

New contexts, new processes, new strategies: the co-construction of meaning in plurilingual interactions

Novos contextos, novos processos, novas estratégias: a co-construção do sentido em interações plurilíngues

Filomena Capucho*
Maria da Piedade Silva**

ABSTRACT: Intercomprehension (IC) can be defined as *the process of co-constructing meaning in intercultural/interlinguistic contexts*. The latest developments of this notion locate the communicative processes in the context of *plurilingual interactions*, both in written hybrid forms of communication at distance (chats and forums) and in face-to-face oral conversations (cf. ARAÚJO E SÁ; DE CARLO; MELO-PFEIFER, 2011; BALBONI, 2010, among others). Further research in Applied Linguistics is required so as to support the emergent pedagogical practices aimed at developing the competences of individuals who are now seen simultaneously as IC learners and IC immediate users. This research should be grounded on a multidimensional analysis model of authentic corpora of oral plurilingual interactions in order to provide the analyst with a list of communication strategies and a detailed description of interactional processes that will allow IC specialists to assess the results of actual learning in the context of IC projects and to structure IC learning activities. In this paper, we will present the analysis of an extract from the Bucharest-Cinco corpus that will allow us to identify the strategies developed in the process of co-construction of meaning in multilingual contexts through a close examination of verbal and non-verbal features.

RESUMO: A Intercompreensão (IC) pode ser definida como o processo de co-construção do sentido em contextos interculturais / interlinguísticos. Os últimos desenvolvimentos desta noção situam os processos comunicativos no contexto das interações plurilíngues, tanto em formas híbridas de comunicação escrita à distância (chats e fóruns) como em conversas orais face-a-face (cf. ARAÚJO E SÁ; DE CARLO; MELO-PFEIFER, 2011; BALBONI, 2010, entre outros). Mais pesquisas em Linguística Aplicada serão necessárias para apoiar as práticas pedagógicas emergentes destinadas a desenvolver as competências dos indivíduos, que agora são vistos simultaneamente como aprendentes de IC e utilizadores imediatos de IC. Esta investigação deverá ser fundamentada num modelo de análise multidimensional de *corpora* autênticos de interações plurilíngues orais, a fim de proporcionar ao analista o (re)conhecimento de estratégias de comunicação e uma descrição detalhada dos processos interacionais, que permitirá aos especialistas avaliar os resultados da aprendizagem real no âmbito de projetos de IC e estruturar as atividades de aprendizagem. Neste artigo, apresentaremos a análise de um extrato do *corpus* Bucareste-Cinco, que nos permitirá identificar as estratégias desenvolvidas no processo de co-construção de sentido em contextos multilíngues através de um exame atento de características verbais e não-verbais.

* Universidade Católica Portuguesa – Centro de Estudos em Comunicação e Cultura.

** Agrupamento de Escolas do Sátão - Centro de Estudos em Comunicação e Cultura.

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PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Intercompreensão.
Interação plurilíngue. Cooperação dialógica.
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1. Introduction

The concept of Intercomprehension (IC) has been under discussion for more than 20 years now. Since the beginning of the 90's, several European teams have been studying and implementing it in the context of language learning. Definitions may vary according to the many theoretical schools, or to the direct pragmatic aims of specific applied research (cf. CAPUCHO, 2011a). Several publications have reflected this diversity (DEGACHE; BALZARINI, 2002; CAPUCHO et al., 2007; DEGACHE; MELO, 2008; UZCANGA VIVAR, 2010; DE CARLO, 2011; MATESANZ EL BARRIO, 2013; OLLIVIER, 2013, among others); however, this diversity does not attain the unity of the approach and is considered as a source of flexibility and adaptability to target audiences and specific learning situations.

In general terms, IC can be defined as *the process of co-constructing meaning in intercultural/interlinguistic contexts* (CAPUCHO, 2011b). The latest developments of the notion are linked to the development of projects addressing the training of plurilingual communication competences of professionals. These trainees are simultaneously learners and immediate users of the IC in the context of professional *plurilingual interactions*, either in written hybrid forms of communication at distance (emails, chats and forums) or in face-to-face oral conversations (cf. ARAÚJO E SÁ; DE CARLO; MELO-PFEIFER, 2011; BALBONI, 2010). These new professional contexts of IC regarded as plurilingual interactions bring new learning needs concerning specific strategies and processes that are required for effective plurilingual/intercultural communication.

Studies on the hybrid forms of plurilingual communication are now abundant (ARAÚJO E SÁ; MELO, 2003, 2006, 2007; ARAÚJO E SÁ; MELO-PFEIFER, 2009; BONO; MELO-PFEIFER, 2008, 2011; MELO-PFEIFER, 2014, 2015, amongst others), but research about the processes that are at stake in face-to-face plurilingual interactions is still very scarce (CAPUCHO, 2012; CAPUCHO, 2016 and in press a)). Further research in Applied Linguistics is, thus, required so as to support the emergent pedagogical practices aimed at developing the competences of individuals who are now seen simultaneously as IC learners and IC immediate users. This research should be grounded on a multidimensional analysis model of authentic corpora of oral plurilingual interactions in order to provide the analyst with a list of

communication strategies and a detailed description of interactional processes that will allow IC specialists to assess the results of actual learning in the context of IC projects and to structure IC learning activities. In this context, the *intercultural (communicative) competence*, which is vital to ensuring the success of these plurilingual encounters, cannot be separated from linguistic and pragmatic resources.

In this paper, we will present the analysis of an extract from the Bucharest-Cinco corpus that will allow us to identify the strategies developed in the process of co-construction of meaning in multilingual contexts, through a close examination of verbal and non-verbal features. We will particularly focus on aspects concerning dialogic cooperation¹, negotiation of meaning² (reformulations, clarifications and conflict resolution), interactional negotiation (turn-taking and topical development) and interproduction³ (anticipation strategies, lexical choice, simplifications), as well as the use of non-verbal communication.

The results of this analysis will be compared to published data on analyses of monolingual interactions in second language (*i.e.* English) (MEIERKORD, 2000; COGO; DEWEY, 2012; VARONIS; GASS, 1985 amongst others – cf. point 4.5) so as to bring to light specific interaction strategies and effects, which will be fundamental for supporting the Didactics of IC.

