sound instead. When sharing his experience, A1 incorporate his students’ voice in his statement, as if they were saying the words *ipsis litteris*. In line 005, this incorporated voice calls him “herr A1”, using his last name, and in line 007, it addresses him using the V-form. This suggests that T is not an unmarked form of address for A1 in his professional environment, but he actively chose to adopt it in this conversation in particular.

Regarding the topics discussed in the interaction, the Germans did not diverge very much from the subjects suggested in the cards, which have all been used, as already mentioned in Section 3.1.3. This can be seen in Table 11 below, which has been based on the ones presented in Viterbo Lage (2013, p. 96-98) and which shows the time distribution of the topics, as well as the percentage of time spent on a specific card in relation to the duration of the entire conversation.

Topic/Activity	Main topics	Duration (mm:ss)	%
re-discussion	Decision on who picks the card first.	00:08	0.21
What is your name? Where are you from? How old are you? What do you study? What do you do professionally?	Introductions Accents and dialects Academic and professional plans Scope of Medienwissenschaft ⁴⁷ studies Learning German in Brazil	09:19	14.80

⁴⁶ “Sun” in German.

⁴⁷ Media science

<p>What do you enjoy doing in your free time?</p> <p>What kind of music do you like listening to?</p> <p>What is your favorite film?</p> <p>What is your favorite TV series?</p> <p>What is your favorite book?</p>	<p>Hobbies</p> <p>Books</p> <p>Food</p> <p>TV series</p> <p>Brazilian literature</p>	16:33	25.68
<p>What makes you most angry? Have you been involved in situations which made you angry recently? What happened?</p>	<p>Unreliability in academic and personal life</p> <p>Commitment and demands in academic life</p> <p>Everyday disrespectful situations</p> <p>Comparisons between Brazil and Germany</p>	06:06	9.70
<p>Tell [the others] something about your first love.</p>	<p>Childhood and adolescence crushes.</p>	3:00	4.78
<p>A large number of people in the world has nothing to eat and also no access to health care, education or housing. In your opinion, what is the reason for extreme poverty in the world? Is there anything you can do to change this situation?</p>	<p>Conscious consumption and boycotting</p> <p>Job requirements in Brazil and Germany</p>	4:58	7.90
<p>Do you think that you are privileged because of the things that you have access to (and others do not)?</p>	<p>Relationship between privilege and being born in a specific country or belonging to a specific ethnic group</p>	1:39	2.63
<p>Europa lives increasingly in fear of terror attacks. Do you believe that this fear is reasonable?</p>	<p>Frequency of attacks in Germany in relation to other places and in small towns in relation to larger cities.</p> <p>Probability of a terrorist attack in Germany related to other possibilities of death</p> <p>Fear of terrorism and other types of danger</p> <p>Safety measures taken by authorities</p>	6:43	10.67
<p>Family brings a lot of joy, but also embarrassing situations. What is the most embarrassing situation you have been through because of your family or what was the most embarrassing moment you made someone from your family go through? What happened?</p>	<p>Embarrassing habits of the parents</p> <p>Embarrassing situations</p>	6:45	4.39

What do you do to fight stress? How do you relax in your everyday life? And on vacation? Why are these things relaxing?	Running as a relaxing activity Thinking about good things and feeling free	2:00	3.19
Who do you admire the most? Why? Do you consider to be somewhat like that person? Why?	A3's mother and her background The role of women in the 70's Jobs and majors that bring money karlheinz böhm and philanthropy Charity organizations Food Admiring famous people vs. admiring people you know	8:44	13.87
Post-discussion	Whether they could leave or not and how they could finish the interaction	1:59	1.59
Discarded data	Interruption	00:21	0.55
Total		63:19	100%

Table 11 – The German interactional structure

Taking Table 11 into consideration, it is possible to understand that the topics with which the participants spent the most time were also the most productive and, therefore, the most interesting to them. Consequently, the topics with which they spent the least amount of time could be understood as the most uninteresting ones. This is also suggested by the fact that the interactants only picked the next card when there was silence and none of them added anything else to the discussion, as can be seen in Excerpt (3), when A2 was talking about her first love and concluded her story by saying that she never saw the boy again after he was transferred from her school. Her last contribution to the topic is seen in line 001.

Excerpt (3): ((Germans 00:34:46-00:35:09))

001 A2: oder vielleicht ein MAL oder so;
Or maybe once or so
002 ((2.0))
003 A2: JA;
Yeah

004 ((2.0))
 005 A1: boh jetzt gibt es viel TEXT beim nächsten kärtchen hier;
 Whoa now there's a lot of text in the next little card here
 006 ((1.0))
 007 A3: JA;
 Yeah
 008 (-) STIMMT;
 True
 009 A2: ((nimmt die karte und liest vor))
 ((picks the card and reads aloud))

In Excerpt (3), A1's utterance in line 001 is followed by silence and no one takes the turn next, to which she adds a minimal contribution in line 003. This is also followed by silence, and A1 makes a remark about the next card on the table, saying that there is "viel TEXT" ("a lot of text") in it. There is also a following silence and minimal contributions by A3. A2 then picks the card and reads it. The fact that no one took the turn after A1's contribution in line 001 and the instances of silence suggest that nothing else was to be added to the topic, so it can be considered that the subject of the card was exhausted.

Another fact which stands out in the German interaction is that, even though none of the cards proposed topics on interculturality or comparisons between Brazil and Germany, this theme was very frequent in the conversation, probably due to their situation as foreigners in a different country. This occurred not as a separate, distinctive subject, but as remarks when other matters were being discussed. Excerpts (4) and (5) show examples of this, as can be seen below:

Excerpt (4): ((Germans 00:23:35-00:23:41))

001 → A3: und hier sind die auch ein bisschen BILLiger die bücher;
 And here the books are a bit cheaper
 002 hier kann [man ja dann] ja auch im internet zum halben
 PREIS,
 Here you can find a book on the internet
 003 A2: [JA;]
 Yeah
 004 A3: ein buch[FINDen;]
 For half the price
 005 A1: [JA;]
 Yeah

In Excerpt (4), the interactants are discussing books they like or are reading at that moment and they start to talk about Brazilian literature. In lines 001 and 002, A3 states that books are cheaper “hier” (“here”), a deictic which should be understood as “in Brazil”, as opposed to “in Germany”. This dichotomy between “here” and “there”, “Brazil” and “Germany” can also be seen in Excerpt (5), when the participants are talking about conscious consumption and buying from ethical brands which offer organic products.

Excerpt (5): ((Germans 00:38:00-00:38:17))

001 A1: ich mein so also so in DEUTSCHland,
I mean so well so in Germany
002 in klEinem rahmen ist es ja EInfach;=
In a small scale it's easy
003 =weil da gehst du dann auf den WOchenma:rkt,
Because you go to the weekly market
004 hast du deine BIOMä::rkte,
You have your organic markets
005 find ich es irgendwie toTAL;
I find it kind of totally
006 total EInfach das zu machen;=
Totally easy to do it
007 =und hier find ich das relativ ANstrengend,
And here I find it relatively stressful
008 WEIL,
Because
009 ((1.08))
010 A1: ich WEIß nicht wo kauf ich hier ein,=
I don't know where to go shopping here
011 =wenn ich nicht (.) im supermarkt EInkaufen will,
If I don't want to buy from the supermarket
012 dann ist es bei mir im: im: viertel zum beispiel schon
ziemlich komPLEx so,
Then it's already fairly complex in my neighborhood for example

In lines 001 to 006, A1 expresses approval and familiarity with the German food selling system, which offers weekly markets and organic shops which allow individuals to buy from local producers. This is opposed to his utterances in lines 007 to 012, in which he expresses his unfamiliarity with the Brazilian system and shows annoyance at not knowing where to buy (line 010) if he wants to maintain the shopping habits he once had in Germany and avoid supermarkets (line 010).

Therefore, considering the aspects presented in this section, it is possible to regard the German interaction as a task-oriented conversation, because of the tendency to focus on the topics presented by the cards. The interaction was also friendly and informal, without being intimate, considering that little personal information was shared and that few instances of closeness inclination have been found (see Section 4.5). The participants also showed a willingness to share their experiences and perceptions of Brazil, which were generally presented as unfamiliar, as opposed to what was familiar to them in Germany.

4.1.2. The Brazilian interaction

Concerning the form of address adopted by the Brazilian participants in the interaction, it is important to comment on some idiosyncrasies of Brazilian Portuguese. Considering that the three speakers were born and raised in the metropolitan area of Belo Horizonte, Capital City of the state of Minas Gerais, as seen in Section 3.1.4, the specific choice for either “tu” or “você” does not indicate a social behavior nor a judgment of the conversational situation. In some areas in Brazil, both “você” and “tu” are productive in a nominative position and speakers use them interchangeably, but in Minas Gerais the “você” form is prevalent (RUMEU, 2005, p. 84) and, indeed, no instances of “tu” in nominative position have been found in the talk of the Brazilian participants. In spite of that, using the nominative form “você” together with the form “te” in a dative or accusative position is common and productive in Minas Gerais in sentences such as “**Você** falou que eu **te** veria hoje” (p. 84).⁴⁸ It means that, even though the addressing pronouns “tu” and “você” exist, they do not carry the same semantic and pragmatic features that “du” and “Sie” do in German.

This is not to say, however, that Brazilian Portuguese does not have a T/V form, as it “has a further pattern of address available, (...) such as *o senhor* (‘the gentleman’), *a senhora* (‘the lady’), *o doutor* (‘the doctor’): these bound forms of address are used for V attitude towards the addressee” (ASHDOWNE, 2006, p. 904). These markers have a crucial function in language due to the “extension and weakening” (p. 904) of “você” as the V form, in the same way that “você”/“vocês” replaced almost completely the previous V form “vós” (p. 904).

⁴⁸ “You [Você] said I was going to see you [te] today”.

Even though the “Portuguese system remains even now underexplored” (p. 904), especially in relation to other Romance languages, these features are important to understand the general attitude of the participants of the interaction towards each other. Not only did the Brazilian speakers choose to address each other as “você”, but they also chose to connect by their similarities, such as their social connection to the researcher (Carol), provided that she had known B2 since Kindergarten, had been B1’s teacher and had also taught B3’s daughter. This can be seen in more detail in Excerpts (22) and (27), respectively in Sections 4.4.2 and 4.5.2.

Regarding the topics discussed in the interaction, the Brazilians talked about various subjects beside the ones suggested in the cards. Because of that, they did not use all the cards, namely the last four ones. This can be seen in Table 12 below, which has also been based on the ones presented in Viterbo Lage (2013, p. 96-98) and shows the time distribution of the topics, as well as the percentage of time spent on a specific card in relation to the duration of the entire conversation.

Topic/Activity	Main topics	Duration (mm:ss)	%
Pre-discussion	Decision on who picks the card first.	0:13	0.31%
What is your name? Where are you from? How old are you? What do you study? What do you do professionally?	Introductions Academic/professional background University campuses B2’s former job Life plans Radio Family Cellular phones and the problem of being reachable	09:58	14.47%
What do you enjoy doing in your free time? What kind of music to you like listening to? What is your favorite movie? What is your favorite TV series? What is your favorite book?	Netflix Music TV series Books Movies Life plans Choosing a major at an early age College life Means of communication Super heroes	28:29 ⁴⁹	41.34%

⁴⁹ The duration of this topic was in fact 28 minutes and 52 seconds (0.56%), but 23 seconds were discarded due to my interruption to hand water and snacks to the participants (see Section 3.1.1).

	Working in journalism		
	Family		
	Vinyl records		
	Food		
	Dollar exchange rate		
What makes you angry? Have you been involved in situations which made you angry recently? What happened?	Lies	10:14	14.85%
	Punctuality		
	Family		
	Netflix		
	Injustice in everyday life		
	Work		
	Students' evaluation of teachers		
	Waiting lines		
	Respect for the elderly		
	The retirement reform in Brazil		
	Lottery		
Talk about your first love.	B3's love story	04:43	6.85%
	B1's recent heartbreak		
A great part of people in the world does not have anything to eat and do not have access to healthcare, education or housing. In your opinion, what is the reason for the extreme poverty in the world? Is there anything you can do to fight against it?	Social inequality	12:58	18.82%
	Admission quotas in universities		
	Jesus and religion		
	Welfare programs in Brazil		
	Idealism		
	Feminism		
	Corruption		
	Problems of infrastructure in Belo Horizonte		
	Criminality		
	Checking the iPad and the cameras		
Do you feel privileged because of the things you have access to (and others do not)?	iPhones	01:56	2.81%
	DVD players		
	Lifestyle		
	Charity		
	Family		
Discarded data	Interruption	0:23	0.56%
Total		68:54	100%

Table 12 – The Brazilian interaction structure

In a similar manner as the German group, Table 12 suggests which topics the participants found more interesting, considering the amount of time spent talking about them, except in the case of the last topic, because, as mentioned in Section 3.1.4, the participants were abruptly driven to finish their interaction due to the memory card of both cameras, which have gotten full and made the cameras stop recording. Also, it can be seen that, differently from the Germans, the participants' interest was not directed

necessarily towards the cards, considering that there many extra topics were discussed and in most discussions family and personal issues were addressed. It is possible to understand, nevertheless, that a more significative amount of time has been spent with some topics and not others because they led to more connections with other experiences and interests they had, so that the most productive topics were considered here as the most interesting ones, regardless how many subtopics there were. Consequently, the topics the Brazilians spent the least amount of time talking about were considered to be the most uninteresting, because they led to few or no connections with other topics.

The Brazilians, similarly to the Germans, picked the next cards mostly after instances of silence, but in some occasions, they also prevented silence from happening, as can be seen in Excerpt (6):

Excerpt (6): ((Brazilians 00:53:46-00:54:06))

001 B2: eu vejo que assim algumas coisas podem piorar na VIda,
I see that like some things can get worse in life

002 mas assim pelo menos a gente tem que ir evo/ evoluINdo;
But like at least we have to keep evo/ evolving

003 (-) [e isso aJU:da,]
And that helps

004 B1: [é com cerTEza;]
Absolutely

005 com cerTEza;
Absolutely

006 (---)<<pointing at the cards on the table> nossa esse aqui
parece que é um testaMENTo olha;>
Gee this one looks like it's a testament⁵⁰ look

007 ((laughs))

008 B3: É;
Yeah

009 B1: <<picking the card> deixa eu ver NU:::,>
Let me see whoa

010 <<reading> uma GRANde parte das pessoas do mundo não tem o
que comer e não tem acesso à saúde educação ou moradia;>
A great part of people in the world do not have anything to eat and do not
have access to healthcare, education or housing.

In Excerpt (6), the interactants are talking about their first love and B1 mentions that she is still young and can still fall in love in the future, to what B2 and B3 agree. In

⁵⁰ “Testamento” (“testament” or “will”) is a Brazilian informal and hyperbolic expression used to refer to a long text.

lines 002 to 004, B2 expresses a view about life which concludes the subject. In lines 004 and 005, B1 expresses affiliation to B2's contributions and when there was no uptake after that, as can be seen by the pause in line 006, she changes the subject to the card on the table, making a humorous remark about it before picking it up and reading it.

Another distinguishable feature of the Brazilians' interaction is that it was more rapport-oriented than task-oriented. This means that bonding was a priority in conversation rather than going through all the cards, for example. This is evidenced not only by the range of diverse conversational topics shown in Table 12, but also by the fact that the interactants showed behaviors which are compatible to the 'Camaraderie' style of rapport (See Section 2.4), which means the participants sought for closeness and friendliness in each other. This was done in different ways, such as sharing personal information, as can be seen below in Excerpt (7):

Excerpt (7): ((Brazilians 00:41:08-00:41:19))

001 B1: é: ela não iria mentir pra MIM,=
Ahm she wouldn't lie to me
002 → =mas eu vou contar até uma coisa pessoAL;
But I'll even tell you something personal
003 → a minha MÃE,
My mom
004 → é:: ela: (.) descobriu em dois mil e TREZE que ela tava
Ahm she found out in 2013 that she had
→ com um tumor no cÉrebro;
A brain tumor
005 → (--)e ela não iria me conTAR,
And she wasn't going to tell me
006 (--)

In Excerpt (7), participants are talking about what makes them angry, and B1 says that she feels annoyed by lies. To exemplify a situation in which she was distressed at being lied to, she announces in line 002 that the story she was about to share was personal, which is confirmed in lines 003 to 005, in which B1 talks about her mother's brain tumor and how her parent hid this information. The matter of rapport will be dealt with in more detail later (see Section 4.5).

Therefore, taking into consideration the aspects presented in this section, it is possible to sum up the Brazilian interaction as a rapport-oriented conversation, which was

friendly, informal and intimate, which means that a significant amount of personal information was shared and that closeness and bonding were sought.

