Tatjana Paunović

THE TANGLED WEB:
Intercultural Communicative Competence in EFL

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Faculty of Philosophy
2013.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

This book addresses probably the 'hottest' issue of foreign language learning and teaching today – intercultural communicative competence (ICC) as a goal and desired outcome of the process of L2 learning and teaching. As a complex, multi-layered concept, intercultural communicative competence has been dealt with in different social disciplines and humanities from a variety of perspectives, ranging from more narrowly linguistic ones in sociolinguistics, pragmatics and discourse and conversational analysis, to broader perspectives of culture studies, sociology, communication studies, ethnography and anthropology. But although it has been discussed and explored so intensively for several decades, ICC is still a matter of debate and further study, evading a comprehensive description and unified explanation. This is only natural, since it involves a number of aspects that are equally complex themselves, such as those of identity and multiple identities, language attitudes, social and cultural contexts of communication, the pragmatic use of linguistic devices, or the non-verbal elements of communication.

In the context of foreign language education, studies of intercultural communication and intercultural competence aim to add to our understanding of what it takes to bridge the intercultural communication gap, and what kind of knowledge, skills, mindsets, and feelings are required for a person to be a successful intercultural 'mediator'. And since the issue is multidisciplinary in its very essence, it is not surprising that ICC studies have employed a variety of approaches and methods, from the firmly

established quantitative methodology rooted in the fields of sociolinguistics and pragmatics, to more recent qualitative, naturalistic, descriptive, and ethnographic research tools in interactional and critical approaches.

Despite the fact that this may be one of the most actively discussed and researched issues today, there are some areas that have hardly been touched upon. Firstly, the issue of intercultural communication is still prevailingly investigated in the contexts of 'real-life intercultural encounters', such as study abroad programs, immigration, or the context of international business, while not enough attention is paid to the needs of L2 learners in formal educational contexts, in learning and teaching a foreign language.

Secondly, few empirical studies in the L2 context have focused on the 'receiving' end of the communication channel, that is, the question of how communicative situations are interpreted by L2 learners, and how they construct meaning through the interpretation of various cues in intercultural encounters. The fields of communication studies and psychology have a lot to offer in the area of interpersonal and intergroup communication, but there are very few, if any, empirical studies that would focus particularly on EFL learners of different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, and their problems in the process of sensemaking and meaning construction.

Therefore, this book offers a small puzzle piece that may help fill this gap. It aims to contribute to the ongoing discussion of ICC by highlighting this aspect of the problem, which has not received enough attention – the EFL student at the receiving end of the intercultural communication channel. The three previously unpublished studies presented in the central part of this book focus on Serbian EFL students in the formal educational context, on their process of meaning construction through the interpretation of cues received in different communicative situations, and on their understanding of several key concepts of intercultural communication.

Three points are particularly emphasised in *The Tangled Web*. Firstly, the issues of intercultural communication and intercultural competence require a very broad, interdisciplinary theoretical perspective. Such a perspective is offered, for instance, by the interdisciplinary *Language and Social Interaction* (LSI) approach, which aims to investigate all the various details of people's everyday practices in the "complexities and multifunctionality of human communication" (Fitch & Sanders 2005:v). It does so by taking a perspective that includes at least five overlapping aspects of study: discourse analysis, conversation analysis, pragmatics, language and social psychology, and ethnography. In intercultural communication

research, the LSI approach is becoming "increasingly visible and incorporated into traditional perspectives" (Fitch & Sanders 2005:vi). One of our aims in this book is to draw attention to the fact that a broad interdisciplinary outlook, which would bring together linguistic, applied linguistic, sociolinguistic, pragmatic, communicational and educational perspectives, is essential in studying ICC in L2 learning and teaching.

Secondly, investigating the complex issues of intercultural communication requires all the devices available, that is, the application of complex methodological frameworks with both quantitative and qualitative perspectives. The three studies presented here illustrate the application of qualitative methodology, which aims to reach beyond the level of overt manifestations in communicative situations, to shed light on the deeper underlying processes that shape the participants' interpretations and responses in intercultural communication.

Thirdly, another particularly important aspect of ICC in EFL learning is the fact that, unlike some other areas of linguistic and pragmatic EFL competences, its development depends on *spoken* communication. In addition to the issues of genre and register, level of formality, verbal and non-verbal elements of face-to-face communication and conversational context, one aspect of spoken communication that is often pointed out as relevant but is, in fact, not sufficiently investigated, is the role of prosody. In the studies presented here, focusing on intercultural communication and the EFL learning context, special attention is paid to the interpretation of prosodic cues, and the participants' awareness of the role played by intonation, pauses, speech tempo, pitch range, loudness, and other prosodic cues often highlighted in literature as very important for the meanings we communicate.

Although applied linguistics has always emphasised that research findings are not and need not be directly translated into L2 teaching and learning *practice*, the so-called 'pedagogical implications' of intercultural competence research are of utmost importance for the EFL context. That is why *The Tangled Web* focuses on the issues of EFL teaching and learning, and particularly on EFL teacher education, and highlights the fact that research findings from the complex field of intercultural communication and intercultural competence should be more substantially included in education policies and teacher education.

The outline of the book

Part One of the book sketches the theoretical background and the conceptual framework within which the research studies presented in Part Two should be interpreted. The background includes theoretical concepts, ideas, and models relevant for the study of intercultural communicative competence. Concepts such as culture, communication, identity, language attitudes and ideologies are discussed, defined, presented from perspectives argued by different authors, and placed within the EFL learning and teaching context.

Starting with a brief chapter that presents some of the most widely debated issues related to the role of English in international communication, and re-examines the concept of 'English as a foreign language', Part One of the book comprises four more chapters. *Chapter Two* summarizes some of the most commonly discussed views of culture, communication, and intercultural communication, from the perspective of ICC as a goal of foreign language teaching.

Chapter Three deals with the issues of identity construction, multiple or hybrid identities, language attitudes, stereotypes and ideologies, and their role in intercultural communication. In addition to the discussion of the relevant theoretical concepts, a selection of previous empirical research is also presented.

Chapter Four focuses on the process of meaning construction, sensemaking, and interpretation, and presents several relevant theories in this area. One is the Sensemaking theory, developed in communication and information study but today widely applied in diverse fields, including education. The other two are the Attribution theory and the Communication Accommodation theory, presented as examples of approaches that take into consideration the communicative context, as well as the dynamic and interactional nature of spoken communication.

Chapter Five focuses more narrowly on the role of prosody in meaning construction and interpretation. Apart from the relevant theoretical frameworks and empirical research in the study of prosody, particularly in the context of English as a foreign language, approaches are presented that deal with prosody as an element of the broader process of spoken communication, such as interactional sociolinguistics or conversational analysis.

Finally, in *Chapter Six*, we present the theoretical framework of *Language and Social Interaction*, as an example of a broad interdisciplinary, or, in Norman Fairclough's words, 'trans-disciplinary' approach to the study of spoken communication in all its complexity.

Part Two of the book turns to empirical research. In *Chapter Seven*, some methodological issues are discussed, and the contributions made possible through the quantitative and qualitative research paradigms compared. The importance of using complex methodology is highlighted, particularly the value of using the qualitative approach in investigating issues relevant for intercultural communicative competence.

The central part of the book is occupied by three chapters presenting three previously unpublished studies in which qualitative methodology was used to explore some questions related to intercultural communication in the EFL context. The aim was to investigate the students' thinking process, the views, beliefs, and attitudes underpinning the choices they make in communicative situations.

In *Chapter Eight*, titled *Linguistic profiling in EFL*, we investigate how EFL students construct social meaning and social evaluations of speakers of different English varieties. The students were presented with the speech samples of ten different speakers, and asked to verbalize their inferences, evaluations, and interpretations, based only on the way the speaker 'sounded to them'. The qualitative methodology applied is described in detail, particularly the technique of focus group interview used for data collection. The findings are discussed in the context of EFL learning and teaching.

The second study, presented in *Chapter Nine*, titled *What did they say? What did they mean?* focuses on the process of meaning construction, sensemaking, and interpretation by EFL students when presented with three excerpts of spoken language, first only auditorily, and then accompanied by visual presentation, too. The methodology is described in detail, especially the version of the think-aloud protocol used for data collection. The findings are, again, discussed in the context of EFL learning and teaching.

Chapter Ten, titled *Students' glossary of intercultural communication* looks at the issue of intercultural communicative competence from the perspective of EFL students. This qualitative study required the students to verbalize their understanding of several concepts crucial for ICC, such as culture, communication, appropriateness, 'normal' behaviour, or 'annoying' behaviour. The findings are discussed in the context of EFL teacher

education, because the responses of first-year English department students were compared to those of third-year students, who had, prior to the study, completed not only their pre-service EFL Teaching Methodology training, but also an elective course in intercultural competence development.

Instead of a conclusion, the final *Chapter Eleven* brings together the questions discussed in the theoretical and empirical parts of the book, and sets them in the EFL teaching and learning context. It points to the possible implications for EFL teacher education, which seems to be 'caught' or 'stuck' in the intricate web of the complex issues affecting intercultural communication, and struggling to answer the question of what competencies EFL teachers need to have to help EFL learners develop *their* intercultural competence.

Paradoxically, this book is two opposite things at the same time. On the one hand, it is a result of several years of my study in the field of intercultural communicative competence, which started when the ICC course was first introduced in the English Language and Literature curriculum at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Niš, in 2007/2008. On the other hand, it is still a pioneering enterprise in many respects, because despite the daily growing body of literature on the topic, research into the difficult issues of ICC has, in the Serbian educational context, barely taken its first steps. Together with a small number of previous studies (e.g. Bakić-Mirić 2012; Lazarević 2007, 2013; Lazarević & Savić 2009), the research presented here ventured into the pretty much uncharted territory of Serbian EFL students' intercultural communicative competence.

Therefore, I hope that this book may motivate other researchers to get into grips with this difficult but exciting, rewarding and important field of study, to use various approaches and methodological designs, and add to our understanding of what intercultural communicative competence should mean in EFL learning and teaching.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book is a result of the research conducted within the project *Languages and cultures in time and space,* funded by the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia (Project No 178002). Important support also came from the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Niš, as the publisher of this book.

Special thanks go to my dear colleagues and friends: to Ljiljana Marković and dr Nina Lazarević for their love, patience, most insightful comments on earlier versions of this manuscript, and for being devoted, enthusiastic, and reliable members of the ICC Course team from its beginning; to dr Milica Savić, a dear friend, who is not a member of this team, but has often forgotten that fact and helped out as if she were; to my loving and supporting family and friends, who never once complained; to my bright and inspiring students, whose clever questions keep me 'on track', particularly to those students who found time and curiosity to take part in the studies; and last but not least, to Professor Snežana Gudurić, Professor Gordana Petričić and Professor Maja Marković of the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Novi Sad, who had the patience and will to review this book and recommend it for publication.

To all of them, my most sincere gratitude is due, while the responsibility for all the mistakes in the book remains my own.

The publisher and the author also thank Susan Johnson Bolter, a San Francisco painter, for the permission to use her painting 'When Sparks Fly' on the front cover of the book.

Finally, I want to express deep and heartfelt gratefulness to my teachers, Professor Mladen Jovanović, Professor Radmila Đorđević, and Professor Ranko Bugarski, from whom I have learned – everything that really matters.

PART ONE

THE BACKGROUND

1. THE TANGLED WEB: EFL

The social context in which foreign languages are studied and taught has never been unimportant, given the very purpose of and motivation for learning foreign languages. Particularly with the advance of the communicative approach in the 1970s and 1980s, the socially rooted notion of communicative competence, as put forward by Dell Hymes (1972), has been recognized as central to language learning and language use.

However, when it comes to learning and teaching English, in the past several decades, the social, historical, and political context of its learning and use has become especially complex, globally relevant, and widely debated. The impact of the globalization processes on communication, on languages in general and English in particular, has been deliberated from different stances and with different arguments, challenging our understanding of what 'English as a foreign language' (EFL) means in today's circumstances. These attempts to redefine the role of English in its speakers' lives, and the ways in which English should be learned and taught, from the perspective of English teachers may seem like a thick and tangled web, too complicated to unravel, and very difficult to translate into teaching practices.

This chapter outlines a rough sketch of the context in which EFL is taught and learned today. It presents some of the commonly encountered views of the effects of globalization on the role and status of English, and what we construe as 'English as a foreign language'.

'Globalised' communication, 'globalised' language(s)

David Held's view of globalization as an ever-increasing political, economic, and social inter-relatedness that has transformed our world into a global web of 'overlapping communities of fate' (Held 2001) resonates in more recent discussions of globalization, too. In these discussions, several fundamental aspects of globalization are repeatedly pointed out, and all of them are, in one way or another, related to language and communication.

One view almost invariably put forward is that globalisation is a process of 'simultaneous homogenization and heterogenization' (Eriksen 2007) – a process which is, dialectically, making us all more similar to and more different from each other, standardising, modernising, deterritorializing, but also 'localising' individuals. Cynthia Stohl (2005) notes that today's theories of globalization "try to capture the oppositional and dialectic forces that simultaneously obliterate, maintain, and maximize homogeneity/ heterogeneity within the global system" (Stohl 2005:245), echoing Appadurai's (1997) earlier conclusion that the "central problem of today's global interactions is the tension between cultural homogenization and cultural heterogenization" (Appadurai 1997:230).

This process happens both 'horizontally', through the interaction of the local and the global, and 'vertically', through the local interaction of the traditional and the new. As put by Dissanayake (2006), new symbolic forms that emerge in local spaces interact with the local 'historically sedimented practices' and 'historical narratives', becoming both increasingly visible and legitimized, and transformed and localized, and changing the local 'lifeworlds' in unprecedented ways (Dissanayake 2006:556). Fairclough (2006), too, describes the new diversity in the 'voices of globalization' – it grows as global and local entities get "subtly intertwined through blending, crossing, mixing and transforming, to account for the new types of social relations in the mushrooming intercultural, interregional or transnational networks" (Fairclough 2006:5). This complex and intricate interaction of the local and the global is seen as one of the defining features of the contemporary world.

Another commonly highlighted point is that the global web is not 'a state of affairs' but a dynamic process, restructuring time and space. Its essence is social interaction across time and space, and it "embodies [...] new practices and produces new discourses of identity" (Stohl 2005:248).

Therefore, communication is perceived as crucial in weaving the dynamic global web.

As for the linguistic facet of communication, it is often agreed that globalization has brought forth "a major shake-up of the global language hierarchy" (Graddol 1997:39), or a "new linguistic world order" (Bugarski 2009:18). Jacques Maurais reminds us that "[t]he expansion and retraction of languages is a social phenomenon, which reflects a position of power" (Maurais 2004:28). The perceived 'position of power' associated with English and its global role, as well as the varied perceived 'power' of other languages are among the most controversial issues debated in the context of globalization.

The controversy is probably the most obvious in the different responses evoked by the perceived homogenizing-heterogenizing effects of globalization. While some authors see the promotion of multilingualism and multiculturalism and the preservation of 'small' and 'minority' languages as the main – and most welcome – effect of globalization (Bugarski 2009), reflected in the 'added vigor' (Dissanayake 2006) and visibility local languages and cultures have obtained, others believe that the main effect of globalization is linguistic homogeneity. It is evident from the fact that the 'expanding circle' English is growing daily, and into what is already defined simply as the speakers' different levels of 'functional nativism' (Kachru 1985; Kachru *et al.* 2006; Wajnryb 2006; Bugarski 2007).

Even within this latter view, however, another controversy arises. Some welcome the global spread of English because it "brings unity through linguistic uniformity" (Cameron 2000:22), or because it is seen as 'deterritorialised' and 'denativised', as a "stateless language [...] we all embrace" and use for communication (House 2001). On the other hand, loud voices are also heard warning against the global spread of English and Anglophone cultures, as powerful vehicles of linguistic and cultural 'imperialism' that marginalizes local and small languages and cultures (Phillipson 1992, 2003).

For instance, discussing the concepts of plurilingualism and pluriculturalism and their implementation in 'real life', Mark Fettes (2004) warns that "even where plurilingualism has been formulated as an ideal, the reality may be quite different". In fact, he predicts a rather gloomy trend in the linguistic picture of Europe in the 21st century, characterized by a combination of 'elite plurilingualism' and 'consumer English', i.e. "active competence in several languages for the upwardly mobile, and limited,

primarily passive competence in English for the rest" (Fettes 2004:40). Such a compromise, Fettes concludes, "would fall far short of the standards for diversity, integration, and equity" (Fettes 2004:40). Similarly, William Mackey (2004) states that voices of resentment are heard not only in political, but also in social and scientific circles against the idea of global English, since "not everyone is enchanted with a language that dominates all international conferences and all meetings"; reminding us that things were similar with widely used or 'global' languages from ancient times, he still warns that "dominant languages have often provoked jealousy if not resentment " (Mackey 2004:73).

A very good illustration of this controversy is Janina Brutt-Griffler's (2002) observation that the paradox of the English language in the world today lies in the fact that it is seen in two opposite ways:

> To some, English anywhere outside the mother tongue context is an alien language, perhaps even an imposed language. From this standpoint, English has a fixed identity, both political and linguistic. It represents something peculiarly English, or perhaps Anglo-American, but at all events certainly Western. English has become a world language because – and to the extent that – Anglo-American, Western culture has become hegemonic in the world.
>
> To others English, although not their mother tongue, is nevertheless their language, an expression of their own unique identity. It is theirs because they have made it so – through their lived experiences in the language that have gained expression in the way they use English. In this view, English has become a world language to the extent that it has been stripped of any simplistic association with Anglo-American and Western culture. World English has emerged because its users have changed the language as they have spread it (Brutt-Griffler 2002:vii-viii).

This latter view is represented, for example, by David Crystal's (2010) conclusion that "one predictable consequence of a language becoming a global language [...] is that nobody owns it any more", or, more precisely, "everyone who has learned it now owns it [...] and has the right to use it in the way they want" (Crystal 2010:52). However, this kind of perception, too, can provoke resentment in some speakers:

> This fact alone makes many people feel uncomfortable, even vaguely resentful. ‘Look what the Americans have done to English’ is a not uncommon comment found in the letter-columns of the

British press. But similar comments can be heard in the USA when people encounter the sometimes striking variations in English which are emerging all over the world (Crystal 2010:52).

A similar point is made by Christian Mair (2006), who states that in addition to the fact that other languages feel threatened by English, the many English varieties feel threatened by the spread and influence of American English. Mair cites the frequently heard complaints "that American English has been a dominant influence on the development of other varieties, and that world English is being homogenized on American norms" (Mair 2006: 193). This further adds to the controversy surrounding the global role and status of English, and the effects of globalization on language and communication.

'Globalised' English(es)

As the views presented above illustrate, all the parties involved in EFL teaching and learning, are, as never before, faced with the fundamental question of how to define their very subject-matter – what it *is* that teachers are expected to teach and students to learn. This question is reflected in the ongoing discussion about the terminology used to specify *which* English, *whose* English, and *what kind of* English we are dealing with.

For instance, discussing the issues of linguistic and cultural globalization from a sociolinguistic perspective, Allan James (2009) sets off from the observation that linguistic and applied linguistic studies rarely seek to connect with the 'mainstream theories of globalisation' in other social sciences, such as economic, political, social and cultural studies. On the other hand, issues of language and culture, particularly English and its specific status, are rarely touched upon in these 'mainstream' globalisation theories, not even in the context of 'cultural globalisation' (James 2009:79).

James, however, believes that in order to gain an adequate sociolinguistic understanding of English in the world today, a broad, unified conceptual perspective is necessary. Therefore, to classify different views about the effects of globalization on language and culture, he uses the conceptual trichotomy of 'global', 'local' and 'glocal', where global stands for forces of homogenisation, local represents heterogenisation, while the glocal results from hybridisation, that is, an interplay of the global and the local (James 2009:81). This tripartite distinction relies on the one proposed by

David Held and colleagues (1999) in the 'mainstream' globalization theory to account for the dynamics and implications of globalization. In Held's view, 'hyperglobalizers' believe that we have entered a new era of global existence, largely influenced by the Western (American) popular culture and consumerism; 'sceptics' believe that globalization is essentially a myth; 'transformationalists', though, believe that societies are experiencing a process of profound change, evident, among other areas, in cultural hybridisation and new global cultural networks (Held *et al* 1999: 327, cited in James 2009:82).

When these two classifications are taken together, as James proposes, it means that 'globalists' tend to paint a negative and pessimistic picture, focusing on the 'hegemonic influence of English', which jeopardizes language diversity. 'Localists' believe in the positive effects of English expansion, pointing out its diverse forms emerging around the globe. Finally, 'glocalists' "celebrate the [...] meeting of global and local influences [and] translingual and transcultural flows worldwide" (James 2009:81). To illustrate this, James states that Phillipson's model would be 'globalist' (Phillipson 1992), and his notion of 'linguistic imperialism' is an example of the homogenising views of English influences. The opposite end of the continuum, stressing the 'heterogenizing effects of English expansion' would be represented by Crystal's (1997) and McArthur's (2002) viewpoints, or Schneider's (2007) account of the development of 'postcolonial Englishes' around the world. Between these two stances as opposites, there is a whole range of diverse viewpoints, such as 'educational linguistic' (Kirkpatrick 2007), 'critical applied linguistic' (Pennycook 2004, 2007) or 'futuristic' (Graddol 1997; 2006) perspectives. For James, Pennycook's (2007) views represent a 'glocalist' perspective, stressing the linguistic and cultural 'hybridising processes' in the global–local interplay (James 2009:81).

Based on this tripartite classification of viewpoints, James proposes a corresponding tripartite terminological distinction, a 'trichotomy of Englishes', which captures the differences in the way authors view the "globalising and globalised role of English today" (James 2009:86). *Global English* reflects the (positive or negative) view of 'globaists' and 'hyperglobalists' that (predominantly American) English is the vehicle of globalization, infiltrating the world through the economic, political, social, cultural, communicational and media-propelled domination of the West, including the "(Anglophone) discourse of neo-liberal economics" that goes "hand in hand with the general commodification of language" (James

2009:84). It, however, also recognizes the role of English as a 'virtual language' developed through various 'autonomous registers' for specialist communication in 'global expert communities' (Widdowson 1997:144, quoted in James 2009:84).

The notion of *World Englishes* reflects the (positive) views of linguistic 'localists' and social science 'sceptics', who believe that globalisation is a heterogenising process, which promotes 'a healthy glossodiversity'. The very term 'Englishes' allows for "the signalling of national (and/or regional) affiliation, constituting semiotic repositories for the expression of user identity" (James 2009:85).

Finally, *Lingua Franca English* expresses the view endorsed by 'glocalists' or 'transformationalists' that variations of English used in international communication are the 'linguistic manifestation of a myriad of contexts' in which English is used as a 'globalised and globalising linguistic resource' of intercultural communication (James 2009:86).

The terminological and conceptual differences systematized in this way by James are somewhat differently delimited and defined by other authors. Still, what is commonly underscored is the opposition between monocentric and pluricentric perspectives. For instance, Kingsley Bolton (2006a), too, discusses the "tension between the centrifugal and centripetal dynamics of international English(es)" (Bolton 2006a:241). He states that the singular term, 'world English', is synonymous to 'global English' or 'international English' (Bolton 2006a:240). However,

> [...] the use of the term 'Englishes' consciously emphasizes the autonomy and plurality of English languages worldwide, whereas the phrase 'varieties of English' suggests the heteronomy of such varieties to the common core of 'English'. The 'double-voicedness' of such nomenclature (English vs. Englishes) resonates with the much-cited Bahktinian distinction between 'centrifugal' and 'centripetal' forces in language change (Bolton 2006b:289).

To illustrate the difference between monocentric and pluricentric views, Bolton cites the views on the future prospects of the English language in the world put forward by David Crystal (1997) and David Graddol (1997). While Crystal maintains that a unifying dialect, World Standard Spoken English (WSSE), is likely to develop as a 'neutral' variety of English which people would use worldwide for international communication (Bolton 2006a:259), Graddol offers a more polycentric view of the future of English,

namely, that today's varieties of English may follow separate paths in their future development, growing more and more distant.

The main challenge for present-day applied linguistics, in Bolton's opinion, is the question of how the 'center–periphery balance' might be best 'redressed', or 're-centered' and 'pluricentered' (Bolton 2006a:264). He particularly singles out three approaches, all the three 'critical' in the sense that they seek to resolve this tension between the 'centrifugal' and 'centripetal' forces. One is Phillipson's (1992, 2001) belief that 'linguicism' should be opposed by supporting 'linguistic and social equality' through 'critical ELT' (Phillipson 1992:319, quoted in Bolton 2006a:257). Another is Penycook's *Critical Applied Linguistics* (2001, 2004), which attempts to restore the balance by introducing and refining a "critical perspective on both world Englishes and applied linguistics" (Bolton 2006a:258). The third approach is 'the Kachruvian paradigm', put forward by Braj Kachru and other scholars gathered around the idea of pluricentric 'Englishes'. This approach argues against 'monocentrism', for 'inclusivity and pluricentricity' in the study of English, that is, for the recognition of the 'multifarious' Englishes as autonomous varieties of the language (Bolton 2006a:240). The Kachruvian World Englishes (WE) approach, Bolton points out, recognizes the 'realities of the multilingual societies' – their "linguistic, sociolinguistic and educational realities" (Bolton 2006a:251).

And indeed, Braj B. Kachru represents the most prominent voice of the pluricentric view of global Englishes. He describes English today as 'the Hydra-like language' that 'has many heads, representing diverse cultures and linguistic identities'; it is like the 'Speaking Tree' of the ancient legend, with all its 'cross-cultural reincarnations', 'multi-identities' created across cultures, its creativity, and its "multiple cultural visions, discourses and linguistic experimentation" (Kachru 2006:447). Echoing Geertz's (1983:234) point that 'the world is a various place', Kachru believes that only the concept of World Englishes allows us to maintain this perspective of 'variousness' (Kachru 2006:466).