2. Theoretical framework

In the present study, we will apply a multidimensional and plural approach in Applied Linguistics, bringing together existing theoretical models: the Modular Model of Geneva School of Linguistics (ROULET, FILLIETAZ; GROBET, 2001); Conversation Analysis in its foundations (SACKS; SCHEGLOFF; JEFFERSON, 1974) but also taking into account its recent epistemological evolution (MURATA, 1994; LI, 2001; YANG, 2001; OERTEL et al., 2012); Critical Discourse Analysis (FAIRCLOUGH, 1992); and Goffman's approach to interaction (GOFFMAN, 1959; BROWN; LEVINSON, 1987; KERBRAT-ORECCHIONI 2006). An analysis of non-verbal aspects of communication (especially with regard to the paraverbal and kinesic aspects) is also essential, given its importance in the co-construction of meaning. This model does not aim at fully applying any of the above mentioned theoretical

¹ Cf. Roulet, Filliettaz and Grobet, 2001.

² Cf. Ellis, 1997.

³ Cf. Capucho, 2011a.

models, but at taking into account selected specific notions and methods from these theories and combining them for the different objectives of the analysis.

3. Methodology

The model will be applied to analyse an extract from the mentioned Bucharest-Cinco corpus. This corpus is a transcription of 3 hours of video-recorded authentic interactions among the participants gathered at the 5th meeting of the CINCO⁴ project that took place in Bucharest on the 5th and 6th of September 2013. It includes interactions held during plenary meetings and during work sessions of smaller working groups. In order to facilitate the reading and comprehension of the speakers' talks, the examples are presented both in the original language (using a slightly adapted version of the Val.Es.Co. transcription code (<http://www.uv.es/valesco/sistema.pdf>), including paraverbal and non-verbal aspects) and in their English translation.

The extract analyzed in this study is an interaction of 17'36" which corresponds to the beginning of the working session of two members of the group "Brassage Culturel" (Cultural Melting Pot). This working group has the task of preparing a document to present the city of Marseille as a multicultural place at the formal session of the final event of the project in Marseille. Both speakers, Juan (Spanish) and Tatiana (Belarus having lived in Portugal for 17 years and fluent in Portuguese), who attended the entire CINCO training course, have to organise the presentation of their group work. The instructions and the title of their collaborative task were presented to them in French, and the work was underway. To fulfil the objectives of the training course, they were invited to apply what they have learned during the IC course while interacting in their mother tongues or any other preferred language. Therefore, Juan chooses to speak Spanish and Tatiana selects Portuguese to facilitate the dialogue. It is important to note that, even though they are proficient in several foreign languages, none of them is a language specialist – Juan holds a degree in Economics and Business Administration and a Master Degree in International Relations and works as a Project Manager; Tatiana has a PhD in Mathematics and is a Professor at the University of Aveiro.

⁴ CINCO was a Leonardo – transfert d'innovation project, nº 2011-1-PT1-LEO05-08609, developed during the years 2011 – 2013. The aim of this project was to create training materials for Intercomprehension between Romance Languages for professionals working in Volunteer Associations in France, Italy, Portugal, Romania and Spain.

4. Results

4.4 Dialogic Cooperation

As mentioned above, Juan and Tatiana have a common aim: to produce a sound planning of the presentation that their working group will have to make. Being the leader of this group, Juan tries to get some feedback on his ideas from Tatiana. The role played by Juan explains the asymmetric distribution of talk that is noticeable along the interaction we analyse in this paper. During the development of the main topic of this interaction, Juan initiates the majority of the moves and often holds the floor in long interventions while Tatiana's turns are shorter and mainly responses or feedbacks to Juan's turns. The aim of the conversation and its social and institutional issues allow Juan to occupy the strong position as he holds the information needed to fulfil the task; in fact, most of the times, he is looking for Tatiana's acknowledgment to his proposals. Tatiana accepts the lower position as she is receiving that information she doesn't possess, and there are no conflicts arising from any attempt to renegotiate these contextual positions. It is the final result of the group's work which is at stake and Juan's leadership appears to be accepted. The harmonious dialogic cooperation that characterises the interaction corresponds to the commitment of both speakers to the task they are accomplishing and a mutual willingness and engagement to guarantee its successful achievement.

Dialogic cooperation in this conversation is built on specific strategies that emerge throughout the interaction. These strategies are identified in the light of existing models, analysed and explained through the proposed multidimensional model which will specifically tackle *interactional negotiation* (turn-taking system, and eventual conflicts, namely overlaps), *topic negotiation* (how subtopics are inserted, ratified and developed), *negotiation of meaning* (repair sequences, reformulations, self-elicitations) and *face work* (namely FTAs⁵ and FFAs⁶ that are performed).

In the following excerpt, the conversation starts with a metacommunicative topic concerning the conditions of talk – Juan attributes himself the lower position by revealing issues that are unknown to him about the videotaping logistics:

J: eh: ha/ hay una cosa que no he entendido/ (EN: eh: there is/ there is something I have not understood/)

⁵ Brown & Levinson, 1987.

⁶ Kerbrat-Orecchioni, 2006.

T: hum hum

J: que nos van gravar ahora o después o: ///{ilustrator}(EN: if they are going to videotape now or later or:///)

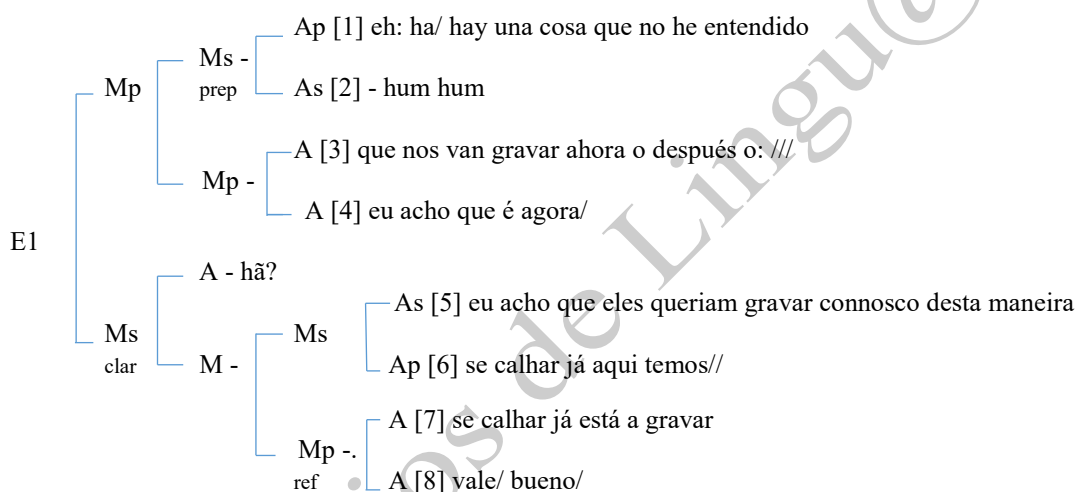
T: eu acho que é agora/ (EN: I think it is now/)

J: hã?