Bearing the general aspects of the interactions among Brazilians and Germans in mind, the next Section introduces the analysis of hyperbole, discussing problems regarding a quantitative analysis of overstatements and examining occurrences which may be relevant to understand these complications.

4.2. The problem with quantitative determinations of hyperbolic occurrences

As mentioned in Section 3.3, the analysis of overstated occurrences in this study included a quantitative approach which consisted in counting the number of hyperboles manually and relating the results to each conversation card made available to the participants. This study was also supposed to determine the number of hyperboles per ten minutes of conversation. It soon became clear, however, that, at least in this specific study, this procedure would lead to a potential inaccuracy in numbers and, therefore, to numbers that certainly could not be entirely trusted.

This is due to the high number of borderline occurrences, that is, instances in which the speaker may or may not be exaggerating. Confirming or dismissing them as hyperbolic would require extralinguistic knowledge that more often than not are not available in the interaction. This means that neither the participants nor the analysts are able to differentiate a literal utterance from a hyperbolic one in these situations, which is an interesting finding *per se*. For this reason, instead of presenting a quantitative analysis, some of these borderline occurrences, hyperbolic or not, will be discussed here.

4.2.1. Borderline occurrences

In Section 2.1.3, it was pointed out that hyperbole is related to extralinguistic knowledge and context. In some occurrences, which will be dealt with in more detail later in this study, the contextual and situational clues which allow a speaker to understand an utterance either as an exaggeration or a literal statement are provided within the conversation. In other cases, however, further information is required in order to categorize an occurrence as hyperbolic or not. If, in a conversation, the interactants have enough contextual (or extra-contextual) knowledge about the speaker or the topic about which the speaker is talking, then they may be able to distinguish one usage from the other. If, however, they do not possess such knowledge, they may interpret the expression

in one way or the other, depending on their own state of mind and ideas of how the world works. It is necessary, then, to examine here some examples of the borderline occurrences which were found in the data. For the sake of focus and clarity, the discussion of other instances of hyperbole which may appear in the extracts will be laid aside for the moment.

In Excerpt (8), the Brazilians are talking about B3's hobbies and interests and there is an interruption so that the researcher can provide water bottles to all the participants and gluten-free food to B2, who is a celiac. The participants then talk briefly about the gluten-free food and B1 starts talking about a topic B3 has mentioned before.

Excerpt (8): ((Brazilians 00:36:24-00:36:37))

001 → B1: quando cê falou de vINIL eu lembrei da minha mãe=
When you spoke of vinyl it reminded me of my mom
002 → =que ela tem tipo duZENTos discos de vinis lá em casa;
'Cause she has like two hundred vinyl records at home
003 → (--)e eu também Amo;
And I love them too
004 ela tem tipo o rei leÃ:O,
She has like The Lion King
005 tipo †TUdo,
Like everything
006 B3: [hm_HM;]
007 B1: [quando eu era]menor[ZInha sabe,]
When I was little you know
008 B2: [a gente tinha sandy e JÚ]nior;
We used to have Sandy & Júnior⁵¹
009 B3: ainda[tem o to]ca DISco,
Do you still have the record player
010 B1: [É;]
Yeah
011 TE[nho;]
I do
012 B3: [ah] [leGAL ué;]
Ah nice
013 B1: [ah eu Amo,]
Ah I love it

When, in line 002, B1 mentions that her mother has “tipo duZENTos discos de vinis lá em casa;”, the number is not high enough for her utterance to be automatically categorized as a hyperbole, as it would have been the case with the number two billion,

⁵¹ Sandy & Junior was a teenage pop music duo which was very popular in Brazil in the 1990's and early 2000's.

for example. Having two hundred records is not counterfactual and probably many record collectors possess an even larger number of discs, which means the meaning of B1's statement can be literal. On the other hand, it can also represent an exaggerated expression if the mother has, for instance, ninety-five records.

It is nevertheless interesting to notice that neither B2 nor B3 challenge B1's utterance and no repair-like moves are attempted. On the contrary, in line 009, B3 asks a follow-up question about the record player (*ainda tem o toca DISCO,*). This is because the message was not hindered, and regardless if the utterance is hyperbolic or not, the general meaning remains the same. In line 003, B1 says "*e eu também Amo;*" (And I love it too). The lexical item "too" presupposes that someone else loves records as well, as can be seen by sentences (1a) and (1b), in which (1a) presupposes (1b).

(1a) I love it too.

(1b) Someone else loves it.

Also, the word "e" ("and"), an additive conjunction, transmits the idea of an additional fact which is related to something previously stated, which must be "*quando cê falou de VINIL eu lembrei da minha mãe=*" (line 001) ("When you spoke of vinyl it reminded me of my mom") and/or "*que ela tem tipo duZENTos discos de vinis lá em casa*" (line 002) ("Cause she has like two hundred vinyl records at home"), given that those are her two first contributions when this topic starts. Considering that both utterances refer to the mother, in this case, a conversation implicature is created, namely that she is the one who loves the records. It is also implicit that some information about it has already been given, which could only be that "*ela tem tipo duZENTos discos de vinis*" (line 002). This is shown in sentences (2a), (2b) and (2c) which are implicatures created by the pragmatic interpretation of the meanings of lines 001-003.

(2a) My mom loves records.

(2b) You can know that my mom loves records because she has two hundred records.

(2c) My mom has two hundred records, therefore my mom loves records.

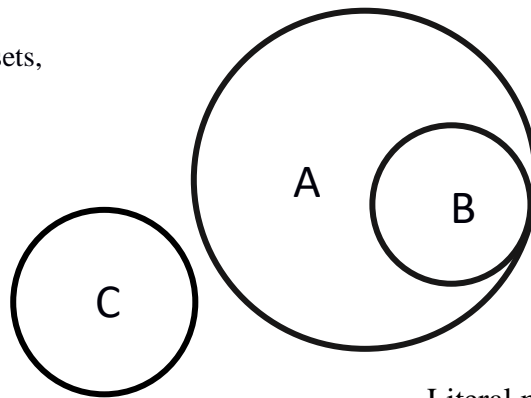
Regarding the number two hundred specifically, considering that the implicature (2c) relates the number of discs owned to the love someone has for them, it is possible to understand two hundred as part of a 'more than' scale as the one below:

(3) <very few records,..., few records> <some records,..., many records>

Regardless if the number two hundred is hyperbolic or not, it must belong to the element “many records” in order to allow the interpretations previously mentioned. Thus, the meaning that B1’s mother has a large number of discs and therefore loves them remains intact. The difference between a literal and a hyperbolic interpretation here is, therefore, the referent of “duZENTos”: either this number means exactly two hundred⁵² or another quantity that belongs to the element “many records” on scale (3). This relation can be seen by means of logic sets,⁵³ which are shown below:

Considering that {A}, {B} and {C} are three sets,

- {A: A is a thing that B1’s mom loves}
- {B: B is a large number of possessions}
- {C: C is a median number of possessions}



x is the number of discs B1’s mother has
y is the highest number in {C}

Literal meaning
x = 200

$x \notin \{C\}$

Hyperbolic meaning
200 > x > y

$x \in \{B\}; \{B\} \in \{A\}, \text{ therefore } x \in \{A\}$

$y \in \{C\}$

$y \notin \{A\}; \{B\} \in \{A\}, \text{ therefore } y \notin \{B\}$

Figure 8 – Sets for Excerpt (8).

If B1’s mother having a large number of something means that she loves them, then it is necessarily true that the set B ({B}), which consists of elements which represent

⁵² In case of a vague utterance, “two hundred” might mean a few more or less, but here a strictly literal meaning is being considered for the sake of argument.

⁵³ Sets have been used in mathematics, philosophy and semantics as logic instruments. The notation and logic theory used here was consulted from Chierchia (2003) and Giovanni et al. (2002).

a large number of possessions, belongs (\in) to set A ($\{A\}$), which contains elements that B1's mother loves. Moreover, if y is the highest number in $\{C\}$, it means that y does not belong (\notin) in neither $\{A\}$ nor $\{B\}$. Consequently, if x is the number of discs B1's mother has, a literal meaning would mean presuppose that $x = 200$, while a hyperbolic meaning would require x to be higher than y and lower than 200.

In a very similar manner, Excerpt (9) shows an instance containing the number two hundred, but this time in the German interaction. In this extract, the Germans are talking about hobbies and A3 mentions that she likes baking, so that a conversation about Brazilian cuisine starts:

Excerpt (9): ((Germans 00:11:11-00:11:39))

001 A1: <<smiling> hast du beim backen schon einheimische reZEpte
bekommen oder so was,>
About baking have you already gotten a local recipe or anything

002 (--)

003 A3: von HIer?
From here

004 A1: hm_HM,
005 (---)

006 A3: äh naja brigadeIro,
Eh well brigadeiro⁵⁴

007 ((laughs))

008 A1: [hm_HM,]

009 A2: [((laughs))]

010 A3: ist so das EINzige was alle imme:r mir ans herz legen,
It's like the only thing that everyone always recommends

011 A2: es gibt aber so eine HOMEpage,
But there's a homepage

012 hab ich mal geFUNden,
I've found

013 → die haben da irgendwie zweihundert brigadeIrorezepte,
They have like two hundred recipes to brigadeiro

014 (--)toTAL gut;
Totally good

015 A3: es gibt da[v/ auch] verschiedene
interpretaTIONen glaub ich von [denen;]
There are also different interpretations of them I think

016 A2: [((unintelligible))]

017 A1: [JA;]

⁵⁴ Brigadeiros are a traditional Brazilian chocolate dessert.

should be higher than what A2 considers ordinary, but necessarily less than 200. In case it is a literal statement, the number must necessarily be of 200.

The problem with numbers appears again in shorter scale in the same extract. In lines 020 to 022, A1 talks about a shop which sells only *brigadeiros*. In line 024, he adds that this place offers “keine ahnung dreißig variANten”. The phrase “keine ahnung” might indicate vagueness, meaning he does not know exactly how many variations were available, but believes the number must be around thirty. Therefore, in this case, it is not likely that A1 means that the shop offers exactly thirty variations, but there is also a possibility that the number is significantly lower than thirty and he is performing a hyperbole. Considering only the contextual clues in this fragment, it is not possible to retrieve which one is the meaning the speaker meant to convey.

In Excerpt 10, the Brazilians are talking about different university campuses, because the campus of UFMG is unfamiliar to B1 and B2. B3 then starts to talk how the campus was when he was an undergraduate student, which can be seen below:

Excerpt (10): ((Brazilians 00:03:33-00:04:11))⁵⁶

001 B3: ah mudou deMA::IS: ,
Ah it changed a lot

002 da Época que eu;
Since the time I

003 BOM (.) quando eu era estudante: ,
Well when I was a student

004 o curso não foi aQUI né;=
The courses weren't here

005 =o curso foi lá na lá no são jerônimo;
The courses were there at there in Saint Jerome

006 B2: A:i perto da minha Casa [agOra;]
Ah close to my place now

007 B3: [É?]
Is it

008 [ah pois É;]
Ah, you see

009 B2: [aquela faculdade;]
That college

010 B3: I:sso aquela que parece um aeroporto;
That's right the one that looks like an airport

011 (.)na verdade !FOI! um aeroporto né;
In fact it was an airport right

012 B2: †SÉ:rio?

⁵⁶ The underlined phrases have been changed so as to protect B2's privacy and also for safety reasons.

Really

013 B3: eles dizem que o PRÉdio antigamente,
People say that in the past the building

014 Era um aeroporto antes de ser a faculdade né;
Was an airport before it was the college

015 B2: GE::Nte;
You're kidding

016 B3: aí eu estudei foi LÁ;
Then I studied there

017 não cheguei a/ a estudar nada aQUI;
I didn't get to study anything here

018 só dePOIS é que eu vim pra cá;
I only came here afterwards

019 B2: pois é se tivesse fiCAdo lá quem sabe eu não tinha feito lá
né;
See if it had stayed there who knows if I wouldn't have studied there right

020 B3: É:;
Yeah

021 B2: porque é !UM! quarteirão da minha cAsa;=
Because it's one block away from my place

022 =eu voto LÁ (-) [inclusive (.)] nas [eleições;]
I even vote there in elections⁵⁷

023 B3: [↑NOSSa;]
Wow

In line 021, B2 states that the old college building is one block away from her place, which is a ordinarily occurring situation. Nothing in the conversation can be retrieved so as to determine whether this is accurate or not. Although neither B1 nor B3 could be able to determine the meaning in this utterance, given its borderline features, this information could be obtained for the analysis, which helps to illustrate the matter being discussed here. In this case, analyzing a map of B1's neighborhood makes it clear that this is in fact an instance of hyperbole, which can be seen in Figure 10 below:

⁵⁷ In the Brazilian electoral system, voting is mandatory for most citizens and each person must vote at a designated polling place, which is generally the nearest one to the citizen's place of residence.

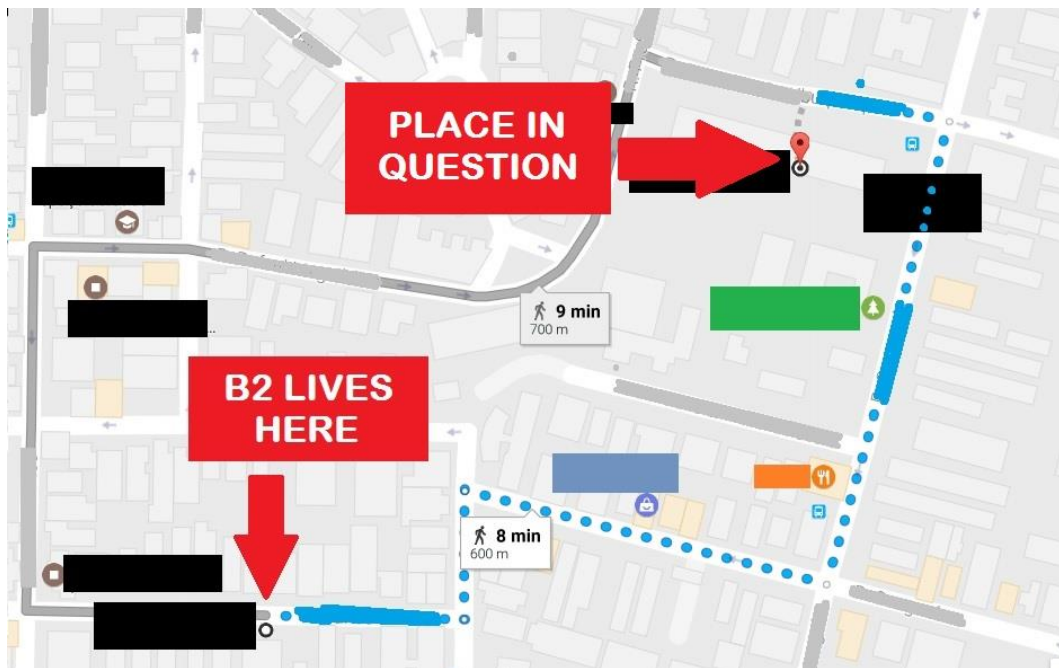


Figure 9 – It’s a block away from my house.⁵⁸

According to the map, B2’s building is 600 meters away from the old college building, which is a short distance, but definitely not one block away. This could not have been determined in conversation, however, and confirming B2’s statement as hyperbolic required extralinguistic knowledge to which the participants did not have access at the time, namely B3’s address and the address of the place in question. Furthermore, it also required a map so as to check the information. As can be seen in Excerpt (10) by B3’s affiliative token “†NOSsa;” (023), the general message of how close the two places are from one another is conveyed, so that it becomes a vague description of location rather than a line or a contribution which would require repair.

B2 overstates here so as to give evidence of how close the building is from her house. This proximity is given by B2 as a reason of why she might have studied at UFMG if classes still took place in the old college building (lines 019 and 020). In this way, two ideas indicate how close the old college building is to B3’s house, namely that:

- (a) It is a block away
- (b) She votes there in elections.

⁵⁸ The names of the streets and all references that could indicate the exact location of B2’s apartment have been omitted for privacy and safety reasons.

Now, it is interesting to compare the instance in Excerpt (10) to the one to be presented next. Excerpt (9) shows a very similar instance of someone talking about their place of residence by using another place which was mentioned in conversation as point of reference. Here, the Brazilians are talking about problems in the country public administration and infrastructure and mention a bridge which has collapsed due to structural miscalculations and poor planning.

Excerpt (11): ((Brazilians 01:03:46-01:03:56))⁵⁹

001 B3: eu/ eu moro do LAdo ali da ponte que caiu;
I live next to the bridge that collapsed

002 [aLI,]
There

003 B1: [SIM,]
Yes

004 eu ia falar isso aGOra,
I was going to say it now
((10 sec omission))

016 B1: eu moro do laDInho lá naquelas casinhas azuis,
I live next[-DIM] to it in one of those blue little houses

In lines 001 and 002, B3 mentions that he lives next to the collapsed bridge, and there is no information in conversation which could help to determine whether he lives next to the bridge or not. It is clear, however, that he believes that the bridge is at a very short distance from his house, because, as shown in the previously addressed instances in this Section, the general message of proximity has been conveyed regardless.