In a different way and from a different standpoint, M.A.K. Halliday (2006) puts forward a similar idea: that English *is* the medium through which 'variousness' can be expressed. Like James and Bolton, he discusses a terminological difference which reflects a different understanding of the role and consequences of English in the world, but focuses on the distinction between 'global English' and 'international English'. Discussing the sociolinguistic, or, as he puts it, 'historical' context of the phenomenon of

'global English', he defines a 'global language' by analogy with a 'standard language':

> A standard language is a tongue which has moved beyond its region, to become 'national'; it is taken over, as second tongue, by speakers of other dialects, who however retain some features of their regional forms of expression.
>
> A global language is a tongue which has moved beyond its nation, to become 'international'; it is taken over, as second tongue, by speakers of other languages, who retain some features of their national forms of expression. If its range covers the whole world, we may choose to call it 'global'" (Halliday 2006:352).

However, the position of English as a 'global' language at this moment of time is not very bright. Halliday states that, indeed, the 'globe' which provides the context for 'global English' *is* the world of international capitalism and corporate power, and that they "exploit the enormous power of the language for their own causes and benefit" (Halliday 2006:362). In this sense, 'global English' (as would any other language that found itself in its stead, Halliday adds a trifle apologetically), indeed functions as a 'medium of corporate power' and new technologies, so that "those who are able to exploit it, whether to sell goods and services or to sell ideas, wield a very considerable power" (Halliday 2006:362).

But at the same time, English is a 'world language' in the sense that it is 'international English' – in many countries it is a medium of literature and cultural expression, and a 'highly-valued international language' with certain 'clearly defined spheres of activity' (Halliday 2006:362).

Acknowledging the perceived danger of the global spread of English, which has been "expanding along both trajectories – globally, as English, internationally, as Englishes" (Halliday 2006:362), Halliday believes that the solution does not lie in trying to abolish its influence. Instead, he suggests that its users should try to exploit more substantially the enormous 'meaning-building potentials' of the language, evident in both its 'expansions'. Namely, both global and international English involve 'semogenic strategies', i.e. ways of creating new meanings that are open-ended, like the various forms of metaphor, lexical and grammatical (Halliday 2006:362). So far, international English has used this potential while expanding and growing into world Englishes, it has changed by adopting (and adapting to) the new

meanings of local cultures. On the contrary, global English has expanded "by taking over, or being taken over by, the new information technology, which means everything from email and the internet to mass media advertising, news reporting and all the other forms of political and commercial propaganda" (Halliday 2006:362). It has not changed in any important way, and has not been influenced by different local cultures.

Therefore, Halliday believes that, since "[m]eanings get reshaped, not by decree but through ongoing interaction in the semiotic contexts of daily life", a possible way to resist the global unification and homogenization through global English may be 'claiming ownership' over it by actively trying to exert some influence on it, so that we could 'make it our own'. Instead of the 'quixotic venture' of trying to resist global English, its 'baleful impact' and dominance, we "might do better to concentrate on transforming it, reshaping its meanings, and its meaning potential, in the way that the communities in the Outer Circle have already shown it can be done" (Halliday 2006:362).

The acronym conundrum: EFL, ELF, LFE

As illustrated by the views of Allan James, Kingsley Bolton and M.A.K. Halliday discussed above, the terminological distinctions between 'global English', 'international English', 'world English', 'world Englishes', which may appear to be superfluous and even pedantic, actually stem from important differences in the conceptual and theoretical views about the processes of globalization, and about the perceived effects of the global spread and use of English. In the context of applied linguistics and the practice of L2 learning and teaching, these have resulted in other important terminological differences, recently particularly emphasised. One is the distinction between 'English as a foreign language', and 'English as a Lingua Franca'.

The term 'English as a foreign language' (EFL) was traditionally used to refer to the study and use of English by non-native speakers around the world, in those cultural, social, and historical contexts where English has no formal status, which would correspond to the 'Expanding circle' in Kachru's early model (Kachru 1985). It was sometimes distinguished from 'English as a second language' (ESL), the main difference between the two being the 'setting' in which English is learned – formal in EFL and naturalistic in ESL

(Ellis 1994). Still, this distinction, closely related to the one between language learning (EFL) and language acquisition (ESL), was, at least in some periods and in some L2 teaching approaches, neglected or erased.

On the other hand, the more recent term 'English as a Lingua Franca' (ELF) has been promoted as a way to emphasise the legitimacy of the multitude of varieties of English emerging in international communication, when English is used as a communication tool between Expanding circle speakers. An important ideological assumption behind ELF is the promotion of a pluricentric rather than monocentric definition of 'acceptability' in language use. Instead of the traditionally promoted Inner circle (i.e. native speaker) standards as the only measure of correctness and acceptability, the ELF approach rests on the idea that native-speaker measures and standards should not apply to international communication contexts. The concept of ELF as promoted by authors such as Jennifer Jenkins (2000, 2006) or Barbara Seidlhofer (1999, 2001) implies that the varieties used by Expanding circle speakers should be included in the term 'World Englishes', since they are as legitimate as those of the Outer circle speakers.

Furthermore, these authors (Jenkins 2000; Seidlhofer 2001; Modiano 2006) believe that, like any other variety of English, or like any of the World Englishes, ELF should be described and codified, as, for instance, Modiano (2006) describes the ELF varieties of 'Euro Englishes' as 'real' emerging varieties. Mabel Victoria (2011) believes that this as an attempt to "legitimise [ELF] as a language in its own right, not as a deficient approximation of English as spoken by its native speakers" (Victoria 2011:38).

However, other authors do not believe that 'Euro English' or any other ELF form should or could be codified and described as *a* language variety. Victoria, for instance, states that "lingua franca English defies description and codification", primarily due to its "highly variable and context-dependent nature" (Victoria 2011:38). She illustrates this viewpoint by Canagarajah's work (2007), who argues that ELF emerges only through interaction in real time (Canagarajah 2007).

That is why Canagarajah (2007) introduces yet another term – 'Lingua Franca English' (LFE), to point out that, when investigating international communication, we should focus not on the codification of the ELF 'variety' as a 'linguistic system', but rather on pragmatics and communication. LFE is hybrid in nature: on particular occasions speakers will combine different devices from different English varieties and even

from different languages (Canagarajah 2007:926, in Victoria 2011:39); it is not a 'product located in the mind' but a ‘form of social action’ (Canagarajah 2007:928, in Victoria 2011:39).

This view, that meaning is constructed in intercultural – and any other – communication through social interaction, in specific situations, in specific contexts, and in real time is the underlying idea behind the research we present here. Yet, we do not accept the accompanying terminology. Namely, since the research presented here focuses on the *educational* context, i.e. the context in which English is learned and taught in the Serbian formal educational system, and since we want to distinguish this particular educational context from the different contexts of language *use,* we believe that the traditionally used term 'English as a foreign language' (EFL) is still the most appropriate one for our purposes, while the term 'Lingua Franca English' (LFE) would be more appropriate when focusing on various 'real-life' situations of language use. Also, since we do not endorse the view that 'English as a Lingua Franca' (ELF) can be regarded, described, and codified as a linguistic variety, we do not endorse this term either. Therefore, we choose the term 'English as a foreign language' (EFL) to highlight the fact that we refer to the context in which Serbian L1 speakers learn and use English in formal educational settings, within the Serbian formal educational system.

It could be argued that the problems discussed above, including a fine conceptual delimitation of ideas embodied in the terms 'world Englishes', 'global, 'international', or 'lingua franca English', may not be so very relevant for formal educational contexts. Formal contexts are assumed to be, by their nature, the most conservative and slowly changing ones, unlike 'real-life' international communication, which is characterized by dynamic and quick-paced interaction. Therefore, it can be hypothesised that the problems discussed above would have little effect on EFL teaching within formal educational curricula.

However, in formal-setting EFL teaching and learning, too, global changes have brought the same questions into focus, and EFL is struggling to redefine both its goals and its methodologies. The intense changes in individuals' personal lifestyles, in human relations, and their interconnectedness, have made the issue of the 'ongoing (re)construction of cultural identities', as Martin Fougère (2008:187) phrases it, very important

for more and more individuals. Formal EFL educational contexts, too, have to consider issues of identity construction, of diverse and multiple social and cultural identities, of social and cultural contexts of language learning and language use, and of meaning construction in social interaction. All these issues have become necessary, vital, and pressing in formal-setting EFL learning and teaching, and the importance of developing intercultural communicative competence has become immediate for a rapidly growing number of young educated people.

In the following chapter, therefore, we turn to the issues of intercultural communication and intercultural competence, and to the question of what the endorsement of ICC as a goal of foreign language learning and teaching entails.

2. INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

Despite the fact that intercultural communicative competence has been accepted as a desired outcome of L2 learning, and despite the frequent claim that in L2 teaching culture has moved "from the margins to the centre" (Corbett 2003:30), ICC still seems to be a theoretical concept confined to academic spheres rather than a widely accepted framework for everyday classroom practice. In most L2 learning contexts, and particularly in formal educational settings, the notions of culture and communicative competence are still viewed in fairly traditional terms, and ICC is still a concept too abstract and elusive for teachers and learners to fully endorse.

The reason probably lies in the complexity and evasiveness of the very idea of ICC. It encompasses three concepts, which are themselves inherently complex, dynamic, and difficult to define – culture, communication, and intercultural interaction. The vague, changing, and dynamic nature of each of these elements makes it very difficult to define ICC, and to understand how exactly it should figure in L2 learning and teaching.

In this chapter, we present some of the commonly encountered views of culture, communication, intercultural interaction, and particularly the role of language in intercultural communication. We discuss several theoretical models of cultural differences and ICC, focusing particularly on the ideas they share despite their differences.

Culture

To emphasise how elusive the concept of culture is, John Baldwin and colleagues (2006) describe it as 'a moving target' – "a sign, an empty vessel waiting for people – both academicians and everyday communicators – to fill it with meaning" (Baldwin *et al.* 2006:4). In the same vein, Jennifer Fortman and Howard Giles (2006) discuss the "tendency for individuals and, perhaps more importantly, scholars to interpret culture through their own particular lens": psychologists explain culture through personality traits, communication scholars believe that culture is a shared worldview sustained through communication, while sociolinguists focus on the "context, level and tone of voice, choice of phrase, gestures, eye contact, and body posture" (Fortman & Giles 2006:91-92). Similarly, Michael Hecht and colleagues (Hecht, Baldwin & Faulkner 2006) conclude that different definitions of culture focus on its various aspects – its elements, or functions, or processes and relationships (Hecht *et al.* 2006: 63).

Moreover, as observed by Clifford Geertz (1973) almost half a century ago, "[t]he term 'culture' has obtained a certain aura of ill-repute [...] because of the multiplicity of its references and the studied vagueness with which it has all too often been invoked!" (Geertz 1973:89). Indeed, the very number of definitions of culture offered in social sciences and humanities in the past century alone can be discouraging. Sandra Faulkner and her colleagues (Faulkner *et al* . 2006) collected over three hundred definitions of culture across the vast field of social sciences and humanities, and used content analysis to find the recurring concepts shared by definitions in various disciplines.

The authors identified seven such "themes" or types of definitions: 1) those that see culture as a system or framework of elements (structure or pattern); 2) those that focus on the function, i.e. see culture as a tool to an end; 3) those that focus on the ongoing social construction of culture; 4) those that focus on cultural artefacts, symbolic or not, 5) those that focus on belonging to a place or group; 6) those that see culture as a "sense of individual or group cultivation of higher intellect or morality"; and 7) those that focus on group-based power or ideology, as do postmodern and postcolonial definitions (Faulkner *et al.* 2006:29-31).

Furthermore, Hecht and colleagues (Hecht, Baldwin & Faulkner 2006) classified these different definitions of culture into three categories: 1) structural and functional definitions, which are 'positivist or neopositivist in

nature', because structures and functions are seen as 'objective elements', 'knowable from the outside', while culture is a variable that "predicts political, social, or communicative outcomes"; 2) interpretive definitions, focusing on the "communicative and social processes that create culture", where culture is seen as "the processes themselves rather than their determinant or their outcome"; and 3) critical definitions, which ask the question "Whose (power) interests do structures, processes, and products of culture serve?" (Hecht *et al.* 2006:63).

However, Hecht and colleagues do not believe that these different perspectives offered through various definitions of culture can be simply 'integrated', because the nature of culture is too complex, and such a 'compiled' definition would only further 'blur' the truth (Hecht *et al.* 2006: 64). Instead, in order to capture the essence of culture and all its important and intricate distinctions, the authors propose a 'meta-theoretical model', which they label "the layered and holographic perspective" (Baldwin & Hecht 1995; Hecht & Baldwin 1998; Baldwin & Hecht 2003; Hecht *et al.* 2006:64).

Based on the communication theory of identity, this model proposes that culture, like any form of identity, is experienced at different layers or levels: at the individual (psychological) level, but also in communication and relationships, as well as in rituals, artefacts, and social structures. Culture is subjective and objective, individual and collective, and we must take into account "all the various levels at which culture is reflected and created" (Hecht *et al.* 2006:64). Moreover, culture is 'alive', because the layers "interpenetrate each other" and "manifest themselves in each other" (Hecht *et al*. 2006:64). An example of this could be the cultural identity of a nation, which is not "simply a handed-down set of elements, a heritage, but rather an active process of defining and redefining through communication" (Hecht *et al*. 2006:64).

Indeed, what is emphasised in most contemporary definitions is the dynamic, constructivist view of culture as a process in which individuals' identities are discursively constructed through communication and interaction. For instance, Helen Spencer-Oatey and Peter Franklin (2009:15) state that culture is acquired and constructed through interaction with others, that it can be manifested in unpredictable ways, and that it affects both people's behaviour and their interpretations of other people's behaviour. This evokes Blommaert's (1998) observation that 'all kinds of things happen in interaction' – people mutually adapt, or shift into a 'space' that is no-one's

territory, some cultural conventions are sacrificed while others are given prominence.

This is particularly evident in intercultural encounters, where the participants' cultural similarities and differences affect the way they interpret and construct their mutual communicative reality. Therefore, most theoretical frameworks and models formulated to account for cultural differences especially highlight the dynamic, interactional and communicative nature of culture.

Culture and communication

The idea that culture and communication are inseparable has always been put forward in one form or another, in the fields of both communication and culture studies. Just as an illustration, in his early discussion of how the field of communication can be defined within social sciences, George Gerbner (1966) concludes that understanding communication involves an understanding of:

> [...] the types of message systems that tend to be produced under different *cultural*, institutional, and technological conditions; of the ways in which the composition of message systems tends to structure and weight issues and choices *from the interpersonal to the international level*; and of the ways in which information is processed, transmitted, and integrated into given frameworks of knowledge (Gerbner 1966:103, italics added).

Adding that communication study should focus on areas where 'problems of communication lie', Gerbner actually stresses the importance of cultural backgrounds, as 'given frameworks of knowledge', for the success of communication. Similarly, in his much more recent discussion of this topic, Craig Calhoun (2011) states that communication study, as a field currently characterized by 'diversity and creative chaos' (Calhoun 2011:1482), should focus on studying the key dimensions of contemporary social and cultural changes (Calhoun 2011:1480).

Another example of the view that culture and communication are indivisible is Fred Jandt's *Introduction to intercultural communication: Identities in a global community* (Jandt 2010). In this ICC coursebook, communication is, in fact, subsumed under culture, and one of the chapters is

titled 'Defining communication as an *element* of culture' (Jandt 2010:37, italics added). Moreover, because communication is 'a cultural element', not only the way people communicate, but also the way communication is *defined* varies from culture to culture. For instance, Jandt compares different models of communication, and shows how those offered within the Western paradigm differ from the Eastern models. Therefore, he points out that culture and communication must be studied together: "[c]ulture cannot be known without a study of communication, and communication can only be understood with an understanding of the culture it supports" (Jandt 2010:38).

Most importantly, of the ten components of the communication process in a model he describes, which comprises the source, encoding, message, channel, noise (external, internal or semantic), receiver, decoding, receiver response, feedback, and context (Jandt 2010:43), Jandt particularly focuses on the last one. He states that "[c]ulture is also context" (Jandt 2010:43), because it comprises the participants' worldviews, their understanding of time, social organization, human nature, the ways things are done, and the way *self* is perceived. Understanding the communication context, therefore, is crucial for successful intercultural communication.

Not only the authors whose starting point is in communication studies, but also those who rather set themselves within the field of 'culture studies' express the idea that culture and communication are inseparable. Frameworks and models of cultural differences almost invariably put emphasis on communication and interaction. For instance, Geert Hofstede's (1980) widely cited definition of culture as the "collective programming of the mind which distinguishes one human group from another" goes on to bring forth the interactional component, too, adding that culture is "the *interactive* aggregate of common characteristics that influence a human group's response to its environment" (Hofstede 1980:25, italics added).

Similarly, in Edward T. Hall's anthropologically based framework, the complex concept of culture is also seen as interaction-based, and as a form of communication. In *The Silent Language* (1959) Hall explicitly equates culture with communication, stating that "[c]ulture is communication and communication is culture" (Hall 1959:191), and that we should observe "culture in its entirety as a form of communication" (Hall 1959:28). In *The hidden dimension* (Hall 1966), the interactional component is also central, since what is emphasised are the *shared* experiences of a cultural group. As Hall puts it, culture comprises those "deep, common, unstated experiences which members of a given culture share, which they

communicate without knowing, and which form the backdrop against which all other events are judged" (Hall 1966:x).

This is crucial for intercultural communication, to which Edward Hall and Mildred Hall (1989) turn in *Understanding cultural differences*. Here, the authors state once again that communication is governed by the 'hidden codes' of behaviour, by that vast and unexplored region "that exists outside the range of people's conscious awareness" (Hall & Hall 1989:3). The differences in our 'hidden codes' cause breakdowns in intercultural communication when some 'crucial steps are omitted', or when we unconsciously apply our own rules to another system (Hall & Hall 1989:4).

Like Geert Hofstede, Hall and Hall view culture through the metaphor of computer programs, which "guide the actions and responses of human beings in every walk of life" (Hall & Hall 1989:3). However, they add another aspect to this shared 'program for behavior', and that is *information.* Namely, "[m]embers of a common culture not only share information; they share methods of coding, storing, and retrieving that information" (Hall &Hall 1989:xiv). Since these methods vary from culture to culture, the key to effective international communication is "[k]nowing what kind of information people from other cultures require" (Hall & Hall 1989:xiv) and "how much information is enough" (Hall & Hall 1989:6).

This view is condensed in Hall's notion of the *context* (Hall 1976). In communication, 'context' refers to the information 'that surrounds an event', which is "inextricably bound up with the meaning of that event", because events and contexts "combine to produce a given meaning" (Hall & Hall 1989:6). However, cultures differ with respect to how much the context influences the meaning. A culture can occupy any place in the span from high-context cultures, in which much information is contained in the context, to low-context cultures, in which very little information is 'understood' from the context and taken for granted, while the messages are coded explicitly (Hall 1976). To underline this, echoing the idea underlying the Whorfian linguistic relativity hypothesis, Hall and Hall warn that even scientists in the intercultural field of study, like 'ordinary' participants in intercultural communication, are vulnerable to distortions of this kind – "they look at any new culture through eyes conditioned from birth to see things in a particular way" (Hall & Hall 1989:xx). Therefore, the difference between high-context and low-context cultures is crucial for understanding intercultural interaction, because miscommunication results from our different assumptions about the information contained in the communicative context.

The idea about the significance of the context is not new. Put forward from the perspective of ethnology and social anthropology, Raymond Firth's view of culture as an 'aggregate' of society, community and culture, which all 'involve one another' (Firth 1971:28), also emphasises the role of 'contextualization' in our observation and interpretation of culture. Firth views culture as 'the way of life' of a society or community, together with the content of its social relations, that is, as "the aggregate of people and the relations between them" (Firth 1971:27). However, when observing a culture, we have to make inferences about social relationships and the meaning of activities from observing physical acts (Firth 1971:27). In this process of interpretation, the key factor is 'contextualization', because it is through adequately apprehending the context that we interpret the observed behaviours, 'attach values' to them, and infer the quality of the relationships between actors (Firth 1971:23).

In this sense, we could say that any instance of intercultural communication can be compared to what Firth describes as anthropological and ethnographic observation. Our mutual understanding and the success of our intercultural communication depend on contextualization, too – on attaching values, interpreting relationships, and recognizing the relevance of certain elements of the communicative context.

A similar idea, though not in the foreground, can be identified behind the notion of 'symbols' as used by Clifford J. Geertz in the field of cultural and symbolic anthropology. *The Interpretation of Cultures* (Geertz 1973) defines culture as "a historically transmitted pattern of meaning embodied in symbols", that is, as "a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life" (Geertz 1973:89). In Geertz's view of culture, the construction of meaning is central:

> Believing, with Max Weber, that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I *take culture to be those webs*, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an *interpretive one in search of meaning*" (Geertz 1973:5; italics added).

The importance of the context in understanding both culture and communication was also stressed by Dell Hymes, particularly in his most widely cited work, *Foundations in sociolinguistics: An ethnographic approach* (1974). Unifying linguistic, sociolinguistic, and anthropological

perspectives, Hymes, like Hall (1959), explicitly construes culture as communication. For him, language is an essential part of culture, but communication and cultural identification are the result of a complex interplay of linguistic and non-linguistic aspects. The central concept is that of a 'speech community', a group "sharing knowledge of rules for the conduct and interpretation of speech", including the knowledge of "at least one form of speech" and its patterns of use (Hymes 1974:51). Therefore, language is an important factor in 'delineating' cultural communities. However, the language code is but one component of communicative events, and only a careful study of particular events could reveal the way in which the "code enters into communicative purposes and cultural life" (Hymes 1974:18). In many different ways, language is crucial for "enculturation, transmission of adult roles and skills, interaction with the supernatural, personal satisfactions, and the like" (Hymes 1974:18), but, like other cultural traits, languages are 'integrated' into cultures and societies in different ways, to different degrees, and the nature of that integration can vary from one culture to another.

Therefore, Hymes believes that 'comparative ethnography' as well as 'the formal comparison' of language codes could offer deeper insights into the "relations between code and communicative context" (Hymes 1974:27). What we should investigate and explore are "[n]ot codes alone, but whole systems of communication, involving particular needs and alternative modalities" (Hymes 1974:27). In other words, he suggests that ethnographic studies of communication should be used as a framework for studying both languages and cultures.

What makes Hymes' point particularly relevant for the topics we discuss here is his insistence that the same kind of 'functional relativity' is found in international (intercultural) communication and within what is thought of as 'monolingual' communities – "the functional relativity of languages is general, applying to monolingual situations, too" (Hymes 1974:18). Therefore, differences should be observed in contexts involving not only 'acculturation', and 'bilingualism', but also 'standard languages', that is, 'monolingual' and 'monocultural' communities.

This links to another question important for the study of intercultural communication, namely, what counts as 'intercultural' in different communicative situations.

Whose culture?

Definitions of culture discussed above all agree that it is 'shared' by a group of people, be it 'society', Geertz' 'community', Hymes' 'speech community', or Hall's 'cultural group'. Despite their differences, most definitions state that culture embodies "the beliefs, values, and behaviors *of cohesive groups of people*" (Richards & Morse 2007:53, italics added), or the "norms, beliefs, perceptions, and values" (Fortman & Giles 2006:92) shared by "an *identifiable group of people* with a common history and a verbal and nonverbal symbol system" (Neuliep 2003:15). Culture is "a negotiated set of *shared* symbolic systems that guide individuals' behaviors and incline them *to function as a group"* (Chen & Starosta 1998:26, italics added).

However, as we have already pointed out earlier, in the 'global ecumene' (Hannerz 2001) of our 'Communication Age' (Lull 2001), the changes in economic and institutional relations, and in human relations and individuals' personal life have changed the meaning of the cultural group and intercultural interaction. Exploring the impact of cosmopolitan, intercultural life on people's sense of identity, Martin Fougère (2008) states that in our globalised world "the ongoing (re)construction of cultural identities is a central issue that is of crucial concern to more and more individuals" (Fougère 2008: 187).

This seems to be true of an ever-increasing number of people, and not only those who live a 'cosmopolitan' life. James Lull (2001), for instance, states that "cultural experiences of individuals are becoming increasingly individualized, complex, dynamic and expansive" (Lull 2001:3). The unprecedented development of information industries and easily accessible micro-communication technologies has opened the way for 'ever more diverse and mobile symbolic forms', and a unique 'empowerment' of many people. The 'technological landscape' of our world makes it possible for 'ordinary' people to communicate, to "originate, produce, and distribute ideas much more easily and with far greater impact than ever before" (Lull & Neiva 2012:15). Similarly, in their Introduction to the *Handbook of Intercultural Communication*, Helga Kotthoff and Helen Spencer-Oatey (2007) point out that today many people live in ephemeral social formations, simultaneously belong to several cultures and change cultural memberships, so it is questionable whether there are "separate local cultures" any more (Kotthoff & Spencer-Oatey 2007:2). David Chaney (2001), too, questions

the definition of culture as "a shared framework of norms, values, and expectations", since ways of life are no longer stable and clear-cut. Instead, he believes that culture should be seen as "a self-conscious repertoire of styles that are constantly being monitored and adapted", or as "a polyphony of ways of speaking" (Chaney 2001:81).

All these views point in the same direction as Ron Scollon, Suzanne Scollon, and Rodney Jones' (2012) conclusion that there is a serious 'problem' with the notion of culture today. Namely, Scollon and colleagues point out that culture means very different things to different people, and that we should not fall into the "trap of thinking that any particular construction of 'culture' is actually something 'real'" (Scollon, Scollon & Jones 2012:3). Instead, they propose that it is best to think of culture "not as one thing or another, not as a *thing* at all, but rather as a *heuristic*", or a 'tool for thinking' (Scollon *et al.* 2012:3).