T: eu acho que eles queriam gravar connosco desta maneira se calhar já aqui temos// {deictic} se calhar já está a gravar/ (EN: I think they wanted to videotape with us like this may be we have it already// may be it is already going on/)

J: vale/ bueno/ (EN: ok/good/)

Tatiana's collaborative moves contribute to the smooth development of the topic and the sharing of the requested information, through the following hierarchic structure⁷:



In the main move (Mp), Tatiana responds to Juan's preparatory act with a sign of backchannel. The second move (Ms) aims at clarifying the given information. It is not a repair sequence because Juan's question that opens this move does not concern any lack of understanding, but the need for further explanation about the topic. This is understood by Tatiana, who continues to develop her previous statement and reformulates it in a final move. Juan's final reaction act shows that his initial request has been satisfactorily answered.

It is important to notice that acts [3] and [4] and [7] and [8], which compose the two main moves of this exchange, are hierarchical at the same level, showing equal collaboration between the interactants. This first exchange is therefore an example of effective dialogic cooperation, where the meaning is actually co-constructed by the speakers without conflict.

⁷ For the analysis of conversational structure, we use the Geneva model of discourse analysis (ROULET et al, 2001). We will therefore consider the concepts of *exchange*, *move* and *act* (cf. MOESCHLER, 2002).

Having successfully confirmed that the logistic aspects of their “performance” were ensured (Juan and Tatiana had been asked to be videotaped during their work), Juan can initiate the main topic of the conversation: “entonces tenemos un grupo de personas” (EN: so we have a group of people). The plural form of the verb (*tenemos*) is an evidence of solidarity among the two speakers, integrating Tatiana in the work that will be done.

During this long exchange, Tatiana’s continuous collaboration is expressed by numerous discourse markers:

- Continuers - hum, hum
- Non-verbal backchannels – frequent head nodding
- Diaphonic echoes in Portuguese – “língua”, “sim, sim, francês”, “cada pessoa”, “palavras chaves”, “atualidade”, “de outros idiomas”, “Roménia”
- Diaphonic echoes in the language used by Juan - “slides”, “cada persona”
- Convergence backchannels - “sim”, “pois”, “pois é”, “ai é”, “ok”, “é”

Some of these features are also present in Juan’s discourse, namely:

- Diaphonic echoes in Spanish - “para todos”, “la actualidad”, “nada”, “o escuchas” “o entiendes”
- Diaphonic echoes in the language used by Tatiana: “Power Point”
- Mention of Tatiana’s previous statements – “siguiendo un poco eso que tu dices”
- Convergence backchannels – “claro”, “sí, exactamente”, “vale”, “sí”, “sí, es verdad”, “exactamente”

Another noteworthy collaborative strategy to signal is Juan’s frequent use of cajolers⁸, verbalised 16 times with the interrogative “Vale?”. This strategy shows Juan’s attention towards Tatiana, a strategy to ensure that his interlocutor understands his statements or agrees with him. In nonverbal terms, the same is reflected in Juan’s frequent eye contact.

Moreover, both speakers clearly apply “diligent anticipation” strategies (ARAUJO E SÁ, 1993), displayed in our corpus through the use of code-switching that both Juan and Tatiana accompany with illustrators whenever they anticipate that the other may not understand what

⁸ Cajolers are “verbal appeals for the listener’s sympathy, e.g. *you know, I mean, you see*” (MEIERKORD, 2000).

they mean. The following move illustrates the adoption of a mutual “benevolent attitude” (MEIERKORD, 2000):

J: algo que sirva de// {illustrator} de guion para que la gente entienda/ el contexto ¿no? ehh de hecho es una de las// ehh de de la té/ de las técnicas de la intercomprensión/ intentar un poco/ comprender el contexto// {illustrator} y ya/ (EN: Something that works as// a script so that people may understand/ the context right? ehh in fact this is one of the//ehh thee te/ of the techniques of intercomprehension/ to try a little/ to understand the context// and thi/)

T: hum

J: y así es más fácil/ [ir entendiendo (EN: and this way it is easier/[to understand)

T: sim comm *key words* {illustrator} (EN: yes with *key words*)

J: exactamente/ exactamente las palabras claves/// las *key words* (EN: exactly/ exactly y the *key words*/// *key words*)

T: ou palavras chaves/ e depois tu falas e as pessoas pelo menos (EN: or key words/ and then you speak and the persons at least)

J: exactamente (EN: exactly)

T: {illustrator} lendo] entendem melhor sobre aquilo que falas (EN: by reading] understand better what you are talking about)

J: si en al/ si en algún caso esa palabra clave {illustrator}/ o esa frase clave va unida a a alguna pequeña imagen/ que pueda hacer entender incluso mejor no lo sé se me ocurre inmigración/ ¿no? ehh// sobre culturas/ pues una foto en la que aparezca en el propio Marsella gente que/ culturalmente se ve que son muy diferentes {illustrator}// ¿vale? (EN: if in an/ if in any case that key word/ or that key sentence goes with a any small image/ that may help to understand better I don't know I'm thinking about immigration/ right? Ehh// about cultures/ you put a photo in which it appears in Marseille itself people that/ culturally we may see they are very different// ok?)

T: hum hum

Juan uses the same code-switching strategy whenever he employs a term related to technological devices or any other term that may be considered opaque in Spanish. Since he is aware of the fact that these words may present a difficulty to Tatiana when verbalised in Spanish, he immediately translates them into English:

J: el orde] **el ordenador el computer**/ eh (EN: the compu] **the computer the computer/eh**)

J: sí tienes/ lo puedes hacer/ con **el ratón** ((...)) con **el mouse** o// aqui (EN: if you have one/ you may do it/ with **the mouse** ((...)) with **the mouse** or// here)

In other examples, he simply uses the English word followed by the translation:

J: (()) tanto/ tantos partners/ tantos parceiros (EN: (()) so/ so many *partners*/ so many partners)

The same happens in self-repair acts, whenever Tatiana's reaction to Juan's illocutionary intentions is not the one he expects. In the following move, Juan makes a joke and laughs, looking at Tatiana and expecting her laughter, but she only smiles. In order to make sure that she understands his irony, Juan reformulates his word in English:

J: **Supervisora** {laugh}
 T: {smile}
 J: {laugh} *Supervisor* eh///
 T: {smile}