In line 16, B1 also claims to live “do laDInho” of the collapsed bridge. In Brazilian Portuguese, “do lado” means “next to” and “ladinho” is the diminutive form of “lado”, morphologically marked by the diminutive suffix *-inho*. It is important to highlight, however, that this use in particular is not related to size whatsoever. In fact, this adjective is being intensified and turned into a superlative form called “intensifier diminutive⁶⁰” (CEGALLA, 2008, p. 171). Therefore, in this case, “do ladinho” means something on the sort of “really next to”.

This claim is, therefore, very similar to the one B2 made in Excerpt (10), but, differently than that one, B1’s statement is literal, as can be seen in the map in Figure 10,

⁵⁹ The underlined phrases have been changed so as to protect B2’s privacy and also for safety reasons.

⁶⁰ “diminutivo intensificador”.

which shows the place B1 lives in relation to the place they talk about in conversation Excerpt (11). This contrast has been presented here as to show how two statements which are very similar in meaning can be either hyperbolic or literal. In the two examples presented here, even though the participants did not have enough contextual information to interpret B1's and B2's claims as literal or not, some extra information to which I had access allowed an analysis to be made. B3's claims in lines 001 and 002 of Excerpt (11) remain, nevertheless, unclear, because no extra information was available.



Figure 10 – It's a block away from my house⁶¹

Considering that, even though instances of borderline occurrences offer no hindering to the message conveyed, when one aims to investigate hyperbolic language specifically, these instances may lead to doubtful analyses and unreliable results, especially in a quantitative approach.

Some instances of doubtfulness had been expected since the beginning of this research, especially because this problem has been mentioned in other texts, such as in Claridge (2010), as can be seen below:

Needless to say, the decisions to be taken in individual cases about whether or not hyperbole is involved are often tricky and certainly not uncontroversial. On the whole, I have aimed to keep the balance between being over- and under-inclusive – and in doubtful cases have

⁶¹ The names of the streets and all references that could indicate the exact location of B2's apartment have been omitted for privacy and safety reasons.

tended to opt for the former. Going to(wards) the top and then over the top is fairly common. Just where intensification and grading turns into hyperbole in the strict sense is a fuzzy area rather than a clear line, something which is interesting in itself. (p. 39)

Considering that, at first, it was expected that the results of study could be compared to Claridge's (2010) (see Section 2.1.3), this problem was regarded as being solvable by means of what she proposes in this extract, namely that a balance between being over- and underinclusive should be found. The process of collecting, transcribing and identifying hyperboles has shown, however, that balance is a vague answer to the questions aroused here and that it does not solve the problem. For this reason, it was decided that borderline occurrences should be discarded from the list of hyperbolic instances and that this study would focus on the qualitative aspects of hyperbole, leaving a quantitative analysis aside for now.

4.2.2. Extreme case formulations and the case of “immer” and “sempre”⁶²

Even though Pomerantz (1986) did not originally offer a complete list of Extreme Case expressions,⁶³ the lexical item “always” has been considered an ECF by different authors (see CLARIDGE, 2010, p. 7; NORRICK, 2004, p. 1728). Because of that, occurrences with “immer” (German) and “sempre” (Portuguese), which would be translated into English as “always”, were categorized here at first as examples of Extreme Case formulations and, therefore, hyperboles, if their meaning in context was different from “continuously and at all times”. In the Brazilian interaction, there were 27 occurrences of this word and in the German one, 79. Most occurrences of “immer” and “sempre” were initially considered to be hyperbolic, as shown in the Excerpts (12) and (13).

In Excerpt (12), the Germans are talking about Conscious Consumption and A2 states that she avoids buying Coca-Cola products for considering it an unethical company. They start talking about how hard it is to boycott the company in Brazil because of their range of products. Then they have the following conversation:

⁶² Both words would be translated as “always” in English.

⁶³ “Some examples of Extreme Case formulations are: ‘brand new’, ‘completely innocent’, ‘he was driving perfectly’, ‘he didn’t say a word’, ‘I really don’t know who he is’, ‘no time’, ‘forever’, ‘every time’, ‘everyone’”. (POMERANTZ, 1986, p. 219)

Excerpt (12): ((Germans 00:36:26–00:36:31))

001 A2: ja naja bei coca Cola,
Yeah well with Coca-Cola

002 → STEHT ja immer irgendwie drauf;
It's always there anyway

003 aber dann kauft man halt irgendwie boNAqua oder so was,
But then you buy like Bonaqua or something

004 A1: hm_HM,
005 (-) [ja steht es hinten DRAUF;]
Yeah it's there on the back

006 A2: [und guckt es hinten DRAUF,]
And look at the back

008 A2: oh da steht AUCH coca cola drauf;
Oh there is Coca-Cola there too

In this case, “immer” can be considered hyperbolic if one considers that the meaning of “always” is constantly and at all times, because in fact the Coca-Cola Company does not own everything nor it is always there. It would be also considered an ECF because of the lexical item “immer” (“always”), which leads to the most extreme position on a scale.

A similar instance can be found in the following Brazilian conversation, in which the Brazilians are introducing themselves and saying where they are from. B1 was born in the metropolitan area of Belo Horizonte, in a town called Vespasiano, and she then proceeds to talk about her extended family and where they live, as can be seen in Excerpt (13) below:

Excerpt (13): ((Brazilians 00:06:39–00:06:59))

001 B1: é: (.) a minha família é diviDida;
My family lives apart

002 te/ a família do meu pai mora LÁ,
My dad's family lives there [in Vespasiano]

003 meu pai é faleCido né;
My dad's passed away right

004 ele é falecido tem uns CINco anos;
He passed away around five years ago

005 É::;
Yeah

006 a família dele mora LÁ:,
His family lives there

007 e a família da minha mãe mora lá em joão monleVade;

And my mom's family lives there in João Monlevade

008 cês coNHEcem,
Do you know it

010 B2: [hm_HM;]

009 B3: [coNHEço;]
I do

016 <<smiling>meu pai trabalhou em joão monlevade;>
My dad worked in João Monlevade

011 B1: É::;
Yeah

012 → aí a gente sempre (.) quando não tá em vespasiano tá em
joão monlevade;
Then we're always when we're not in Vespasiano we're in João Monlevade

013 → sempre em contato;
Always in touch

014 B3: ó:: coincidência; (---)
What a coincidence

In this case, just like in Excerpt (12), when B1 says that, when her nuclear family is not in Vespasiano, they are in João Monlevade (line 012), this can be interpreted as counterfactual, given that at the very moment she speaks, she is in Belo Horizonte, where she also lives. This would lead to a categorization of “sempre” as a hyperbole and, more specifically, a ECF. However, when analyzing instances such as (12) and (13), it seemed odd that in both interactions most occurrences of the same word were considered hyperbolic.

Then, a second hypothesis was tested, namely that the usage of “immer” and “sempre” was actually an instance of semantic neologism (FERRAZ, 2010, p. 258), that is, a possibility in lexical innovation which consists of a previously existent word in a language receiving a different or extended meaning. In order to determine whether the meaning extension of “immer” and “always” as “very often” and “repeatedly” was indeed a semantic neologism instead of a very often employed and productive instance of hyperbole, the lexicographic criterion (FERRAZ, 2010, p. 261-262) has been adopted. According to this criterion, a word is considered a neologism if it does not appear in the most important and complete dictionaries of a language. Ferraz (2010) uses three Brazilian dictionaries in his study, namely *Aurélio* (2010), *Houaiss* (2009) and *Caldas Aulete* (online). According to this procedure, a word is only considered a neologism if it does not appear in any of the three dictionaries. Here, I have preliminarily selected a German and a Brazilian dictionary, respectively the *Duden* (online) and the *Houaiss*

(2009). In case the word was not to be found in any of them, another dictionary would be selected up to the number of three for language. It was not necessary to do so, however, because both presented the definition of “always” as “very often” (which cannot, however, be considered neological since the meaning has already been registered in dictionaries). Table 13 below shows the result of the search in the dictionaries. The column “meaning” refers to the number of the meaning found in the dictionary, that is, the order it appears in the entry.

Language	Dictionary	Meaning	Definition	Translation
German	Duden	First	sich wiederholend, gleichbleibend, andauernd, ständig, stets	häufig sehr oft; Oftentimes repeating itself, very often, lasting, enduring, constant, steadily.
Portuguese	Houaiss	Third	muito frequentemente; geralmente, habitualmente, ordinariamente Ex.: <i>ela compra s. as suas roupas em brechós</i>	very often, generally, habitually, ordinarily e.g.: <i>she always buys her clothes in thrift shops.</i>

Table 13 – Dictionary definitions for “immer” and “always”

As can be seen, the Duden dictionary brings as first definition the notion that “always” is something that happens often, not **necessarily** something that never ceases or that happens continuously – even though the idea of continuity is also there. Houaiss also brings the same meaning, but this time in the third meaning.

It is possible then to understand the lexical items “sempre” and “immer” as polysemic according to the definition found in Cançado (2008, p. 63), namely that polysemy occurs when the different meanings of a word have a relation between them. Considering the temporal relation between “continuously and at all times” and “very often”, it is possible to understand the lexical item as polysemic.

Because of that, instances which show “immer” or “sempre” as a hyperbole in situations which mean “very often” were discarded. This is not to say, however, that this should be the procedure with other types of ECF. It is interesting to consider, then, another set of words, namely “todo mundo” and “alle”,⁶⁴ which is also regarded as an ECF. Table 14 shows the definitions of these two phrases found in the dictionaries.

⁶⁴ Both words would be translated into English as “everyone”.

Language	Dictionary	Meaning	Definition	Translation
German	Duden	First, items a and b	stärker vereinzelt, die Einzelglieder einer Gesamtheit betrachtend; jeder, jedes, jegliches (umgangssprachlich) alle Leute hier; jeder Anwesende; jeder Einzelne	More singularly, looking at the individual members of a totality; Every, everybody, everything; (Colloquially) all the people here; Every person present; every single one
Portuguese	Houaiss	Third, item 2	raça humana; totalidade das pessoas; humanidade Ex.: todo m. procura disfarçar sua própria animalidade	human race; totality of people; humankind Eg.: everyone tries to disguise their own animality.
Portuguese	Aurélio	Expressions	Ver “todos” 1. Todas as pessoas; toda a gente; todo o mundo; o mundo inteiro; deus e o mundo, deus e todo mundo, deus e todo o mundo: “Em Portugal <u>todos</u> falam de tudo” (Luís Forjaz Trigueiros, <i>Ventos e Marés</i> , p. 111).	See “everyone” 1. All people; all folk; everybody; all the world; god and the world; god and everyone: “In Portugal everyone talk about everything” (Luís Forjaz Trigueiros, <i>Ventos e Marés</i> , p. 111).

Table 14 – Dictionary definitions for “alle” and “todo mundo”

As can be seen in Table 14, the lexical item “alle” is still connected to the idea of the whole amount of people in a group. In Portuguese, the *Houaiss* (2009) registered the meaning of “todo mundo” in a very general manner, as related to humankind as a whole. The expression “todo mundo” does not even appear as a separate entry, being under the entry “mundo” (world). For this reason, I also consulted *Aurélio* (2010), which also registers “todo mundo” under “mundo” and then reads “see everyone”. In the entry “everyone”, then, it appears as referring to “all the people”. Either way, the idea of totality is present and connected to the word.

That having been said, two instances of the use of “alle”/ “todo mundo” as an Extreme Case formulation will be followingly discussed in Excerpts (14) and (15).

Excerpt (14) is a fragment of the beginning of the German interaction, when they are introducing themselves. A1 reads one of the questions in the first card:

Excerpt (14): ((Germans 00:03:51–00:04:10))

001 A1: <<reading aloud> wie ALT bist du,>
How old are you

002 spannende FRAge;
Interesting question

003 [((laughs))]

004 A2: [((laughs))] ich BIN,
I'm

005 (--)muss ich das verRaten,
Do I have to reveal this

006 ((laughs))<<laughing> ICH bin achtundzwanzig;>
I'm twenty-eight

007 (--)

008 A3: ich bin EINundzwanzig;
I'm twenty-one

009 (-)

010 A1: ich bin einundVIERzig;
I'm forty-one

011 ((laughs))

012 A2: oKAY,

013 ((laughs))[aber du bist nicht mehr]stuDENT;
But you're not a student anymore

014 A3: [alles daBEI;]
Everything close

015 A2: [((laughs))]

016 A1: [((laughs))] nee das STIMMT;
No that's right

017 schon ein paar jahre [HER;]
For a couple of years already

018 A3: [JA;]
Yeah

019 A1: JA;
Yeah

020 A2: nee aber bei mir reagieren immer alle so wie oh um gottes
WILlen fast dreißig;
No but with me everyone always reacts like Sweet Jesus almost thirty

021 ((laughs))

022 A1: na für hier ist das natürlich KLAR,
Well here of course naturally

023 wo die [alle so jung in die Uni kommen,]
Where everyone goes to University so young

024 A2: [in DEUTSCHhland aber auch;]
But in Germany too

025 A1: [und so WEIter;]
Et cetera

026 A2: [so JA:;]
 So yeah

027 A1: ach in DEUTSCHland glaub ich nicht ne;
 Well in Germany I don't think so

In lines 004 and 005, A2 hesitates in saying her age, but shares in line 003 that she is twenty-eight years old. In line 010, A1, who is forty-one years old, also shares his age. To that information, A2 says that asks in an affirmative way if he is no longer a student, which he confirms not to be (line 016). This contribution suggests, at first, that A2's remark would break the maxim of relevance, because it has no relation to the conversation or to what A1 has answered.

(5a) I'm forty-one

(5b) But you're not a student anymore

Therefore, it is possible to understand that an implicature was created by the non-observance of the maxim and because of A2's hesitation in telling her age, namely that she feels old (for a student). Thus, she is old, but A1, thirteen years her senior, is not. Ultimately, this implicature is confirmed by her humorous remark in line 020, in which she claims that all people react in a surprised and alarmed manner when she says she is twenty-eight, shown by the expression "oh um gottes WILlen", an idiomatic expression of surprise and alarm. Also the emphatic, although not hyperbolic, expression "fast dreißig" plays a role, to the extent that it is a pessimistic way of expressing age, considering that one views being thirty years old as negative. This is opposed to neutral expressions such as "Endezwanzigerin", for example, which is used to refer to someone (a female in this morphological format) in their late twenties. This pessimistic way of looking at the matter is also reinforced by the ECF "alle", as if every person regarded A2 as being too old to be a student. In this matter, the expression "alle" also attests her feelings and make her argument more powerful. It is possible to understand this overstated utterance in a 'more than' scale:

(6) <manche, ..., viele Leute, ..., alle>

<some people, ..., many people, ..., everyone>

This expression is hyperbolic because it is unlikely that everyone makes that comment about A2. As a matter of fact, A1 disagrees that she is too old, also using the same hyperbole for the sake of his argument, saying that in Brazil everyone goes to university at a very young age, so maybe she is old for the country's standards, but not for German standards (lines 022 to 024). This means that he uses the same scale she used, but to perform the same argumentative activity and with the same strength, but in the opposite direction.

A similar usage of this lexical item occurs in Excerpt (15), when the Brazilians are talking about television series:

Excerpt (15): ((Brazilians 00:24:50–00:25:13))

001 B1: tem uma série que !TO!do mundo gosta;
There's a series that everybody likes

002 DUas;
Two

003 (.)e que eu (.) não conseGUI;
And that I couldn't

004 game of THRO:nes e the walking dead;
Game of Thrones and The Walking Dead

005 <<len> eu [não] conSIgo;>
I can't

006 B2: [ai meu pai Ama;]
Ah my dad loves them

007 B1: eu não conseGUI.
And I couldn't

008 B2: ah esses neGÓcio de/ de,
Ah, these things with/ with

009 B1: é meio estranho (.) zumBI não,
It's kinda strange zombies no

010 B3: é: eu assisti UM episódio de cada uma delas e/ mas também,
Yeah, I watched one episode of each one of them and but they weren't

011 não me atraIU não;
appealing to me either

012 B1: n/ É:,
n/ Yeah

013 B3: (-)mas tem mui/ assim VÁ:rios e vários alunos vários
amigos,
But there are lo/ like lots and lots of students lots of friends

014 assistiram todas fazem mara
They watched and do mara

015 B1: e MOR[re né na hora que]cê fala né;
And they die when you say that right

016 B3: [TOna mas eu não,]
 thons but I don't
 017 É:,
 Yeah
 018 B1: ((laughs))

In line 001, B1 starts her contribution by talking about a series that everyone likes (“!TO!do mundo gosta”). “!TO!do” is also marked with an emphatic extra strong accent in the syllable “TO”. In line 002, B1 performs a self-repair which rectifies that in fact there are two series that everyone likes. In line 003, when she states, “e que eu não consegui”, it can be understood that her argument involves an idea of “everyone but me”.