The definition of culture they settle on is that it is "a way of dividing people up into groups according to some feature of these people which helps us to understand something about them and how they are different or similar to other people" (Scollon *et al.* 2012:3). But they immediately add that this definition "points to the trickiest aspect of the notion of culture", that is, the question: "When you are dividing people up, where do you draw the line?" (Scollon *et al.* 2012:4).

Therefore, instead of 'intercultural communication', Scollon and colleagues propose the framework of 'interdiscourse communication', i.e. the view that *any* communication can be construed as 'intercultural' in a way. It evokes Hymes' (1974) idea of the sociolinguistic 'functional relativity' of any language and all languages, emphasising the need to re-define whose culture we are looking into in any particular instance of 'intercultural' communication.

Implicitly, the framework of 'interdiscourse communication' also evokes Hall's and Firth's views of the importance of interpreting intercultural communication in the specific *context* in which it takes place.

Finally, placing the notion of 'discourse' in the centre of their proposed framework, Scollon and colleagues turn the spotlight to language and its role in the discursive construction of meaning in specific communicative situations, particularly those that we see as 'intercultural'.

Language in intercultural communication

The role of language in intercultural communication is especially highlighted in many frameworks and models of cultural differences and ICC, echoing the early views of Edward Hall (1959) or Clifford Geertz (1973), who saw culture as crucially intertwined with communication and its symbolic systems. Reviewing several conceptual frameworks of ICC developed in communication studies (Gudykunst, 1998; Ting-Toomey, 1999), foreign language education (Byram, 1997; Prechtl & Davidson Lund 2007), and international business and international projects, Helen Spencer-Oatey (2010) states that all these models, aiming to capture "the bigger picture of interaction across cultures", stress the importance of *knowledge*, but also of *communication* (Spencer-Oatey, 2010:204).

In many of these frameworks, which we discuss in some more detail in the following section, language and language-related skills are highlighted as especially important. However, a recurring fundamental idea is that the linguistic aspect of communication is inextricably intertwined with all the other aspects, including all the non-verbal and even non-linguistics aspects of the communicative context.

One excellent example of this is the work of John J. Gumperz (2001), who often pointed out that the aim of this investigation was to explain how "culture through language affects the way we think and communicate with others of different background" (Gumperz 2001:35). His central concept is that of 'conversational inference' (Gumperz 1982), which is partly "a matter of a priori extra-textual knowledge, stereotypes and attitudes", but is also "to a large extent constructed through talk" (Gumperz 2001:37). Thus, Gumperz' views of culture and communication emphasize the importance of both the context and the interactional construction of meaning, through both non-linguistic and linguistic means.

Similar views are shared by several other authors. For instance, Susanne Günthner and Thomas Luckmann (2001) use the notion of 'communicative genres', which "guide the interactants' expectations about what is to be said (and done)" (Günthner & Luckman 2001:60). As in Gumperz' view, these 'communicative genres' comprise diverse elements, ranging from words and phrases, to registers, rhetorical figures, stylistic devices, prosodic melodies, discourse structure signals, and repair strategies (Günthner & Luckman 2001:66). In addition, as socially constructed historical patterns, i.e. "sediments of socially relevant communicative

processes", communicative genres are subject to change and cultural variation (Günthner & Luckman 2001:62), which makes them crucial for intercultural communication.

A similar point is highlighted by Helen Spencer-Oatey (2008), too, although she focuses more narrowly on 'rapport management', i.e. the use of language to manage social relations in communication. She explores how differences in language use can affect rapport management, and the way people assess each other in intercultural communication (Spencer-Oatey 2008:44).

Finally, the same kind of perspective is visible even in discussions that look into broader issues of intercultural communication research. Alan Durant and Ifan Shepherd (2009), for instance, note that both language and other activities that accompany language use affect intercultural communication (Durant & Shepherd 2009:156). They criticize linguistically based studies of intercultural communication, and remind that in applied linguistics and linguistics, the study of intercultural communication emerged as a distinct sub-discipline three decades ago 'largely out of contrastive analysis, error analysis, and interlanguage studies'. Therefore, they tend to be too narrowly focused on linguistic and applied linguistic questions. Instead, Durant and Shepherd believe that intercultural communication is "something active, with scope for creative fusion, initiative and change" (Durant & Shepherd 2009:147), and that, hence, we should look into questions linked both to how language is used, and to wider questions of communication and culture, which are today particularly complicated:

> Linguistic dimensions of cultural diversity are interesting precisely because they are not narrowly national. Such questions draw attention instead to fundamental problems in what ‘culture’ is, what purposes it serves, how deeply people are attached to what they perceive as their culture, and how readily or reluctantly they adapt in the face of changing and increasingly interlocked societies (Durant & Shepherd 2009:151).

As these several examples show, many authors share Gumperz’ belief that in all communication, including intercultural communication, we cannot make a clear distinction between "cultural and social knowledge on the one hand and linguistic signalling processes on the other" (Gumperz 1982:186). In other words, in communication, language and its contexts of use are inseparable.

Furthermore, many authors in this field can also be said to build upon Hymes' (1972) understanding of communicative competence as an entirely empirically founded concept. Unlike, for instance, Jürgen Habermas (1970a, b), who understands communicative competence as a system of rules 'generating an ideal speech situation', with little regard for the actual linguistic codes and particular pragmatic realisations, Hymes (1972) promoted a firmly empirically grounded understanding of language as a matter of concrete realizations, in specific communicative situations. That is why Gert Rickheit and Hans Strohner (2008) point out that Hymes understood the dichotomy of linguistic competence vs. performance simply as 'two sides of a coin', where performance is the observable part, and competence is "the inferred ability to produce the observed performance in the future" (Rickheit & Strohner 2008:17-18).

In this respect, many of the authors in intercultural communication research can be said to share Hymes' belief that linguistic competence and performance come to life together, unified in specific communicative situations, when we observe how language is used by real people, in real communicative contexts.

Cultural difference and intercultural competence

In the study of cross-cultural interaction, many theoretical frameworks, models, and conceptualizations have been proposed to systematize and explain the ways in which cultures can differ. Given the complexity of the notions of both culture and communication, it is understandable that different models should focus on different aspects of cross-cultural communication. Reviewing a number of such models, Helen Spencer-Oatey and Peter Franklin's (2009) show that those proposed in the fields of social and cross-cultural psychology tend to observe fundamental cultural values, as do Geert Hofstede (Hofstede 2001) or Shalom Schwartz (Schwartz 1999: 25), the models proposed in anthropology, such as Edward Hall's (1959, 1966) or Fons Trompenaars' (Trompenaars 1993; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner 1998) focus on behavioural differences and orientations to life, while models that come from the fields of applied linguistics and discourse studies focus more narrowly on verbal communication, speech styles, and language use (Spencer-Oatey & Franklin 2009:30).

Still, despite their differences, all these frameworks seek to capture the essence of cultural variation, and point to the ways in which it is possible to 'bridge' cultural differences and successfully communicate 'across' cultures. Therefore, such theoretical frameworks, formulated as models of cultural difference and not explicitly of intercultural communicative competence, also aim to account for the possibilities and challenges of intercultural communication.

As an illustration, the model proposed by Fons Trompenaars and Charles Hampden-Turner (1998) systematizes cultural differences in terms of different 'orientations' to the key 'dimensions' such as time, space, human relations, or relationship with nature. We are constantly involved in "a process of assigning meaning to the actions and objects [we] observe" (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner 1998:196), but this process of 'assigning meanings' is shaped by our cultural 'orientations', which is particularly obvious in intercultural communication. Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner believe that our awareness of the main dimensions of cultural difference can greatly contribute to successful intercultural communication. What is also important is "being aware of one's own mental model and cultural predisposition", and being able to "shift cultural perspectives" (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner 1998: 199). Therefore, this model implies three components necessary for successful intercultural communication – awareness of how cultures can differ, self-awareness i.e. the ability to observe one's own 'mental model', and flexibility in both thinking and behaviour.

In addition to such conceptualizations of cultural difference, various theoretical frameworks focus specifically on intercultural (communicative) competence. In contemporary conceptualizations, ICC is viewed as a very complex construct, encompassing various aspects and components. As an illustration, the definition offered by Young Yun Kim (2009:54) stresses that intercultural competence must be distinguished from 'cultural' or 'culture-specific' competences, because it is 'culture-general' and 'context-general', that is, it is "applicable to all encounters between individuals of differing cultural backgrounds, regardless of the particularities" (Kim 2009:54). Kim's definition highlights three crucial aspects: one's abilities, behaviours, and cooperative interaction with others. Specifically, ICC is "the overall capacity of an individual to enact behaviors and activities that foster cooperative relationships with culturally (or ethnically) dissimilar others" (Kim

2009:54). Although different models stress different aspects of ICC, they all represent an attempt to single out its most important components.

One of the most comprehensive recent overviews of ICC models is the one offered by Brian Spitzberg and Gabrielle Changnon (2009) in *The SAGE handbook of intercultural competence* (Deardroff 2009). The authors present, discuss, and compare over twenty ICC models, in order to identify their common themes and components as well as potential conceptual gaps important for the future development of the ICC theory (Spitzberg & Changnon 2009:2).

The presented models of intercultural competence are classified into five categories. 'Compositional' models only list relevant traits, characteristics, or skills, and do not show their possible interrelatedness. Also, they vary in categorical complexity and the number of proposed conceptual elements. For example, the *Intercultural Competence Components Model* (Howard Hamilton *et al.* 1998) has three categories of components (attitudes, knowledge, and skills), the *Facework-Based Model* (Ting-Toomey & Kurogi 1998), proposes four categories or 'dimensions' (knowledge, mindfulness, facework competence criteria, and interaction skills), while the *Pyramid Model* (Deardorff 2006) is even more elaborate, with five componential categories ('desired external outcomes', 'desired internal outcomes', knowledge and comprehension, skills, and 'requisite attitudes' such as respect, openness and curiosity).

'Co-orientational' models, which focus on communication, interaction, and 'shared meanings', are illustrated, among others, by Fantini's (1995) *Worldviews Convergence Model*, which focuses particularly on the linguistic component of interaction, and Byram's (1997) widely quoted *Intercultural Competence Model,* with its four competences – linguistic, sociolinguistic, discourse and intercultural, the last one comprising five types of skills: interpreting/ relating skills or *savoir comprendre*, discovery/ interaction skills or *savoir faire*, knowledge or *savoir*, critical cultural awareness or *savoir s'engager*, and attitudes or *savoir être*.

'Developmental' models include the time dimension of intercultural interaction, and specify stages through which competence evolves. Spitzberg and Changnon analyse the *U-Curve Model of Intercultural Adjustment* (Gullahorn & Gullahorn 1962) as well as Milton Bennett's (1986) *Developmental Model*, also known as the *Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity*, which will be discussed in some more detail below.

'Adaptational' models include multiple participants and emphasize their interdependence in communication. An example is the *Intercultural Communicative Accommodation Model* by Gallois, Franklyn-Stokes, Giles, and Coupland (1988), which we devote more attention to later, in Chapter 4.

'Causal process' or 'Causal path' models see intercultural competence as a process in which there is an initial set of concepts leading to a 'downstream set of outcomes'. Here, the authors describe Arasaratnam's (2008) *Model of Intercultural Communication Competence,* Ting-Toomey's (1999) *Multilevel Process Change Model,* as well as the *Anxiety/ Uncertainty Management Model* by Hammer, Wiseman, Rasmussen, and Bruschke (1998), finishing their review by Deardorff's (2006) *Process Model*, and Spitzberg and Cupach's (1984) *Relational Model of Intercultural Competence.*

The aim of our chapter is not to give a detailed account of the many existing models of intercultural competence. Rather, our aim is to draw attention to the idea which Spitzberg and Changnon, too, emphasise in their discussion – that contemporary intercultural competence field indeed represents "a rich conceptual and theoretical landscape" (Spitzberg & Changnon 2009:44). Namely, Spitzberg and Changnon's analysis identified over *three hundred* elements, i.e. 'concept and factor labels', in the analysed models (cf. Spitzberg & Changnon 2009:36-43). Therefore, the authors warn that it may well be that "many conceptual wheels are being reinvented" (Spitzberg & Changnon 2009:45), because many of the proposed elements overlap. Thus, they conclude that it would be necessary to develop 'more parsimonious', synthetic and integrated models (*ibid.*).

Commenting on the very number of proposed conceptual models of ICC, the authors state that it may be "tempting to argue that the variety of models is a sign of postmodern diversity and that cultural diversity itself may require a parallel range of models" (*ibid.*). However, their analysis showed that some common theoretical categories run across most models, suggesting that this 'postmodern diversity' could be collapsed and integrated around a much simpler 'common core' of conceptual categories.

As proposed earlier in Spitzberg and Cupach (1984), and also in Spitzberg (2000), five conceptual categories can be said to constitute this common core of ICC components: motivation, knowledge, skills, context, and outcomes. The first three of these have long been included in competence models – motivation (affective, emotional component), knowledge (cognitive component), and skills (behavioural, actional

component). Spitzberg and Cupach (1984) expand this core by two more conceptual categories – context (situation, environment, culture) and outcomes (perceived appropriateness, perceived effectiveness, satisfaction). This 'core' could be further enriched, as proposed in developmental and relational models, by the time component, i.e. the development of competences over time, and by including all of the participants involved in the interaction (Spitzberg & Changnon 2009:44). But, in essence, Spitzberg and Changnon believe that all theories of intercultural competence rely on the five basic conceptual metaphors (Spitzberg & Changnon 2009:7).

Indeed, most models of ICC commonly referred to in the fields of education and L2 learning illustrate this observation. For instance, the model proposed by Guo-Ming Chen and William Starosta (1996) defines ICC as "the ability to negotiate cultural meanings and to execute appropriately effective communication behaviors that recognize the interactants' multiple identities in a specific environment" (Chen & Starosta 1996:359). A successful intercultural communicator is the one who has respect for other cultures, and tolerance for cultural differences. These abilities are modelled by Chen and Starosta as three main components of ICC – *intercultural sensitivity*, as the affective component, or the ability to acknowledge and respect cultural differences; *intercultural awareness*, as the cognitive component, or one's self-awareness, the understanding of one's own cultural identity and awareness of cultural variation; and *intercultural adroitness*, or the behavioural component, which includes language and communication skills, flexibility, interaction management, and social skills.

As an example of a model that includes the dynamic perspective, the literature on education and L2 learning and teaching often quotes Milton Bennett's Developmental model of intercultural sensitivity (Bennett 1986, 1993). This model aims to account for changes that can occur in one's intercultural competence over time, that is, for the transformation of one's perspective from ethnocentric to ethnorelative. The ethnocentric outlook implies that one's own culture is experienced as 'central to reality', and that the ways of one's culture are seen as 'the right ways'. The ethnorelative outlook is the one in which we are aware that our own beliefs and behaviours are "just one organization of reality among many viable possibilities" (Bennett 2004). The development of one's intercultural sensitivity progresses through six phases, three of which are 'ethnocentric' (Denial, Defense/Reversal, Minimization), and three 'ethnorelative' (Acceptance, Adaptation, Integration). What changes as we develop from

one stage to the next is our perception of cultural differences, as well as our responses to them.

An example of a very complex model of ICC is the *Rainbow Model* described by Bernd Kupka, André Everett and Susan Wildermuth (2007), which proposes as many as ten different components of ICC. These include foreign language competence, 'cultural distance', self-awareness, knowledge, skills, motivation, appropriateness, effectiveness, contextual interactions, and a factor they label 'intercultural affinity' (Kupka *et al.* 2007:18). The model rests on a number of theoretical concepts from well-known theories, such as the social construction of reality, social learning, cultural identity, identity management, and anxiety and uncertainty management theories. Therefore, the Rainbow model, in a way, does represent an attempt to 'synthesize' and 'integrate' the conceptual categories proposed in several earlier models.

Kupka and colleagues (2007) adopt two components from the *Integrative model of ICC* proposed by Brian Spitzberg (2000) – appropriateness and effectiveness. Spitzberg's integrative model comprises three levels – individual, episodic, and relational (Spitzberg 2000:380), and views intercultural competence as "interactional competence in intercultural contexts" (Spitzberg 2000:379), manifested as our "impression that behavior is appropriate and effective in a given context" (Spitzberg 2000:379).

However, since "any given behaviour or ability may be judged competent in one context and incompetent in another", competence cannot "inhere in the behavior or ability itself", but must be viewed "as a social evaluation of behavior" (Spitzberg 2000:380). Appropriateness and effectiveness are the two main criteria on which we base this 'social evaluation of behavior':

> *Appropriateness* means that the valued rules, norms, and expectancies of the relationship are not violated significantly. *Effectiveness* is the accomplishment of valued goals or rewards relative to costs and alternatives. With these dual standards, therefore, communication will be competent in an intercultural context when it accomplishes the objectives of an actor in a manner that is appropriate to the context and relationship (Spitzberg 2000:380).

Successful intercultural communication happens only when both these standards are met, and only if "interactants can analyze intercultural

situations sufficiently to understand initial conditions" (Spitzberg 2000:381). Intercultural communicative competence, therefore, involves one's understanding of the 'conditions', and choosing an appropriate and effective course of action in the given situation.

Therefore, it can be said that Spitzberg's addition of the concepts of appropriateness and effectiveness to the 'common core' of intercultural competence components follows the same line of thought identified in our previous discussion of different views of culture, communication and intercultural interaction. In a way, it reflects and continues the ideas argued by Hymes (1972), Hall (1976), and Geertz (1973), observing intercultural communicative competence not as an abstract 'competence' but as a potential realized in specific situations and specific communicative contexts, which include 'a social evaluation of behaviour', as well as a context-based construction of meaning through interaction.

To sum up, conceptual frameworks of ICC assume that it comprises a common core of at least three crucial components. The affective component – mindfulness in Gudykunst's (1998) terms, or *savoir être* in Byram's (2006:116), or intercultural *sensitivity* in Chen and Starosta's (2008:217) terms – involves positive, non-judgemental attitudes, curiosity, and open-mindedness.

The cognitive component, in addition to knowledge, *savoir*, about social groups, relations and general interaction, also involves a critical cultural awareness or *savoir s'engager*, as well as the skills of interpreting and relating or *savoir comprendre* (Byram 2006:116), that is, an intercultural *awareness* of the norms and values that "affect how people think and behave" (Chen & Starosta 2008:223).

Finally, the behavioural component implies knowing how to act effectively and appropriately in intercultural communication. This, in addition to effective language use, also requires skills of discovery and interaction (*savoir apprendre/ faire*) (Byram 2006:116), that is, flexibility, interaction management, and social skills (Chen & Starosta 2008:223).

These three basic conceptual categories, together with Spitzberg's additional elements of context and outcomes (the criteria of appropriateness and effectiveness) represent the essence of intercultural communicative competence.

Intercultural communication and EFL

Returning to the question of ICC as a goal of L2 learning and teaching, if we look back on the previous sections of this chapter and all the presented views of culture, communication, and ICC from the perspective of an EFL teacher, the picture is overwhelming. In the light of all the complexities the notions of culture, communication, and ICC entail, the task of L2 teachers seems almost impossible. How can they render all these theoretical insights into classroom curricula and practices that would lead to their students' development as competent intercultural communicators?

Trying to translate theoretical concepts into the practice of EFL teaching, we may choose to completely disregard their fine details and observe intercultural communicative competence only as a three-component core of attitudes, skills, and knowledge. Even so, it remains an immensely complex and complicated target.

ICC takes time and effort to develop, as well as a curriculum that would be, as a whole, devoted to this goal. Therefore, even though there is a growing body of literature devoted to the issues of teaching for ICC (Byram 1997, 2003, 2007, 2008, 2009; Byram & Feng 2005; Byram & Grundy 2003; Byram Gribkova & Starkey 2002; Sercu 2005a,b, 2006; Feng, Byram & Flemming 2009), in most L2 education contexts it has not yet become a truly accepted and common goal. A necessary pre-requisite would be a reform of both L2 curricula and L2 teacher education to help them gain the necessary knowledge and skills to teach for ICC. These are the issues we discuss in Chapter 11.

Finally, the pressing need for this kind of educational turn becomes even more obvious if we remember the view put forward by Scollon and colleagues, that "*all* communication is to some degree intercultural" (Scollon, Scollon & Jones 2012:2), since we use different 'discourse systems' when we, as members of certain groups, communicate with members of different groups – national, ethnic, cultural, gender, or professional. If intercultural communication is understood in this way, as 'interdiscourse communication', then we must agree with Kenneth Cushner and Jennifer Mahon (2009) that *all* teacher education and development programs should place ICC at their centre. All teacher education, as well as EFL teacher education, should involve "broadening teachers' understanding and ability to think, communicate, and interact in culturally different ways and from multiple perspectives" (Cushner & Mahon 2009:319). Cushner and Mahon

warn that this will be 'no easy task', but that this aspect 'of all people's education' can no longer be ignored (*ibid.*).

Developing intercultural or 'interdiscourse' competence means developing the ability to 'decentre' (Byram *et al.* 2002:12), to "engage with complexity and multiple identities and avoid stereotyping" (Byram *et al.* 2002:10). This is necessary because the discourse of the particular group we identify with "enfolds us within an envelope of language which gives us an identity, and which makes it easier to communicate with those who are like us", while making it more difficult to interpret others (Scollon, Scollon & Jones 2012:xiv).

Developing intercultural communicative competence means learning how to step out of this 'envelope' of the familiar discourses and engage with different 'others' in creating new discourses through communication. Therefore, in addition to sensitivity to and understanding of cultural differences, and a repertoire of communicative strategies and techniques, intercultural communicative competence should also embrace an understanding of "the ways in which discourses are created and interpreted" when we "cross the boundaries of group membership", and the ways in which "we use communication to claim and to display our own complex and multiple identities" (Scollon, Scollon & Jones 2012:xiv).

In the next chapter, we discuss the issues of 'complex and multiple identities' and identity construction in the EFL context.

3. IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION AND EFL: ATTITUDES, STEREOTYPES, IDEOLOGIES

Together with culture and communication, identity is a concept that has marked most of the past century in social sciences and humanities. From early explorations in psychology and sociology, to contemporary considerations in critical discourse analysis and interactional approaches, the concept of identity has been widely discussed and explored from different perspectives.

In this chapter, we look into some questions related to identity construction, particularly the notions of shifting, multiple and hybrid identities. As closely linked to issues of identity, we also discuss language attitudes, which play an important part in the way we see others and ourselves. The focus is on communication and language attitudes, because they represent a sphere in which stereotypes and ideologies greatly influence social evaluations in intercultural interaction.

After a brief discussion of some theoretical concepts related to identity and attitudes, and a presentation of different authors' views on some key questions, we present a review of selected empirical research into language attitudes, illustrating the different approaches and methods used in attitude study.

As in previous chapters, the discussion places the issues of identity and language attitudes primarily in the context of intercultural communication and EFL learning and teaching.

Identity, identities, language, languages

Questions of identity are vital for intercultural communication because individual, social, and cultural aspects of identity have always been seen as deeply connected. Discussing the notion of identity as a factor in intercultural competence, Young Yun Kim (2009) states that an individual's 'global self-identity' comprises 'both personal and social dimensions', and that such a 'holistic' view has characterized much work in social science research (Kim 2009:54). This is because identity is defined as a construct that guides "the general self-other orientation of an individual", and represents the 'routinized way' in which an individual responds to the external world (*ibid.*). Therefore, as the 'core of personhood', identity crucially influences our interaction with others,

Authors state that identity is the key word of our contemporary society from different perspectives. For instance, from the standpoint of social psychology, Judith Howard (2000) observes that the notion of identity has changed substantially with the changes in our social circumstances. Earlier, 'when societies were more stable', identity was primarily 'assigned', while today it is created, constructed, selected, or adopted:

> [...] the concept of identity carries the full weight of the need for a sense of who one is, together with an often overwhelming pace of change in surrounding social contexts – changes in the groups and networks in which people and their identities are embedded and in the societal structures and practices in which those networks are themselves embedded (Howard 2000:368).

Therefore, within deconstructionist, postmodernist approaches, identities are seen as "multiple, processual, relational, unstable, possibly political" (Howard 2000:387). Howard concludes that when studying social identities we should 'see people as a whole', not only in terms of "gender, racial, ethnic, sexual, and class identities", but as "multiple identities of whole people, [...] recognizing that both our everyday lives and the larger cultures in which we operate *shape our senses of who we are and what we could become*" (Howard 2000:388, italics added).

Although the view of identity as negotiated and constructed has acquired a new significance in our world, the idea itself is not new. Dynamic constructivist views, discussed earlier with respect to the concepts of culture and intercultural competence, stem from the idea repeatedly found in the

theoretical framework of the past half-century – that an individual plays an active role in the process of his/her identity (re)construction, and that the sense of identity changes depending on specific contexts and circumstances.

To look at just some examples, the ideas of Symbolic interactionism and particularly Frederik Barth's (1969) view that social groups are social constructs, in which group members *actively* create both their symbols and their boundaries, lies at the root of Howard's (2000) view that "identities locate a person in social space by virtue of the relationships" with others (Howard 2000:371). The symbolic meanings we attach to other people and ourselves are developed through interaction (Howard 2000:368), they "vary across actors and situations" (Howard 2000:371), and depend on the specific communicative context.

This kind of views can also be traced back to the Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner 1986, 2004; Tajfel *et al* 1971; Turner 1982), built around the idea that each individual expresses a whole range of different identities, rooted in her/ his simultaneous identification with a number of smaller or larger social groups at different 'levels' of identity (Turner *et al*. 1987). Therefore, in different circumstances and contexts, an individual acts, but also thinks and feels in different ways, in accordance with the 'level of self' s/he identifies with in the given context (Turner *et al,* 1987). In other words, an individual has multiple 'social identities', derived from the fact that s/he perceives her/himself as a member of certain social groups (Hogg & Vaughan 2002). The degree to which an individual would identify with a group depends on a particular context and the perceived need to compare that group with other groups.