4.2 Interactional Negotiation

The analysis of issues concerning interactional negotiation in the dialogue will lead us to some previous comments concerning its interpretation: "According to Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974), an ideal conversation is organized so that no interruption occurs" (LI, 2001, p. 260) and, therefore, any interruption or overlap is considered as disruptive and a manifestation of the interrupter's struggle for power. However, further research on the topic (BEATTIE, 1981, 1982; MURRAY, 1987; TANNEN, 1981, 1994; GOLDBERG, 1990; MURATA, 1994, NG. et al. 1995, amongst others) has contested this view and proposed that, conversely, interruptions and overlaps may, in certain contexts, be an evidence of high dialogic cooperation based on solidarity, complicity and enthusiasm (cf. LI, 2001, p. 261; YANG, 2001, p. 2). Even if interruptions are termed differently by different authors, it is possible to consider two main types of interruptions (with or without overlaps): competitive interruptions⁹ – also called intrusive (MURATA, 1994; LI, 2001) or power interruptions (GOLDBERG, 1990) – and collaborative interruptions - also named rapport (GOLDBERG, 1990) or cooperative interruptions (MURATA, 1994; LI, 2001). In competitive interruptions and overlaps, "the incoming speaker attempts to forcefully take over the turn" (OERTEL et al, 2012); on the contrary, collaborative interruptions do not involve power conflictual issues, since they

⁹ We adapt the terminology proposed by Oertel et al. 2012 for overlaps, extending it to interruptions, as well. Moreover, we distinguish competitive and collaborative interruptions, in order to avoid any confusion between cooperation and collaboration: "a collaborative behaviour or a non-collaborative behaviour are necessarily cooperative" (AUCHLIN; MOESCHLER, 1985, p. 202). Vion (1992, p. 251) suggests the same: "As we are speaking, even if relations are particularly conflictual, we are on cooperation ground". (our translation of both quotations). We will use the same terminology for the classification of overlaps.

correspond to what is called *kyowa* in Japanese which literally means “coproduce” or “cooperate”. In this sense, an interruption is a means for the co-speakers to achieve a “conversational duet” (LI, 2001, p. 262).

In this analysis, we also adopt Li’s distinction between **successful** and **unsuccessful interruptions**. In the latter, “both speakers continue talking and complete their utterances [...] or the second speaker stops before finishing the intruding speech, although the first speaker continues talking and holding the floor” (LI, 2001, p. 268), like in the following example:

J: *supervisor*// ehh// entonces por ejemplo/ tú dices que te gustaría historia (EN: *supervisor*// ehh// then for instance/ you say you would like history)

T: eu gosto de história/ de cultura/ pode ser [história cultura (EN: I like history/ culture/ may be [history culture)

J: yo creo] (EN: I believe]

T: = história ou cultura tanto faz// cultura/ já tens Elisabete// aqui diz cultura (EN: = history or culture it is the same// culture/ you already have Elisabete// here it says culture)

J: sí no porque ellos han respondido (EN: yes no because they have answered)

T: já responderam? (EN: have they?)

J: sí (EN: yes)

T: ok

In spite of his higher position, Juan stops his interruptive move abruptly and chooses to respond to Tatiana’s turn.

The overlap in the following example shows a short moment of competition between the speakers. Nevertheless, it does not seem to be felt as conflictual, since it is solved by an agreement move, which is reinforced by the nonverbal positive features that accompany Tatiana’s speech:

J: ça, es hablar conn// de inmigración pero no como un problema que/ [sino (EN: This is speaking with// of immigration but not as a problem/ [but)

T: não mas (EN: no but)

J: como una (EN: as a)

T: leva leva a questões/ cuidados com língua (EN: it leads leads to questions/ care with language)

J: enriquecimiento cultural] (EN: Cultural enrichment])

T: sim {nod, smile}/// precisamente (EN: yes/// precisely)

J: exactamente (EN: exactly)

It is noteworthy to remark that, in the entire dialogue, there is only one example of competitive interruption, in the form of a disagreement (cf. LI, 2001, p. 269), occurring just before this last example:

J: claro/ sí pero proprio tenemos que enfocar todo esto desde un punto de vista positivo// (EN: obviously/ yes but first we have to focus on everything from a positive point of view ///)
 T: sim (EN: yes)
 J: [ya no (EN: [and not)
 T: não estou] a falar sobre im/ imigrantes no negativo (EN: I'm not] speaking about im/ immigrants in a negative way)

These two examples compose, in fact, a particularly complex sequence in terms of negotiation of faces that will be commented in point 4.4.

Thus, we should point out that, even if interruptions and overlaps are frequent in this dialogue (we counted a total of 14 interruptions¹⁰ and 8 full overlaps that do not arise from clear interruptions), the majority of them are evidence of a collaborative attitude between the speakers.

If we apply Li's subcategories (LI, 2001, p. 269) for collaborative interruptions, we may conclude that all of them are present in the corpus:

Agreement interruptions show the interrupter's "concurrence, compliance, understanding, or support. Sometimes the interruption also serves as an extension or an elaboration of the idea presented by the speaker" (*ibidem*). Most of the cases identified in the dialogue correspond to this subcategory, as exemplified in the following moves:

J: nuestro grupo está formado como verás/ por/ ehh una dos tres/ tres representantes de Portugal/// una representante italiana/ que no sé quién es/// porque/ Ponja/ no sé quién es// ehh: (EN: our group is composed as you will see/ by/ ehh one two three/ three representatives of Portugal/// one Italian representative/ I do not know whom she is/// because/ Ponja/ I don't know whom she is// ehh)
 T: dois/ dois [italianos aquí (EN: two/ two [italians here)
 J: de verdad Nicoleta]/ que/ es [italiana (EN: in fact Nicoleta]/ who/ is [Italian)
 T: é francesa] [EN: she is French]
 J: italiana/ ¿verdad? (EN: Italian/ right?)
 T: hum
 J: viene a través de esta organización/ pero no es francesa/ (EN: she comes from

¹⁰ 10 are from Tatiana's initiative; 4 are from Juan.

this organisation/ but she is not French)

T: ok mas se calhar já tem alguma coisa/ (EN: ok but she probably has already something/)

J: supongo que ella puede ayudarnos/ un poco/ de manera más general/ por eso me ha escrito este correo/ este email/ en que decía ((...)) (EN: I suppose that she may help us/ a little/ in a more general way/ that's why she has already written to me this email/ this *email*/ where she said ((...)))

J: la lengua en la que tú vas hablar es claro// ¿qué quiere decir eso?/ quee ///sí habrá (EN: the language that you will speak obviously// What does this mean? That: ///we will have)

T: hum hum

J: que es escribir algunas frases {illustrator} (EN: to write some sentences)

T: hum hum

J: ¿vale? /// para: vale/ [tener (EN: ok? to: well/ [have...)]

T: mas poucas]/ melhor imagens porque quando as pessoas estão a ouvir (EN: but not many]/ better images because when people are listening)

J: si/exactamente (EN: yes, exactly ...)