In line 004, she reveals which series she is talking about, namely that they are *The Walking Dead* and *Game of Thrones*. In this sense, she seems to believe that both shows are extremely popular, but that, despite such popularity, she does not like them. It is interesting to note here the lexical item “consegui” in “não consegui” (line 003), which presupposes a tentative of enjoying the shows so as to match everyone else’s taste. This only accentuates the difference between her and the rest of the people who like the series, because they like the shows, but she did not manage to like them.

Considering this, the nature of the hyperbole with “!TO!do mundo” can be shown using a ‘more than’ scale (7), namely:

- (7) <algumas pessoas, ..., muitas pessoas, ..., todo mundo>
 <some people, ..., many people, ..., everyone>

The argumentative idea of “!TO!do mundo”, which is the extreme of the scale, contrasts then with “não consegui”, suggesting that a disaffiliation with something very popular is not done without an effort to match the general taste first.

Also, in lines 010 and 011, B3 supports B1’s position, saying that he also did not enjoy the series, having watched one episode of each. Interestingly, after saying that the series were not appealing to him by “não me atraIU não;” (line 011), B3 also talks about the popularity of the series by saying that he did not enjoy them, but other people do – which implicates that the shows are not intrinsically bad. In the same way as B1, B3 perform this communicative act by means of a syntactic hyperbolic realization, namely “VÁ:rios e vários alunos vários amigos” (linha 013). This repetition is considered

hyperbolic because, as stated by McCarthy and Carter (2004, p. 164), “it stretches the (...) reference vertically to an impossible level”. Wierzbicka also considers that syntactic reduplication has a similar pragmatic effect to that of an overstatement (WIERZBICKA, 2003, p. 278).

Discarding the segment “vários amigos”, which can be also understood as a literal addition to the overstated “VÁ:rios e vários alunos”, it is possible to understand this phrase as “a very large number of students”. Therefore, it can be expressed by a ‘more than’ scale such as (8):

- (8) <alguns alunos, vários alunos, vários e vários alunos, todos os alunos>
<some students, lots of students, lots and lots of students, all the students>

It is interesting that, as opposed to the discussion about Excerpt (14), in which the strength of A1’s overstatement matched A2’s one, which was done to perform a contrastive action, the arguments of B1 and B3 do not have the same strength, because the element “lots and lots of students” on scale (8) does not bring an argumentative force as strong as “!TO!do mundo”, used by B1. This can be seen in the sentences below, in which (9a) entails (9a’), (9b) entails (9b’) and (9c) entails (9c’).

(9a) vários e vários alunos assistiram

(9a’) nem todos os alunos assistiram

(9b) todos os alunos assistiram

(9b’) nenhum aluno não assistiu

(9c) todo mundo gosta

(9c’) nenhuma pessoa não gosta

Therefore, in an argumentative scale, the argumentative strength of (9b) is greater than the one of (9a), because the sentence (9b’) entailed by it includes a greater number of elements – in this case, the students. Sentences (9c) and (9c’), which refer to the argumentative strength of “!TO!do mundo”, show that it is equivalent to (9b), not (9a), being therefore stronger.

Considering the relations discussed here regarding Extreme Case formulations, it seems to be necessary to investigate each of the classic Extreme Case expressions individually and thoroughly instead of considering them as a set which automatically leads to overstatement. I suggest, therefore, that these instances should be incorporated in the study of exaggeration without differentiation from the other realizations of hyperbole, so that each instance can be analyzed within its context.

4.3. Hyperboles with a high degree of context independence

As seen in Section 4.2.1, the limit between a literal and a hyperbolic expression is not always clear, and in such cases the interlocutor needs to have access to extralinguistic information which allows him or her to distinguish one from the other. It is possible to say, however, that some hyperboles depend less on the context than others. If someone says, for example, that “there were more than 120 ice cream scoops on the cone”, it is likely that this statement would be considered an overstatement. Nevertheless, in a very unique situation, the statement may be literal, namely when referring to Dimitri Panciera’s ice cream cone in September 20th, 2015, when he broke a world record of the most ice cream scoops balanced on a cone, with 121 scoops.⁶⁵ That is to say that there is no such thing as completely context-independent hyperboles, but the more extreme a hyperbole is, the more context-independent it is. 120 is a high number of scoops on an ice cream cone, but not even Dimitri Panciera could have balanced, for instance, “all the scoops in the world” on a single cone. This is the type of hyperbole which will be dealt with in this Section.

Hyperboles related to death usually have a high degree of context independence, considering that it is likely that a speaker is exaggerating a fact, feeling or intention rather than sharing suicidal or homicidal thoughts in an informal conversation. In extreme situations, they can, however, be literal, in a similar manner to the case of Mr. Panciera and his ice cream scoops. Overstatements involving death were frequent in the Brazilian interaction, but did not occur in the German one. Among the Germans, on the other hand, hyperboles involving numbers were more productive, whilst the Brazilians did not use anything of the sort. The following subsections will discuss some types of hyperboles

⁶⁵ The register of this world record can be found on the official website of Guinness World Records at <<http://www.guinnessworldrecords.com/world-records/most-ice-cream-scoops-balanced-on-a-cone>> (accessed on May 18th, 2017).

with a high degree of context independence, first presenting the Brazilian instances and then addressing the German examples.

4.3.1. The Brazilian participants

In Excerpt (16), the Brazilians are talking about choosing a college major at a very early age. B1 told the others how her mother did not react well at first to the news of her major choice. This leads to a conversation about B1's future experiences in college according to B1 and B2, which can be observed below:

Excerpt (16): ((Brazilians 00:14:01–00:14:21))

001 B2: mas cê tá em qual peRÍodo?
But what semester are you in

002 B1: eu tô indo pro terCEIro;
I'm about to start the third one

003 B2: HM;

004 B1: tô bem no iniCInho ainda;
I'm still at the very beginning

005 B3: ainda tem[TEMpo;]
You still have time

006 B2: [é porque a gente] tem umas [CRIses na faculdade;]
Yeah because we have some crises in college

007 B3: [TEM;]
Yeah

008 B1: [<h>>ainda tem uma
caminHA:da,>]
I still have a long way

009 B3: Ô:;
Oh yeah

010 [se TEM né;]
You do indeed

011 B2: [umas vontades de] matar os coLE:gas,
[There are] some urges to kill your classmates

012 B1: †TEM?
Are there

013 ai meu DEUS;
Oh my God

014 [(laughs)]

015 B2: [ah quando] <<len> entra traBAlho em grUpo> (.) tececÊ
minha[filha,]

- Ah when you have group assignments the undergraduate thesis girl⁶⁶
- 016 B3: [mas a von]tade de matar o colega vem dePOIS da vontade
de matar o professOr;
But the urge to kill your classmates comes after the urge to kill the professors
- 017 B2: [é os profesSOREs,]
Yeah the professors
- 018 B3: [<<smiling> a vontade de matar o profes]sor vem A:Ntes>,
The urge to kill the professors comes before

B2 asks B1 how far she is in her major. When B1 answers that she is a sophomore, B2 gives a minimal response in line 003, which leads B1 to state how she is just starting her college life. B2 then starts to talk about the difficulties in college life and the crises that come during the process, to which B3 agrees in line 007 by means of an affiliation token (“tem”).⁶⁷ To exemplify those crises in a convincing way, she mentions the urges to kill the classmates (line 011) and specifying group assignments and the final undergraduate thesis as critical moments of college experience (line 015).

This hyperbole is better thought regarding argumentative scales than a ‘more than’ scale, because “to kill” is also a metaphor for “rage” or “wrath” maybe in its most primitive form. Once again quoting Aristotle, his idea of wrath carries “a certain pleasure which arises from the expectation of revenge” (ARISTOTLE, *Rhetoric*, II, 2), which, to a certain extent, can explain the transference of some semantic features from the notion of killing, such as revenge, to the notion of “wrath”, which may also involve revenge.

Nevertheless, the expression “to kill” is also a hyperbole because the annoyance at the classmates or the professors in an ordinary academic environment can hardly be called “rage”. It is not clear, therefore, how a ‘more than’ scale could operate, because there is no scale of violent events which would ultimately culminate in a killing representation of extreme rage. Therefore, the scale <*slapping, punching, mutilating, killing>, for example, could not work, especially because it is not possible to say that ‘killing’ entails ‘mutilating’ or that ‘mutilating’ entails ‘punching’, but not ‘killing’.

⁶⁶ “Girl” refers here to the expression “minha filha”, which would be translated literally as “my daughter”, but can be used informally in Brazil to address a woman, especially to introduce a surprising or interesting topic. A man would be addressed as “meu filho”, or “my son”.

⁶⁷ In Brazilian Portuguese, it is possible to give an affirmative response to something by repeating the verb used by the speaker in the corresponding tense and conjugation instead of saying “yes”.

If, however, the expression “to kill” is used in an absolute value, in a position in which no rage is greater, then the use of argumentative scales makes sense, as can be seen in sentences (10a) and (10b):

(10a) There are instances of deep annoyance at your classmates.

(10b) There are some urges of killing your classmates.

The argument in (10b) is stronger than the one in (10a) because it does not matter how deep one’s annoyance is if “to kill” assumes an absolute value, which seems to be the case.

This hyperbole is also incorporated by B3, who performs a hyperbole over a hyperbole, making its argumentative strength double, suggesting that in the future B1 will not only want to kill her classmates, but also the professors, and that the former will come after the latter. His argument is therefore stronger than B2’s, because it uses combines hers and also a new one. Differently than the situation discussed in Excerpt (14), however, the direction of the argument is the same of B3, that is, they are aligned in their argument, which ultimately leads to B3 making B2’s argument even stronger. This alignment is also recognized by B2 in line 017, in which she agrees that the urge to kill the professors comes before killing the classmates.

Excerpt (17) shows other instances of hyperboles involving death. At this moment of the interaction, the participants are talking about their favorite television series and B2 compares her two favorite shows, namely *Sherlock* and *Doctor Who*, as can be seen below:

Excerpt (17): ((Brazilians 00:22:14–00:22:48))

001 B2: Olha (.) eu Amo amo amo doctor who;
Look I love love love Doctor Who
002 ((1.3))
003 B2: Só que::;
But
004 sherLock⁶⁸ é de (.) levantar e <<clapping> bater pA:lma
no [finAl;>]
Sherlock is for you to stand up and clap at the end

⁶⁸ Even though the word in English has *-lock* as a syllable, the pronunciation of B2 was “-loque”, forming, therefore, two syllables.

005 B1: [((laughs))]
006 B3: [((smiles))]
007 ((1.0))
008 B2: de verDAde;
For real
009 quando eu acabei a terceira temporada que tava no netFLIX
eu fiquei de mU:ito mau humor;
When I finished watching the third season that was on Netflix
010 tipo assim eu fui dormir ↑MAIS <<laughing> cedo,>
Like I went to bed earlier
011 B1: [((laughs))]
012 B2: [((laughs))] porQUE:,
Because
013 [<<looking up and puts her hands above her head> acaBOU a
vI:da;>]
Life's over
014 B1: [<<laughing> é esTRAnho né;>]
It's weird right
015 B2: É;
Yeah
016 [((laughs))]
017 B1: [((laughs))] <<smiling> quando cê acaba um livro alguma
coisa assim cê olha assim pros LA:dos;>
When you finish a book something like that you look around
018 B2: dá um vaZIO;
[And] there's emptiness
019 B1: dá um vaZIO;
There's emptiness
020 é como se cê tivesse perDI:do alguém assim [sabe;]
It's like you'd lost someone you know
021 B2: [NÃO,]
And what's more
022 e sherLOck eles são terrÍveis porque só te:m,
And Sherlock they're terrible because there's only
023 agora que lançaram a QUA:Rta;=
They only released the fourth [season] now
024 =mas eu vou esperar chegar no netflix porque eu gosto de
ver no meu TEMpo;
But I'm waiting until it comes to Netflix because I like to watch things in my time.

In line 001, B2 performs a syntactic hyperbolic action similar to the one seen in Excerpt (15). In this case, the scale of the repetition follows a 'more than' metric shown in (11):

(11) <gosto, gosto muito, amo, amo amo amo>
<like, like very much, love, love love love>

Here, B2's hyperbolic utterance is also overpowered by her own next hyperbolic utterance, which comes immediately after the first one, in lines 003 and 004, when B2 says that even though she “loves loves loves” *Doctor Who*, “sherLOck é de (.) levantar e bater pA:lma no finAl;” (“Sherlock is for you to stand up and clap at the end”) (line 004). The adversative expression “só que::;” (“But”) (line 003), evidences a relation between the utterances in lines 001 and 004, which ultimately modifies the scale in (11), pushing up its extreme point, as can be seen in (12).

(12) <gosto, gosto muito, amo, amo-amo-amo, de levantar e bater palma>
<like, like very much, love, love-love-love, for you to stand up and clap>

While B2 says “sherLOck é de (.) levantar e bater pA:lma no finAl;” (line 004), she also actually claps, bodily demonstrating the reaction to the Sherlock series.



Figure 11 – Sherlock é de levantar e bater palma

After that, from line 009 onwards, B2 starts talking about her irritation when she finished watching the third season of *Sherlock*. Considering, however, her remarks about the show in lines 001 to 004, comparing it to another series that she likes, namely *Doctor Who*, her annoyance can be understood as being caused by having no more new episodes to watch rather than because of the quality of the show. This idea is corroborated by her remark in lines 022 and 023, which suggest that the next season takes too long to be released. So, B2 tells the other participants how she was in a bad mood after watching the last episode of season three, in a way that she went to bed earlier because “acaBOU a vI:da” (“life’s over”) (line 013). In the same way as the hyperbolic instances analyzed in Excerpt (16), here it is not possible to determine a ‘more than’ scale, and the expression “acaBOU a vI:da” should be understood as an absolute value. Unlike “to kill”, however, this instance does not denote wrath, but distress. Therefore, the exaggerated utterance can be represented by the argumentative scale (13a) and (13b) below:

(13a) I felt distress at the end of the third season of the *Sherlock* series.

(13b) I felt like my life has ended at the end of the third season of the *Sherlock* series.

The argumentative strength of (13b) is therefore greater than the one in (13a) because no possible argument is stronger than “acaBOU a vI:da”, which occupies an absolute position. It is possible, however, to intensify even an expression of absolute value, which B2 does by means of her body language. Figure 12 shows B2 performing the gesture, which involves a movement of her arms, hands and head. This gesture functions as an acting performance of what is being said and makes the description of the situation more vivid in the sense that exaggeration is carried out not only in the field of ideas, but also in a visual, embodied form. In this sense, it is possible to determine that more elements have been incorporated to the absolute value of “acaBOU a vI:da”, but without changing its absoluteness.



Figure 12 – Acabou a vida

This idea can be explained by means of a philosophical-mathematical approach to infinity. In a mental experiment known as Hilbert’s hotel, proposed by Hilbert (*apud* HUEMER, 2016), a fully occupied hotel with an infinite number of rooms is able to receive an indefinite number of new guests by moving the guests of the rooms n to rooms $2n$, meaning that all odd number rooms in the hotel will be free to new guests. This can be shown in Figure 13 below:

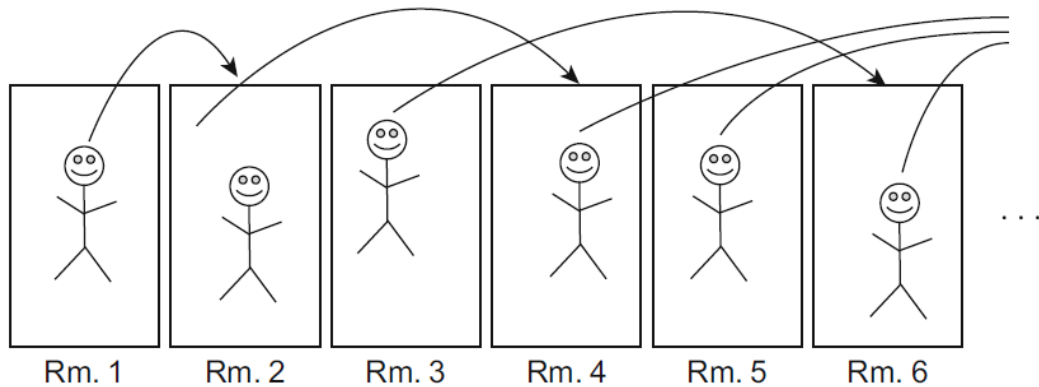


Figure 13 – Hilbert’s hotel

Source: Huemer (2016, p. 23).