In the same vein, but focusing on culture rather than ethnicity or society, Geertz (1973) states that both one's unique individual identity and one's negotiated social identity are constantly being (re)defined. This re-definition happens within culture, as the system of symbols, and language, as the system of meaning, which mark the boundaries of the 'imaginary universe' within which our actions are 'symbolic signs' (Geertz 1973:12-13). What is more, the meaning carried by symbols with which group members identify is also dynamic, changeable, and actively questioned and re-constructed through interaction (Geertz 1973:13).

From the perspective of sociological cultural studies, Stuart Hall (1996) stresses that identity does not imply a 'stable core of the self', but a 'strategic and positional concept', because "identities are points of *temporary* attachments to the subject positions which *discursive practices construct for*

us" (Hall 1996:6, italics added). Hall also believes that we need to understand identities as "produced in specific historical and institutional sites", and constructed "only through the relation to the Other" (Hall 1996:4). Finally, in the same edited volume (Hall & Du Gay 1996), Zygmunt Bauman (1996) sums up the changes in how identity is viewed in this way:

> The modern 'problem of identity' was how to construct an identity and keep it solid and stable, the postmodern 'problem of identity' is primarily how to avoid fixation and keep the options open (Bauman 1996:18).

This dynamic nature of identity construction, most authors agree, has become the crucial feature of the contemporary world, in which identities are growing more and more dynamic, shifting, and unstable. The age of globalisation has opened the way for new forms of identity re-construction, and innumerable possibilities for individuals to construct their identities as unique combinations of the global and the local (cf. Chapter 1), as 'hybrid' identities, unique, complex, and, above all, increasingly 'deterritiorialized''(Portes 1997, 1999). Craig Calhoun (1994) even describes the process of identity construction today as a "personal struggle", resulting from the individual's need to question and re-question his/her identity in the difficult and complex circumstances of the modern way of life. One identifies simultaneously with a number of small groups with whose inmembers one shares all or just some of the cultural elements and symbols, including the language or languages one speaks. After all, as pointed out by Edward Said (Said 1993:407), nobody is just one thing any more. Therefore, in the modern world the notions of 'multiple identity' or 'multi-cultural identity' (Werbner & Modood 1997) have become central.

The notions of dynamic, hybrid multiple identities inevitably bring into focus issues of language and communication. From a constructivist sociocultural perspective, Mary Bucholtz and Kira Hall (2005) propose a framework for the analysis of "identity as constructed in linguistic interaction" (Bucholtz & Hall 2005:585). They define identity, in a deliberately 'broad and open-ended' way, as "the social positioning of self and other" (Bucholtz & Hall 2005:586), and describe their theoretical standpoint as focusing "on both the details of language and the workings of culture and society" (*ibid*).

The proposed framework is based on five 'principles'. The first one, the *emergence* principle, relies on Dell Hymes' concept of emergence from

linguistic anthropology and interactional linguistics, and means that identity, as a social and cultural phenomenon, is the 'emergent product' of linguistic and other semiotic practices (Bucholtz & Hall 2005:588). The second principle, that of *positionality*, is also concerned with the ontological status of identity, and states that identities "encompass macro-level demographic categories, local, ethnographically emergent cultural positions, as well as temporary and interactionally specific stances and participant roles" (Bucholtz & Hall 2005:592). Including local, micro-level 'interactional positions' as part of identity may be unusual from the conventional perspective, but the authors believe that these temporary roles "contribute to the formation of subjectivity and intersubjectivity in discourse" (Bucholtz & Hall 2005:591) at least as much as the macro-level categories, such as age or gender, focused by sociology and ethnography.

The third principle of this framework, that of *indexicality*, describes the mechanism through which identity is constituted, i.e. the way in which linguistic forms are used to construct identity positions. Since indexes are linguistic forms which depend on the context for its meaning, indexicallity creates 'semiotic links between linguistic forms and social meanings' at any level of language structure (Bucholtz & Hall 2005:594). Therefore, this principle states that "identities may be linguistically indexed through labels, implicatures, stances, styles, or linguistic structures and systems" (*ibid.*). What is particularly important from the perspective of the questions discussed in this book, the authors point out that

> [i]n identity formation, indexicality relies heavily on ideological structures, for associations between language and identity are rooted in cultural beliefs and values – that is, ideologies – about the sorts of speakers who (can or should) produce particular sorts of language (Bucholtz & Hall 2005:594).

The fourth principle in the identity framework states that identity is a *relational* phenomenon, because "identities are never autonomous or independent but always acquire social meaning in relation to other available identity positions and other social actors" (Bucholtz & Hall 2005:598). They also introduce a much broader range of relations relevant for 'forging' identities, in addition to 'sameness-difference', traditionally considered in relation to identity. The principle, therefore, states that "[i]dentities are intersubjectively constructed through several, often overlapping,

complementary relations, including similarity/ difference, genuineness/ artifice, and authority/ delegitimacy" (*ibid*).

Finally, the principle of *partialness* stresses the fact, often disregarded in theories, that social life is *not* 'internally coherent', that all representations are partial, because in many ways "identity exceeds the individual self" (Bucholtz & Hall 2005:605). Therefore, this principle states that identity "may be in part intentional, in part habitual and less than fully conscious, in part an outcome of interactional negotiation, in part a construct of others' perceptions and representations, and in part an outcome of larger ideological processes and structures" (Bucholtz & Hall 2005:606).

With the changes in the contemporary world, the role of language in constructing, articulating and expressing our personal, social and cultural identities has also become very complicated.

On the one hand, as an objective marker of identity, as a medium through which our identity is expressed, affirmed, and, as put by Buchholtz and Hall, constructed, language has long been recognized as one of the crucial elements that we identify with when identifying with a culture, it is what makes one culture 'our own'. Therefore, our sense of who we are derives largely from what we identify with as 'our language' (Paunović & Lopičić 2008).

On the other hand, however, as David Block and Deborah Cameron (2002) remind us, identity construction is 'a reflexive process' in which one uses all and any available devices (Block & Cameron 2002:4). Therefore, not only the 'mother tongue', but all the different *languages* one uses – first, second, foreign or 'additional' (Bugarski 2004, 2007) – play their different roles in constructing and shaping one's identity/ identities. As discussed in two previous chapters, the role played by the English language in the life and social interaction of its speakers has changed, too, binding firmly together issues of identity, intercultural communication, and foreign language learning and teaching.

It would be wrong to assume that in EFL learning in formal educational settings outside the 'inner' or 'outer' circles students' sense of identity is any less affected by these changes. In our students' lives, English has a place which no longer depends mainly (or only) on what we teach them 'at school'. The role of English in students' various social relationships, in the networks and communities they connect with, in all the different contexts in which they use English as *one of their languages*, affects their sense of who they are, and who different 'others' are. This, in turn, affects

their views about the 'kind of language' they want to use and learn, since the language has become a marker of their social identity and a factor in their interpersonal and intergroup relationships.

Therefore, the issues of identity in the context of L2 learning and teaching are particularly closely related to the issue of language and communication attitudes, as well as to the role of language ideologies and stereotypes, which we turn to in the following section.

Language attitudes

The field of language attitude research has a long tradition, originating primarily from sociolinguistics and experimental social psychology. Therefore, the concept of attitude used in language attitude research is rooted in psychology, and based on definitions such as Allport's (1954), that attitude is 'a learned predisposition to think, feel and behave towards a person (or object) in a particular way', or the more elaborate definition by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), which states that attitudes are 'general predispositions' or 'tendencies', which do not necessarily lead to any specific behaviour, but rather represent "a set of intentions that indicate a certain amount of affect toward the object in question" (Fishbein and Ajzen 1975:15). Oppenheim (1992) defines an attitude as a 'tendency to respond in a certain manner when confronted with certain stimuli', and adds that most of an individual's attitudes are "usually dormant and are expressed in speech or behaviour only when the object of the attitude is perceived" (Oppenheim 1992:174). An important characteristic of an attitude is its 'evaluative nature' (pro – con, pleasant - unpleasant) (Ajzen 1988:3), and the fact that it can be inferred from people's verbal or non-verbal responses to the attitude object (Ajzen 1988).

Accordingly, language attitudes are judgements we make about a particular language or language variety. They are sets or bundles of strongly held and readily expressed opinions, beliefs, feelings, and 'predispositions to act'. Peter Garret (2010) highlights several properties of language attitudes that follow from the definition of the concept and are particularly important for studying them.

One is that attitudes are complex constructs, with a very complicated interrelationship of components. It is generally agreed that attitudes embrace three components – thoughts, feelings, and actions, that is, the cognitive,

affective/ emotional, and behavioural/ conative component (e.g. Ajzen 1989; Edwards 1985:139, *inter alia*). The cognitive component comprises our beliefs and thoughts about the attitude object, or, as put by Garret (2010), our "beliefs about the world, and the relationships between objects of social significance (for example, judgements of standard language varieties tending to be associated with high status jobs)" (Garret 2010:23). The affective component is our emotional reaction to the attitude object, involving, again in Garret's terms, "a barometer of favourability and unfavourability, or the extent to which we approve or disapprove of the attitude object" (*ibid.*). Garret also points out that the positive or negative 'directionality' of attitudes can be assessed as the attitude 'intensity', e.g. "whether we mildly disapprove of something or we well and truly detest it" (*ibid.*). Finally, the behavioural or conative component is our 'predisposition' to act in accordance with our thoughts and feelings, that is, it comprises either overt behaviours or just intent to act, or a 'tendency' to act in a certain way.

What makes attitudes very complex to observe and explain is the fact that these components may or may not be in accord with one another. Gallois and colleagues (2007) point out that attitude components are correlated, but not necessarily linked. For instance, we may have an affective reaction to another social group, but not have clear beliefs to support that affective reaction. Or, we may have particular beliefs and emotions about another group, but not behave in accordance with them (Gallois, Watsonand & Brabant 2007:596).

Particularly problematic is the behavioural component, because research findings are very controversial when it comes to predicting behaviours based on identified attitudes. Garret states that this is one of the important issues in the field of language attitude research, and proposes that cognition, affect and behaviour should be seen "more in terms of causes and triggers of attitudes" (Garret 2010:23), since 'outside the laboratory', there are numerous 'situational constraints' that influence people's behaviour, and the relationship between attitudes and behaviours (Garret 2010: 25). Garret also observes the following tendency in the way we speak about attitudes, very revealing of this problem:

> It is perhaps telling that we tend frequently to talk in terms of the '*relationship* between attitudes and behaviour' as if taking it for granted that attitudes are primarily related to cognition and affect combined, with a tendency to work together *independently of behaviour* much of the time (Garret 2010: 23, italics added).

Another fundamental property of language attitudes is that they are 'learned predispositions'. As *social* evaluations of objects, people and events, they are formed through the process of socialization, and affected by all agents of socialization. Peter Garret (2010) specifically singles out two 'sources of attitudes' – personal experiences, and the social environment. Although various processes are involved in language attitude development, including observational learning, instrumental learning, the role of primary agents of socialization such as the family or school, Garret particularly stresses the role of the media, as the "focal point for the shaping, reinforcement or change of attitudes" (Garret 2010:22).

An important line of research in the field of language attitudes deals with attitude formation and change, and many researchers look into the factors and agents that influence attitude change. The 'stability' of attitudes is one of the particularly frequently debated issues, because attitudes have traditionally been viewed as very 'stable' constructs, resistant to change even in the face of much evidence against one's beliefs. In more recent, particularly discursive and constructivist approaches, attitudes are viewed as much more context-dependent constructs, which can be influenced by specific circumstances, or negotiated and constructed in social interaction (cf. Hyrkstedt & Kalaja 1998.).

For instance, Schwarz and Bohner (2001) analyse how the understanding of the concept of attitude has changed over time in social psychology. They compare early definitions, in which the connectedness of attitudes and behaviour was never questioned, with more recent ones, in which "the attitude concept lost much of its breadth and was largely reduced to its evaluative component" (Schwarz & Bohner 2001:436). In earlier views, attitudes were seen as enduring and stable, as, for example, in Krech and Crutchfield's (1948) definition of an attitude as "an *enduring* organization of motivational, emotional, perceptual, and cognitive processes" (Krech & Crutchfield 1948:152, italics added). In more recent definitions, it is mainly the evaluative, judgemental aspect of attitudes that is emphasised, as, for instance, in Eagly and Chaiken's (1993) definition of an attitude as "a psychological tendency that is expressed by *evaluating* a particular entity with some degree of *favor or disfavor*" (Eagly and Chaiken's (1993:1, italics added). Therefore, Scharz and Bohner conclude that, based on a large body of empirical research in social psychology, "attitudes may be much less enduring and stable than has traditionally been assumed" (Schwarz & Bohner 2001:436).

However, research shows only that attitudes are complex, evasive, and difficult to observe and investigate. People may have stable attitudes, but express them differently under different circumstances. Also, people may hold multiple or controversial attitudes about the same object, and express different ones in particular circumstances. Some attitudes may be more stable, while some others may be 'created on the spot' and easily changed under certain conditions. Therefore, we believe that the most important point made by Scwartz and Bohner (2001) is that in order to understand the true nature of attitudes, we need to investigate the processes underlying the way they are expressed, and the circumstances under which they are expressed.

Speaking from the standpoint of Language and Social Psychology (LSP) (which we present briefly in Chapter 6), Gallois and colleagues (2007) also state that in contemporary communication attitude research, theoretical underpinnings are adopted that take into account the importance of the context for the attitudes expressed. The authors specifically mention the Social Identity Theory, which offers the possibility to explore the relationship between attitudes and behaviour 'through a careful exploration of the context', and the Communication Accommodation Theory (presented in some detail in Chapter 4), which offers the possibility to observe "interpersonal communicative behaviour in intergroup contexts" (Gallois, Watsonand & Brabant 2007:608), and to take account of many different factors that affect language diversity (Gallois, Watsonand & Brabant 2007:612). Finally, the authors also stress the significance of the contemporary 'discursive' turns in the investigation of communication attitudes, which see attitudes as dynamic "social constructions negotiated in context", and presume that attitudes can be studied only by looking at 'conversational behaviour' in specific communicative contexts (Gallois, Watsonand & Brabant 2007: 608).

A recurrent finding of much language attitude research is a discrepancy between the participants' overtly expressed attitudes, shown in individuals' self-reports or in direct questionnaires, and their covert attitudes, observed by some indirect methods. This suggests that language attitudes are often but a window to more fundamental and more general attitudes to ‘others’, and that language is just a marker or trigger of all kinds of social evaluations.

William Mackey's (1978:7) often-cited witty remark that "[o]nly before God and the linguist are all languages equal" can be interpreted in this way, too, because he adds that "everyone knows that you can go further with some languages than you can with others". This means that a language attitude is "not really an attitude to a language feature" but "an awakening of a set of beliefs about individuals or sorts of individuals through the filter of a linguistic performance" (Niedzielski & Preston 2003:9). In other words, attitudes towards *language varieties* are easily translated into attitudes towards their *speakers*. Varieties different from the 'standard' tend to be associated with sociocultural and socio-economic characteristics of the region in which they are used, so people's attitudes towards *language* varieties are shaped by social, economic and cultural factors (Hudson 1996; Holland McBride 2006).

Because they act as "filters through which social life is conducted and interpreted" (Garrett *et al*. 2003:3), language attitudes are central in our attribution of social meanings to people, objects, and events. Affecting communication at all levels, individual and interpersonal, intra-group and inter-group (Stainton Rogers 2003:176), language attitudes are one of the crucial factors in intercultural communication, too.

Linguistic profiling

As part of their evaluative component, language attitudes almost invariably involve a strong feeling that certain varieties of language are 'right' and 'correct', while others are 'wrong' and 'incorrect'. This is closely related to language ideologies, primarily the idea about the difference between 'standard' and 'substandard' varieties (Edwards 2006). This feeling is also closely linked with some common stereotypes, positive or negative, about certain language varieties, and, proving that attitudes are essentially *social* evaluations of others, about the *speakers* of these varieties. Therefore, it could be said that spoken communication comprises one important social aspect which we may label linguistic profiling.

The term 'linguistic profiling', originally used in a narrower sense and with a strong negative connotation by John Baugh (2000, 2003, 2009), primarily in the context of racial identity and discrimination, can be used to refer to any kind of inferences made about a speaker's social background – racial, ethnic, religious, educational, economic, gender or professional –

based solely on the sound of his/her speech. In this sense, it would underline the fact, often pointed out in sociolinguistic and sociophonetic research, that phonetic properties of speech index social meanings, social roles and identities, and are constantly perceived as indexing them in our "everyday sense-making practice" (Anderson 2007:192).

The term 'linguistic profiling' also highlights the role played by deeply rooted pre-conceptions, stereotypes, and ideologies in shaping our language attitudes. Stereotypes, as overgeneralised and simplified ideas about types or groups of people, involve our beliefs about what certain different 'others' are like. As any other kind of ideology, involving "processes and practices at several levels of consciousness, of different scope and scale, and with different effects" (Blommaert 2005:171-172), language ideologies entail "subconscious, deeply rooted sets of beliefs about the way language *is* and *is supposed to be*" (Winford 2003:22, italics added).

Both language attitudes and language ideologies have become especially important in the context of the role and status of English(es) today, and the context of EFL learning and teaching, where varieties are not yet felt to be quite 'equal' in terms of their 'correctness', 'prestige', desirability, 'closeness', or even 'pleasantness'. The importance of attitudes in EFL learning and teaching has long been recognized (Ellis 1994; Gardner 1985; Gardner & Lambert 1972; Krashen 2003; Giles and Coupland 1991). For instance, Ellis (1994) explicitly states that "levels of proficiency in the L2 are not determined by variables such as age, sex, social class, or ethnic identity, but rather by the attitudes and social conditions associated with these factors" (Ellis 1994:211). However, like many other issues, this one has acquired a new significance in contemporary circumstances. While, as discussed above, the legitimacy of the multitude of world Englishes is almost unanimously recognized, the fact remains that the choice of models, standards and aims in EFL, in terms of the varieties to be taught and used, is still among the most fervently debated, and, from the teachers' point of view, probably most annoying issues. Abandoning the native-speaker 'yardstick' (Jenkins 2006:175) has only brought about new, difficult questions, in which the issues of language attitudes, stereotypes and language ideologies play an important part.

Many EFL learners and teachers have ambivalent and even contradictory attitudes towards different inner, outer, and expanding circle English varieties. On the one hand, inner circle varieties still seem to hold a special significance for many learners and teachers; on the other, many (but

not all) expanding circle speakers also express a kind of pride about their unique hybrid identity, which they feel should be legitimately expressed in the way they speak English. EFL learners' language attitudes, as well as their social evaluations of various other speakers of English, also seem to depend on the specific communicative contexts and situations.

Although focused on the perceptions of dialectal variations of English by the native speakers, and not on the international context, Dennis Preston's theory of 'folk linguistics' (1996, 1999, 2004) can also be enlightening in our attempt to understand the complex attitudes of EFL users. In *Language with an Attitude* (2004), Preston concludes that the feeling that some language (or variety) is 'good' and some is not "lies at the root of most evaluations and discriminations of language variety" (Preston 2004:64). This is because folk perceptions are measured against the construct of 'real' language, that is, 'correct' language. Slight deviations from it are tolerated, but if a speaker goes "too far, [...] error, dialect, or quite simply, *bad language* arises". This notion of 'correctness' underlying folklinguistic beliefs and attitudes shapes substantially the way we perceive 'other' social groups through the language (varieties) they use, and may be regarded as the root of linguistic profiling. The other notion shaping our evaluations is pleasantness (Preston 2004:62), obvious, for instance, in the fact that "speakers of prejudiced-against varieties (like prejudiced groups in general) derive solidarity from their distinct cultural behaviors, in this case, linguistic ones" (Preston 2004:62; cf. also Niedzielski & Preston 2003:63).

The idea that some varieties are 'correct' is often described as the effect of language ideologies promoted through formal education systems and agents of socialization such as the media. Discussing the notion of correctness from this perspective, James Milroy (2001) points out that the "prestige attributed to the language varieties (by metonymy) is indexical and involved in the social life of speakers" (Milroy 2001:532). He sharply criticizes 'standardization' as the "imposition of uniformity", and the effects of the standard language ideology on language attitudes (Milroy 2001:531). The very idea that one language variety could be the 'standard' or 'correct' one, as opposed to all the others, is the result of enforcing a 'standard-language culture' on the speakers, so that "virtually everyone subscribes to the ideology of the standard language" and develops a consciousness about a 'correct' or canonical form of language (Milroy 2001:535). Most importantly, "although common sense attitudes are ideologically loaded attitudes, those who hold them do not see it in that way at all" (Milroy 2001:536).

However, language attitude research shows that the notions of 'correctness' and 'pleasantness' seem to have a life of their own in the folklinguistic reality, at least partly independent of standardization ideologies and enacted language policies. The 'right', 'correct' i.e. 'standard' language is a construct, an idea. Although this construct may have rather flexible and 'fuzzy' edges, and be perceived differently by different members of the community, it seems to run very deep among many speakers, and to be very resilient to change. Attitudes to language varieties are shaped by complex influences of various social factors, among which language ideologies may be the most obvious one. But other factors, such as self-image, some common social stereotypes, as well as a sense of cultural identification, seem to play an equally important role. As pointed out by Preston (2004), "an understanding of this correlation between group stereotypes and linguistic facts [...] appears to be particularly important in the scientific calculation of the social identities we maintain and respond to" (Preston 2004:41).

Attitudes towards L2 varieties can be said to reside in the same kind of 'folklinguistic' reality. The way a person speaks is perceived as an obvious identity marker, and interpreted in the light of one's overt *and* covert attitudes, in EFL as well as in one's mother tongue. The notions of 'correctness' and 'pleasantness', alongside language ideologies, cultural and social stereotypes, and, probably most importantly, speakers' ideas about the visible, desirable or stigmatised social and cultural identities they can relate to – all these factors play a role. Thus, in the EFL context, it is questionable whether the still persistent and recurring pattern of high evaluations of the inner-circle varieties of English across numerous research studies should be attributed solely to the 'standardizing' or 'native-speaker' ideology.

It is often repeated that the goals have changed in EFL teaching and learning, particularly when it comes to the skill of speaking and pronunciation. The native-speaker model has been (or should be) removed (Cook 2005:292), and a 'new pronunciation syllabus' adopted, which would entail "a phonological core that would provide for phonological intelligibility but not seek to eradicate the influence of the mother tongue" (Richards 2002:3). However, both EFL teachers' and learners' attitudes seem to be stubbornly resistant to this change. For instance, research has shown that EFL students' attainment in pronunciation is strongly affected by "the degree of prestige associated with a certain way of speech", and "the values associated with native-like speech" (Lefkowitz & Hedgcock 2002).

Therefore, in order to explore "the effects of language on social judgment [as] an integral part of uncovering the communication process" (Giles & Billings 2004:187), language attitude research in EFL should focus on various factors that may influence the social evaluation of speakers based on the sound of their English, that is, the practice of 'linguistic profiling'.

To illustrate this and other observations about language attitudes, the following section presents a selection of empirical research studies in which different approaches, methods, and techniques were used to investigate certain aspects of language attitudes.

Language attitude research

In the remarkably rich field of language attitude research focusing on regional and social varieties of English, some recurring patterns have emerged in research findings irrespective of the approaches used, and regardless of whether the evaluations were made by English native speakers or by outer- and expanding-circle users of English.

Firstly, two dimensions found to be central to language attitudes across different situations are the dimension of social status, prestige, and power, and the dimension of social solidarity, closeness, and pleasantness. Some varieties are repeatedly seen as highly prestigious, associated with high social status and power, while others are seen as low-prestige varieties, which, when associated with solidarity or group loyalty, can be associated with pleasantness and closeness, and acquire a certain 'covert prestige' (Trudgill 1983).

Secondly, since speech varieties function as markers of social self-classification, as well as of social acceptance or rejection (Hudson 1996), code-switching between varieties for different purposes and in different situations has been well documented by research (Labov 1972a,b; Trudgill 1983; Tajfel 1981) as an integral part of speakers' pragmatic and communicative competence. In both their evaluations of other speakers of English, and in their own decisions about the choice of the code in a particular situation, speakers' ideas about 'standard' and 'correct' English seem to play a very important part.

And lastly, across different populations and situations, language attitudes have been shown to be very intense, very promptly expressed, and

easily triggered even by tiniest linguistic details, particularly the phonetic details of speech (Hay & Drager 2007).

Approaches

Empirical language attitude studies have used both direct and indirect approaches. Direct approach methodology involves the use of questionnaires, self-reports or interviews in which the participants are asked to directly state their attitude towards the given variety. These can include some form of attitude intensity measure, too, in the form of several-point scales, and can be based either on presenting language samples to the participants or on using just variety labels as prompts.

Indirect approach methodology involves the use of verbal-guise or matched-guise techniques, and the use of clusters of personality traits with which the participants are asked to associate the given variety on semantic differential scales. That is why in his detailed discussion of numerous research studies Peter Garret (2010) states that this approach is also referred to as the 'speaker evaluation paradigm' (Garret 2010:37). Aiming to elicit covert attitudes and to avoid social desirability effects in the participants' responses, indirect approaches can be said to probe the participants' proneness to linguistic profiling, that is, making inferences about a person just from the way he or she sounds when s/he speaks.

A third approach is the 'societal treatment of language varieties' (Garret 2010; McKenzie 2010), or 'content analysis' (Garret 2010:37). In fact, this label is used to group together a broad span of diverse qualitative studies, which use techniques such as participant observation, ethnographic description, document analysis, discourse analysis, and other content-analysis based methods. It is interesting to note how authors' opinions about the qualitative approach differ. While McKenzie (2010), referring back to Garret and colleagues (2003), believes that qualitative investigations of attitudes are useful only as a preliminary step to further study by more rigorous direct and indirect methods, Garret himself (2010) points out that 'societal treatment studies', although much more subjective than the 'rigorous social psychological studies', offer valuable insights into social attitudes towards language, "along with some of the ideological struggles accompanying them" (Garret 2010:158). Discursive approaches relying on the ideas of social constructivism and symbolic interactionism represent the

most recent development in language attitude research, and there are comparatively much fewer studies in this line of research than in the more traditional and well-establish line pursued by direct and indirect methods.