Assistance interruptions provide help to the speaker, adding a word, a phrase, a sentence or an idea to what is being said. Tatiana often assists Juan, whenever she perceives that he is struggling to formulate his thought in a comprehensible way:

J: Cada persona porque después lo vamos a poner en común y tendremos/ de eh:/// digamos yo mandaré [una versión (EN: Each person because afterwards we are going to put it in common and we will have/ to eh:/// let's say I will send [a version)

T: juntar] (EN: gather])

J: Junta de todo/ vale? (EN: all together/ ok?)

T: {nod}

J: por eso si alguien necesita del/ dame información sobre la historia de Marsella// [o dime (EN: so if someone needs that/ give me information about the history of Marseille// [or tell me)

T: sim] (EN: yes])

J: dónde puedo buscar/ oo ehh/ alguna pista sobre// ehh: [cuándo ha estado (EN: where I can get/ oo ehh/ any clue about// ehh; [when she has been)

T: se calhar mais para] esclarecimento de [qualquer questão que podia {nod} (EN: may be more for] clearing out [any question that she might)

J: exactamente] (EN: exactly)

T: mas// eh a atualidade// era bom queee eh houvesse eh (EN: but// eh present times// it would be good iiif eh there was eh)

J: Por ejemplo en la actualidad yo había pensado destacar un poco// de que sigue siendo un centro de inmigración (EN: for instance for present times I had thought to note a little// that it goes on being a centre for immigration)

The same attitude is also recurrent in other moves. Sometimes, Tatiana fills in Juan's utterances with missing words, not interrupting, but profiting from a hesitation or a moment of silence to complete an utterance, thus permitting the conversation to flow, as in:

J: pudiera actuar/ como soporte (EN: it might work/ as a support)

T: para todos (EN: for everybody)

That can be also observed in the example that we have previously mentioned:

J: algo que sirva dee// {illustrator} de guion para que la gente entienda/ el contexto ¿no? ehh de hecho es una de las// ehh dee de la té/ de las técnicas de la intercomprensión/ intentar un poco/ comprender el contexto// {illustrator} y ya/ (EN: Something that works ass// a script so that people may understand/ the context right? ehh in fact this is one of the//ehh thee te/ of the techniques of intercomprehension/ to try a little/ to understaqnd the context// and thi/)

T: hum

J: y así es más fácil/ [ir entendiendo (EN: and this way it is easier/[to understand)

T: sim comm *key words* {illustrator} (EN: yes withh *key words*)

Clarification interruptions are also present in Tatiana's moves. She interrupts Juan to confirm that she really understands what he means or to clarify information that seems unclear to her:

J: cada persona tiene [que tener (EN: each person has [to have)

T: cada persona?] (EN: each person?)

J: cada (EN: each)

T: cada? ou de cada grupo? (EN: each? or from each group?)

J: no/ cada persona (EN: no/ each person)

T: cada pessoa (EN: each person)

J: {reading from the computer screen}: cada uno de nosotros explicará brevemente en su propia lengua/ las evidencias que haya encontrado sobre Marsella/ y su entorno// quiere decir/ puede ser Marsella [(EN: each one of us will explain briefly in their own language/ the evidences that they have found about Marseille/ and its surroundings// this means/ it may be Marseille)

T: ou em torno] (EN: or aound)

J: oo la zona [alrededor (EN: or the zone around)

T: pois] (EN: right)

J: pues que tenga solo que es la Provence oo/ el sur de Francia algo/ así (EN: yes that has only that it is Provence oor/ the south of France somethiing/ like that)

The frequent overlaps are also evidence of collaboration. Very often Juan and Tatiana speak simultaneously, with the same intention, composing a sort of choir tuned to construct shared meaning, as illustrated in the sequence of overlaps below:

T: mas se calhar é bom meter é ital-espanhol romeno (EN: well, but may be it would be good to put it is Ital-Spanish and Romanian)

J: [por ejemplo entonces podemos/ (EN: [for instance then we put...)

T: romeno] (EN: Romanian)

J: siguiendo un poco eso que tú dices podemos decir que el voluntario español/// tra-trabajaría esa parte de [actualidad porque (EN: following a little bit what you say we may say that the Spanish volunteer/// wou-would work that part of [present times because)

T: atualidade/ sim {nod} (EN: present times/ yes)

J: ya no está conmigo no está {deictic} (EN: it is no longer with me it isn't)

T: hum hum]

J: en mi grupo y vuestro grupo de historia ya tiene dos personas y el de cultura tiene dos (EN: in my group and in your group of history there are already two persons and the culture one has two)

T: eu acho que para esta chega e para grupos de língua e atualidade podia ser mais/ língua [e atualidade (EN: I think that for this one it's enough and for groups of language and present times it might be more/ language [and present times)

J: sí/ sí] (EN: yes, yes)]

We may, therefore, conclude that far from revealing a conflict between the speakers or a violation to the rule 'one party at the time' or a turn-taking error that needs repair (SACKS et al., 1974), interruptions and overlaps, in this dialogue, exhibit the collaborative will of both interactants and become, in fact, a means to effectively achieve mutual communication aims. Interruptions and overlaps are, thus, interpreted in the light of IC as elements that ensure the flow of communication and evidence of active listenership and a benevolent attitude of the listener towards the speaker, emphasising the contribution of intercomprehension in promoting successful intercultural communication.

4.3 Negotiation of meaning

In plurilingual interactions, we might expect negotiation of meaning to be a complex process, where numerous repair sequences would play the main role. It may therefore be somewhat surprising that, in this corpus, meaning is actually co-constructed in a smooth process, and conflictual sequences are scarce. As it has already been mentioned, speakers seem to adopt a mutual "benevolent attitude", characterised by the use of specific non-verbal

strategies (illustrators) and frequent cajolers. Specific paraverbal features – namely the slow rhythm of production and the careful articulation of words –also demonstrate the speakers' attention to the need of enabling the other to understand. Moreover, the use of anticipation strategies, which aim at ensuring understanding, is effectively implemented by the interlocutors. Apart from the occurrences of code-switching that have been pointed out, reformulations (either marked or unmarked) and self-elicitations seem to be anchored in this type of strategies. Examples of this are prevalent in Juan's discourse as the following examples show:

- Marked reformulations

J: {reading from the computer screen}: cada uno de nosotros explicará brevemente en su propia lengua/ las evidencias que haya encontrado sobre Marsella/ **y su entorno// quiere decir, puede ser Marsella** (EN: each one of us will explain briefly in their own language/ the evidences that they have found about **Marseille/ and its surroundings// this means, it may be Marseille**)

J: pero por lo menos/si podemos ver con eso podemos probar que hay eese **esa mezcla de culturas/ o sea en el aspecto ehhe lingüístico** (EN: but at least/ with that we may prove that there is that **that mixture of cultures/ that's to say that, in the aspect ehhe linguistic**)