The paradox of this problem resides in the fact that if no new rooms are built, after the process of moving the old guests to their new places, the hotel would have more guests

than rooms available. Similarly, if one considers that the expression “acabou a vida” has an absolute value, such as infinity does, then it might be considered a paradox how it is possible that the bodily performance of B2 is considered to be an addition to it.

This can be explained by Huemer’s (2016, p. 181) proposition that “infinity is not a kind of number”, which implies that “no infinite collection stands in the greater-than relation”. What may happen is, however, a rearrangement of elements, which would be infinite in the case of infinite sets. This applies to linguistic instance of B2’s gesture and the expression “acaBOU a vI:da” to the extent that they cannot be set on a ‘more than’ scale and neither can be measured, but are both part of an absolute (or infinite) set which is “beyond number” (p. 147). In this case, what can be increased is not the value of the element, but its argumentative strength. In this case, it is possible to have a second argumentative scale, as presented in (14a) and (14b).

(14a) I felt like my life has ended at the end of the third season of the Sherlock series.

(14b) I felt like my life has ended at the end of the third season of the Sherlock series. + GESTURE

In this case, (14b) consists of a stronger argument than (14a), even though the gesture does not add to the value of the element *per se*, because “I felt like my life has ended + GESTURE” does not represent a next level of distress in relation to “I felt like my life has ended”, but the same level of distress expressed with more elements, and therefore, in a more powerful manner.

Interestingly, besides the intensification of the argument caused by B2’s gesture, a second intensification, this time external, performed by B1, takes place. In lines 017, 019 and 020, B1 incorporates B3’s hyperbole in her own discourse, stating that when you finish a story (= um livro alguma coisa assim) (line 017), there is a similar emptiness to the one experienced when people lose someone they know. The hyperbolic idea of death is also present in this discourse in the extent that it compares B2’s distress in “acaBOU a vI:da” to the grief caused by the death of a loving one. Similarly to Excerpt (16), B1 and B2 are aligned in their argument, leaning towards the same direction, which intensifies B2’s argument even more. Also, B2 also not only recognizes this contribution in line 018, before B1 has the chance of fully introducing her contribution, in a way that

B2 also co-constructs B1's alignment, suggesting the word "dá um vaZIO" (line 018), which is accepted by B1 in line 019.

4.3.2. The German participants

Before Excerpt (18), the Germans are talking about movies and A3 talks about her favorite movie, which A2 has not watched. In this context, A2 takes the turn, which starts in line 001 below:

Excerpt (18): ((Germans 00:15:39–00:16:12))

001 A2: <<laughing> gott ich hab so VIEle filme nicht gesehen;>
God I haven't watched so many movies

002 ((laughs)) ich werde geneRELL immer gefragt,
I'm generally asked

003 kennst du DEN film kennst du den;
Do you know this movie do you know this one

004 NEIN <<laughing>nein nein;>
No no no

005 A3: [((laughs))]

006 A2: [((laughs))] bin auch vor KURzem von jemandem gefragt
worden,
I have just been asked by someone

007 (-)aber harry !POT!ter hast du schon mal gesehen;
But you have watched Harry Potter

008 (-)

009 A3: ah das ist aber (.) NEE;
Ah but this is nope

010 A2: [NEIN;]
No

011 A3: [das geht][ja GAR nicht;]
That doesn't do it at all

012 A2: [((laughs))]

013 A1: was KRASS,
How incredible

014 A3: [wir SIND;]
We're

015 A1: [<<smiling> man] kann überLEben ohne harry potter ge[sehen
zu haben;>]
One can survive without having watched Harry Potter

016 A2: [JA;]
Yeah

017 A1: [((laughs))]

018 A2: [JA;]
Yeah

019 A3: [((shaking her head))][NEIN;]
No

020 A2: [nee ich habe][dafür herr] der RINGe,
No I've watched The Lord of the Rings

021 (-)zwanzigtausend MAL gesehen [oder so;]
Twenty thousand times or something

022 A3: [(<<shaking her head> na das]
[nee>][((shakes her head))][<<shaking her head> ZÄHLT
nicht;>]
Well this no it doesn't count

023 A2: [aber][harry POTter][hab ich nicht gesehen;]
But I haven't seen Harry Potter

024 A1: [((laughs))]

025 A2: [ich habe aber die bücher geLEsen;]
But I've read the books

026 ((laughs))geht das als entSCHUL[digung,]
Does it count as an excuse

027 A3: [(<<shaking her head> NEE;>)]
Nope

028 A2: ((laughs)) [HM::,]
Hm

029 A3: [(<<shaking her head> ?hm ?hm;>)]
?hm?hm

030 ((Moves her index finger sideways))

031 A2: <<h>ich hab die !BÜ!cher gelesen;>
I've read the books

032 das ist [GUT;]
That's good

033 A3: [ja]das ist nicht WICHTiger als die filme zu
gucken;
Yeah that's not more important than watching the movies

034 [(<<pp>Aber;>)]
But

035 A2: [ja] die filme habe ich dann nicht mehr geFUNDen;
Yeah I haven't found the films anymore

036 ((1.28))

In lines 001 to 004, A2 talks about situations in which she has not watched films about which people ask her. In lines 006 and 007 she exemplifies *Harry Potter* as one of the films she has been asked about and has not seen. In line 007, the extra-strong accent in the syllable “POT” from “POTter”, as well as the falling to mid final pitch accent, incompatible with the rising pitch of questions, suggest that A2 and/or her interlocutor believed that *Harry Potter* is a movie she was supposed to have watched. A3 corroborates

this by confronting A1 for not having seen the film, an action she initiates in lines 009 and 011. Even though none of these utterances are hyperbolic per se, a hyperbolic implicature is created, represented in the sentence (15) below:

(15) Having watched Harry Potter is imperative.

A1 challenges this implicature in lines 013 and 015 with a remark that is hyperbolic and ironic at the same time (“was KRASS, | man kann überLEben ohne harry potter gesehen zu haben”). The overstated effect is created by the lexical item “überLEben” (“survive”) (line 015), which suggests the ability to live despite hazards and difficulties. Thus, this creates the following implicature (16):

(16) Not having watched Harry Potter is dangerous.

The ironic effect, on the other hand, lies in the fact that having never watched Harry Potter does not represent a risk or an impediment for someone to continue living, in spite of the use of the lexical item “kann” (“can”) (line 15), which suggests a possibility of someone not surviving for not having watched *Harry Potter*. This creates the double implicatures (17a) and (17b) below, which deny implicature (16) and go in the opposite direction of (15). Its double feature is able, therefore, to nullify or even overpower implicature (15).

(17a) Not having watched Harry Potter is not dangerous.

(17b) Having watched Harry Potter is not imperative.

It is interesting to notice that at first this discussion is carried out in an indirect form, that is, by means of implicatures rather than explicit utterances. Even A1’s hyperbolic statement is uttered ironically, which creates an implicature A1 believes to be false. The ultimate effect of this rhetoric strategy is the denial of this false implicature immediately after it is created. After this, however, the conversation acquires more direct features.

A2 agrees with A1 in lines 016 and 018, showing affiliation to his remark. A3, however, shows disaffiliation to the implicatures (17a) and (17b) by shaking her head and saying “NEIN;” (line 019). A2 then tries a new affiliative action, namely pointing out that

she has watched *The Lord of the Rings* “(-) zwanzigtausend MAL gesehen oder so;” (“twenty thousand times or something”) (line 021). This may have been made considering similar features of both stories or that *The Lord of the Rings* is a popular movie like *Harry Potter*, for example. Either way, hyperbole has been used in a ‘more than’ scale, which can be seen in (18):

(18) <ein paar mal, oft, zwanzigtausend mal>
<a few times, often, twenty thousand times>

A3 rejects this attempt of affiliation in line 022, in which she shakes her head again and says “ZÄHLT nicht;” (“[It] doesn’t count”), which means that the hyperbole used so as to make the argument stronger was unsuccessful in this case.

A2 attempts another affiliative move in line 025, which suggests a preference for affiliation which A3 failed to meet. This time, she argues that she has read the books, and adds in line 026 “geht das als entSCHUL[digung],” (“Does it count as an excuse”). This question indicates that implicature (15) was the successful one in this conversation, in a way that convinced A2 that not having watched *Harry Potter* is problematic to a certain extent.

A3 rejects also this argument with a shake of her head and by saying “NEE;” (“Nope”) (line 027). A2 then gives a minimal response in line 028 and A3 reinforces her disaffiliation with a nonaffiliative continuer in line 029 and head and finger gestures indicating denial in both lines 029 and 030. In line 031, A2 challenges A3’s disaffiliative behavior, by repeating the information given in line 025, but this time with an extra-strong accent in the syllable “BÜ” in “!BÜ!cher” (“books”) (line 031) and in a higher pitch register. She also adds her own evaluation of her situation, namely that “das ist GUT;” (“That’s good”) (line 032). In 033, A3 rejects A2’s arguments once more, stating that having read the books “ist nicht WICHTiger als die filme zu gucken;” (“is not more important than watching the movies”). In line 035, A2 closes the argument without a new affiliative attempt, which is followed by silence. After that, A1 takes the turn and asks A3 a question which has no relation to *Harry Potter* and the conversation about films continues.

In Excerpt (19), the Germans are talking about situations of embarrassment they have been through because of their families, which is one of the topics which the

Brazilians did not discuss. A1 shares his embarrassment in line 001 and the conversation continues as follows:

Excerpt (19): ((Germans 00:48:55-00:49:07))

001 A1: meine mutter hat mir dann auch zum beispiel das PAUsenbrot;
My mom has for example brought me *Pausenbrot*⁶⁹
002 an die BUShaltestelle nachgebracht;
At the bus stop
003 [da bin ich ja FAST;]
I have almost
004 A3: [mein VAtter auch;]
My dad too
005 [im BAdemantel;]
In a bathrobe
006 A1: [((laughs))] [hm_HM;]
007 A3: [ist/ im BAdemantel;]
He was/ in a bathrobe
008 [ist er mit dem] [mal geRANNT;]
And running with it
009 A2: [((laughs))] [↑NEE:::;]
No
010 A1: [((cringes))]
011 A3: [und DAS war mal;]
And that was just
012 A2: [((laughs))]
013 A1: da bin ich ja fast im BODen versunken;
I wish the ground would open and swallow me up
014 irgendwie vor [fremdSCHÄme ne;]
Because of the second-hand embarrassment
015 A3: [JA ja ja ja;]
Yeah yeah yeah yeah
016 A1: ((laughs))

In line 001, A1 expresses his feeling of embarrassment at having his *Pausenbrot* delivered to him by his mother at the bus stop. In line 004, A1 shares that she has a similar experience with her father, with the difference that he was running and wearing a bathrobe when it happened. When, in lines 007 and 008, A3 gives more detail about the situation, A2 laughs and produces a response cry in line 009, showing a reaction to the emotions A3 is sharing. In line 010, A1 also shows affiliation by reacting to A3's story, but using

⁶⁹ *Pausenbrot* is the food German children eat during recess at school.

body language. He cringes in an acting performance that can be seen in the first frame of Figure 14 below.

After that, in lines 013 and 014 he expresses his feelings using a hyperbolic idiom, namely that “da bin ich ja fast im Boden versunken;| irgendwie vor fremdSCHÄme ne;” (“I wished the ground would open and swallow me up because of the second-hand embarrassment”). It is not clear whether he means to comment on A3’s story or he is simply continuing his utterance in line 003, which was interrupted before he could finish, although his affiliative performance in line 010 suggests the former. Either way, his hyperbolic usage can be explained using the ‘more than’ scale (19), which can be seen below:

- (19) <ein bisschen peinlich, sehr peinlich, fast im Boden versunken>
<a little embarrassing, very embarrassing, almost swallowed by the ground>

Together with this hyperbole, A1 also performs another bodily action, moving his arms and pointing them to himself and later to the floor, as can be seen in the second and third frames in Figure 14 below. In a similar matter to B2’s performance in Excerpt (17), A1’s gesture enhances the expressive strength of his utterance, given that, because of the development of the interaction in this fragment, his utterance has no argumentative properties.



Figure 14 – Fast im Boden versunken

As it was demonstrated by the examples of Brazilian and German hyperboles, the hyperboles shown in this section did not require specific contextual knowledge to be understood, because the instances of overstatement were intrinsically exaggerated in most context of ordinary life. It would require a very extreme context for them to be considered literal, such as a confession of homicidal thoughts in the case of killing hyperboles, for example. In the case of a person who has watched *The Lord of the Rings* twenty thousand times since 2001, when *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring* was released in Germany,⁷⁰ A2 would have to have seen the movie approximately 1,333 times a year, or 3.65 times every day.

⁷⁰ According to the Internet Movie Database (IMDb), available at <<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0120737/releaseinfo>>. Accessed on June 23rd, 2017.

4.4. Hyperboles with a low degree of context independence

By this point two major types of (potential) hyperbolic instances have been addressed, namely the borderline occurrences and hyperboles with a high degree of context independence. As shown, the former consists of occurrences which may or may not be an overstatement, whilst the latter represents hyperboles *de facto* which do not require a specific situational information to be understood. In this section, exaggerated language which require contextual information will be analyzed. Differently from borderline occurrences, the information required to understand hyperboles with a low degree of context independence can be retrieved from discourse itself. It is also important to note that, given that this form of hyperbolic language may be realized in various manners with elements which are arranged and rearranged in a specific point in time, place, context and discourse, no particular tendencies were found here.

4.4.1. The German participants

Excerpt (20) shows the moment when A2 reads the card about the extreme poverty in the world, as can be seen below. Before she starts reading, A1 makes a remark about the card containing much text.

Excerpt (20): ((Germans 00:12:01–00:12:28))

001 A2: <<reading aloud> ein großer teil der MENschen weltweit hat
nichts zu essen;
A large number of people in the world has nothing to eat
002 und auch KEInen zugang zum gesundheitswesen;
And also no access to health care
003 zur BILdung oder wohnung;
Education or housing
004 was sind deiner MEInung nach,
In your opinion
005 die gründe für die exTREme armut in der welt;
What is the reason for extreme poverty in the world
006 gibt es ETwas was du,
Is there anything you
007 (-)TUN kannst;
Can do
008 um die situation zu ÄNdern,>
To change this situation
009 A3: oh GOTT;
Oh God

010 A1: ((laughs))

011 A2: pff

012 ((4.34))

013 A1: hm_HM;

014 (-)<<laughing>das ist jetzt ganz schön komplex;>
This is very complex

015 ((laughs))

016 A3: ja JA;
Yeah yeah

017 A2: [ah JA;]
Ah yeah

018 A3: [das ist] JA;
This is yeah

019 das ist SCHWIERig;
This is hard

020 A2: <<laughing>tja die fragen STEIgern sich hier;>
Well the questions are escalating here

021 A1: ja JA,
Yeah yeah

022 [na also;]
Well so

023 A2: [jetzt frag ich] mich was [<<laughing> die LETzte frage
ist;>]
Now I'm asking myself what the last question is

024 A3: [((unintelligible))]

025 A1: [<<laughing> geNAU;>]
Exactly

026 A2: [ist;]
Is

027 [((laughs))]

028 → A1: [((laughs))][<<laughing> was ist der sinn des LEbens;>]
What's the meaning of life

029 A3: [viele so verSCHIEdene sachen;]
So many different things

030 A1: ((laughs))

031 A3: ((laughs))hm_HM;

As can be seen in this extract, the question in the card was considered challenging by the participants, who initially had difficulty in answering. None of the participants took the turn at first, and minimal contributions were uttered in lines 009-012. In line 014, after a period of silence, A1 verbally expresses his feelings about the complexity of the question, which is followed by other minimal contributions in lines 016-018. In line 019, A3 also states how difficult the question is. A2 then comments that “tja die fragen

STElgern sich hier;” (“Well the questions are escalating here”) (line 020), which is also a remark about the complexity of the question. In line 023 she utters “jetzt frag ich mich was die LEtzte frage ist” (“Now I’m asking myself what the last question is”) (line 023), as a complement of the idea that questions are escalating (line 020). This comment influences A1’s hyperbolic remark in line 028, namely “was ist der sinn des LEbens” (“What’s the meaning of life”).

It is important to consider that “was ist der sinn des LEbens” (line 028) only assumes a hyperbolic meaning in this specific context and as a response to A2’s remark in line 023. The combination of the meanings of A2’s utterances in lines 020 (20a) and 023 (20b) creates the consequence (20c):

(20a) The questions are escalating.

(20b) I’m asking myself what the last question is.

(20c) The last question will be the most difficult one.

Therefore, the exaggeration of “was ist der sinn des LEbens” (line 028) is established based on (20c) as literal proposition and stretching it meaning to the extreme of a ‘more than’ scale, as can be shown in (21):

(21) <einfache Frage, schwierige Frage, was ist der Sinn des Lebens>
<easy question, difficult question, what is the meaning of life>

Consequently, “was ist der sinn des LEbens” (line 028) expresses the idea of ‘the most difficult question possible’. This meaning is established *ad hoc* and thus is applicable strictly at that moment, as an interactional and contextual construct shared by the participants of the conversation.