English Varieties

When the varieties of English are concerned, numerous studies investigating native speakers' attitudes toward regional and dialectal varieties of English have utilised some of the well-established indirect methods, such as the modified verbal-guise or matched-guise techniques combined with semantic differential scales, or the folklinguistic approach and direct method questionnaires based on variety labels. Such studies have been widely conducted in the USA (Preston 2004), the UK (Coupland 2000; Garrett, Coupland & Williams 2003; Hiraga 2005; Coupland & Bishop 2007) or Australia and New Zealand (Ray & Zahn 1999; Bayard, Weatherall, Gallois & Pittam 2001; Garrett, Williams & Evans 2005). Some studies investigated the attitudes of immigrant or study-abroad L2 English speakers in naturalistic settings, for instance, in the USA (Lippi-Green 1997; Moyer 2007; Bucholtz *et al.* 2008) or in Canada (Derwing 2003).

Most of these studies suggest that 'standard' varieties tend to hold a special status in the speakers' idea about what is desirable, prestigious, and 'correct'. For instance, in the study by Cavallaro & Bee Chin (2009) native (=75) and non-native (=19) listeners evaluated Singapore Standard English and Singapore Colloquial English or 'Singlish'. Not only was the standard variety ranked higher on social prestige, but, unexpectedly, it was also rated higher than the colloquial variety in the dimension of solidarity. The authors ascribe this to the effects of the official language awareness campaign in Singapore (Cavallaro & Bee Chin 2009:155), pointing to the crucial role played by socialization agents in shaping language attitudes.

Similarly, studies focusing on non-native evaluations of English varieties almost invariably show EFL students' preference not only for 'native' varieties of English but, notably, for those they feel to be more 'correct' than others. For instance, in Ladegaard's (1998) study, Danish learners expressed a strong preference for RP over other native-speaker varieties. Ladegaard and Sachdev's (2006) participants (=96) rated American, Australian, RP, Scottish and Cockney English, and the highest prestige was associated with varieties closest to RP, i.e. 'standard British'.

In a study that combined a direct-method questionnaire with a listening task and a qualitative analysis of responses obtained through an interview, Scales, Wennerstrom, Richard and Hui Wu (2006) investigated the accent perceptions of English learners in the USA (=37), compared to American students (=10), evaluating General American, British English, and English spoken by Chinese and Mexican speakers. The findings showed that more than half the learners defined their goal as 'sounding like native speakers', but that they showed a very poor ability to identify the accents correctly, even the preferred American accent. That is why the authors conclude that learners may have "an idealized conception of what the native accent aspired to actually sounds like" (Scales *et al*. 2006:717). They draw attention to the role played by accent stereotyping and "an idealization of native speech" (Scales *et al*. 2006:719).

In numerous other studies, EFL learners unfailingly expressed preferences for the inner circle varieties over both outer and expanding circle varieties, including their own. For instance, Austrian students (=132) investigated by Dalton-Puffer, Kaltenboeck and Smit (1997) showed markedly positive attitudes towards RP, while the English speech of Austrian speakers was ascribed a very low status.

The study by Chiba, Matsuura and Yamamoto (1995; quoted in Scales, Wennerstrom, Richard & Hui Wu 2006) showed that Japanese students rated inner circle varieties much more favourably than any of the outer or expanding circle varieties – Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Hong Kong – including Japan (cf. Scales *et al.* 2006:719). Their participants, Japanese university students, preferred 'American English' and accepted it as a model in studying English, particularly if their motivation was not instrumental. In addition, the participants' familiarity with certain 'native-speaker' accents enhanced positive attitudes towards them, even though the overall accuracy in accent identification was rather poor. These students, too, showed rather negative attitudes towards L2 accents, including their own.

McKenzie (2007, 2008a,b) investigated Japanese English learners' (=558) attitudes to English varieties combining a wide array of techniques – direct, indirect and folklinguistic. The varieties perceived as 'standard' were evaluated more favourably on status, whereas 'non-standard' varieties were rated more favourably on solidarity.

Similar conclusions are reached by Vodopija-Kristanović and Brala-Vukanović (2012), based on their study of Croatian university students, that is, EFL 'student-teachers' and their attitudes towards English varieties.

In the Serbian context, too, in addition to the belief that the language most important for international communication is English (Kovačević 2005), the results of direct and indirect-method studies show that EFL students evaluate inner-circle varieties, particularly those perceived as closest to RP, much more favourably than any others, while EFL varieties are regarded the most unfavourably (Cvetičanin & Paunović 2007, Paunović 2007a, b, 2008a, b, 2009a, b, c).

By way of example, in a quantitative study (Paunović 2009b) based on a modified verbal-guise technique with semantic differential scales for 15 traits in the dimensions of social prestige, social closeness, and personal integrity, combined with a direct-method questionnaire, we investigated the attitudes of adult Serbian EFL students (N=114), trained as future EFL teachers, to 8 regional and 2 EFL varieties of English, relative to accent identification. The findings showed that in their evaluations of the speakers the participants relied on broad constructs of 'British' and 'American' English, and showed rather poor recognition of specific regional varieties. Positive attitudes were expressed for the varieties the participants associated with 'standard' and 'correct' English, while very negative attitudes were expressed towards the two expanding-circle EFL varieties, judged unfavourably because of their perceived 'foreign accent'.

In an earlier study (Paunović 2009c), within a broader investigation of social distance, cultural preferences and attitudes of Serbian high-school populations, we observed the attitudes of 209 high-school pupils from five different urban centres in Serbia. The techniques used included a direct-method questionnaire combined with attitude scales, and speech samples as elicitation materials. Part of the questionnaire referred to the participants' attitudes towards English as a foreign language, and towards a number of Anglophone and non-Anglophone cultures. The results showed the participants' controversial attitudes towards the English language. Generally, the attitude towards EFL was positive, but the attitudes related to the global spread of English were negative, because the students expressed the belief that it endangered local and 'small' languages. Most interestingly, the study showed that the English language was not seen as related to Anglophone cultures, but rather as a 'deterritorialized' language not linked to any particular culture.

In another related study (Paunović 2009a) we investigated the attitudes expressed by Serbian university students (=150), enrolled in Psychology, Pedagogy, and English Departments, towards native and non-

native varieties of English. This was a direct-method questionnaire study, in which half the items asked the participants to provide their evaluations of variety speakers on personality trait scales, based on variety labels. Here, too, the participants showed a marked preference for the varieties they considered 'standard' and a generally positive attitude to studying English as a foreign language. Attitudes towards less familiar regional varieties, and particularly towards expanding-circle varieties, were notably negative. Probably most importantly from the perspective of the topics dealt with in this book, the attitudes expressed by English department students were only mildly different from those of Psychology and Pedagogy students.

An important observation, in this as well as various other studies, was that the participants' overt attitudes toward 'accented speech' expressed in one part of the study were not matched with corresponding covert attitudes in the other part of the study, particularly towards those varieties which the participants judged to be the most 'removed' from 'standard' English.

Comparative studies

Very interesting findings are reported in the studies that focus on English in comparison to some other languages, using various methods and techniques, direct and indirect. A common observation that can be made based on their findings is the issue discussed in the earlier sections of this chapter, namely, that English plays an important role in the lives of its speakers and their sense of identity, but that the participants also often express controversial, ambivalent and varying attitudes towards English, depending on the context of the investigation.

For example, El-Dash & Busnardo (2001) investigated Brazilian adolescents' attitudes towards English and Portuguese, combining indirect and direct techniques, i.e. a matched-guise technique and a 'subjective vitality questionnaire' (El-Dash & Busnardo 2001:60). About half their participants showed preference for English speakers in the dimensions of both solidarity and prestige (El-Dash & Busnardo 2001:71). The authors ascribe such a high level of identification with English to the impact of the international youth culture, i.e. the participants' "identification with that imaginary community built out of popular media culture, elaborated by individual peer groups" (El-Dash & Busnardo 2001:72), as well as to the

perceived vitality, i.e. the global "power and/or importance" of English (El-Dash & Busnardo 2001:60).

This seems to be particularly important in the context of EFL teaching, as shown by several research studies. For instance, Tan & Tan (2008) carried out a combined-method study of the attitudes towards 'non-standard' English in Singapore. The study involved upper secondary pupils (=260) in five non-elite schools, and used survey questionnaires and a modified matched guise-technique (Tan & Tan 2008:470), asking the participants to evaluate the speakers as prospective teachers for the subjects English and Maths. The participants rated Standard English very highly, but also showed that the 'non-standard' variety, Singlish, played an important role in their perception of their community. The authors suggest that it might be possible "to harness the non-standard in a curriculum that promotes the standard", instead of making the English-language classrooms "Singlish-free zones" (Tan & Tan 2008:467). Most interestingly, the participants perceived the 'non-standard' variety as "strongly inappropriate, even unacceptable, from an English teacher", but "only mildly inappropriate from a Maths teacher", which evokes both Milroy's (2001) discussion of language standardization and Preston's notion of 'correctness'.

The direct-method quantitative study conducted by Üstünlüoglu (2007) is very illustrative in this respect as well. Its aim was to investigate Turkish university students' (=311) perceptions of native (=19) and non-native (=19) teachers of English, in terms of their class teaching roles, their class-management roles, their communication skills and their individual qualities (Üstünlüoglu 2007:67). Turkish students found native-speaker English teachers more cheerful, trustworthy, energetic, respectful, consistent, tolerant, sensitive and easygoing than Turkish teachers, and they were also better rated on their class communication skills.

In the Serbian context, some of our previous research studies focused comparatively on English and Serbian, or on the varieties of Serbian only. For instance, in one such study (Paunović 2008b), based on a single direct-method questionnaire with semantic differential scales and self-report questions, we investigated the attitudes toward regional varieties of Serbian in a group (=75) of university students (in social sciences and humanities – law, management, journalism), who expressed a bit controversial attitudes towards the concept of the 'standard' language, a positive overt attitude towards 'accented speech', but mixed attitudes towards specific regional varieties, judged to be more or less 'deviant' from the standard. Generally,

the participants' attitudes revealed stereotypical but not prejudiced views about regional varieties of their mother tongue. Also, regional varieties were associated more readily with traits related to solidarity than with those of social status and power. Equally ambivalent attitudes were expressed towards English as their foreign language, and these participants, like the ones in most our other studies, operated with abstract concepts of 'standard' and 'correct' language.

Another one of our earlier studies (Paunović 2007b) was comparative, focusing on the attitudes towards Serbian as L1 and English as L2 in two groups of speakers, each bilingual and bicultural in its way. One group comprised Serbian EFL students in the English department (=56), and the other L1 speakers of Serbian (=20) who had lived in diaspora from 5 to 43 years, in the English-speaking part of Canada. The study was based on a qualitative analysis of the attitudes reported by the participants in response to a questionnaire with 40 open-ended questions. The content analysis of the participants' responses revealed remarkable similarities between the two groups. It showed that for both groups of participants English played an important role in their sense of identity, and was used by them in various spheres of their lives.

Concluding the discussion of the research presented in this section, it should also be pointed out that many of these studies were designed to try and capture the possible influence of some factors on the kind of attitudes EFL learners (or users) expressed, for instance, their age, the length of exposure to English or the time spent in Anglophone countries, the level of language proficiency, or even the participants' preferred extracurricular and leisure-time activities.

However, despite the clear and well-supported research findings, which show the participants' preference of certain varieties over others in certain dimensions, and often also the degree or strength of the attitudes expressed, many questions remain without a clear answer. How language attitudes are formed and where they come from, what shapes them and which elements of the contexts and circumstances exert the most important influence on the attitudes expressed, what lies beneath the choices and preferences of EFL users – all these questions need to be investigated further.

The discursive, interactionist and constructivist line of research, which views language attitudes as constructed, shaped and negotiated in communication and talk-in-interaction, focuses particularly on this kind of questions, and on the ways in which social meanings, including the social evaluation of speakers, are constructed and negotiated in interaction.

In our next chapter, therefore, we turn to the process of meaning construction and sensemaking, as fundamental for communicative interaction, including intercultural communication.

4. SENSEMAKING AND MEANING CONSTRUCTION

Communication has been wittily defined as ‘an intelligent guessing game’, in which those unspoken meanings are as important as the overtly expressed ones – if not more. As pointed out by Wichman (2002:2), despite the fact that 'people do not always say what they mean or mean what they say', we manage to transmit and understand intended meanings through the process of interpretation.

In intercultural communication, mediated by a foreign language, the process of meaning construction is even more complex. Our ability to receive messages and get them across successfully depends on our competence in interpreting a variety of signals in the communicative situation – those carried by the message itself, or by the context, or the relationships between the participants. All of these can be largely shaped by the different cultural backgrounds of the parties involved. Meaning construction in intercultural communication, therefore, depends on our ability to 'read between the lines' and attach *appropriate* interpretations to the various elements of the communicative situation.

A number of important theories have been formulated over the past decades to account for the important aspects of the process of meaning construction and interpretation in interpersonal or intergroup communication. In this chapter, we discuss some of the influential theories of meaning construction relevant for intercultural communicative competence.

Sensemaking Theory

First put forward in the field of communication theory by Brenda Dervin (1983, 1999, 2003), and later developed by other scholars in various areas of research and application, the Sensemaking theory is a framework that offers concepts and methods for the study of "how people construct sense of their worlds", and "how they construct information needs and uses for information in the process of sense-making" (Dervin 1983:1). Dervin defines the notion of sensemaking as "behavior, both internal (i.e. cognitive) and external (i.e. procedural)" – it is 'communicating behavior' in which "[i]nformation seeking and use is central" (Dervin 1983:2).

That the Sensemaking theory can be very relevant for the study of intercultural communication was pointed out by Dervin herself, who stated that the sense-making approach "can be used to study any situation which involves communication" (Dervin 1992:68), and is "central to all communicating situations (whether they be intra-personal, interpersonal, mass, cross-cultural, societal, or inter-national)" (Dervin 1983:1). Another aspect of Dervin's sensemaking approach that we find particularly valuable from the perspective of intercultural communication is that it aims to unify the analytical properties of the quantitative approach with the dynamic, interpretative and holistic properties of the qualitative approach, because sensemaking is itself synthetic and 'contextually-bound' (Dervin 1983:2).

There are several basic assumptions of the Sensemaking theory that are especially relevant for intercultural communication. Firstly, reality is incomplete and inconsistent, full of discontinuities and gaps, which we attempt to bridge through sensemaking and communication. Secondly, information does not exist "independent of and external to human beings but rather is a product of human observing" (Dervin 1983:2). In that sense, observations can never be 'direct', because "human minds [...] guide the selection of what to observe, how to observe, and the interpretations of the products of the observing" (Dervin 1983:2). Consequently, all information is subjective, and information seeking, use and transmission is a 'constructing activity', which involves 'personal creating of sense' at specific points in time and space. All information is 'designed', in that "some pieces of information are accepted as 'fact', while others are controversial and are called 'opinion' or 'delusion', depending on the socio-political context" (Dervin 1996:3).

Thirdly, Dervin (2003) views sensemaking as a subjective process of learning, in which the 'learner' relies on the entirety of his/her knowledge,

previous experiences, emotions, and perspective. This fundamental idea of the Sensemaking theory is also pointed out by Kolko (2010), who summarizes a comparison of several understandings of sensemaking in different fields by stating that, despite their differences, they all see sensemaking as a learning process. Therefore, Kolko defines sensemaking as an action-oriented cycle through which people aim to "integrate experiences into their understanding of the world around them" (Kolko 2010:3).

A somewhat different version of the Sensemaking theory was proposed, in the context of organizational theory, by Karl Weick (1995). He views sensemaking primarily as "an issue of language, talk, and communication", which are crucial for all the seven aspects or components of the sensemaking process – identity, retrospect, enactment, socialization, continuation, extraction of cues and plausibility (Weick 1995:61-62).

Three ideas in Weick's framework are particularly important for us. One is that sensemaking is most directly linked to identity and identity construction, because different individuals make sense in different ways. Another one is that sensemaking relies primarily on the process of interpretation, which depends on extracting cues from the communicative context. Cue extraction, however, is governed by 'inertia', which means that our attention to cues is selective – we easily observe the cues that confirm our beliefs, and ignore incompatible ones.

Finally, the most directly relevant idea is that sensemaking, as an "interplay of action and interpretation" (Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005), is an ongoing social process, a shared, communal, collaborative activity through which meanings are negotiated. Hence, it can be said that Weick shifted the centre of sensemaking from an individual process to a cooperative, collaborative process that goes on in people's interaction. Weick also uses the notion of the 'community of practice' as a group in which meanings are negotiated through communication, and within which social connections and active communication enhance the process of sensemaking.

In this collaborative interaction, language plays a fundamental role – so much so, that Weick believes that supporting collaborative activity can be considered the primary function of language. Besides collaboration, the crucial property of sensemaking is its retrospective and reflexive character, so Weick stresses that "people can know what they are doing only after they have done it" (Weick 1995:24). In other words, we become aware of our experience only when we stop and look at it after it has passed (Weick 1995:25). Most importantly, the role of language in this process is crucial, as

highlighted by Weick's famous example quoted widely across the sensemaking literature: "How can I know what I think until I see what I say?" (Weick 1979:207).

This view is often especially emphasised in more recent discussions of sensemaking, too. For example, the view that sensemaking involves "the retrospective development of plausible meanings that rationalize what people are doing" (Weick 1995; Weick *et al.* 2005) is elaborated by Maitlis and Sonenshein (2010), who add that central to this 'development of plausible meanings' is the "bracketing of cues from the environment, and the interpretation of those cues based on salient frames [...] to create an account of what is going on" (Maitlis & Sonenshein 2010:551-552). Similarly, in the context of educational research, Abraham, Petre and Sharp (2008) point out that many educational tasks draw upon three major components of sensemaking: seeking information, evaluating content, and using representations. In cognitive sciences, too, the often highlighted aspect of sensemaking are the 'metacognitive skills', which include monitoring one's understanding, identifying knowledge gaps, determining when more information is needed, and using meaningful strategies to accomplish educational goals. From the perspective of social psychology, the discursive nature of sensemaking is also stressed by Berente, Hansen, Pike and Bateman (2011) who quote Weick's view that sensemaking is "an issue of language, talk, and communication", in which "meanings materialize" and "environments are talked into existence" (Weick *et al.* 2005:409).

Berente and colleagues discuss in detail (Berente *et al*. 2011:688-689) how the discursive nature of sensemaking relates to theoretical approaches such as discursive psychology (Billig 1997; Edwards & Potter 1992; Potter and Edwards 2001) or discourse analysis (Fairclough 2003), or the process of argumentation (Habermas 1981; Toulmin 2003; Weick 1995). The authors state that "[p]roactively supported thematized claims are particularly important to the study of sensemaking because they indicate a certain amount of reflection, anticipation, and interest critical to sensemaking" (Berente *et al.* 2011:689).

In many respects, the sensemaking approach aligns with the ideas of the Symbolic interactionism, and its claim that communication is symbolic while based on interaction through which individuals construct meaning (Blumer 1969). Another similar idea is that communication rests on three central components: *meaning*, because individuals act and interact with others based on the meanings they give to other people, things and events;

language, because it provides the symbolic means through which meaning is negotiated; and *thought*, because each individual interprets symbols through a form of mental conversation (Griffin 2012:54ff; Bloomer 1989:2). Miscommunication can be caused by any of these three aspects, for instance, when actors in a situation do not use language appropriately, or when they attribute different meanings to an element of the situation, or if their interpretations of symbols are different (Griffin 1997/2012).

To sum up, in all its variations, the theory of sensemaking accounts for the process by which we give meaning to our experiences and construct our realities, and is thus essential for communication. After all, as Em Griffin puts it, "[a] truism among communication scholars is that *words don't mean things, people mean things*" (Griffin 2012:7). If we agree with Dervin that sensemaking is also a process of learning, and with Weick that language is central in the negotiation and construction of meaning, then we must see the process of sensemaking as crucial for communication-oriented foreign language teaching, too, and fundamental in intercultural communication.

Attribution Theory

Another theory developed in social psychology that proved very relevant for intercultural communicative competence is the Attribution theory, put forward, in its early versions, by Fritz Heider (1958), Edward Jones and Keith Davis (1965) and Harold Kelley (1967), and further developed by Weiner and colleagues (Weiner 1974, 1986). Like the Sensemaking theory, the Attribution theory explains how people interpret events and give them meaning, focusing particularly on the relationship between thinking, emotions, and behaviour. The starting point is the idea that people are driven by a fundamental urge to seek explanations for events, that we need to understand *why* something happened, and to understand other people's behaviour, because that enables us to relate to our environment in a meaningful way. Attribution is, therefore, defined as a process of interpretation in which pieces of information are collected and connected to formulate a plausible explanation of a person's behaviour and to attribute meaning to events (Weiner1986).

According to Heider (Heider 1958), we make two kinds of attributions – internal, when we interpret a person's behaviour by something

about him/herself, for instance, attitude, character or personality; or external, when we attribute certain meaning to a person's behaviour interpreting it as caused by something in the situation or the context. Weiner (2006), too, points out that the Attribution theory makes "a distinction between internal versus external causality (or the locus of the cause)", and that inferences about causal locus and why a particular event has occurred lie "at the heart of attribution analyses" (Weiner 2006:188). Specifically, in interpreting our own and other people's actions and events we are guided by our urge to maintain a positive self-image. These accounts for the fact that we tend to attribute success or failure to different factors when thinking about ourselves and when thinking about others. When we are concerned, we more readily attribute success to our own ability or effort, while failure is more likely to be attributed to factors we cannot control. With the attributions we make about others, it is vice versa – success is attributed to luck, or favourable circumstances, while failure tends to be attributed to personal factors.

Within the Attribution theory, different authors focused on different aspects of attribution. For instance, Kelley (1967) was interested in the process itself, while Weiner (1980) focused on the effects of attributions and motivation. But the key assumptions underlying all the versions of the intrapersonally oriented theory were very similar.

However, when the early views of Heider (1958), Jones and Davis (Jones & Davis 1965) or Kelley (1967) are compared to the more recent views (e.g. Weiner 2006), it can be observed that in the Attribution theory, like in the Sensemaking theory, a shift was made from focusing on the intrapersonal aspect of meaning construction to the interpersonal, social, and discursive aspect of the process. Weiner (2006) himself points out the difference between the earlier version of his theory, which focused primarily on intrapersonal motivation and on one's thoughts and emotions 'about oneself', and the later version of his attribution theory, which focuses on one's thoughts and emotions 'about others'. The central issues in the recent versions of his Attribution theory are 'interpersonal or social motivation' and other social phenomena "including compliance, impression formation and stigmatization" (Weiner 2006:xvi).

Yet, there are some authors who see the individual and the social aspects of attribution as closely connected. Thus, discussing the concepts of 'self' and 'identity', Reich and Arkin (2006) state that "implicit theories that people hold about human behavior" influence both their self-judgments and their judgments of others, including their perception of groups.

Consequently, "[b]eliefs about the likely evaluations of others may shape an individual's own cognitive, affective, and behavioral reactions to events" (Reich & Arkin 2006:89). In this sense, both the individual and the social aspects of attribution, both intrapersonal and interpersonal attribution processes, are relevant for intercultural communicative competence and foreign language learning.

Indeed, the Attribution theory has long been explicitly associated with intercultural communication and used in intercultural studies. For instance, in his early discussion, Mansur Lalljee (1987) describes some of the culturally determined differences in making attributions, and shows how attributions can contribute to miscommunication in cross-cultural encounters. Lalljee states that interaction is central to the process of attribution, and that understanding attributions is crucial for understanding intercultural communication (Lalljee 1987:37). In inter-group relations, the attribution of "attitudes, motives, intent and rationality" influences the way in which we interpret a person's behaviour (Lalljee 1987:38). Applying Weiner's (1974, 1986) distinction between personal and situational attributions, Lalljee (Lalljee 1987:39) describes a number of studies which demonstrate that personal attributions are commonly made about the positive behaviour of ingroup members, but also about the negative behaviour of outgroup members; conversely, situational explanations are attributed to the negative behaviour of ingroup members and positive behaviour of outgroup members (Lalljee 1987:43). He points out that this kind of attribution pattern is typically related to the high level of ethnocentricity, since it reinforces the positive self-image and helps maintain cognitive consistency, as well as the stereotypes about other groups.

Lalljee also discusses "how cultures differ in explanations they prioritize" (Lalljee 1987:44), because certain explanations may be more plausible in a certain culture than in another. Furthermore, specific attributions may have different 'values' in different cultures, so, for instance, cultures can differ in what they consider to be an acceptable excuse for one's behaviour (Lalljee 1987:46). Also, cultures can differ in the degree of control they ascribe to certain aspects of emotion, thought or behaviour. All these can be sources of intercultural miscommunication.

A similar point is made by Norenzayan, Choi and Nisbett (1999). Because people of different cultures "draw different conclusions from the same encounter", this leads to cultural misunderstandings. The authors focus on what they see as "one likely source" of such misunderstandings – 'the

fundamental attribution error' as formulated by Ross (1977), that is, the tendency to assign causality to people's personal traits rather than to situations, i.e. "the preference for explanations of behavior in terms of internal attributes of the target" (Choi, Nisbett & Norenzayan 1999:47):

> Attributing the individual's behaviour to a corresponding disposition is sometimes justified, and usually it cannot be shown to be mistaken, but often it constitutes an error because people attribute situationally determined behavior to a disposition. This error in attribution appears to be linked to a very coherent and widespread theory about personality traits (Norenzayan, Choi & Nisbett 1999:239).