- Unmarked reformulations

J: pero claro que no hay ningún francés/ **no tenemos ninguna sola persona francesa** que nos pueda decir ehhe/ (EN: but of course there is nobody French/ **we don't have any single French person** who may tell us ehhe/)

J: Sí pero/realmente lo que nosotros creo que tenemos que ver **es identificar por un lado/explicar un poco sobre el occitano la lengua de allí/ e identificar palabras/** que vengan de otros idiomas latinos (EN: yes but/ really what I think we have to see **is identify on one side/ explain a little about Occitan the local language/ and identify words/** that come from other Latin languages)

- Self-elicitations

J: y actualidad {deictic} (EN: and present times)

T: Hum hum

J: **en este sentido actualidad es bueno pruebas actuales** de que sigue siendo un lugar de centro de culturas/ por ejemplo// ehhe (EN: **in this sense present times is well present proofs** that is goes on being a place of centre of cultures/ for example// ehhe)

J: nuestro grupo está formado como verás/ por/ ehhe una dos tres/ tres representantes de Portugal/// una representante italiana/ **que no sé quién es/// porque/ Ponja/ no sé quién es//** ehhe (EN: our group is composed as you will see/ by/ ehhe one two

three/ three representatives oof Portugal/// one Italian representative/ **I do not know whom she is/// because/ Ponja/ I don't know whom she is// ehh)**

J: exactamente/// vamos a ver es que/ he tenido un problema con el ordenador// **me han robado el ordenador** / (EN: exactly/// let's see because/ I have had a problem with the computer/ **someone stole my computer**)

In spite of Juan's effectiveness in preventing conflicts in the negotiation of meaning, one repair move is identified immediately after the move above:

J: vamos a ver es que/ he tenido un problema con el ordenador// me han robado el ordenador / (EN: let's see because/ I have had a problem with the computer/ someone stole my computer)

T: *ordenador* isto é o quê? (EN: *ordenador* what is this?)

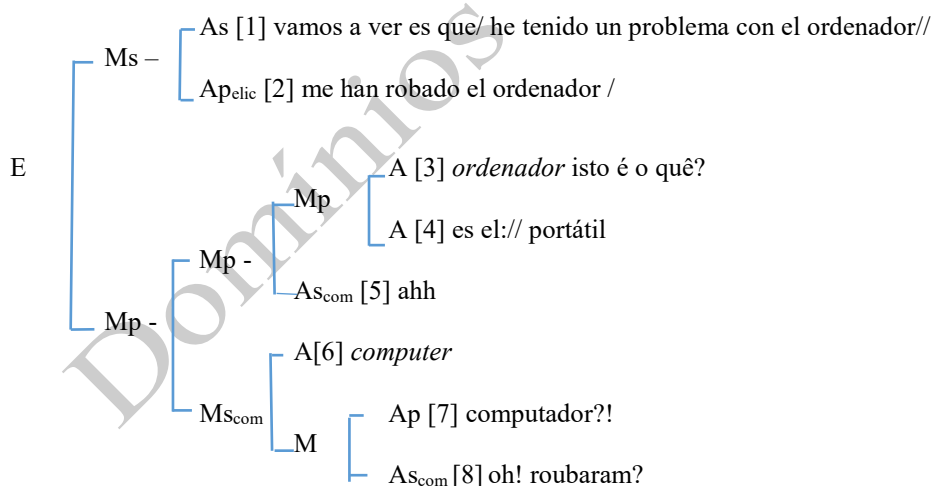
J: es ell// portátil {deictic} (EN: it is thee // portable)

T: ahh

J: *computer*

T: computador?! oh! roubaram? (EN: computer!?! oh! did they?)

The speaker's readiness to ensure full comprehension of the triggering act is evident in the complex structure of this move, which goes beyond Varonis & Gass (1985)'s sequential model for repair mechanism, as the following hierarchical structure may prove:



The first move corresponds to the trigger, A[3] to the indicator of communication trouble, A[4] to the response and A[5] to the reaction. Nevertheless, Juan still feels the need to clarify his response and he uses code-switching as a new strategy in A[6], followed by Tatiana's

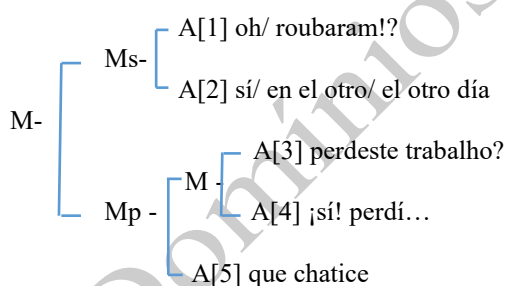
repetition of the same word in Portuguese as a sign of reaction A[7] and a diaphonic comment [8], showing that she has fully understood.

Therefore, this particular sequence reinforces the collaborative attitude between both interactants.

The inclusion of topics which are not related to the conversational aim (*i.e.* the planning of the presentation in Marseille) only happens twice in this corpus, but they play an important role in the co-construction of personal relations. The first one stems from the trigger that introduces the repair move, *i.e.* the reference to the stolen computer. After having solved the comprehension problem (cf. above), Tatiana takes up the topic and initiates a new move:

T: oh/ roubaram!?! (EN: oh/ it was stolen!?)
 J: sí {nod}/ en el otro/ el otro día (EN: yes/on the other/ the other day)
 T: perdeste trabalho? (EN: did you lose any work?)
 J: ¡sí!/ perdí (EN: yes/ I did)
 T: que chatice (EN: what a bummer)

In fact, as the hierarchical structure below indicates, Tatiana's intention is to show her solidarity towards Juan, not only because his computer had been stolen, but also because this implies that he had lost some of his work (cf. Mp [3] – [5], thus resulting in a typical triadic turn structure, composed by Question – Answer – Response/Reaction):



The second topical disruption concerns the same topic [STOLEN COMPUTER], re-introduced again by Juan, and corresponds to the following extract:

J: ai espera que ((...)) como como me han robado el/// (EN: oh wait because ((...)) as they have stolen the///)
 T: [então aqui (EN: [So here)
 J: el orde] el ordenador el computer/ eh (EN: the com] the computer the *computer*)
 T: ah pois (EN: oh yes)
 J: eh: todavía eh este nuevo no/ no le tengo cogido bien el tacto/ [e se me va siempre

{illustrator} (EN: eh: however eh this new one I am not/I am not used to its touch/
[and it always goes)

T: ah:!]]

J: si se agranda si se hace pequeña {illustrator} (EN: if it gets bigger or smaller)

T: ah!