In Excerpt (21), the German participants are talking about one of A1’s hobbies, which is dancing *fórró*.⁷¹ A2 comments that she does not know how the dance is and A1 says that it is possible to learn to dance in classes on campus. A3 shares that on the following day she is going to have a *fórró* lesson for the first time, outside campus. Then A1 tells the others where they can dance *fórró* at UFMG. The conversation then develops as follows:

⁷¹ Fórró is a Brazilian dance style.

Excerpt (21): ((Germans 00:13:27–00:13:45))

002 A1: aber hier kann man immer MITTwoch tanzen,==ne;
But here you can always dance on Wednesdays right

003 auf diesem praça de serVIços,
On that Praça de Serviços

004 gibt es IM[me:r,]
There's always something

005 A3: [ach SO;]
I see

006 A1: geNAU;
Exactly

007 A1: [mittw mitt]woch AB,
Wednesday on

008 A3: [oKAY;]
Okay

009 A1: (-)glaub so halb SECHS oder so forró;
I think forró is at half past five or something

010 A2: aber die KÖNnen das glaub ich auch schon oder,
But I imagine they can dance already right

011 ((1.0))

012 A1: HM: ,

013 A2: [NEE,]
No

014 A1: [so halb] HALB;
So fifty-fifty

015 A1: [also es gibt so die CRACKS,]
So there are like the cracks

016 A2: [((laughs))]

017 A1: [die halt so RUMtanzen ne;]
That kinda dance around right

018 A2: [((laughs))]

019 und dann aber [bei denen die am RAND rumsitzen;]
And then next to them the ones who sit in the corner

020 A3: [<<pp> die anderen sich so verSTEcken;>]
The others hide themselves

021 A1: die freuen sich dann wenn man einfach mal irgendwas verSUCHT
ja; (--)
They're pleased when you simply try something

022 A2: a:h oKAY;
Ah okay

After learning where to go dancing on campus, A2 says “aber die KÖNnen das glaub ich auch schon oder” in line 010, which is probably related to the fact that if

she went to class she would be a real beginner in *forró*. A1 then explains in lines 014, 015 and 017 that there are two groups of people (“halb HALB”, or “fifty-fifty”) (line 014). There are then the “CRACKS” (line 015), who can dance, and another group. A3 says then, in a very low voice, in line 020 that the other group “sich so verSTEcken” (line 020), which is a meaning conveyed *ad hoc*, in a similar way to what was shown in Excerpt (20).

The overstatement in this phrase is thus dual, representing two opposite poles in a dance scenario. Moreover, this duality is co-constructed, with A1 establishing the cracks, which represent the “good dancers’ extremity” and A3 determining the other extreme, that is, the “terrible dancers”, the ones who do not know the dance or cannot dance properly to the extent that they need to hide themselves when confronted to the other group. Therefore, this hyperbolic realization can be understood by means of a ‘polar grading’, a term introduced by Sapir (1944, p. 114) and represented by the scale (22) below. A particularity of this type of grading is that only the extreme elements matter, given that the exaggerated meaning is, ultimately, the difference between them.

(22) <die Tänzer, die sich verstecken, die Cracks>
<the dancers that hide themselves, the cracks>

Also, as can be seen in Figure 15 below, the idea of hiding is also enacted by an arm gesture and a slight movement of A3’s torso. It is also possible to see that A1 and A2 are talking to each other and looking at each other, in a way that none of them notices A3’s remark, which can also be explained by the fact that A3 uttered her hyperbolic contribution in a very low voice.

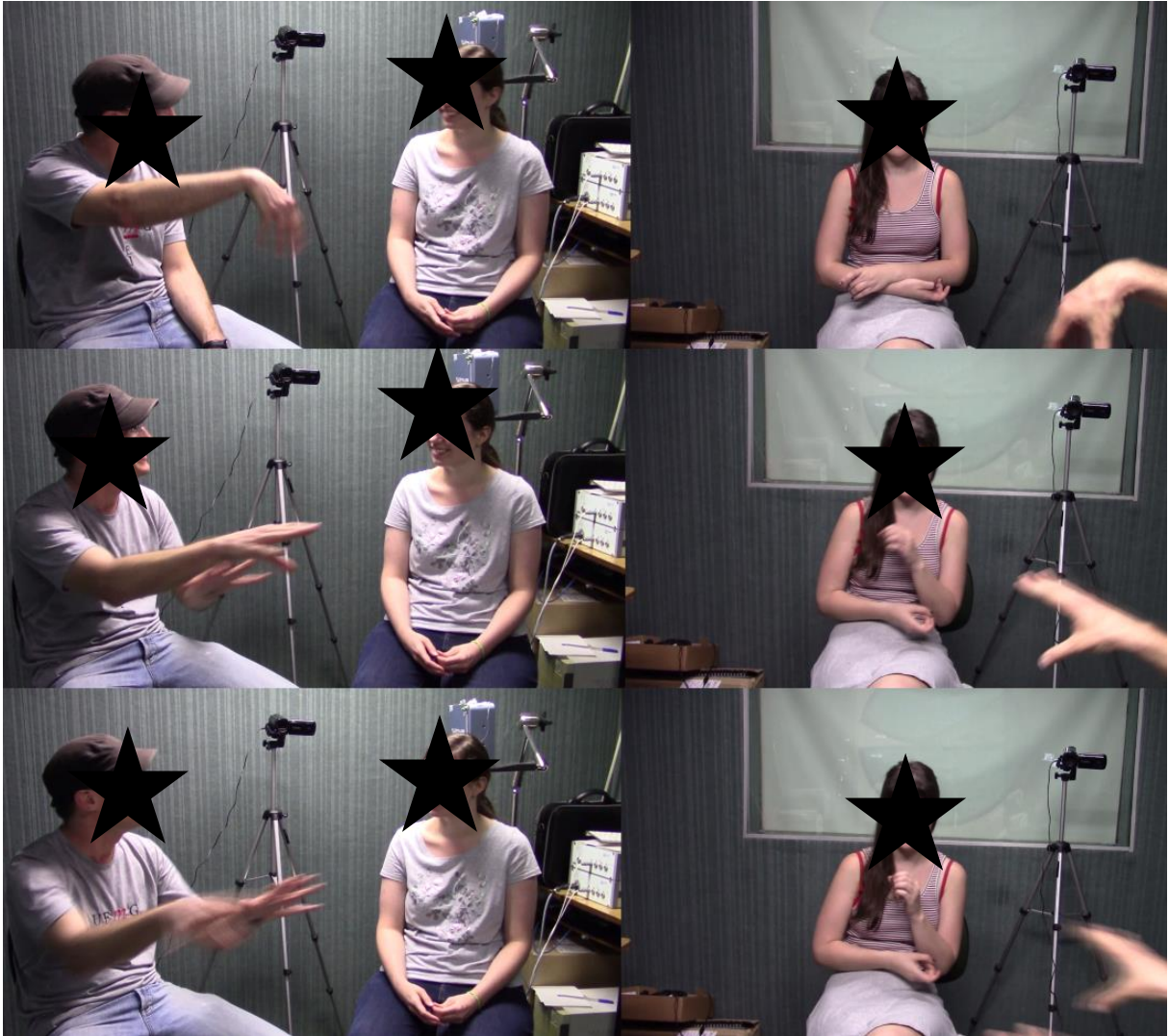


Figure 15 – Die anderen sich so verstecken

4.4.2. The Brazilian participants

Excerpt (22) shows an instance in which, in a similar manner to Excerpt (20), the participants read a card and complain about the task they are supposed to perform, as can be seen below:

Excerpt (22): ((Brazilians 00:49:17–00:49:35))

- 001 B1: <<reading aloud> conte sobre o seu primeIro amor;>
Talk about your first love
- 002 B2: <<rindo> nó vão pular ESSa gente;>
Gee let's skip this one guys
- 003 B3: ((laughs))
- 004 B2: pelo amor de DEus,
For God's sake

005 B1: ((laughs))<<laughing> carol isso não é JUSTo tá,>
Carol this isn't fair okay

006 B2: ((laughs))
((Laughs))

007 B1: ((laughs))<<laughing> abre a porta que eu quero saIR
agora,>
Open the door because I want to leave right now

008 ((laughs))<<laughing> A::I,>
Ah

009 cês podem podem cês querem pu↑LA:R ou pode,
Can you can do you want to skip this one or can I

010 B2: pode fal <<looking at B3> ah pode fa↑LAR uai;>
You can ta ah you can speak

When B1 reads the card in line 001, B2 exaggerates a desire for skipping the question (line 002) in an emphatic plea expressed by the expression “*pelo amor de DEus*” (“For God’s sake”) (line 003). B2’s reaction could be understood as literal, but the fact that she performs her conversational action while laughing suggest otherwise. This hyperbolic manifestation is also expressive and emotional rather than argumentative, because there is no argumentative point to be gotten across, although there is in fact an exaggerated implicature set up in discourse, as can be seen in (23).

(23) Please don’t make me talk about this.

In line 005, B1 incorporates B2’s implicature into her discourse, as seen in line 005 with the utterance “*carol isso não é JUSTo tá*”. In this moment, there is a change of footing (GOFFMAN, 1981), because B1 no longer addresses the other participants, but the researcher who set up the conversation (“*carol*”) and who is not in the room at the time. It is interesting to note that when complaining about the card, differently from the Germans in Excerpt (20), she relates the conversation not to a set of tasks, but to the researcher personally, which leads B1 to behave as if the cards were the researcher’s voice in the conversation. She then utters an exaggerated command directed to the researcher in line 006, “*abre a porta que eu quero saIR agora*”. It is possible to recognize the hyperbolic feature of her contributions in both lines 005 and 006 due to the fact that B1 knows the researcher cannot hear her and that she could leave the conversation whenever she wishes. Also, the laughter suggests that her utterances are not supposed to be taken literally.

All the instances of exaggeration in this extract were created *ad hoc* and are not hyperboles *per se*. Therefore, in order to confirm whether B2's first utterances were literal or not, B1 shifts the footing again and addresses the participants whether they were serious about skipping the question or not, which can be seen in line 009 with “cês podem podem cês querem pu↑LA:R ou pode,”. B2 then confirms that the implicature (23) is hyperbolic in line 010, to the extent that she does not mind talking about it. In this moment, she starts giving the answer “pode fal”, interrupts herself, looks at B3, possibly to make sure that he does not object to the decision of talking about the card, and continues, “ah pode fa↑LAR uai;”.

Another instance of hyperbole created in context can be seen in Excerpt (23), in which B1 mentions B3's cellular phone, which is a basic model, as opposed to the smartphones she and B2 have. The participants then start a conversation on this topic, as can see below:

Excerpt (23): ((Brazilians 00:07:16–00:07:25))

001 B1: <<pointing at B3> tava até comentando com Ele;>
I was even talking to him

002 que ele tem um um celular que é realmente só pro pro
necesSÁRIO né;
That he has a cell phone really just for for the necessary

003 B3: [<<grabs cell phone> É:;>]
Yeah

004 B1: [eu falei assim gen]te o bom [é ↑ESse,]
I said like guys that's the good one

005 B3: [quase um walkie]
Almost a walkie

TALkie;>
talkie

006 B1: é o bom é E:Sse;
Yeah that's the good one

In lines 001 and 002, B2 introduces the topic about B3's cell phone after talking about the possibility of being incommunicable. In line 002, she explains that his phone is “realmente só pro pro necesSÁRIO né;” and, in line 004, evaluates this feature as positive, with “o bom é ↑ESse,”. In line 005, B3 hyperbolically compares his phone to a walkie-talkie, a radio device whose sole function is to transmit and receive spoken

messages. This idea can be expressed in a ‘more than’ scale, as shown in (24), in which ‘walkie-talkie’ is the element on the bottom.

(24) <walkie-talkie, basic phone, smartphone>

Using this construction, B3 enhances the power of B1’s argument that his cellular phone is only for the necessary, in an affiliative move. The lexical item walkie-talkie is not, however, intrinsically hyperbolic, but assumes an exaggerated meaning specifically in the communicative context of this conversation.

As it was demonstrated in this Section, some instances of overstated language can only be realized *ad hoc*, based on the conversational context of the interaction, and often in a co-constructed manner. Therefore, expressions that are usually used in their literal meaning and emotional responses are exaggerated in order to convey temporary meanings which perform communicative functions in specific moments.

4.5. Communicative styles and rapport

In this Section, the features which each group of participants showed in interaction with respect to rapport and communicative styles will be presented, as there are fundamental differences which are worth addressing. These aspects could be seen in three instances, namely (a) Rapport tendencies, (b) Personalization and (c) Narrative strategies (TANNEN, 2005; SPENCER-OATEY, 2008). After each of the instances is dealt with in Sections 4.5.1 to 4.5.3 respectively, Section 4.5.4 will discuss the relation between communicative styles, rapport and hyperboles.

4.5.1. Rapport tendencies

In relation to rapport, the Germans showed a distance-oriented style, which leaned towards a separation between them and their interlocutors, either physically (none of the Germans touch each other in any moment of the interaction) and also in relation to their opinions and personal choices. The desire to not impose can be exemplified by the Excerpt (23), which shows a moment in which the participants are talking about books and A3 asks for a recommendation of a Brazilian author for her to read.

Excerpt (23): ((Germans 00:22:25-00:22:42))

001 A3: kannst du kannst du ä:h (.) zum ANfangen,
Can you can you ehm as a start
002 ä:h einen autor emPFEHlen,
Ehm recommend an author
003 einen brasilianischen,
A Brazilian one
004 (1.0) [als erstes]
As first
005 A1: [ist gesch ist] geSCHMACKSsache;
It's a mat it's a matter of taste
006 also ich lese halt gerne biograPHIen,
So I like reading biographies
007 dann ist lira NEto zum beispiel super;
Then Lira Neto is for example great
008 weil der schreibt viele biograPHIen,
Because he writes a lot of biographies
009 (1.0) und sonst was hab ich neulich gelesen von joão ubaldo
riBEIro;
And apart from that what have I recently read by João Ubaldo Ribeiro
010 viva o POvo brasileiro,
Viva o Povo Brasileiro⁷²
011 (--)

It can be seen that when A3 asks for A1's opinion on which Brazilian author she should read, in lines 001 to 003, A1 refuses to give a direct answer, as shown in line 005, when he says it is a matter of taste. This can be understood as an attempt to avoid imposing his tastes and ideas on A3. Her question, however, does not remain unanswered. A1 talks, then, in lines 0006 to 010, about the authors he has been reading lately, what ultimately leaves to A3 the choice to consume or not books based on his personal taste.

The Brazilians, on the other hand, tended to show a closeness-oriented style, seeking friendliness and camaraderie in interaction. This can be seen, for instance, in the following Excerpt (24), when the Brazilians are talking about their favorite television series.

⁷² The title of this book in English is "An invincible memory" and in German it is "Brasilien, Brasilien". A literal translation would be "Hail to the Brazilian people".

Excerpt (24): ((Brazilians 00:12:03-00:12:26))

001 B1: mas a minha série favorita é <<len> how to get away with
MURder;>
But my favorite series is How to get away with murder

002 como defender um assassIno é muito boa;=
How to defend a murderer it's very good

003 =eu (.) amo assim (.) a parte do diREItO;
I love like the part of the Law

004 (---)e criminal minds também porque depois de letras eu
penso em fazer psicoloGIA,
And Criminal Minds too because after graduating in letras I'm thinking about studying
psychology

005 B3: NÓ:;
Whoa

006 (--)

007 B2: nó cê pensa em emenDAR um no outro?
Whoa are you thinking about starting one right after the other

008 B1: SIM;
Yes

009 por [QUÊ,]
Why

010 B2: [curSAR um,]
Studying one

011 B1: [<<creaky> é::> cês aCHA:M,]
Do you guys think

012 B2: [porque psicoloGIA são] cinco †A:nos né;
Because psychology takes five years

013 B1: SI:M (.) eu pE:nso,
Yeah I think

014 (--)cês não Acham <<creaky> que é::,>
Don't you guys think it's

015 B3: <h>>ah eu acho leGAL;>
Ah I think it's nice

016 [eu eu]
II

017 B2: [†É::;]
Yeah

Here, in line 004, B1 expresses the wish of studying psychology after her current major, as a life plan. Both B2 and B3 then express a reaction to her idea and B1 proceeds to ask what they think about her plans, in lines 011 and 014. B3 answers directly that he finds it nice (line 015) and B2 gives a doubtful answer with a lengthened, high-pitched “†É::” (line 017). What is particularly interesting about this example is that the

participants talk in a natural manner about their life plans and also give opinions about each other's plans already in the beginning of the interaction (as can be seen in the excerpt's heading, this dialog takes place at about twelve minutes of conversation), even though it is the first time they meet. This behavior can be understood as a pursuit for closeness and sharing ideas, plans and feelings.