Norenzayan and colleagues present evidence of cross-cultural variation in causal attribution focusing on the East Asian cultural area (China, Korea, Japan) and Western European and American cultures, and discuss the possible explanations of these differences, which are also explored in more detail in Choi, Nisbett and Norenzayan (1999). In Nisbett, Peng, Choi and Norenzayan (2001), the authors place these issues in the context of the difference between holistic and analytic cognition, concluding that cultural differences run as deep as the fundamental systems of thought in cultural communities.

As shown by these several examples, the Attribution theory has been successfully used in the study of intercultural communication, in which the process of meaning construction and the interpretation of various cues, including the attributions and constructed explanations of people's behaviour, greatly influence the success of communication.

Communication Accommodation Theory

Particularly frequently associated with sociolinguistic studies and intercultural communicative competence, the Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) is another approach that focuses on communicative interaction. First proposed in the early 1970s as Speech Accommodation Theory (SAT) (Giles 1973), because it focused rather narrowly on interpersonal accent convergence ('accent mobility') and on

speech-style modifications, it was later expended into an integrated approach to the study of various elements of communicative interaction, and is sometimes even described as an 'interdisciplinary' approach, because it is widely used across various disciplines.

The theory aims to account for the communicative strategies used in interaction, and for "the motivations underlying and consequences arising from ways in which we adapt our language and communication patterns toward others" (Giles, Coupland & Coupland 1991:1). Communication Accommodation theory integrates "the micro and macro contextual concerns" (Giles, Coupland & Coupland 1991:2), and in this respect shares John Gumperz' effort to link macro and micro aspects of language use (Gumperz 1972, 1982, 1995, 1996; cf. Chapter 5). It is described as "a robust paradigm" that includes:

> (1) social consequences (attitudinal, attributional, behavioral, and communicative), (2) ideological and macro-societal factors, (3) intergroup variables and processes, (4) discursive practices in naturalistic settings, and (5) individual life span and group-language shifts (Giles, Coupland & Coupland 1991:4).

Giles and colleagues place communication accommodation in the context of similar concepts proposed in other theoretical frameworks to account for adaptive interpersonal processes in language use and communication, such as 'cooperativity' (Grice 1975), or 'interactional synchrony' (Erickson & Schulz 1982), or 'positive politeness' (Brown & Levinson 1987). All of them explore what 'being accommodative' means, but Giles and colleagues note that accommodation theory is capable of addressing "altogether pragmatic concerns", and that the theory as a whole is conceived "less as a theoretical edifice and more as a basis for sociolinguistic explanation" (Giles, Coupland & Coupland 1991:3). For instance, it can be used to explain how accommodative processes "facilitate or impede language learners' proficiency in a second language", or "an immigrant's acceptance into certain host communities" (Giles, Coupland & Coupland 1991:3).

The basic assumption of the Communication Accommodation theory is that we enter interaction with various interpersonal and intergroup goals, and with the 'baggage' of our predispositions, attitudes, views, and previous

experiences. All these factors influence our discourse and the course of interaction.

The central idea of the theory is that the participants' behaviour changes during interaction. As stated by the 'similarity attraction' paradigm (Byrne 1971), we are attracted to those whom we perceive as similar to ourselves. That is why, in interaction with others, we try to increase our 'attractiveness' by making our behaviour – linguistic and non-linguistic – similar to that of the other parties in interaction. We may change different aspects of our speech – the grammatical structures used, the lexical choices, utterance length, our pronunciation, accent or dialect, the speech rate, prosody, pauses, or indeed any aspect of our speech, including code-switching and the choice of the language or variety used. Non-verbal elements of communication can be accommodated, too, for instance, smiling, gestures, eye-contact, or posture and space management (Giles, Coupland & Coupland 1991).

These modifications can go in either direction – towards greater similarity (convergence) to signal social closeness, or towards greater difference (divergence) to signal social distance. In other words, convergence is the strategy of adapting to each other's communicative behaviour (referred to by the terms 'congruence', 'synchrony' or 'reciprocity' in other theoretical frameworks). Divergence is the strategy of using speech and nonverbal features to stress the differences between oneself and others (Giles, Coupland & Coupland 1991:7). Both speech convergence and divergence "may be seen as representing strategies of conformity and identification" (Giles, Coupland & Coupland 1991:27), signalling ingroup and outgroup membership.

In this respect, the Communication Accommodation theory relies on Tajfel's Social Identity theory (Tajfel 1981; Tajfel & Turner 1986) as relevant to intergroup relations. Giles and colleagues explain divergence ('divergent shifts') by Tajfel's view that, when members of one group interact with members of another, they compare themselves on dimensions that are important to them, such as 'personal attributes, abilities, material possessions'; in these 'social comparisons' individuals feel the need "to search for, or even to create dimensions on which they may be seen to be positively distinct" from the outgroup, and which would enhance their "feeling of an adequate social identity, which enhances their feeling of self-worth" (Giles, Coupland & Coupland 1991:27). Since speech style is "for many people an important subjective dimension of, and objective cue to,

social and particularly ethnic group membership", we may, in some situations, choose to accentuate distinctiveness from outgroup members by focusing on a communicative dimension we 'value highly' (Giles, Coupland & Coupland 1991:27).

Ylänne-McEwan and Coupland (2000) offer a similar definition of convergence and divergence. Convergence occurs because speakers are "motivated to reduce linguistic or communicative differences between themselves and their speaking partners" when they want to be approved of and when they want their communication to be effective. On the contrary, when approval is not important for them, or when they want to "symbolize and emphasize difference and distance", they "will be motivated to resist accommodating and will even accentuate differences between themselves and their listeners" (Ylänne-McEwen & Coupland 2000:191).

These authors, however, warn that the idea behind communicative accommodation is 'deceptively simple', because, even though convergence has been established as "a very robust sociolinguistic phenomenon", when individual and group factors (conscious and subconscious) intersect, communicative interaction can be a very complex interplay of motives, interests, and behaviours (Ylänne-McEwen & Coupland 2000:193), and certain 'sociolinguistic strategies' speakers use to manage interaction and the results they want to achieve:

> Codes and styles do not merely covary with social groups and social situations. Rather, we can begin to see code and style choice as sociolinguistic strategies which individuals and groups will employ – again, whether consciously or subconsciously – to achieve the social and relational results they want. Although goals may be consciously held, the sociolinguistic means through which they are fulfilled are beyond the speaker's full consciousness (Ylänne-McEwen & Coupland 2000:193).

Another observation made by Ylänne-McEwen and Coupland (2000) is especially important for our perspective, because in their discussion of different social situations and processes which can be explained by the Communication Accommodation theory, the authors single out intercultural communication. They state that "a theory which deals with social and sociolinguistic similarities and differences" has an obvious relevance; yet, we "need to be wary of generalizing too freely about the cultural identities of

speakers and about the impact of communicative strategies" (Ylänne-McEwen & Coupland 2000:192).

The authors particularly caution about the way we categorize social groups and relationships between them, and how the very notion of interculturality is defined. They conclude that the accommodation theory is a "rich and powerful model of how relationships between individuals and social groups are negotiated through language and discourse"; however, what must be taken into account are "largescale social changes in how cultural groups organize themselves, and how people find meaning in cultural difference and interaction across cultural boundaries" (Ylänne-McEwen & Coupland 2000:192). Indeed, this resonates with many other authors' views of culture, cultural groups, and cultural identities, discussed in our earlier chapters, who point out that the changes in the contemporary social circumstances require a different understanding of these basic notions.

However, the views expressed by Ylänne-McEwen & Coupland (2000) also call to mind the original warning worded by Giles, Coupland and Coupland almost ten years earlier (1991) – that research often represents only partially and selectively the "full subtlety of contextualized interaction", either due to methodological constraints, since "we tend to access the accessible and learn what is most readily learnable" (Giles, Coupland & Coupland 1991:1), or because it is very difficult to observe the complex process of communication as it unfolds in real time. Instead of that, communication research must address "the contexts as much as the behaviors of talk", so as to observe the "ordering – motivational, strategic, behavioral, attributional, and evaluative – that interactants themselves impose upon their own communicative experiences" (Giles, Coupland & Coupland 1991:1).

To conclude, notwithstanding all these caveats, one way in which the Communication Accommodation theory is particularly relevant for the study of intercultural communicative competence, in addition to the adaptive Intercultural Communicative Accommodation Model formulated by Gallois, Franklyn-Stokes, Giles, and Coupland (1988), is the significance it assigns to the context, and to all the elements of communicative interaction – linguistic, non-linguistic, and particularly prosodic.

The role of prosody and intonation in the process of meaning construction, sensemaking, and interpretation is the topic of the following chapter.

5. THE ROLE OF PROSODY

In the study of spoken communication, it has always been emphasised that prosody plays a very important part. And yet, the role of prosody has been much less empirically researched than any other aspect of communication.

Undoubtedly, prosody is very difficult to study. Firstly, prosodic signals, such as intonation or tempo, are interpreted 'locally', relative to the context in which they are used, and this comprises both the immediate phonetic context and the broader pragmatic, discourse, social, and cultural contexts, including the actors' histories and relationships. Research shows that this is true not only of attitudinal and emotional meanings transmitted through intonation, but also of some basic prosodic functions, such as signalling prominence (Lehiste & Fox 1992, in Vaissière 2005:243). Apart from this, many prosodic elements of speech are of gradual (Grice & Baumann 2007), gradient (Culpeper 2011:63), and not categorical nature, and thus very difficult to compare. Lastly, investigating the prosodic contribution to meaning construction requires an interdisciplinary approach, which would observe the prosodic cues together with all the other aspects of the communicative event, uniting minute details of acoustic analysis with the pragmatic, discourse, sociolinguistic and other aspects of analysis.

In this chapter, we discuss some common problems in the study of prosody and its contribution to meaning construction, principally in the fields of L2 learning and teaching and intercultural communication.

Problems in the study of prosody

As noted by many authors of research review articles and chapters, the past two decades have brought prosody back into the centre of research interest in the fields such as pragmatics, sociolinguistics, and discourse and conversational analysis, which aim to explore real-life communicative interaction (cf. Vaissière 2005:237; Wennerstrom 2001; Wichmann 2000). But despite this revived interest in prosody, many authors still put forward the objection that a much more substantial empirical collaboration between phonetic research and these areas of spoken communication study is necessary.

Jonathan Culpeper (2011), for instance, states that in pragmatics, discourse analysis and conversational analysis few empirical studies actually involve a detailed phonetic analysis, and many even lack a thorough phonological description (Culpeper 2011:58). Focusing on politeness, specifically, impoliteness, in a chapter titled *It's not what you said, it's how you said it!*, Culpeper starts from examples illustrating how prosodic features disambiguate messages, and then demonstrates how they can even 'over-rule' the meanings contained in the linguistic form of the message, e.g. in ironic or sarcastic utterances (Culpeper 2011:57). In the second part of the study, he examines how prosody works in context to trigger evaluations of impoliteness in naturally occurring data, taken from a popular British TV show. Finally, since prosody plays an important role "in the lay person's understanding of impoliteness", Culpeper also examines the listeners' metapragmatic comments about impolite utterances (e.g. 'patronizing and condescending', 'contempt', 'sarcasm', 'parroting') (Culpeper 2011:71). He emphasises that prosodic cues are central in the listeners' evaluation of an utterance as im/polite, and that the mere presence of a cue can trigger the listeners' evaluation in a particular context. Therefore, Culpeper concludes that the role of context in our interpretation of prosodic and intonational cues is crucial.

A similar idea is put forward in a different form by Julia Hirschberg in her paper *The pragmatics of intonational meaning* (Hirschberg 2002), which discusses Gussenhoven's (2002) theoretical framework proposed to account for the universal meanings of intonation. The model consists of three 'biological codes' that govern the way users manage intonational cues to convey meanings. The interpretations of intonational meanings may be affective, 'conveying attributes of the speaker', or informational, 'conveying

attributes of the message'. Gussenhoven's (2002) framework also states that while the phonological codification can develop to be largely language-specific, the phonetic implementation can be used to express universal meanings which derive from 'biological codes', i.e. physiological aspects of the production of pitch variation.

Specifically, Hirschberg offers an example of how the long-term effect of the social and cultural context can be traced in the interpretation of a cue that seems to be purely physiological. Namely, John Ohala's 'frequency code', adopted by Gussenhoven as the first 'biological code', states that because male and female larynxes are biologically different in size, lower pitch is biologically associated with male speech. However, Hirschberg points out that "[t]raditional cultural dominance exercised by adult males has led to an association of lower pitch with dominance and higher pitch with submission", and the intonational cue of lower and higher pitch used by any speaker will be interpreted in this light, too (Hirschberg 2002:1). Languages differ in the extent to which universal intonational meanings are grammaticalized, so universal meanings are more likely to be perceived and interpreted by speakers of some languages than of others (Hirschberg 2002:1).

In addition to the difficulties arising from the complexity of the communicative processes within which prosody is observed, even the research focusing on the more narrowly defined linguistic, phonetic or phonological perspective, is faced with some difficulties. Jacqueline Vaissière, for example, points out that intonation is as complex as human beings are (Vaissière 2005:256), and that it is difficult to study primarily because its various functions and meanings interact and overlap in communicative situations. Another problem is that it is not always possible to determine the degree to which intonation contributes to the meaning of what is being said, since it can either support and reinforce the meanings carried by the linguistic structures, or it can add new, independent components to the meaning of the message, or, sometimes, even over-ride the meanings carried by the linguistic forms (as in Culpeper's examples, 2011:57).

Finally, apart from the problem common to many other fields of study, namely, the comparability between the studies performed within different theoretical models (e.g. for intonation, the traditional British model, Autosegmental and metrical models, Brazil's Discourse intonation etc.), in prosody research, there is also the problem of the descriptive representation

or transcription. Although one common system of formal representation has become widely used in the past two decades (ToBI, Beckman and Hirschberg 1994), many authors raise the question of its applicability in investigations that look more closely at the phonetic realization of prosodic cues rather than the formulation of phonological explanations, such as sociolinguistic and conversational analysis studies, or even the context of foreign language learning, where phonetic properties of speech can be as important as the phonological ones.

For all these reasons, prosody and intonation still do not receive as much attention in empirical research as they should based on the important role they play in spoken communication.

Prosody in L2 learning and teaching

In the context of L2 learning and teaching, the status of prosody is particularly problematic. On the one hand, it is a very important aspect of communicative competence, while on the other it has been repeatedly shown to be very difficult to master, and to be a problem even for otherwise very proficient learners. Research has shown that, apart from the influence of mother-tongue prosody, the learner's ability to produce or perceive meanings carried by intonation is affected by their experience with L2 (Trofimovich & Baker 2006), and by their awareness of both the functions of intonation and the phonetic identity of the prosodic cues used to signal them (Grice & Bauman 2007). In addition, deeper and more complex issues of identity, motivation, cultural sensitivity, and attitudes also affect the learner's use and interpretation of prosodic cues. Therefore, although it does receive more attention in EFL teaching than it used to, prosody still remains one of the most difficult aspects of language to teach and learn.

One approach that is often said to have "demystif[ied] the teaching of intonation" (Chapman 2007:6) is Discourse Intonation proposed by David Brazil (1997) and further developed by Dorothy Chun (2002). Setting off from the classification of the communicative meanings and functions of intonation into the pragmatic, discourse, and "interactional" ones (Chun 2002:42), this model highlights the importance of developing EFL students' awareness of the meanings communicated by intonation, and of connecting the meanings with the intonational and prosodic forms used to communicate them.

The main contribution of this framework is its shift of focus from the traditionally primary 'grammatical' and 'attitudinal' functions of intonation to 'discourse' and 'sociolinguistic' functions as particularly relevant for communication, and therefore for the L2 learners' competence.

The function labelled 'discourse' in this model comprises the meanings relevant for the pragmatic, interactional, and discourse meanings in communicative situations. These include intonational cues used to signal coherence and cohesion, as well as informational structure (focus, prominence, contrast, new vs. given information), illocutionary or speech-act functions (the speaker's intentions and expectations), and interactive functions in conversation management (turn-taking, floor-keeping, topic introduction and topic change) (Chun 2002:56-66).

The sociolinguistic functions include the use of intonation cues to signal "contrasts that allow hearers to identify speakers as members of different sociolinguistic groups" (Chun 2002:66,78), including gender, age, socio-regional and occupational groups. This competence is listed as one of the 'major categories', since, as Chun points out, it is "recognized by communicative approaches to L2 learning", where "sociolinguistic and sociocultural competence are increasingly being emphasized as critical components of overall L2 competence" (Chun 2002:67). However, Chun, like Vaissière (2005) also emphasises that the functions of intonation "cannot be divided into neat, clear-cut categories since they typically involve the grammatical, attitudinal, information-structural, illocutionary, pragmatic, and sociolinguistic domains of conversations and discourses with much potential overlap" (Chun 2002:75).

A similar point is highlighted by Martine Grice and Stefan Baumann (2007). Firstly, these authors believe that the main source of L2 learners' problems with intonation may be the fact that pitch variations can be used categorically (e.g. the type of pitch movement – fall, rise) or gradiently (the extent of the movement or the range over which the modulation is made). Unlike categorical signals, gradient means are difficult to acquire, particularly because languages may differ in the way gradient cues are perceived. Gradient means are also very difficult to teach, because they defy simple description and representation. Therefore, Grice and Baumann warn "anyone analysing the intonational forms of a language" that they should "keep an open mind when relating form to function", because "it should not be assumed that they are universally valid" (Grice & Baumann 2007:41) –

gradient cues, such as pitch height, are interpreted in different languages in different ways (*ibid*).

Secondly, like Brazil and Chun in the framework of Discourse intonation, Grice and Bauman point out the importance of the functions of intonation other than emotional ('attitude', 'affect') and grammatical ('lexical and morphological marking', 'syntactic function').

They especially focus on two "main tasks of pitch modulation" – *highlighting*, i.e. marking prominence relations, and *phrasing*, i.e. the division of speech into chunks (Grice & Baumann 2007:26-27). These functions comprise signalling the information structure of the utterance and discourse, e.g. distinguishing given from new information, the background and the focus. They also include signalling distinctions relevant for speech act realization (statements, requests, promises, apologies), e.g. distinguishing a request from a command, a question from a statement. The model also takes account of relevant paralinguistic functions of intonation, and the "iconicity of intonation" (Grice & Baumann 2007:38-41).

In signalling these meanings and functions, pitch modulation works together with other prosodic properties, such as loudness, or segmental length and quality, so Grice and Baumann (2007), like many other authors, use the term 'intonation' in its broader sense, to include all these interrelated prosodic properties.

Another point made by Grice and Baumann is particularly important from the point of view of intercultural communication. The authors offer several examples of how languages differ in the extent to which they modulate each of the prosodic cues to encode relevant meanings and functions. For instance, with respect to information structure, some languages express givenness by deaccentuation, while others choose no specific marking; similarly, focus can be marked by using certain types of accent in some languages, while in others it may be only syntactically and not prosodically marked. At the paralinguistic level there may be more similarities between languages, but "it is precisely these commonalities which lead to misunderstandings", due to the different 'weighting' of phonetic cues – for instance, "one language might interpret an utterance with high pitch as friendly (e.g. British English), whereas another might interpret the same utterance as emphatic (e.g. Dutch)" (Grice & Baumann 2007:46).

Because so many aspects of information structure and indirect speech acts are expressed differently across languages, the phonetic identity of intonation cues is very important in both research and L2 teaching.

Research should aim to determine, for each specific language, how different linguistic and paralinguistic functions of intonation are marked phonetically, including all functions, from "marking sentence modality to the expression of emotional and attitudinal nuances" (Grice & Baumann 2007:31). For purposes of L2 teaching, therefore, it is necessary to identify how different intonation functions are expressed in the learner's L1, and to identify the differences between the native and target languages. Raising learners' awareness about these similarities and differences is crucial, so Grice and Baumann conclude that a systematic teaching of intonational cues is necessary (Grice & Baumann 2007:32).

The need to connect empirical research of prosody with L2 teaching much more closely is especially emphasised by Trouvain and Gut, the editors of the volume *Non-Native Prosody: Phonetic Description and Teaching Practice* (Trouvain & Gut 2007). They believe that it is necessary to bridge the gap between prosody theory and research on one side, and prosody teaching on the other, since the communication between L2 prosody researchers and language teachers "has become difficult or has ceased to exist altogether" (Trouvain & Gut 2007:v). The authors state that the reasons for this division probably lie in the fact that non-native speech research is "no longer directly concerned with pedagogic issues", and still "largely disregards suprasegmental features like pitch and temporal structures" (Trouvain & Gut 2007:v). In the same vein, Grice and Baumann state that "the gap between intonation as it is used in teaching and intonation research" probably results from the fact that recent research studies tend to be "more experimental and/or theoretically rigorous", which makes their results very difficult for foreign language teachers to use (Grice & Baumann 2007:25).

Still, it can be said that prosody research in the L2 learning and teaching context is on the rise, though not nearly as intensive as would be necessary. In the next section, we present the findings of some studies that focused particularly on the EFL context.

EFL prosody research

Although undoubtedly growing in recent years, research in L2 prosody still contains relatively few studies involving EFL learners in formal educational contexts, and even fewer investigating prosodic cues used to signal some of the context-related functions of intonation – discourse,

pragmatic or socio-cultural. Studies involving L2 learners often investigate the potential influences and sources of problems the learners have. For example, Ineke Mennen (2006, 2007) lists a number of pitch-related problems found in previous research with English language learners of different L1 backgrounds. The author stresses that while some of the problems were common to different English learners, and could be explained by the properties of the English prosodic system, some others were found only with speakers sharing a common mother tongue, and could be attributed to L1 interference or negative transfer (Mennen 2006). Mennen (2007) also points out that it is very important to distinguish the level of phonological form from the level of phonetic realization, in order to determine precisely the actual source of the problem the learners are facing.

Most studies with EFL learners focus on their performance, i.e. how they produce intonation or other prosodic elements. One such example is the study reported by Ramirez Verdugo (2005), who investigated the use of intonation by Spanish EFL learners. The learners were found to use a narrower pitch range and simple tones where a wider range and complex tones would be appropriate, e.g. in expressing uncertainty vs. certainty. Juhani Toivanen's (2003) study examined how Finnish EFL learners used intonation to express continuation, uncertainty, and reservation. It showed that the participants tended to use inappropriate falling tones in contexts that required complex fall-rise tones, which, Toivanen concludes, resulted from pragmatic L1 interference.

Discourse-structuring prosodic signals were investigated by Ann Wennerstrom (1994). Her study focused comparatively on groups of Spanish, Japanese and Thai EFL learners. Inappropriate use of prosodic cues to signal new information and prominence was characteristic of all the participant groups, while Thai and Japanese speakers also showed problems with marking boundaries prosodically. Similar findings are reported by Kazuhito Yamato (2004), who found that Japanese EFL speakers did not use appropriate prosodic cues to signal illocutionary force, i.e. they tended to use a falling tone for different intentions, both where appropriate and not, which the author explains as a negative transfer from L1.

When Serbian EFL learners are concerned, there are only a few studies investigating the role of prosody in students' proficiency. Maja Marković (2011a) investigated how Serbian EFL learners (=15) used fundamental frequency as a prosodic cue, in terms of pitch range, main stress, and tunes, in comparison to a native English speaker. The findings

showed that the EFL participants used a narrower pitch range, and that they differed from the native speaker in the use of prosodic cues to signal main stress, and in their use of tunes. Marković points out that the values of F0 were not a problem, and that the EFL participants "seem to use a repertoire of low and high pitch on a par with the native speakers, regardless of the perceived transfer, i.e. a strong foreign accent" Marković (2011a:248).

In another study, Marković (2011b) focused on the prosodic transfer related to the temporal properties of EFL students' (=15) speech as compared to an English native speaker. The analysis included speech tempo, sentence duration, the duration of stressed and unstressed syllables, and the ratio between stressed and unstressed syllable duration. The findings showed that the EFL students' temporal characteristics of speech differed from those of the native speaker both in absolute values and in the relation between stressed and unstressed syllables.

Focusing on higher-level discourse units and the communicative use of prosody, Paunović and Savić (2009) investigated the use of prosodic cues to signal discourse functions of intonation in a reading task performed by Serbian EFL students (=15). The findings showed that students had the least problems with those discourse functions they were familiar with and had been explicitly taught, e.g. question tags, while others, including the introduction of a new topic, signalling turn-taking and expectations about the listeners' reply were much more problematic.

Milica Savić (2012) presents one of the very few studies focusing on intonation as an aspect of pragmatic meaning. Within a broader research that investigated the pragmatics of apologies, requests, and refusals with Serbian EFL students, in addition to a thorough review of literature and the sparse previous research in the prosody related to these three speech acts, the empirical part of the study offers the analysis of advanced Serbian EFL students' performance. With respect to intonation, the learners used an inappropriate pitch range for requests, but their use of prosodic cues such as the pitch range, pitch accent tone and boundary tone for apologies did not differ significantly from the results of the control group of native speakers.

Very relevant for our research presented later in this book, Savić (2012) also found that the students' metapragmatic awareness about the role of intonation in interpreting the differences between speakers in terms of power and distance was incomplete at best. Although the participants were very proficient EFL students, and had had some linguistic phonetic training,

they could not specify how intonation contributed to their interpretation of this aspect of social and pragmatic meaning.

Finally, Paunović (2013) investigated the use of prosodic cues to signal discourse topic structure (topic beginning, continuation, and ending) in a reading task performed by two groups of participants: L1 speakers of Serbian, who were also EFL learners, and L1 speakers of English. The analysis included F0/pitch, intensity, and duration measured at intonation unit boundaries (left and right edges), first peak/onset, and nuclear accent syllable, as well as overall intonation unit pitch range and intensity. The findings suggested that some, but not all of the EFL students' problems could be attributed to L1 transfer. For instance, the widening of the pitch range to signal topic beginning, very prominent in the Serbian text, was transferred by the participants into the L2 text, where they produced an even wider pitch range than the L1 English speakers, contrary to the expectations based on previous research.