J: {laugh} porque no le tengo bien cogidoo el dedo {deictic} (EN: because my
finger is not used)

T: ((...)) comigo a mim também me acontece isso/ ainda fica mais pequena
{illustrator}/ tu trabalhas com quê? PowerPoint? por causa do PowerPoint? comigo
acontece tudo/ tudo fica mais pequeno {ilustrador}/ de repente/ eu não sei o que é
que apareceu ((...)).(EN: ((...)) with me the same thing happens/ it gets even
smaller/ what do you work with? PowerPoint? Because of the Power Point? with
me everything happens/ everything gets smaller/ suddenly I don't know what
appeared ((...)))

J: ah tienes aquí (EN: ah you have here)

T: achas que é deste rato? (EN: do you think it is because of this mouse?)

J: pero que tienes de ir aquí lo pones normal aquí en la derecha/ tienes ((...)) (EN:
but you have to go here you put it right here on the right/ you have ((...)))

T: sim/// talvez (EN. yes/// may be)

J: sí tienes/ lo puedes hacer/ con el ratón (EN: if you have one/you may do it/with
the mouse)

T: [sim (EN: [yes)

J: con el] mouse o// aquí {deictic} (EN: with the] mouse or// here)

T: [ah!

J: entonces (EN: then)

T: este zoom é do PowerPoint?] (EN: this zoom is from the Power Point?])

J: sí (EN: yes)

T: exatamente/ mas eu tenho na página geral (EN: exactly/ but I have it in the
general page)

J: ahh en cualquier ahh (EN: ahh in any ahh)

T: sim: e dá-me tão pequenininha {illustrator}/ (EN: yes: and it gets so very small)

J: sí/ eso me pasa a mí también (EN: yes/ that happens to me too)

T: que eu não sei: (EN: that I don't know)

J: hum

T: o que me acontece (EN: what happens to me)

J: hum/

In this longer move, the parallel expressions of solidarity reveal a high degree of empathy between the interactants:

T: ((...)) comigo a mim também me acontece isso/ (EN: ((...)) with me the same
thing happens/)

J: sí/ eso me pasa a mí también (EN: yes/ that happens to me too)

Juan's attempts to explain Tatiana a possible solution to the problem she refers to also show a high degree of personal involvement:

- T: achas que é deste rato? (EN: do you think it is because of this mouse?)
 J: pero que tienes de ir aquí lo pones normal aquí en la derecha/ tienes ((...)) (EN: but you have to go here you put it right here on the right/ you have ((...)))
 T: sim/// talvez (EN. yes/// may be)
 J: sí tienes/ lo puedes hacer/ con el ratón (EN: if you have one/you may do it/with the mouse)
 T: [sim (EN: [yes)
 J: con el] mouse o// aquí {deictic} (EN: with the] *mouse* or// here)

We may conclude that both topical intrusions are related to the construction of a personal relationship that goes beyond the institutional roles of the two social actors, thus they can be interpreted as cooperative interruptions (LI, 2001).

4.4 Face work

Communication does not only concern functional needs, but it also becomes a way to share personal experiences and construct affective links. This construction is continuously supported by the face work strategies developed by the speakers.

Actually, Juan and Tatiana seem to pay special attention to each other's faces, preventing any threat and explicitly displaying agreement on opinions: Juan's use of "exactamente" (8 occurrences), Tatiana's use of "pois" (6 occurrences) are only two examples of the continuous effort that both make to reassure the other, to show sympathy, and to achieve a successful communication, not only as committed professionals but also as individuals. All the cooperation markers that have been analysed (cf. point 2) play an important role in this common construction process.

Face work is also at stake in the following example:

- J: bueno/ para el día cuatro quería que cada persona me dijera en que temática está/ ¿vale? (EN: well/ for the 4th I would like each person to tell me in what thematic they are/ ok?)
 T: [{**laugh**} **zero** {illustrator}]
 J: **No**
 T {**laugh**}
 J: **Tatiana no eres la única que no ha respondido///eh: // pero si es importante que para día veinte de septiembre// veinte de septiembre/ reciba una o dos slides**

(EN: **Tatiana you are not the only one who hasn't answered**// /eh://**but what is important** for the 20th of September// 20th of September/ is that I get one or two *slides*)

The move above exemplifies a double strategy: on the one hand, Tatiana responds with humour to what may be interpreted as a face threatening act (FTA) to her positive face and reinforces this act by taking the blame; on the other hand, Juan immediately reduces his FTA, saving Tatiana's face by letting her know that what he mentioned does not specifically concern her and is not really important.

The turn taking issues that are mentioned (cf. point 4) also imply a strong commitment to ensure a balanced face work. In the first example of unsuccessful interruptions, Juan stops his intrusive turn when he realises that Tatiana hasn't yet finished hers, giving her the floor and developing her subtopic in his next turn, in spite his strong position in the dialogue.

Nevertheless, the second example of unsuccessful interruption, characterised by a long overlap, illustrates a conflict that concerns Tatiana's social identity. The interruption occurs just after Juan's statement about the need to speak positively about immigration. Tatiana interprets this as an implicit reaction to her previous insistence on the fact that immigration constitutes a problem. This is an issue that is important to her, since she is herself an immigrant in Portugal. Therefore, she reacts emotionally to Juan's potential criticism and strives to justify her position, but the conflict is solved by common agreement on approaching immigration as cultural enrichment:

J: enriquecimiento cultural (EN: cultural enrichment)
 T: sim {nod, smile}///exatamente (EN: yes /// exactly)
 J: exactamente/ (exactly)

4.5 From monolingual to plurilingual interactions

Literature on monolingual interactions in pluricultural contexts is very wide and deals with native speakers - non-native speakers (NS-NNS) interaction (PICA, 1994; SHEHADEH, 1999; WIBERG, 2003; SEIDLHOFER, 2001; GONZALEZ-LLORET, 2005; ROGERSON-REVEL, 2006; SWEENEY; ZHU, 2010; DOBAO, 2012) and non-native speakers - non-native speakers (NNS- NNS) interaction (SCHWARTZ, 1980; VARONIS; GASS, 1985; YULE, 1990, PICA; LINCOLN-PORTER; PANINOS; LINNELL, 1996; GARCÍA MAYO; PICA, 2000; MEIERKORD, 1996, 1998, 2000; MACKKEY; OLIVER; LEEMAN, 2003, AL-

GHATANI; ROEVER, 2012; COGO; DEWEY, 2012), indicating that not only the context of face-to-face interaction but also the setting, the scene and the relationship between interlocutors influence the structure of the negotiation. However, if one of the speakers is using a foreign language, the language deficit determinates what can be said and how it is said, and the unbalanced linguistic proficiency between them (either in NS-NNS interactions and NNS-NNS) is bound to create an asymmetric relationship between interlocutors.