Also, the inclination for closeness in the Brazilian group also manifested physically, because the B1 and B2 had various moments of touching each other when speaking. This could not be observed in relation to B3, perhaps because he was spatially separated from the other two participants, or possibly due to gender and age differences. An instance of both physical and psychological alignment and closeness can be seen in the set formed by Excerpts (25) and (26), which can be seen below:

Excerpt (25): ((Brazilians 00:10:11-00:10:28))

001 B1: <<reading aloud> o que você gosta de fazer no seu tempo
Livre,>
What do you enjoy doing in your free time

002 → <<smiling> ah eu não vou faLAR isso não;
Ah I won't say it

003 → eu v eu vou falar mas: (.) todo mundo vai achar
sedentaRISmo,
I'll say it buy everyone will think I'm sedentary

004 → mas gente eu amo dormir e assistir netFLIX;>
But guys I love sleeping and watching Netflix⁷³

005 B3: [((laughs))]

006 → B2: [(<<ff> ((laughs)))>]

007 B1: [((laughs))]<<h> É:: o que eu faço de melhOr,>
It's what I do best

008 dormir comEr e assistir netflix não tem ↑COmo assim;
Sleeping, eating and watching Netflix there's no way like

009 ((laughs)) (-)<<laughing> ai desCULpa;>
Oh sorry

Here, it can be seen that B1 hesitates in sharing what she does in her free time (line 002), which she attributes to not wanting to be judged by the others (line 003). In the end, she does share what she does, which is sleeping and watching Netflix. This also happens at the beginning of the interaction, namely at minute ten. Around seven minutes later, B1's utterance is retrieved by B2 in Extract (26), which can be seen below:

⁷³ Netflix is a streaming service of films and television shows on demand.

Excerpt (26): ((Brazilians 00:17:04-00:17:12))

001 B1: <<handing the card to B2> vai LÁ;
Your turn
002 ((laughs))>
003 B2: <<reading aloud> o que você gosta de fazer no seu tempo
Livre,>
What do you enjoy doing in your free time
004 → <<touching B1 with the arm and smiling> dormir e netFLIX;>
Sleeping and Netflix
005 B1: <<laughing> †A::H,>
006 B3: <<pp> AH;>
007 B1: <<laughing> †feCHOU então;> ((laughs))
That's my girl⁷⁴
008 B3: ((smiles))

Here, when it is B2's turn to talk about what she enjoys doing in her free time, she shares that she also likes to sleep and watch Netflix, which is done as an emphatic alignment that includes gaze, touching, laughing. When, in line 007, B1 adds that “feCHOU então”, she recognizes herself and B2 as belonging to the same group. The bodily reactions of B1 and B2 can be seen in Figure 16 below.

⁷⁴ “Fechou” is a Brazilian informal expression which expresses affiliation and partnership at the same time. A literal translation would be “closed”.



Figure 16 – Sleeping and Netflix

4.5.2. Personalization

The Brazilian group showed a high degree of personalization, which means that personal topics were frequently introduced and, moreover, the participants tended to personalize impersonal activities. This has been briefly discussed in Excerpt (22), when B2 addressed the researcher in a shift of footing. Another instance of this can be seen in Excerpt (27), when the Brazilians are talking about a time when B3 believed he had won the lottery.

Excerpt (27): ((Brazilians 00:48:34-00:48:52))

001 B3: aí eu na hora falei assim NÃO,
Then at the time I said hey
002 teresa procura lá a gente gaNHOU a gente ganhou (.) ai,
Teresa check out the numbers we won we won ah
003 (-)é eu[sabIA que ia,]
And I knew
004 B2: [não tava nem aqui aGO]ra,
[You] wouldn't even be here now
005 [tava viaJANdo;]
[You]'d be traveling
006 B3: [é NO::S] [sa senhora,]
Yeah gee
007 B1: [((laughs))]
008 B3: <<smiling> ia queBRAR o galho da carol,
I'd pull the rug from under Carol's feet⁷⁵
009 ia falar assim ó tem JEItO não,
I'd say like look there's no way
010 tô viajando tô LONGe;
I'm traveling, I'm far away
011 fui emBOra,
I'm gone
012 aposenTEI (.) né;
Retired right
013 vou passar o RESto dos dias viajando;>
I'm spending the rest of my days traveling
014 (---)

In line 002, B3 expressively tells the others how he was sure he had won the prize, asking his daughter to check the results. The expressivity comes in form of the repetition “a gente gaNHOU a gente ganhou” (“we won we won”) (line 002), which dramatizes his emotional reaction to having won the money. Then, in lines 004 and 005, B2 states that, if B3 had won the prize, he would be traveling instead of sitting “aqui” (“here”) (a deictic referring to the situation in which B2 and B3 are) in that moment. B3 confirms it and says, in line 008, that it would “queBRAR o galho da carol” (see footnote 73), taking the impersonal study for the individual who carries it out (“carol”). He then

⁷⁵ “Quebrar o galho” is a Brazilian expression which could be literally translated as “Break the branch”. As this phrase means to help someone and B3 seems to be saying that he would actually withdraw his help to the researcher and travel instead, this was translated accordingly to what the speaker seemed to have meant. This idea would be expressed in Portuguese with other expressions using the verb “quebrar”, such as “quebrar as pernas” (break one's legs).

proceeds to describe the conversation he would have to the researcher, telling her the reason why he would not have been able to take part in the interaction.

The Brazilians also tended to personalize general topics, as can be seen in Excerpt (28), when they are talking about their opinion about the extreme poverty in the world and B1 expresses her opinion about admission quotas⁷⁶ in Brazilian universities, which is a controversial topic in the country. The development of her argument can be seen below:

Excerpt (28): ((Brazilians 00:54:46–00:55:14))

001 B1: é: eu sou totalmente a faVOR (.) de cotas;
I'm totally pro-quotas
002 eu estudei em escola particuLA:R,
I studied at a private school
003 (-) agora frequento a a PU:C,=
Now I go to PUC
004 =que é uma universidade (-) particuLAR também,
Which is a private university too
005 é:: (--) eu acredito que:: assim (.) a c as CO:tas,
Yeah I believe that like the qu the quotas
006 é:: (.) você não pode: (.) é (.) comparar uma pessoa que
não
Ehm you can't ehm compare a person who didn't
teve (.) os me a o a acesso às mesmas COIsas (---) que
você teve;
Have the sa th th th access to the same things you did
007 entendeu as mesmas oportuniDA:des;
You know the same opportunities
008 então nada mais justo que essa pessoa também ter um di↑REItO
né,
So nothing's fairer than this person also having a right
009 (--)

Here, the topic about quotas is not personal to B1, because, as she states in lines 002 to 004, she has studied at a private school and now goes to a private university. Nevertheless, before starting to address the subject in an impersonal manner, which is

⁷⁶ Admission quotas in Brazil usually include black, indigenous and low-income students, as well as people who attended public schools.

recognizable by the use of the generic “você” (“you”) (line 006), she personalizes the topic, discussing her own background.

Differently from the Brazilian participants, the Germans not only showed a low degree of personalization but also tended to make personal activities, feelings and experiences impersonal. An example of this is shown below in Excerpt (29), when the participants are talking about what makes them angry and A3 says that people’s unreliability annoys her.

Excerpt (29): ((Germans 00:31:02–00:31:22))

001 A3: und DAS verstehe ich halt nicht;
And that I don’t understand

002 wenn man WEIß man hat was schönes vor,
When people know they planned something nice

003 und DANN,
And then

004 (---)aber nicht das wa das was man zu tun hat einfach MACHT,
But don’t [do] wha just do what they have to do

005 weil man daNACH,
Because they want

006 (-)ZEIT haben will,
To have time afterwards

007 (-)sondern RUMhängt,
Instead they loiter

008 (---)obWOHL man äh äh;
Even though they

009 (-)NE,
Right

010 (--obwohl man eigentlich jetzt schnell kurz alles FERTig
machen könnte und danach,
Even though they could just finish everything quickly now and then

011 (---)

012 A2: HM;

013 A3: was unter[NEHmen;]
Do something

014 A2: [JA:,]
Yeah

015 A3: [das NERVT mich;]
That annoys me

016 A2: [das ist NERvig;]
This is annoying

017 A3: wenn alle leute immer in der lEtzten minute irgendwie (--)
abSAgen;

Here, instead of talking about what makes her angry from a personal perspective, A3 analyzes a behavior of an indefinite individual as an outside observer, as can be seen by the use of the pronoun “man” (line 002), which is roughly equivalent to the English form “one” or the generic “you”. This analysis is done, nevertheless, in a biased manner, since she disapproves of it. Only later, in line 015 and 017, does A3 share a personal view on the topic, uttering the hyperbolic statement “das NERVT mich wenn alle leute immer in der lEtzten minute irgendwie abSAgen” (“That annoys me when everyone always cancels things in the last minute”).

4.5.3. Narrative strategies

The narratives in the German interaction tended to be short and, in case of personal narratives, the participants also tended to tell their stories in general terms, without many details, and in a restrained manner. Considering Tannen’s (2005, p. 128) idea that “one effect of telling long stories is to keep the speaker as the center of attention”, this may also be an indicative of an inclination towards the desire not to impose, as shorter turns, at least in theory, would allow more speakers to give their contributions. An instance of this can be seen below, in Excerpt (30), which shows A3 talking about her first love.

Excerpt (30): ((Germans 00:33:17–00:33:35))

001 A3: der ist ein TYP in den ich so (.) ganz doll verliebt war;=
He is a guy that I was completely in love with
002 =den wollt ich EIgentlich verkuppeln;=
I actually wanted to set him up
003 =mit meiner besten FREUNDin,
With my best friend
004 A2: ((laughs))
005 A3: ABE:R irgendwie hat es nicht geklappt;
But somehow it didn’t work out
006 A2: HM;
007 A3: und DANN,
And then
008 (--)WAR ich die ganze zeit verliebt;=
I was in love the whole time
009 =habe das aber nicht verSTANden,
But I haven’t understood it

010 (-)und (.) ÄH;
And ehm

011 (--)<<dim>fünf kilo abgenommen erstmal in einem MOnat;>
Lost five kilos in a month

012 ((1.29))

013 A3: weil ich so verLIEBT war;
Because I was so in love

014 (--)

A3's story is launched in line 001 and in lines 003 to 005, she points out that at first she wanted to set him up with her best friend, but that did not work out. She does not share, however, details of how it occurred or how she, her friend and the boy she fancied felt about the situation. Also, in lines 011 and 013, she mentions how she lost five kilos in a month because she was in love, but no contextualization of any further information is given.

The Brazilians, on the other hand, tended to produce their narratives in an expressive manner, telling long stories in great detail, inserting characters, dialogs, emotions, acting and exaggerations. Considering that the German's style of short storytelling may be interpreted as a form of attempting not to impose, as previously seen, the preference of the Brazilian participants for long stories may be linked to an idea that detailed narratives allow the interlocutors to learn more details about the speaker, facilitating thus a closeness-oriented rapport. Excerpt (31) shows an instance of storytelling performed by B3. In this context, he talks about his basic model cellular phone, in a passage that takes place shortly after the dialog presented in Excerpt (23).

Excerpt (31): ((Brazilians 00:07:37–00:08:20))

001 B3: eu tenho <<h> mUito pOuco tempo> que TEnho,
I have it hasn't been long since I've had it

002 (--) tem QUATro anos só que tenho (.) ((aponta para o
bolso da calça onde está o celular)) esse;
It's been only four years since I've had this one ((points to the pocket where his
phone is))

003 eu brinco que é teleMÓvel;
I jokingly say it's a telemóvel⁷⁷

004 porque quando eu tava em portuGAL aí,

⁷⁷ "Telemóvel" is the European Portuguese word for "cellphone", whereas the Brazilian Portuguese word is "celular".

Because when I was in Portugal, then
 005 (-) lá eles chamam de teleMÓvel,
 There they call it a telemóvel
 006 comprei lá pra falar com a minha esPOsa e com a minha
 filha,
 I bought it to speak to my wife and with my daughter
 007 (-)então era um walkie TALKie;
 So it was a walkie talkie
 008 e aí <<len> depois que eu volte:I,>
 Then after I came back
 009 <<all>o povo não acreditAVA>
 People didn't believe it
 010 ai mas cê vai ficar sem o celuLAR,
 Ah but are you gonna be without your phone
 011 porque eu !NÃO! !tI!nha celular;
 Because I didn't have a [cell] phone
 012 falava assim ah ↑NÃO,
 I said like oh no
 013 (.)↑TUdo que eu s cês sabem onde eu trabAlho sabem onde
 eu mOro eu tenho telefone fIXo,
 Everything that I you know where I work, you know where I live, I have a landline
 014 (.)ah mas (.) e se precisar falar com você com urgÊncia;
 Ah but what if we need to talk to you urgently
 015 eu FAlO assim ah (.);
 I say like ah
 016 tUdo que cês tentam falar comigo com urgÊncia (.)
 NORmalmente não é urgente;
 Everything that you try to talk to me urgently about isn't normally urgent
 017 e eu falo assim eu respondo e↑MA:IL;
 And I say like I answer emails
 018 chega no final do dia eu Olho e Em gerAl,
 The end of the day comes and I check and in general
 019 aquilo que tava TOdo mundo atrás de mim,
 That thing that everyone was after me for
 020 eu chego no final do dia (.) ia falar com as pesSOas,
 I come at the end of the day and I went to talk to people
 021 aí o que priMEIra coisa que eles falam,
 And what first thing they say
 022 ah não a gente já resolveU;
 Oh no we've already figured it out
 023 eu falo assim uai tá VENdo,
 I say like well see
 024 eu tô estimulando a autonomia de voCÊS;
 I'm stimulating your autonomy
 025 cês não me Acham cês resolvem por conta própria;
 [If] You can't find me, [then] you figure things out on your own

B3's story about his cellular phone is launched in line 001 in a very detailed manner. He tells the other participants how long he has had the phone (line 002), the name he calls it (lines 003 and 007), where he bought it (line 004) and why he bought it (line 006). He then immediately proceeds to tell the reactions people had when they learned that they still would not be able to contact him on his cellular phone. This is done by means of a complete dialog between B3 and indefinite individuals referred as "as pessoas" (line 020) or "o povo" (line 001). This dialog includes not only B3's general questions (line 010) and answers (line 012), but also more complex rhetoric features such as arguments (lines 013, 014) and counterarguments (lines 016, 017) on both parties (in the case, B3 and "people"). The story also has a conclusion which is launched in line 018 and shows that in the end "people" did not need to talk to contact B1, because they were able to figure things out on their own (line 025). In this sense, B3's story shows a high degree of expressiveness and dramatization.⁷⁸ There were characters (B3 and "people"), a scenario (Portugal and then Brazil), a conflict (not being reachable by phone) and a solution (stimulating the autonomy of "people" makes them figure things out on their own) (lines 024 and 025) which is also the moral of his story.

4.5.4. Remarks on styles and hyperboles

After analyzing the data in the aspects presented throughout Section 4, it is possible to establish a relationship between the communicative and rapport styles presented by the participants and their hyperbole production.

It might be apprehended that the hyperboles produced by the Brazilians match their expressive communicative style and their inclination towards closeness. This may help explain why the Brazilians tended to enhance the argumentative strength of their hyperboles with other overstatements and, moreover, the reason why it was common that other participants also engaged in further hyperbolic utterances in the same argumentative direction as the first one. This led to the collective construction of arguments which grew stronger after each exaggerated contribution, culminating in a common overstated meaning.

In this sense, the instances in which Brazilian hyperboles were produced with more than one overstatement and by more than one speaker can be illustrated using the

⁷⁸ "Dramatization" is used here in the theatrical sense of the word.

physics notions of force and vector.⁷⁹ In order to do so, it is necessary to consider that hyperbole is a force and that “force is a vector” (BROWN, 2013, p. 42). The meanings of utterances are then points in space which the arguments occupy and, therefore, a hyperbole is the action of going from a given meaning A, literal, to meaning B, overstated. The magnitude of this vector, that is, its length, is the argumentative strength of the hyperbole. In physics, the magnitude of a vector “is a scalar quantity” (CAPECE, 2010, p. 2) which can be measured and represented by a number. As natural languages do not seem to operate this way, it is not possible to measure the strength of an argument, even though it is feasible to determine if it is stronger or weaker than another one, as already seen throughout Section 4.

So as to understand how this functions, Figure 17 below illustrates how the notion of vectors may be applied to Brazilian hyperbolic instances.