The most important finding, though, was the fact that native speakers' performance in both Serbian and English (respectively) differed from L2 performance. Namely, statistically significant differences and correlations were found between prosodic cues used relative to topic beginning, continuation or ending in both the English and the Serbian texts when read by their respective native speakers. However, in the EFL students' reading of the L2 text, the acoustic cues were not used in a way regular, consistent, and systematic enough to show statistically significant relatedness with topic structure, pointing to various problems with this prosodic function.

Summing up this presentation, it can be said that EFL related prosody research has been confined to the study of strictly defined speech acts, such as apologies, requests, or questions, and to the use of prosody in reading tasks. Especially in the scarce research of Serbian EFL learners' prosody, the study of natural communicative interaction, the study of intonation perception and its role in the listeners' interpretation of speech, and the study of the role of prosody in intercultural communication, are almost altogether lacking.

The importance of prosody for social interaction, the interpretation of meaning, and particularly for intercultural communication has been emphasised in many areas of research, such as conversational analysis,

discourse analysis, or sociocultural studies, and particularly ardently in the approach of interactional sociolinguistics, as promoted by John J. Gumperz and colleagues.

In the next section, we present Gumperz' views that place prosody, together with other minute linguistic details, in the focus of interactional and intercultural communication study.

Prosody in intercultural communication

As often pointed out by John J. Gumperz and his colleagues, interactional sociolinguistics is an approach to the study of the complexity of communicative interaction, which, relying on ethnographic methods and discourse analysis, aims to account for the fact that all small details and nuances are important for the construction of meaning. The cornerstone idea of this approach is that the smallest linguistic detail can, albeit unconsciously, encode information and trigger interpretations. Prosodic cues, such as intonation, pauses, loudness, accent and other small phonetic details can all function as cues carrying information and triggering the listener's interpretations. Therefore, in intercultural interaction, miscommunication can result from culturally shaped differences in the ways speakers use and interpret such small details of speech.

Two key concepts of Gumperz' interactional sociolinguistics are particularly significant for the topics we discuss here – contextualization and indexicallity. In his discussion of Gumperz' views, Stephen Levinson (2003) describes Gumperz' motivation for developing the framework of interactional sociolinguistics as an attempt to bridge the observed "yawning gulf" between the linguistic content of the message and what the speakers were obviously "doing with their words" (Levinson 2003:33). "One line of attack", in Levinson's words, was "the careful analysis of prosody, the neglected acoustic cues that might help to explain how we can possibly mean so much by uttering so little" (Levinson 2003:34). Another was the idea that utterances "carry with them instructions about how to build the contexts in which they should be interpreted" (Levinson 2003:35), i.e. the concept of 'contextualization'. These two ideas combined constitute the essence of Gumperz' concept of a 'contextualization cue' – a trigger (very often prosodic) that, together with the lexical content of the message, "will

invoke frames and scenarios within which the current utterance is to be interpreted as an interactional move" (Levinson 2003:35).

In an earlier article on Gumperz' notion of contextualization, Peter Auer (1992) points out that such a cue is purely 'indexical' in that it has no 'meaning', no 'propositional content'. In signalling contrasts, for instance, the only 'meaning' such a cue has – Auer paraphrases Jakobson – is to "indicate otherness" (Auer 1992:31). The cue, be it a prosodic element, gesture, posture, or a linguistic element, is used to trigger an inference and the intended interpretation of the message in the given context.

Gumperz' understanding of indexicality is also discussed by James Collins (2007), who is particularly interested in how 'Gumperz' legacy' is relevant today, in "an era of globalization" (Collins 2007:1). Collins focuses on the 'ordering' of indexicality in the study of language use by immigrants (Collins 2007:2), and uses examples to illustrate how "very small differences of form can have large consequences for meaning", because they can "cue implicit frames of interpretation" (Collins 2007:2).

Contextualization cues, like other indexical signs, serve to retrieve the 'frames' that "channel the interpretive process by 'trimming the decision-making tree' and limiting the range of possible understandings" (Prevignano & Luzio 2003:9). They are, as put by Levinson (2003), "like a knot in a handkerchief", a 'memo', "an encoded or conventional reminder", whose content is "inferentially determined", and dependent on situated inferences (Levinson 2003:36).

Gumperz points out that in everyday talk, "situated inferences always take the form of assessment of what a speaker intends to convey by means of a message", and that the inherent ambiguity of inferential processes can be resolved only in situated interaction "by human agents, acting in the real world" (Prevignano & Luzio 2003:9). Reverberating his earlier statement that "linguistic signs interact with social knowledge in discourse" (Gumperz 1982:29), he concludes:

> People rely on presuppositions about mutual rights and obligations, as well as on ideologies of language and individual personalities, to get their message across. This implies that, in addition to meaning assessment in the established sense, there are always social relationships that are continuously negotiated and renegotiated by means of the same interpretive processes by which content is assessed.
>
> It is useful to distinguish between two levels of inference in analyses of interpretive processes: a) global inferences of what an exchange is

about and what mutual rights and obligations apply, what topics can be brought up, what is wanted by way of a reply, as well as what can be put into words and what is to be implied; and b) local inferences concerning what is intended with any one move and what is required by way of a response. (Prevignano & Luzio 2003:12)

Therefore, it can be said that starting from the view that social environments in which we live and act are dialogically constructed, Gumperz focuses on the question of how spoken communication affects this dialogic processes of construction.

Because in intercultural communication different interpretative practices collide, and make the process more visible, from the early formulation of his views in *Discourse Strategies* (1982), Gumperz especially focused empirically on 'interethnic', i.e. intercultural communication, and theoretically on "the role of typified communicative practices in interaction" (Prevignano & Luzio 2003:2), exploring how they "relate to speakers' communicative and social background" and "how they affect interactive outcomes" in intercultural encounters (Prevignano & Luzio 2003:7).

As shown in his early research (e.g. Gumperz 1979/2003), in cross-cultural interaction, which happens through a language that is not native to at least one of the parties, miscommunication is most often caused by the participants' applying different interpretations, and different inferential practices of the community they are used to interacting within. This happens because many of the indexical contextualizing cues are applied automatically, at the subconscious level, and the way we interpret these cues, acquired through the process of socialization and interaction over time, is equally automatic (Gumperz 1982). And although Gumperz describes the conventions in cue interpretation as "partly linguistic and partly cultural", and points out that interactions may be culturally shaped, but are also socially negotiated and individually applied (Gumperz 1979 / 2003:272), the fact he emphasises equally frequently is that these interpretation practices are very difficult to change, and can be affected only through interaction within a community that uses different practices in this respect.

This has often been pointed out, particularly about prosodic cues, such as rhythm, tempo, intonation, or tone of voice, but also paralinguistic and non-verbal cues. The way we have learned to use them to signal social relationships, politeness, interaction management in terms of turn-taking, floor-yielding, repair, expectations, and many other important aspects of interaction, is very difficult to change.

One more aspect of Gumperz' views on intercultural interaction is important, because it echoes in so many contemporary views of culture, communication, and intercultural interaction – that 'talk' does not directly reflect "the norms, beliefs and values of communities seen as disembodied, hypothetically uniform wholes", embodied by the "traditional categories of language, culture and society" (Prevignano & Luzio 2003:7). Communicative practices result from the 'interplay' of linguistic, social, cultural, and ideological forces, and are "governed or constrained by partly universal and partly locally-specific organizational principles" (*ibid.*). Gumperz emphasises that it is "long-term exposure to similar communicative experience in institutionalized networks of relationship, and not language or community membership as such, that lies at the root of shared culture and shared inferential practices" (Prevignano & Luzio 2003:15). Through participation in certain 'networks of relationships', we become, over time, "socialized into similar network-specific communicative practices" (*ibid.*), and begin to share communicative conventions and interpretive practices with other members of our networks. Traditionally, these were equated with our culture or speech community, but in most people's lives today, as discussed in our previous chapters, the question of community membership has become much more complex.

Therefore, this idea of Gumperz' has two important implications. Firstly, that, as pointed out by many contemporary authors, for any given individual in the modern globalised world, the ethnic or linguistic background may not be the main determinant of his/her cultural 'communicative and social background', or at least not in all the various communicative contexts s/he is engaged in. People of all sorts of cultural and linguistic backgrounds may be linked in a network of relationships within a specific 'community of practice', in which they would share communicative and inferential practices, too, together with the use of a chosen language for 'international' communication.

Secondly, taking us back to the discussion of what counts as 'intercultural' in the notion of 'intercultural communication' (Chapter 2), Gumperz pointed out that within what would count as the same, 'monolingual' or 'monocultural' community, the surface 'similarity of language and background' may hide 'deep underlying differences' (Prevignano & Luzio 2003:15). That is why Blommaert states that Gumperz and Hymes (1972) 'destabilized' the traditional assumption that language, "along with other social and cultural features of people" is relatively fixed in

time and space (Blommaert 2012:11-12), because they saw language, society, and culture "not as 'separate-but-connected', but as dialectic, i.e. co-constructive and, hence, dynamic", with relationships that need to be established through minute ethnographic examination (Blommaert 2012:11-12).

Any speaker of 'a language' actually uses a number of varieties of 'the language', which can be remarkably different both from each other and from the 'standard' variety, among other things, in terms of the inferential and interpretative conventions and the use of contextualizing cues. Similarly, Blommaert points out that "from the actual ways in which people use language in their lives, what counts are [...] repertoires, registers, styles, genres, modes of usage (Hymes 1996)", that is, sociolinguistic varieties as 'emergent constructs' (Blommaert 2003:2). Therefore, "[l]anguage names such as English, French, Swahili or Chinese belong to the realm of folk ideologies of language and popularized or institutionalized discourses anchored therein" (Blommaert 2003:2).

Indeed, as discussed earlier, in Chapter 3 on language attitudes, Dennis Preston's theory of 'folk linguistics' (1996, 1999, 2004) captures this insight, that people do operate with this broad construct, the "Platonic, extra-cognitive reality" (Preston 2004:64) of 'English' or 'Serbian' as a "real" language. In communicative interaction, the varieties, styles, and registers used by the participants are 'measured' against this construct, too, which makes the processes of inferencing and interpretation even more complex.

Taking into account this deep complexity of communicative interaction, and stemming from the same views and ideas presented here as cornerstones of interactional sociolinguistics, the interdisciplinary theoretical approach of Language and Social Interaction (LSI) has been developed. Its roots lie in the field of communication study, just as interactional sociolinguistics is rooted in linguistics, anthropology, and ethnography.

In the following chapter, we outline the main ideas of LSI, as an illustration of the kind of broad, interdisciplinary approach essential in the study of intercultural communication and L2 teaching for intercultural communicative competence.

6. LANGUAGE AND SOCIAL INTERACTION

Language and Social Interaction (LSI) is a broad interdisciplinary approach which originated from communication studies and which defines itself as different from the 'mainstream' approaches in any of the disciplines it pulls together. Because it represents a general outlook rather than a clearly delimited methodology, a philosophy rather than a particular approach, its proponents often describe it as a 'research program' around which researchers from different disciplines are gathered. It focuses on communication as context-situated interaction with all its particularities.

Researchers subscribing to LSI come from almost all social disciplines and humanities, from linguistics and sociolinguistics, to communication study, sociology, psychology, and anthropology. Karen Tracy and Kathleen Haspel (2004) describe LSI as:

> [...] the intellectual home for those convinced that the smallest of language, gesture, or vocal expressions affect meaning making and can shape socially consequential outcomes. It is the residence of preference for those who believe that studying interaction in its situated and messy particularity is the best way to understand communicative life [...] Cutting against the grain – resisting commonly held beliefs or usual practices in other intellectual communities – is part of what it means to do LSI scholarship" (Tracy & Haspel 2004:3).

The central matter of interest to LSI researchers is how people engaged in a communicative situation make sense of that particular act of

interaction, in that particular context. From different perspectives of their respective subfields, LSI researchers focus on different aspects of social interaction and different aspects of meaning construction.

As stated by Sanders (2005a) in the Introduction to the *Handbook of Language and Social Interaction*, LSI "refers to both a subject matter and to a multidisciplinary confederation of research communities assembled within the field of Communication" (Sanders 2005a:1). The five subfields it connects are pragmatics, conversation analysis, language and social psychology (LSP), discourse analysis, and the ethnography of communication, listed in the order of the increasing degree to which each of them

> [...] goes beyond the form and content of the talk itself, and takes into account such additional matters as the social identities and relations of speakers and hearers, the organization of the interaction in progress, participants' psychological states, participants' cultural identities, and the activity or business at hand in which participants are jointly engaged" (Sanders 2005a:1-2).

The main idea of LSI research is meaning constructed in 'situated talk' ('talk *in situ*') as a matter of its 'functionality', i.e. the effect a specific utterance ('discursive practice') has on the 'state of affairs' in the communicative situation. The elements observed as potentially important include all the details of the "content, wording, syntax, and intonation, and the social circumstances of its utterance" (Sanders 200a5:2).

In this respect, LSI assembles many of the ideas we discussed in the previous chapters, such as the main ideas of Gumperz' interactional sociolinguistics, Hymes' original notions, the early ideas of Symbolic interactionism, Social identity theory, Attribution theory, Communication Accommodation theory, and indeed most contemporary approaches in critical discourse analysis, conversational analysis, sociolinguistic and social psychology that share constructivist and interactionist ideas.

Starting from the view that the meaningfulness ('functionality') of utterances ('discursive practices') is co-constructed in communicative interaction between the speaker and the hearer (Sanders 2005a:2-3), different LSI subfields focus on different kinds of meanings and aspects of functionalities. For instance, pragmatics would focus on those utterance details that distinguish, e.g. a promise from a threat; those details that distinguish speakers as members of one stereotype category or another

would be focused by Language and Social Psychology (LSP), while those details that distinguish discursive practices in one culture from those in another, e.g. 'harmless' gossip from malicious gossip, would be focused by ethnography of communication.

The details investigated in the LSI approach often "extend beyond discursive practices to the meaningfulness (functionality) of non-linguistic practices" (Sanders 2005a:4), to include bodily expression (facial expression, gesture) or even the material components of social interaction such as costumes, tools, equipment, or furnishings. Therefore, LSI

> [...] views language use coupled with particulars of the social interaction holistically, as occurrences in the ongoing lives of persons, communities, and institutions. When particular people in particular moments engage in language and social interaction, there is at the same time a history and a future involved on a personal, interpersonal, interactional, institutional, and cultural level. However, LSI's subfields differ as to how the past and (anticipated or desired) future make themselves felt in the present and how important it is that they do so (Sanders 2005a:4).

To illustrate this, from the perspective of pragmatics, Arundale (2005) states that LSI investigates how people involved in interaction achieve social meaningfulness through "language in use", central to communication as "the means by which social life is constituted, moment to moment and turn by turn" (Arundale 2005:41). Presenting the LSI-oriented work in Conversational Analysis, Drew (2005) states that conversation lies at the intersection of linguistics, sociology, and psychology, since "engaging in a conversation requires more than knowledge of and the ability to use a language, and more than the psychological disposition to interact with others. It requires that speakers participate in ways that are consistent with the social organization of conduct in conversation" (Drew 2005:72). The social competencies required to converse in socially appropriate ways are acquired along with linguistic abilities, and these competencies include "the knowledge of the patterns, routines, and rules of conversation, which we share as members of a communicative culture" (Drew 2005:73). Similarly, Pomerantz and Mandelbaum (2005) describe the focus of LSI Conversational Analysis as the study of "the practices through which members of a culture conduct and understand social interaction":

> [C]onversation analysts have shown that people monitor each other's conduct in the course of interaction and design their own conduct in the light of their sense of what the recipients know, want, feel, and will do next (Pomerantz and Mandelbaum 2005:149).

From the point of view of Language and Social Psychology, Sanders (2005b), echoing Hymes' and Gumperz' fundamental ideas, states that during social interaction, people "attach significance to their own or others' talk (and bodily expression) on bases other than and beyond what the talk or bodily expression means (e.g. denotes or enacts) because of the other person's speaking style or dialect, ways of gesturing, social status, gender, and so on" (Sanders 2005b:175). In communicative interaction, the impressions we form about other participants, and the attributions we make about others' perceptions, motives or intentions affect the interaction. However, unlike the methods of ethnographic description and qualitative analysis chosen by interactional sociolinguistics, Sanders stresses the importance of experimental methods and quantitative analysis, important for observing "statistical regularities between the occurrence of certain details and peoples' responses to them, because they may point to the social significance of such details" (Sanders 2005b:175). From this same perspective of Language and Social Psychology, Cynthia Gallois, Susan McKay, and Jeffrey Pittam explicitly highlight the Communication Accommodation Theory as the source of the main ideas in the LSI-oriented approach (Gallois, McKay & Pittam 2005:232).

Finally, James Bradac and Howard Giles, in their discussion of the LSI approach in the study of language attitudes, in the chapter subtitled: *Conceptual Niceties, Complexities, Curiosities, Monstrosities, and How It All Works* (Bradac & Giles 2005:201-230), stress that "social behaviors and cognitions involve other people and self in relation to these others", whom we can perceive either as "individuals, with idiosyncratic styles of mentation, special needs, and unique behavioral tendencies", or as "more or less typical members of a group, largely undifferentiated from other members" (Bradac & Giles 2005:205). The authors present the area of language attitude research as "one of the oldest and most extensively investigated areas within LSP" (Bradac & Giles 2005:201-208), focusing on the "evaluative reactions that hearers have to a speaker's linguistic style". The 'style' includes phonology, lexical choices, or syntax, i.e. any (or all) of the levels of language that can have influence on the hearer's judgement. The

authors also state that particular attitudes may reflect the hearer's "identification with in-groups and rejection to out-groups", particularly with respect to accents or dialects (Bradac and Giles: 201-208).

Two of the ideas around which the LSI approach is built are the most important from our perspective. One is that, although the diverse research within the wide LSI approach employs various methodologies, it invariably "puts a strong emphasis on contextual sensitivity", and is therefore especially applicable in intercultural communication contexts, as well as education (Gallois, McKay and Pittam 2005:232). The other is that the meaningfulness (functionality) of the situated talk and interaction is systematic, i.e. that there are systems of meaning that can be revealed through study, and, consequently, learned, i.e. acquired (Sanders 2005a).

Although they come from different research traditions and do not endorse LSI as an approach, many other contemporary authors build their work around these and similar ideas. As an example, the approach described as "a general sociocultural linguistic perspective", presented by Mary Bucholtz and Kira Hall (2005), expresses very similar views, only from a more narrowly linguistic perspective, and relying on the views shared by contemporary fields of sociolinguistics, linguistic anthropology, discourse analysis, and social psychology (Bucholtz & Hall 2005:585).

Discussing the concept of identity, they emphasise that it is "a relational and sociocultural phenomenon that emerges and circulates in local discourse contexts of interaction" (Bucholtz & Hall 2005:585-586). And although Bucholtz and Hall believe that 'scholars of language use are particularly well equipped to account for "the complexities of identity as a social, cultural, and – most fundamentally – interactional phenomenon" (Bucholtz & Hall 2005:608), and although they see the scholars gathered around discursive, constructivist, and interactional ideas labelled 'sociocultural linguistics' as a "loose coalition of approaches", these authors also emphasise the necessity of a very broad interdisciplinary approach in the study of face-to-face interaction, because

> [...] it is only by understanding our diverse theories and methods as complementary, not competing, that we can meaningfully interpret this crucial dimension of contemporary social life (Bucholtz & Hall 2005:608).

The research we present in the next part of the book does not explicitly align with the LSI approach, or the sociocultural linguistic

approach, but it did stem from that same kind of ideas about communicative interaction, language in use, construction of meaning and social interaction, shared by the LSI approach, sociocultural linguistic approach, interactional sociolinguistics, Communication Accommodation theory, Attribution theory, and indeed most of the theoretical frameworks discussed in the previous chapters.

It also emphasises the need for cooperation between different perspectives, for interdisciplinarity, and for combining diverse methodologies and approaches in the study of the complex phenomena of intercultural communicative competence and EFL learning and teaching.

PART TWO

RESEARCH STUDIES

7. QUANTITATIVE *AND* QUALITATIVE

On page one of the third edition of his sparkling book *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*, before he sets out to discuss the conceptual issues of qualitative inquiry, Michael Quinn Patton (2002) quotes a pearl of wisdom, which says:

> Psychometricians try to measure *it*.
> Experimentalists try to control *it*.
> Interviewers ask questions about *it*.
> Observers watch *it*.
> Participant observers do *it*.
> Statisticians count *it*.
> Evaluators value *it*.
> Qualitative inquirers find meaning in *it*. (Patton 2002:1)

This summarises perfectly the view that in the research of subjects so complex as language, communication, social interaction or culture, a variety of different approaches is necessary, that the mixing of methods is beneficial, and that the more different questions about our subject we ask, the deeper the insight we get.

Patton believes that the real challenge for today's researchers is "to appropriately match methods to questions rather than adhering to some narrow methodological orthodoxy" (Patton 2002:xxii). Or, in Bryman and Burgess' (1994b) words, that "method has given way to a discussion of methodology [...as] a research process" (*ibid,* 1-2).

Contemporary research in humanities and social disciplines is characterized by a range of approaches and methods, both quantitative and qualitative, stemming from various 'schools of thought' and their "subtly different epistemological viewpoint[s]" (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2000:19). Despite the 'qualitative turn' evident in the past two decades, the 'hard' quantitative methods are still prevailing in some areas of spoken communication study, such as language attitudes, prosody, some areas of sociolinguistics, and even in intercultural competence study the use of standardized quantitative instruments still characterizes part of empirical research. In ethnography of communication, critical discourse analysis, or interactional linguistics, the naturalistic and interpretive qualitative methods are preferred, and ethnographic accounts, discourse and conversation analysis, and content analysis are tools of choice.

In the context of education research, Louis Cohen, Lawrence Manion and Keith Morrison (2000) use a tripartite classification to summarize these differences, describing approaches as 'normative', 'interpretive', or 'critical'. While normative approaches focus on the society and the social system, interpretive ones focus on the individual, and critical ones try to relate societies, groups, and individuals. Further, normative studies involve large numbers of people, and aim to arrive at generalized insights about populations, while the other two prefer small-scale in-depth research. Most importantly, while normative approaches seek to 'uncover' regularities in people's behaviour, the other two focus on 'recreating social life', and critical ones also try to identify the political and ideological factors related to power that shape human behaviour.

Much recent work has focused on methodological dispute. However, in his account of research methods in applied linguistics, Fred Perry (2005) states that the attention that the quantitative-qualitative debate has received is beside the point, at least form the perspective of 'research consumers' in applied linguistics, that is, L2 teaching and the 'pedagogical application' of research findings. He sees the difference between qualitative and quantitative approaches simply in terms of their different data collecting procedures, data analysis, and different degrees of subjectivity in data interpretation, while the epistemological issues 'wedded with these two methodologies', the philosophical issues of positivism and postpositivism, are not important for the 'consumers' of research findings. Instead of picking sides, he sees the question of methodological choices in terms of the idea of a *continuum*:

> Life would be so simple if we had only one kind of everything, but it would also be very boring. In keeping up with the rest of life, research does not provide just one simple type, nor even a choice between only two types. Rather, research can be classified, at least, by three intersecting continua: Basic – Applied, Qualitative – Quantitative, and Exploratory – Confirmatory. Although these continua are independent from each other, any given study can be classified somewhere on an intersection of the three, [...and would] appear at some point out in the three-dimensional space" (Perry 2005:72).

Perry's point fits very well into the view that we need to observe issues of communicative interaction holistically, as they occur in the 'three-dimensional' reality, between real people in real life. The complex issues of intercultural communication, L2 learning and use, and intercultural communicative competence require complex research approaches, which would comprise both the fixed and controllable variables with their quantitative relations, and the 'thick description' (Geertz 1973) offered by qualitative methods, that is, a complex approach that would carry research "across paradigms" (Anderson 2007:193). If we, like Bryman and Burges, see research as "a social process which requires careful scrutiny" (Bryman & Burgess 1994b:1), including a thorough examination of the links and relationships "between research design, research strategy and research techniques", data collection and data analysis (Bryman & Burgess 1994b:2), we need to draw on various dimensions of Perry's 'methodological continuum'.

We have already argued this point before, in a discussion of methodologies applied in EFL phonetic research (Paunović 2012). Because phonetic research has long been established as an 'exact', 'experimental', and 'hard' domain of inquiry, it has invariably used the quantitative methods and techniques of data analysis. But, particularly in the context of EFL learning and teaching, what we traditionally conceive of as 'phonetic' research would greatly benefit from widening the perspective to include additional research questions and more diverse methods of analysis. To quote Cohen, Manion and Morrison's (2000) argument in a bit different light, since "research is concerned with understanding the world [...], how we view our world(s), what we take understanding to be, and what we see as the purposes of understanding" (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2000:3), broadening the view of what "phonetic research" should comprise, and expanding our scope of interest to include more aspects of the complexity of spoken interaction,

would indeed imply a different understanding of the 'world' of speech (Paunović 2012:146). But Laver (2000) also insists that phonetics is "an interdisciplinary subject par excellence" Laver (2000:32) – material, natural, and physical, but at the same time a science about people and their behaviour. And Local reminds us that "[t]he natural home of spoken language is social interaction" (Local 2003:115). Therefore, people's spoken interaction, consisting of 'situated activities' in which phonetic cues are used, cannot really be outside the scope of 'phonetic' interest (Paunović 2012). In our study of 'speech', phonetic details need to be observed in the context in which are used, and there qualitative data can provide "rich and illuminative information" (Patton 2002:40).