A successful training course in IC allows plurilingual interactions to present a (more) balanced and symmetrical relationship, offering the opportunity to successfully express themselves in their mother-tongues (or the language of expression they prefer). Discourse produced in this context has its specific characteristics which demand a shift in interpretation and an adaptation of the existing models and categories of analysis proposed by Discourse Analysis or Conversation Analysis for interactions between native speakers (NS) and non-native speakers (NNS) and NNS-NNS (MEIERKORD, 2000). In contrast to the findings of researchers who emphasise the pragmatic problems encountered by non-native speakers when interacting with native speakers of English, cooperation in plurilingual interactions is achieved through collaborative overlap and back channelling in a jointly constructed conversation as it has been also pointed out by Cogo and Dewey (2012) in NNS – NNS interactions. However, the studied plurilingual interaction shows a more egalitarian power relation and attention is driven from production in a foreign language to reception of a foreign language. This encourages participants to “assure each other of a benevolent attitude” (MEIERKORD, 2000, p. 10). Hence, the discursive strategies are more centred on attitudes towards the other than on knowledge of languages.

The table below presents a comparative synthesis of the findings in NS-NNS, NNS-NNS and in plurilingual interactions:

	Monolingual Interactions		Plurilingual Interactions
	NS-NNS	NNs-NNS	NS-NS
Dialogic cooperation	Asymmetrical relationship between interlocutors – unbalanced communicative rights (cf. WIBERG, 2003; SWEENEY; ZHU, 2010); Non-understanding (cf. ROGERSON-REVELL, 2006); Unconsistency of accommodation strategies (cf. SWEENEY; ZHU 2010).	Co-operative nature (cf. SCHWARTZ, 1980; YULE, 1990; MEEUWIS, 1994; VARONIS; GASS, 1985; MEIERKORD, 1996, 1998; COGO; DEWEY, 2012); Re-planning of utterances (cf. MEIERKORD, 2000); High amount of cajolers (idem); Reduction and compensation (idem) Benevolent attitude (idem) Simplification (cf. AL-GAHTANI; ROEVER, 2012)	Cooperative nature (cf. ARAÚJO E SÁ; MELO-PFEIFER, 2009) Anticipation strategies (cf. ARAÚJO E SÁ, 1993) Benevolent attitude (idem) Conversational duet ¹ Active listenership ² Supportive laughter “Bonheur conversationnel” ³
Interactional negotiation	Competitive conversational model or one-at-the-time turn taking	Mainly one-at-the time turn-taking (cf. MEIERKORD, 2000) but also co-operative overlaps (COGO; DEWEY, 2012)	Collaborative floor ⁴
Negotiation of meaning	Constant (cf. MEIERKORD, 2000); Repair sequences (signalling incorrect linguistic formulations, responding to demands for reformulation; giving corrective feedback) (cf. WIBERG, 2003; GONZALEZ-LLORET, 2005; SWEENEY & ZHU, 2010); Scaffolding devices (cf. WIBERG, 2003).	Echo questions, clarification requests, explicit statements of misunderstanding, inappropriate responses (cf. VARONIS; GASS, 1985) Repair strategies (COGO; DEWEY, 2012) Plurilinguaging (LÜDI, 2014) Non-verbal strategies Scaffolding devices (cf. DONATO, 1994; GARCÍA MAYO; PICA, 2000)	Translanguaging (cf. MELO-PFEIFER, 2015) Interlinguistic mediation Self-initiated repairs/self-elicitations Non-verbal strategies
Face work	Power-driven Unequal places “Reduced personality” (HARDER, 1980; KIRKBAEK, 2013)	Minimizing the risk of losing face (cf. MEIERKORD, 2000) Avoidance strategies (idem) Drop of topic (idem)	Continuous attention to face-work Active intercultural competence Solidarity Empathy

¹ For the definition of the concept cf. Falk, 1980.

² For the definition of the concept cf. Knight, 2011.

³ For the definition of the concept cf. Auchlin, 1990, 1991.

⁴ For the definition of the concept cf. Coates, 1997, Meierkord, 2000.

5. Final Considerations

Discourse produced in the context of plurilingual interaction, a different and clearly more egalitarian one, exhibits specific characteristics which demand a change in interpretation and an adaptation or elaboration of the existing models and analysis categories proposed by Discourse Analysis or Conversation Analysis originally developed for NS-NNS; NNS-NNS interactions.

Being in contrast to the studies which emphasise the communicative and pragmatic problems encountered by non-native speakers interacting in a foreign language, our study shows how cooperation in plurilingual interactions manifests itself in self-initiated repairs, the use of discourse markers (cajolers, head nods, eye contact), translanguaging, collaborative overlap and joint construction. In plurilingual interaction, speakers of different languages make interactional adjustments towards mutual understanding.

In the examples analysed in this paper, there is a preference to use collaborative strategies to ensure comprehensible input by activating plurilingual intercultural competences to anticipate non-understanding, misunderstanding or conflict. Negotiation of meaning is mostly self-initiated, revealing a constant effort (benevolent attitude) to accommodate the interlocutors and adjust each other's' language to communicative needs, through the use anticipation communicative strategies.

Overlapping speech and interruptions, analysed in this paper, are not interpreted as erroneous or problematic; on the contrary, they are regarded as a specific dialogic cooperation strategy to show close attention and support and to collaboratively ensure the conversation to flow smoothly. This alternative and more suitable view of interruptions and overlaps confirms the inherently cooperative nature of plurilingual interactions reported by Araújo e Sá and Melo-Pfeifer (2009) and stresses the fact that plurilingual interactions are the result of joint participation of the interactants. Conversely, it is a common strategy used by both Juan and Tatiana to achieve mutual understanding and to show their engagement in the pursuit of effective communication.

Therefore, symmetric relationships are allowed, opening the way to a *double agreement* which leads to the sharing of a true “bonheur conversationnel” (AUCHLIN, 1990, 1991).

We are aware of the fact that the results presented in this paper cannot be generalised, since they correspond to a specific collaborative situation in a specific social environment. According to Dobao (2012), the participants' collaborative or non-collaborative orientation to

the activity, shaped by their goals and level of involvement in the task, has a stronger effect on the nature of the interaction than the overall proficiency of the dyad, and this may have been at stake in the example presented. Nevertheless, the results of this study indicate that anticipation strategies are at the core of IC and plurilingualism. Successful plurilingual interactions rely as much on the actual knowledge of the languages in use as on the attitudes of the speakers towards language diversity and otherness, and on the attention to each other's communicative needs and difficulties. Isn't it what intercultural communication is also about?

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