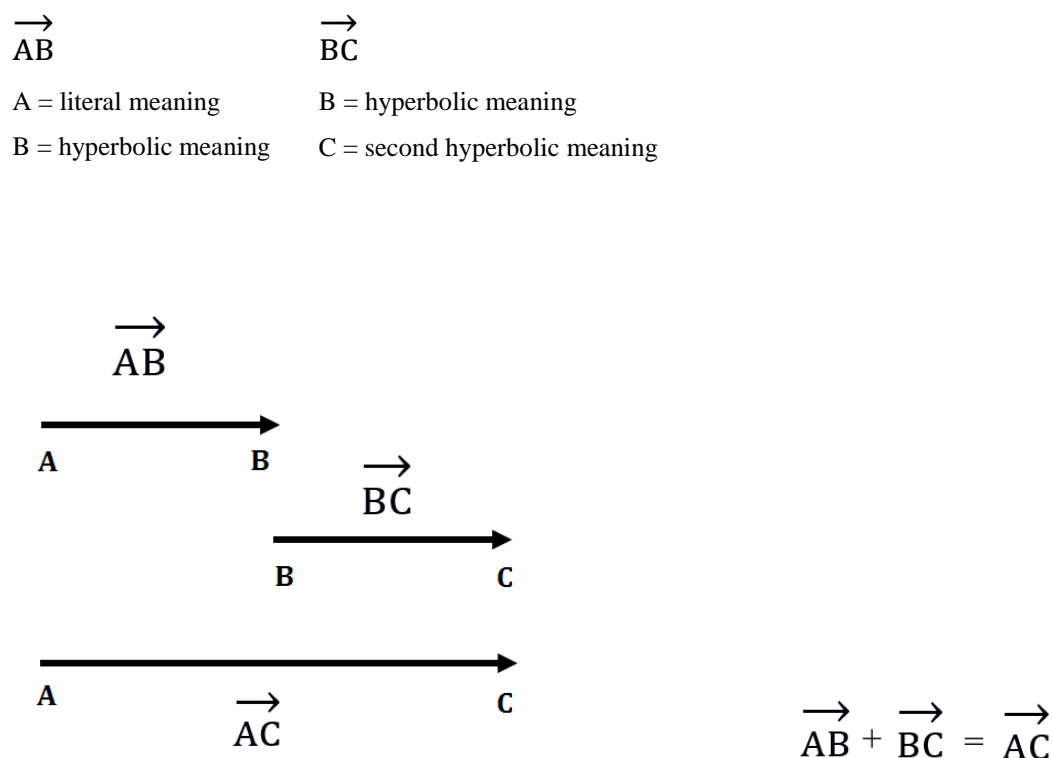


Figure 17 – Argumentative strength of Brazilians' hyperboles

⁷⁹ The force and vector theory and notations have been consulted from Boulos and Camargo (1987), Brown (2013) and Capece (2010).

Figure 17 shows that if a hyperbole is uttered by a given speaker and its meaning leaves point A and reaches point B, then we have a vector (or a hyperbole) \vec{AB} . The point B is, on its turn, the starting point of a new overstatement performed either by the same speaker who uttered \vec{AB} or by one of his interlocutors. This second exaggeration instance goes in the same direction of \vec{AB} and reaches a new meaning C, which makes it a hyperbole \vec{BC} . In this way, it is possible to add hyperbole \vec{AB} to \vec{BC} , having \vec{AC} as a result. Therefore, \vec{AC} is an overstatement which consists of a hyperbole plus an exaggeration of the first hyperbole, what would make it something of the sort of an overhyperbole⁸⁰, which results in a stronger, more expressive argument, given that the magnitude of the vectors are added. In case of a second speaker producing \vec{BC} , also socially associative aspects of conversation are enhanced.

This may be connected to the fact that, as seen in Section 2.4, according to Spencer-Oatey (2008), a style of expressiveness searches for a common point of view and also that an inclination towards an associative principle is related to collectivism and interdependence regarding the social construal of self.

The Germans, on their turn, also produced hyperboles which are compatible to the restrained communicative style they showed alongside with their inclination towards distance. This may help explain instances in which a participant produced a hyperbole in a very low voice, so that the others could not hear, for example. The most remarkable feature of the Germans' hyperbolic production, however, is how some instances might be understood as an establishment of their individuality and autonomy. This is because, differently from the Brazilians, the Germans often used hyperboles to perform confrontative actions instead of affiliative ones. This lead to an independent statement of opinions, even if they were not indorsed by the others, and these hyperboles tended towards a self-construction rather than a co-construction.

Recurring one more time to the notations of vectors previously presented, the German instances of confrontative hyperboles can be seen in Figure 18 below, which show an illustration of the argumentative strength of German hyperbolic instances:

⁸⁰ This term consists of a neologism and it is being used here for the sake of illustration.

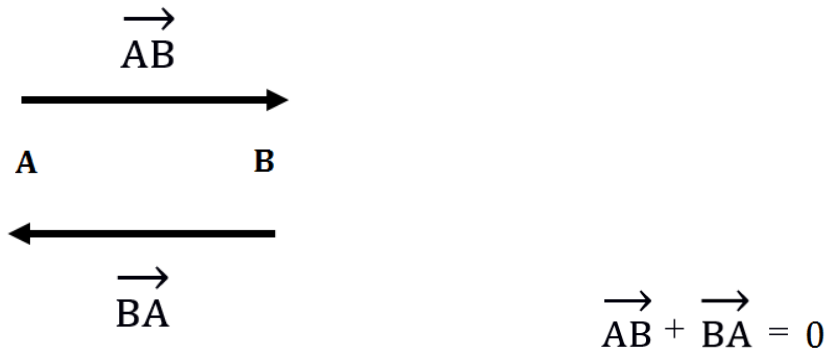


Figure 18 – Argumentative strength of Germans' hyperboles

In the same way as Figure 18, Figure 19 establishes point A as a literal meaning and point B as a hyperbolic meaning. If we have a vector (or a hyperbole) \overrightarrow{AB} , produced by a speaker who wished to argue towards a direction and state an opinion, a hyperbolic disagreement would be an opposite vector, that is, one with the same magnitude, but different direction. This means that this second hyperbolic realization leaves from point B back to point A, trying to dismiss \overrightarrow{AB} . Therefore, in this case, a hyperbole \overrightarrow{BA} is created, in such a way that, if they have the same magnitude (that is, the same argumentative strength), the result is 0, which means that the argument in the first hyperbole is nulled. Consequently, if the magnitude of \overrightarrow{BA} is greater than the one of \overrightarrow{AB} , this means that the argument in an opposite direction “wins”, that is, the speaker of \overrightarrow{BA} proves a point.

A possible explanation to this behavior, which takes back to the first notions of rhetoric as the art of persuasion (see Section 2.1), is that, according to Spencer-Oatey (2008), some speakers are inclined towards individualism over collectivism and to a dissociation between themselves and their discourse, which seem to be the case in this study. Also, this style does not value expressivity as a priority in discourse, which is also supported by the research which has been carried out by Schröder (2003; 2007; 2010) (see Section 2.4).

As a final remark, it is important here to differentiate expressiveness from emotions, because, if it is true that it was possible to establish here a relationship between overstatement and expressiveness or restraint, the same cannot be said about feelings. Although many hyperbolic instances were related to the expression of feelings, an also

great or even greater number of occurrences were not related to emotions in any way. Exaggeration may be therefore a productive and efficient strategy to convey feelings, possibly due to its expressive features, but in this regard, it is necessary to disagree from Aristotle (*Rhetoric*, II, 11) (see Sections 2.1 and 3.1.2) in the sense that hyperbole does not seem to be, according to the data analyzed here, intrinsically an emotional element. Also, according to what has been shown here, overstated utterances do not necessarily arouse emotional responses from the hearer.

5. CONCLUSION

In this thesis, it could be seen that, although there is at least one document attesting the use of hyperbole in everyday language almost two thousand years ago (see Section 1), this trope has nevertheless been fairly neglected in relation to other tropes such as metaphor, irony and metonymy. Hyperbole is, however, an integral element of discourse and studying it is a way of acquiring a better understanding of how a given language functions in one of its most primitive features, namely expressivity.

Having established the view of hyperbole in classical rhetoric as a foundation stone for its research, this study aimed to address the issue of overstatement by employing contemporary methods and theories in linguistics. In this regard, conversation analysis and pragmatics have provided vital theoretical support to the analysis which was carried out here. It also can be said that other fields, such as sociology, psychology, anthropology, physics and mathematics have also played a role in the development of this thesis, either directly or indirectly, given that, in the end, linguistics cannot be completely dissociated from these other fields, for all of them study, in a higher or lower degree, what is human and how we as a species belong and relate to our surroundings.

In languages, specifically, it is possible to see to which extent we are similar from each other and where our differences start. How we behave in conversation, the values that we carry regarding the best way to approach someone and be approached by them, how we express ourselves and what we expect from a conversational interaction are aspects which reflect who we are and how we relate to the world. Studying these relations and contributing at least a little to a better understanding of how they work and how we work as social beings was, ultimately, what this thesis aimed to do.

In order to achieve its goals, this study investigated the hyperbolic use in the talk-in-interaction of members of two speech communities, namely Brazilians and Germans. This has been done by means of a qualitative analysis of two elicited conversations (KASPER, 2008), one with each set of individuals. Each group spoke their own mother tongue and interactional cards were made available to the participants so as to encourage them to talk about their feelings, which, based on the ideas of Aristotle (*Rhetoric*, II), was expected to elicit hyperbolic language from the participants.

The relationship between emotional language and hyperbole could not be attested in this study, but this research was shown that there appears to be a connection between

communicative styles, rapport and use of hyperbole. While the Germans showed a restrained, distance-oriented and individualistic style, the Brazilians demonstrated an expressive, closeness-oriented and collectivist conversational behavior. The hyperboles performed by each group matched these features: the Germans produced mostly quiet and sometimes confrontational hyperbole which established them as individuals entitled to their own opinion and who also respect the right of their interlocutors to be independent thinkers. The Brazilians, on the other hand, tended to produce expressive and dramatized hyperboles, which was often build collectively so as to achieve a common point of view, which established them as individuals entitled to belong to a community which aspires to be harmonious and in which all members collaborate to the construction of each other's self.

It is important to highlight, however, that the results found in this study do not claim nor intend to be universal or broadly applicable to other cases and instances. This research analyzed, as mentioned, two groups of three individuals. All conclusions presented here are related to the communicative behavior of these six individuals, after all, as shown here, some hyperboles are a result of a specific moment and this is too idiosyncratic to allow a reckless generalization.

Bearing that in mind, it became clear that more research on overstatement is necessary to understand this topic in-depth. The possibilities for research include the aims which this thesis failed to address, namely a quantitative analysis of hyperbole and a further investigation on hyperbole and feelings. As has been made clear in this study, the results presented here suggest that, even though overstatement may be used to talk about emotions, it is not true that it is an intrinsically emotional rhetoric strategy. Nevertheless, analyzing natural data in which the speakers discuss feelings specifically, as in therapy or during a fight, for example, seems an interesting path to take in this regard. In any way, there is much to discover and much to understand. Hyperbole deserves to be object of all research in the world.

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APPENDIX A: PERSONAL INFORMATION SHEETS

 Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais Faculdade de Letras Programa de Pós-Graduação em Estudos Linguísticos (Poslin) Mestrado em Linguística Teórica e Descritiva Estudos da Língua em Uso	
<u>TEILNEHMERDATENBLATT</u>	
Vor- und Nachname:	
E-Mail:	
Staatsangehörigkeit:	
Geburtsort:	
Geburtsdatum:	
Geschlecht:	
Heimatuniversität:	
Studienfach:	
Muttersprache:	
Fremdsprachen:	
Ankunftsdatum in Brasilien:	
Erfahrungen im Ausland (Land und Dauer):	
<u>TEILNAHMEZUSTIMMUNG</u>	
Ich stimme zu, dass das Gespräch, an dem ich teilnehme, in Bild und Ton aufgenommen wird. Die aufgenommenen Daten dürfen nur für den Zweck der wissenschaftlichen Forschung genutzt werden.	
Ja <input type="checkbox"/> Nein <input type="checkbox"/>	
_____ Ort und Datum	
_____ Unterschrift	



Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais
Faculdade de Letras
Programa de Pós-Graduação em Estudos Linguísticos (Poslin)
Mestrado em Linguística Teórica e Descritiva
Estudos da Língua em Uso

FOLHA DE INFORMAÇÕES PESSOAIS DOS PARTICIPANTES

Nome completo:	
E-Mail:	
Nacionalidade:	
Local de nascimento:	
Data de nascimento:	
Sexo:	
Universidade:	
Curso:	
Língua materna:	
Línguas estrangeiras:	
Locais de residência:	
Experiências no exterior (país e duração):	

TERMO DE CONSENTIMENTO

Eu aceito que a interação da qual eu participo seja gravada em áudio e vídeo e seja incluída no *corpus* do Núcleo de Estudos de Comunicação (Inter-)Cultural em Interação da UFMG (NUCOI/UFMG). O material e os dados obtidos serão utilizados apenas para fins de pesquisa.

Sim Não

Data e local

Assinatura

APPENDIX B: GAT 2 TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS

Minimal transcript

Sequential structure

[] overlap and simultaneous talk
[]

In- and outbreaths

°h / h° in- / outbreaths of appr. 0.2-0.5 sec. duration
°hh / hh° in- / outbreaths of appr. 0.5-0.8 sec. duration
°hhh / hhh° in- / outbreaths of appr. 0.8-1.0 sec. duration

Pauses

(.) micro pause, estimated, up to 0.2 sec. duration appr.
(-) short estimated pause of appr. 0.2-0.5 sec. duration
(--) intermediary estimated pause of appr. 0.5-0.8 sec. duration
(---) longer estimated pause of appr. 0.8-1.0 sec. duration
(0.5)/(2.0) measured pause of appr. 0.5 / 2.0 sec. duration (to tenth of a second)

Other segmental conventions

and_uh cliticizations within units
uh, uhm, etc. hesitation markers, so-called "filled pauses"

Laughter and crying

haha syllabic laughter
hehe
hihi
((laughs)) description of laughter and crying
((cries))
<<laughing> > laughter particles accompanying speech with indication of scope
<<:-)> so> smile voice

Continuers

hm, yes, no, yeah monosyllabic tokens

hm_hm, ye_es, no_o	bi-syllabic tokens
ʔhmʔhm	with glottal closure, often negating

Other conventions

((coughs))	non-verbal vocal actions and events
<<coughing> >	... with indication of scope
()	unintelligible passage
(xxx), (xxx xxx)	one or two unintelligible syllables
(may i)	assumed wording
(may i say/let us say)	possible alternatives
((unintelligible, appr. 3 sec))	unintelligible passage with indication of duration
((...))	omission in transcript
→	refers to a line of transcript relevant in the argument

Basic transcript

Sequential structure

=	fast, immediate continuation with a new turn or segment (latching)
---	--

Other segmental conventions

:	lengthening, by about 0.2-0.5 sec.
::	lengthening, by about 0.5-0.8 sec.
:::	lengthening, by about 0.8-1.0 sec.
ʔ	cut-off by glottal closure

Accentuation

SYLLable	focus accent
----------	--------------

!SYL!lable extra strong accent

Final pitch movements of intonation phrases

? rising to high
, rising to mid
– level
; falling to mid
. falling to low

Other conventions

<<surprised> > interpretive comment with indication of scope

Fine Transcript

Accentuation

SYLlable focus accent
syllable secondary accent
!SYL!lable extra strong accent

Pitch jumps

↑ smaller pitch upstep
↓ smaller pitch downstep
↑↑ larger pitch upstep
↓↓ larger pitch downstep

Changes in pitch register

<<l> > lower pitch register
<<h> > higher pitch register

Intralinear notation of accent pitch movements

˘SO	falling
´SO	rising
SO	level
^SO	rising-falling
˘SO	Falling-rising
↑˘	small pitch upstep to the peak of the accented syllable
↓´	small pitch downstep to the valley of the accented syllable
↑SO or ↓SO	pitch jumps to higher or lower level accented syllables
↑↑˘SO or ↓↓´SO	larger pitch upsteps or downsteps to the peak or valley of the accented syllable

Loudness and tempo changes, with scope

<<f>	>	forte, loud
<<ff>	>	fortissimo, very loud
<<p>	>	piano, soft
<<pp>	>	pianissimo, very soft
<<all>	>	allegro, fast
<<len>	>	lento, slow
<<cresc>	>	crescendo, increasingly louder
<<dim>	>	diminuendo, increasingly softer
<<acc>	>	accelerando, increasingly faster
<<rall>	>	rallentando, increasingly slower

Changes in voice quality and articulation, with scope

<<creaky> > glottalized

<<whispery> > change in voice quality as stated

Reprinted from “A system for transcribing talk-in-interaction: GAT 2”, by Selting et. al., 2011, *Gesprächsforschung* – Online-Zeitschrift zur verbalen Interaktion, *Ausgabe 12*, Seite 37-39.