Both direct and indirect qualitative data gathering procedures provide 'rich information' of this kind. Direct method techniques, such as fieldwork observation, in-depth interviews, focus-group interviews, or narratives (Patton 2002:4) capture details of the communicative situation, while indirect method techniques, such as think-aloud protocols, or projective techniques (scenario-, story- or cartoon-completion, free word association) provide insights into the participants' interpretations of the events, the way they construct meaning, and the effects of the situation on them as participants.

The inductive analysis of the qualitative data, through identifying patterns, coding and classification of the data, through comparisons and identification of the relationships between ideas, paying attention to all the details and how they contribute to the communicative situation, observing details through the 'reflexive screens' of culture, age, gender, class, social status, education, family, political praxis, language, values etc. (Patton 2002:66) – all these elements of qualitative analysis enrich our understanding of how spoken communication is realized. Combining multiple methods "increases the objectivity of our insight" and enables us to "focus on research questions and strategies, rather than framework and paradigm issues" (Patton 2002:252). Therefore, 'phonetic' research could broaden its perspective to include the study of 'speech'. Although this would be "difficult to subsume under 'phonetic' research", such a perspective "would certainly offer us deeper insights into the process of spoken interaction, which *is* the aim of phonetic investigation" (Paunović 2012:157).

The same reasons motivated the choice of the qualitative approach for data gathering and analysis in the three studies we present in the following chapters of this book. The specific methodology and techniques

used will be described for each of the studies in turn, but here we want to point at several matters relevant for all of them.

The first one is the concept of 'grounded theory' (Bryman & Burgess 1994b:4). Although all the three studies would be positioned closer to the exploratory than the confirmational end of Perry's continuum (Perry 2005:72), they are not 'atheoretical'. Since at least some of the ideas and conceptual categories were derived from the previously gathered data, all the three could be described as 'partly grounded'. The 'generation of concepts' (Bryman & Burgess 1994b:6) was employed as an aspect of our qualitative data analysis, but we did not attempt a formulation of any kind of theory, 'grounded' or not, because we view these studies as the beginning of the process of research in which the next step would be searching for similar situations and testing whether the conceptual categories identified in our data would apply to them, too. In this, we rely on Gumperz' view that our analysis cannot be based on a single corpus, but that we "must work comparatively", "systematically contrasting our analysis with other comparable ones carried out under different but comparable contextual conditions", and "determining similarities and differences in and across contexts" (Prevignano & Luzio 2003:17). Thus established relationships, when "studied comparatively across events", can "yield more general hypotheses" about the "contextualization practices" of a certain community of speakers (Prevignano & Luzio 2003:10).

Secondly, although the methodological designs of the studies are different, all the three hinge on the same basic ideas, which come from several theoretical frameworks discussed in previous chapters. These ideas guided the formulation of our research questions, the design of data gathering procedures and data analysis and interpretation.

The explanation and interpretation of the data were not separate from the description (van Dijk 2001), in accordance with the 'pattern model' (Bryman & Burgess 1994:4) and the view of critical discourse analysis as both "a method and a theory" (Fairclough 2001:121), a "theoretical perspective on language and [...] semiosis (including 'visual language', 'body language' etc.) as one element of the 'social process', which analyses "language within broader analyses of the social process" (Fairclough 2001:121). We focused not only on the *ideas* expressed by the participants, but also on their linguistic (sometimes also non-linguistic) expression, i.e. on how the participants used the language to express their ideas. The details of the context were taken into account in the analysis and interpretation, both

the local, immediate linguistic and non-linguistic context, and the broader socio-cultural context, in an attempt at a "bottom-up and top-down linkage of discourse and interaction with societal structures", focusing on the "role discourses play, both locally and globally, in society and its structures" (van Dijk 2001:118). We were particularly interested in those "units, levels, dimensions, moves, strategies, types of acts, devices and other structures of discourse" (van Dijk 2001:98) that expressed "implicit or indirect meanings", such as "implications, presuppositions, allusions, vagueness" (van Dijk 2001:104). Implicit meanings, which "may be inferred from the text without being explicitly expressed by the text" (*ibid.*) are "related to underlying beliefs, but are not openly, directly, completely or precisely asserted, for various contextual reasons, including the well-known ideological objective to de-emphasize our bad things and their good things" (van Dijk 2001:104).

Finally, another methodological issue the three studies illustrate are the different systems of data transcription used, with their varying levels of phonetic and non-verbal details. As pointed out by Gumperz (Prevignano & Luzio 2003),

> Transcription, therefore, includes all the perceptual cues – verbal and nonverbal, segmental and nonsegmental, prosodic, paralinguistic and other cues – which past and ongoing research shows speakers and listeners demonstrably rely on as part of the inferential process. This enables us not only to gain insights into situated understandings, but also to isolate recurrent form-context relationships and show how they contribute to interpretation (Prevignano & Luzio 2003:10).

In each of the studies, the system of transcription was chosen to fit the research aims and questions, and a decision had to be made as to what to extract from the recordings and include in the transcription. However, it often happened that we started with one decision about the details to include, but later, when something emerged in data analysis, had to revise the choice, to go back to the data, and modify the transcription, too, to include a previously omitted kind of detail. In this sense, the processes of data transcription and data analysis were inseparable, and the analysis consisted of several cycles of data and transcript revision. This, too, fell in line with Gumperz' observation that "transcription, as recent work has shown, must always be related to analysis" (Prevignano & Luzio 2003:18).

This happened most often with phonetic and non-verbal details, in the studies where the participants' way of speaking was relevant, or where it was important to understand the participants' mutual interaction, or where there were important 'contextualization cues' in the eliciting materials which the participants were expected to rely on in their interpretation of the material. There, all the phonetic details had to be recorded in the transcription and addressed in the prior analysis of the materials. Following Gumperz, again, we aimed to find out both what "the most likely inferences" were, and, where possible, how our participants arrived at them (Prevignano & Luzio 2003:17). Gumperz points out that this is particularly important in studies of intercultural communication, in "detecting systematic differences in interpretive practices affecting individuals' ability to create and maintain conversational involvement" (Prevignano & Luzio 2003:17).

However, some details of our participants' speech and behaviour were very difficult to record in the transcription, for the lack of symbols and conventions for representing them. In this sense, our studies also support Gumperz' criticism that in this kind of research, an important problem is that there is no universally applicable and agreed-upon system of transcription, like the IPA system for segmental representation. Gumperz does not think that the Gail Jefferson system of transcription (Jefferson 2004), commonly used in conversation analysis (and used in our studies) is detailed enough – he believes it has no means of recording "some communicatively significant prosodic and paralinguistic aspects of speech", such as "the interpretive import of phonetic variability" (Prevignano & Luzio 2003:18). Therefore, he argues for 'thick' ethnographic description that would include all the details that may prove relevant in the analysis. We did not opt for this methodological solution, but we did use researchers' notes as a source of additional information wherever possible.

Based on these views, the studies that follow represent examples of the application of qualitative methods to investigating meaning construction and interpretation in the EFL context. In its own way, each of the studies aimed to investigate the EFL students' process of thinking – how they construed certain elements or 'moments' of particular situations, what they chose as important, how they interpreted certain situation elements, in what ways they responded, and, to the extent to which it was possible, why they responded the way they did.

The general aim was two-fold: to explore the specific questions each of the studies was designed to investigate, but also, with the question of teaching for ICC in mind, to search for the issues that teaching for intercultural communicative competence needs to address, both in EFL teaching and, particularly, in EFL teacher education.

8. 'LINGUISTIC PROFILING' IN EFL

Overview

Setting off from the broad definition of the concept of *linguistic profiling* to include not only assumptions about the speaker's racial identity but any kind of inferences about the speaker's social, cultural, ethnic or educational background based on the way s/he speaks (cf. Chapter 3), the technique of focus group interview and qualitative analysis and interpretation of the data were used to investigate how 2nd year English Department students, prospective EFL teachers, constructed their evaluations of ten speakers of different regional varieties of English upon listening to their speech samples. The processes of inferencing and interpretation were observed as they were collaboratively negotiated in the focus group. The analysis aimed to identify the domains in which the participants resorted to 'linguistic profiling' most readily, and to explore how their constructed evaluations related to accent identification, language ideologies, common stereotypes, and the socio-cultural context of EFL teaching and learning.

The aim

The aim of this study was to investigate how a group of Serbian EFL students, prospective EFL teachers, would construct their evaluation of ten different regional and sociocultural varieties of English (inner, outer, and expanding circles), what kind of language attitudes they would express, what inferences they would be ready to make about the speakers upon listening to their speech, and how they would explain, justify and elaborate on their inferences.

This qualitative study was a follow-up to a previous quantitative study of Serbian EFL students' attitudes towards the same ten regional and socio-cultural varieties of English (Paunović 2009b). To build upon the findings of the quantitative study, and to explore the motivation underpinning students' attitudes, their beliefs, reasoning and emotions, the qualitative methodology was chosen, as a "way of learning about the ways people think, feel, and act", and of investigating "what beliefs (theories, folk explanations) people have about language variety, [...] which underlie and support their attitudinal responses" (Preston 2004:43, 51).

Therefore, the aim was to observe how EFL students constructed their evaluations of English speakers, how they 'made social meaning' out of the way a speaker sounded (Anderson 2007:178), that is, what kind of social, cultural and other meanings they would associate with the sound of a speaker's speech. In other words, the aim was to probe the participants' readiness to resort to linguistic profiling, that is, to make inferences about a speaker's social, ethnic, racial, religious, cultural, educational, professional or other background based only on the sound of his/her speech. More specifically, we wanted to investigate which aspects of interpretation and inference would be triggered the most readily, which specific varieties of English would prompt certain kinds of inferences, whether any kind of connection would emerge between specific properties of speech and the participants' evaluations, and whether the participants would express any kind of metacognitive awareness in this respect.

The varieties

The varieties of English used in this study (and in the earlier quantitative study, Paunović 2009b) were represented by ten speakers from the inner, outer, and expanding circles. Representing the inner and outer circles there were speakers from Southern England (St Albans, Hertfordshire, near London); Northern Ireland (Strabane, near Londonderry); Scotland (Edinburgh); Southern USA (Atlanta, Georgia); California (Oakland, S.F. area); North-Midland USA (Kansas City, Missouri); Australia (Launceston, Tasmania); and South Africa (Port Elizabeth). The expanding circle varieties were represented by an EFL speaker from Russia (Pskov; Slavic L1, as the participants'), and an EFL speaker from Greece (Ioannina; non-Slavic L1, different from the participants').

The elicitation materials consisted of the recordings from the *Speech Accent Archive* (courtesy of the Department of English, George Mason University). Each of the ten samples was the recording of one speaker reading out the same passage (the 69-word paragraph, *Please, call Stella*). All the speakers were male, aged 32-38 (average 34.6), and none had conspicuous individual phonetic features or exaggerated regional or EFL features. The ten speech samples to use were selected based on the evaluation of the twenty-five shortlisted samples, performed by three senior lectors of the English Department. (For more details about the selection of the speakers and speech samples for the study, see Paunović 2009b)

The participants

The participants were eleven second-year students of the English Department at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Niš. The attitudes of this population are very important, since they are fairly proficient EFL learners (B1+ to B2 CEFR level, according to the curriculum standards) and, at the same time, prospective EFL teachers. At the time of the study, they had not yet started their ELT Methodology training, and were not so narrowly focused on the professional identity of an EFL teacher.

The participants' age was 20-25 (average 20.9), ten were female and one male. The selection of the participants can best be described as purposive 'critical case' sampling. Namely, on the basis of previous extensive teaching experience with this class, of the students who volunteered to participate in the study these eleven were selected as representative of five relevant categories, based on their overall level of proficiency in speaking (low, medium, high), their readiness to engage in oral group activities in class (shy, talkative), and the usual gender structure of students at the Department (fewer male students).

As for the participants' potentially relevant history at the time of the study, all of them had completed their obligatory *English phonetics and phonology* course, which does familiarize students with the major 'standard' varieties of English, but not with regional or social varieties. In addition, as part of their curriculum, they had worked with one British and one American lecturer. The American lecturer was a one-year fellow engaged through an educational program of the USA government, with her regional L1 background from Alaska, while the British lecturer, born and raised in

Birmingham, has been a resident of Serbia and a lector at the English Department for eight years.

The methodology

The technique chosen for data collection was a loosely structured focus group interview, as a method most suitable to "provide insights into the attitudes, perceptions, and opinions of participants" (Krueger 1994:19). This method was chosen over one-to-one interviews for several reasons. First, the participants came from a relatively homogeneous group (second-year English Department students) and shared a common social context (studying English to become language professionals), so the group itself was 'focused' in this respect. Second, the group was not expected to reach any kind of consensus, nor was it our aim to provoke disagreement, debate, or conflict. The purpose of the interview, loosely guided by pre-set (open-ended) questions, was to provide exploratory data, that is, to elicit attitudes and other evaluations and inferences, and then to probe for the reasons and justifications behind them.

The focus group interview provided a natural setting in which the participants felt comfortable, open, and ready to contribute. Although the interview was structured around pre-set questions, the participants were encouraged to interact with one another as well as with the interviewer, and each of them chose how much they wanted to say, when and how. Very soon into the interview, it could be seen that they had established a cooperative group setting: they started helping each other verbalize their thoughts, and engaged in the group-effect chaining and cascading, finishing each other's utterances and using verbal and non-verbal signals to express agreement. Disagreements did not lead to confrontation but were resolved in the spirit of tolerance without the interviewer's intervention. This form of interview allowed us to ask all the important questions or introduce certain topics in an unobtrusive way and only if the participants hadn't spontaneously commented on the topics of interest. This was crucial to maintaining the interactive setting and good group dynamics, and resulted in a lively and natural interaction. This made it possible to regard big chunks of the interview as unified pieces of discourse and to use elements of conversational analysis as well as discourse analysis in data analysis, for instance, to observe the ordering of topics.

At the very beginning, the participants gave their consent to record the interview. The interview was based on presenting speech samples to the participants and then discussing them, so the laptop computer used for both playing the samples and recording the interview was a natural and unobtrusive part of the interview setting. After the introduction in which the participants were told about the planned organization of the activity and how we would proceed step by step, we started the interview. Each sample was discussed immediately after the listening, and the first responses were prompted by a very general question (e.g. 'What do you think?'), or, in many cases, the participants initiated it with a spontaneous comment. In the closing, the participants were asked several general questions about the different ways people speak, and we summed up the main points that came up during the interview.

The issue of credibility was addressed in planning the study design. The greatest problem was the potential researcher effect, i.e. the Hawthorne effect (Perry 2005:101), since the researcher was the data collector and, at the same time, the participants' instructor. After considering several other options, however, we concluded that the presence of a research assistant the students were not familiar with would have a more distorting effect on their participation in the interview than the presence of the researcher. Since we had worked with this group of students for a whole year prior to the study, and in courses such as *Modern English 1* and *English phonetics and phonology*, where class discussions, group activities, and dynamic interaction with the instructor were part of regular class activities, and since all the participants had successfully passed the exams in these courses prior to the study, we concluded that they had been desensitized enough to the presence of their teacher and would feel free to contribute to the discussion as they wished. Also, it was made clear that this activity was extracurricular and voluntary.

The interview lasted for 65 minutes. After the irrelevant parts (technical details, explanations, opening, and wrap-up) were filtered out of the recording, we were left with 38 minutes of the participants' comments and exchanges. The recordings were transcribed verbatim, with as much conversational phonetic detail as was considered relevant for the questions investigated, for instance, hesitations, pauses, tone height and pitch movement used for emphasis, or contrastive focus. The Jeffersonian version (Jefferson 2004) of the Conversational Analysis notation was chosen as the most suitable transcription system for the purposes of this study.

Researcher's notes kept during the interview contained notes about the participants non-verbal signs, such as gestures, facial expressions, change of posture, and descriptions of other potentially relevant elements of their behaviour, so, where they were considered important for the meaning of the message, they were included in the transcript, too, in a separate table column. At the end, most of the interviewer's back-channelling and encouraging lines were edited out of the transcript, leaving only the turns and moves that contributed to the exchange in an important way. Finally, for privacy protection, the participants' names were changed to pseudonyms in the transcript.

The methodology applied here can, therefore, be described, in Perry's terms (2005) as qualitative and exploratory. With respect to the basic – applied continuum, it would be positioned somewhere in the middle, because, although the study did not aim to formulate specific ways of application of the findings, its subject matter, topic and general social context were very closely related to the applied context of EFL teaching and learning.

In theoretical terms, the study relied on the ideas of interactional sociolinguistics, in that its main focus was not linguistic analysis *per se*, but an analysis of social evaluations through the analysis of the language used by the participants. It also relied on some principles of conversational analysis, with elements of ethnographic description, since attention was paid to the 'mechanics' and the 'temporality dimension' of the participants' talk – silence, hesitations, simultaneous talk, prosodic elements, and the local organisation of the talk (Gardner 2004:263-264). It can also be said to draw upon critical discourse analysis in Fairclough's (2003) and Blommaert's (2005) sense, since it was both textually oriented and socially situated – it aimed at analysing the participants' discourse in terms of the language used, but also in terms of the social meanings found in what they said (Fairclough 2003:3). It focused specifically on one kind of social practice – EFL teaching – and the discourse it entails (Fairclough 2003:25).

Therefore, we could say that, in Fairclough's terms, the interpretation focused on two dimensions: *discourse-as text* (analyzing the linguistic features and organisation of the discourse obtained through the data gathering procedure), and *discourse-as-social-practice* (the ideological effects and processes in which discourse is seen to operate). In Blommaert's terms, three ideas were particularly relevant for the interpretation of the data – language ideologies, language awareness and the institutional discourse

within language education (Blommaert 2005:26-27). Also, we tried to observe "orders of indexicality" (Blommaert 2005:253), and to be sensitive to some "heavily loaded and highly problematic" notions, such as, for instance, "ethnolinguistic identity" (Blommaert 2005:231).

Analysis and interpretation

The first step was a qualitative content analysis of the corpus provided by the transcript. This included identifying recurrent themes, patterns and trends in the participants' comments by singling out key words and concepts. Each identified key item was coded for its central theme, its general attitude (positive, negative, neutral), its intensity and emphasis, and the consistency of the response if the topic was repeated later in the discussion. We relied on Krueger's thematic approach and the (modified) seven-step framework of analysis (Krueger 1994; Krueger & Casey 2000), so the analysis was already partly included in the raw data collection phase, in structuring the focus group interview, and particularly in the transcription phase.

The analysis especially focused on: 1) the lexical items used by the participants (their meaning, collocations, patterns of recurrence); 2) the context (e.g. specific examples, the local context, i.e. the preceding and following parts of the discussion); 3) the frequency and extensiveness of comments; 4) the intensity of comments (and the kind of affective component they carried); 5) how specific the comments were (based on personal experience or on hypothetical situations); 6) the consistency of responses (changes of opinion or attitude); 7) the broad, general ideas that cut across different parts of the discussion.

In other words, we tried to interpret why the participants verbalized their comments the way they did, how they arrived at their social evaluations of the speakers, how they legitimized their attitudes (Fairclough 2003:98), what kind of ideologies could be traced in their evaluations, and what kind of assumptions they made in particular contexts – existential, propositional or value assumptions (Fairclough 2003:55), since ideologies can best be recognized in the things observed as 'given' (Fairclough 2003:58).

The next step was to compare, sort and chart the themes, and, following Patton (2002:91-92), to develop 'conceptual analytical categories' to classify them. Initially, the data were grouped into fourteen conceptual

categories, but some of these were later collapsed and some sub-divided, so here we focus on nine main conceptual categories identified in the participants' responses, discussed under the nine subheadings below: the phonetic properties of speech, speaker's personality, speaker's age, race, ethnolinguistic background, speech correctness, speaker's education, social status or class, and his suitability as an EFL teacher. The order in which we chose to discuss these categories does not reflect the importance the participants attached to them, or their frequency of occurrence in the participants' comments.

The last step of the analysis included the micro-level investigation of the linguistic and non-linguistic elements of moves and turns in every exchange identified as a unit of discourse within each of the thematic categories. The aim of this stage was to look for connections between the form of these elements and the meanings they communicated.

The main focus framing the interpretation of the data was the social practice of EFL teaching. Therefore, the internal consistency of comments was particularly important, because it could indicate the participants' readiness to hear a different opinion and, maybe, take a different perspective, that is, change their attitude if presented with a convincing argument by their peers.

Another element important for the interpretation was the ordering of themes (Patton 2002:53), because it indicated the relevance the participants assigned to them in making social evaluations. Finally, we focused on the participants' *orientation to difference* (Fairclough 2003:41-42), as particularly important in the EFL context, being directly related to the students' ability to develop intercultural sensitivity and intercultural communicative competence.

Phonetic properties of speech

Owing to their linguistic training, the participants proved able to discuss the phonetic properties of the speaker's pronunciation in considerable detail, which probably sets this group apart from 'ordinary' EFL learners. They felt comfortable talking about vowel length, the 'intrusive r' or the melody and rhythm of a speaker's speech, since they possessed the metalanguage to do so. That, however, did not make it any easier for them to pinpoint the phonetic cues that triggered their specific interpretative

inferences. When invited to elaborate on a specific comment containing an inference (e.g. why they thought a speaker sounded 'well-educated' or 'Caucasian'), they rarely managed to descriptively specify the phonetic properties that triggered their inferences – 'everything' was the most common response, 'everything together'. On the other hand, they readily resorted to imitation, just like any other population, as noted by Preston, who, in his study of attitudes to dialectal variety, states that "[o]vert identification of details of other varieties is very weak (perhaps particularly at phonological levels), but imitations of the varieties are often convincing" (Preston 1999b:xxxiv).

However, phonetic features were brought up as legitimization for some inferences rather than for others. Most readily linked to the speaker's phonetic properties of speech were the inferences about his geographical or ethnolinguistic background. For instance, to explain why they thought Speaker 3 was from Texas, several participants at once started imitating his vowels, and one remarked that he 'howled on vowels'. When asked why they thought Speaker 6 was from Scotland or Ireland, the response was 'because of that r-sound. And Speaker 1 provoked this exchange:

```
 Mara  ((tries to imitate the speaker's vowels)) ↑wue
       wue wue-
       ((the same /tone repeated))
       And he says (.) please call StellaR (0.3) he said
       that r sound.
Sonja  Intrusive r. ((all laugh))
  Mia  His pronunciation is [so-
Draga                       [The prosodic features of
       speech.
Jasna  His vowels are (0.3) not very (.) long.
 Vera  And somehow (0.4) it's not very err (.) ↑RHYthmic
       (0.3) compared to-=
  Mia  =Yes. The rhythm is the same all the time.
```

Although they 'knew' that something about the speaker's pronunciation made them 'recognize' his regional background, and although they tried to use the appropriate phonetic terminology to explain what it was, it was very difficult for them to verbalize what they so easily 'recognized', and simply 'knew', which was obvious from the hesitations, pauses, unfinished sentences, and the readiness to help each other finish the verbalization, that is, to construct the social meaning together.

Phonetic properties were not spontaneously discussed by the participants in the context of race, social class and status, or the speaker's

age, even when asked directly to try to specify why they thought he was 'middle-aged' or 'middle-class'. At the same time, they ventured inferences about these aspects of the speakers' identity no less readily and quickly. Similarly, the participants could not perceive an explicit link between the inferences about the speakers' personality traits and specific phonetic properties. Just once, Vera explained why she thought Speaker 6 was a 'positive person' by saying: "...somehow... how can I say... high voice...he uses a higher pitch of voice" (herself using a wider and higher pitch range for emphasis).

Conversely, in addition to ethnolinguistic background, phonetic properties were very readily linked to education, to 'correct' and 'standard' language, and the difference between 'native' and 'non-native' speakers. For the participants, revealing the typical ordering of indexicality, being 'well-educated' or not, and being 'a native speaker' or not, were the things most obviously linked to the way one sounded:

```
Vera  I don't think he's well-educated (.) No. I KNOW
      that.
Mara  No! With these things? Kids,
      ((imitates the speaker's short i-type sound,
      fronted))
Mila  I heard that. That's correct? ↓No::.
```

Similarly, Speaker 8 was identified as 'not native' because he made too many pauses and his tempo was 'too slow':

```
Vera  Not native (.) definitely. (0.4) Ahhlso reminds
      me of one of £our ↓colleagues. ((all laugh
      loudly))
Tina  His pauses (.) WAY too many!=
Vera  =[Yes.
Sonja  [and he's too ↑slow=
Mara  =Everything was so (0.4) paying attention to
      every word.=
Jasna =Too many cuts. °Yeah.
```

In these two exchanges, the participants did try to identify the phonetic properties that triggered their social evaluations of the speakers. Although this attempt was not very successful, they were not deterred, but remained very confident that their inferences were correct, and indicated that by using low fall accent tones throughout both exchanges – 'I KNOW that', says Vera., and both Mara and Mila agree.

Therefore, although the participants' social judgements were triggered by phonetic cues in all domains, they were aware of the link between the sound of speech and social interpretations only in some domains, mainly with respect to ethnolinguistic/ regional background and education (and 'correctness'). In other cases, the phonetic properties of the speakers' speech functioned as a sort of indirect indexical cues, operating at a subconscious level, and the participants were not aware of *what* triggered their social evaluations. Even with this group of *language* students, who were not 'lay persons' and did possess the metacognitive abilities and tools for linguistic and phonetic description, the link between phonetic cues and the attributions, evaluations and inferences they triggered did not always reach the conscious level.

Personality

The identified ordering of themes in the discussions that followed each of the speech samples showed that the most easily triggered were the participants' inferences about what kind of person the speaker was. The readiness and spontaneity with which the participants attributed personal traits to speakers solely on the basis of how they sounded were unmatched. These comments were, as a rule, volunteered without any prompt, and, as a rule, these were the participants' first response to the speech sample.

The analysis of the content of these comments revealed an overall positive attitude to language variety, since notably more positive than negative attributes were offered spontaneously, without a prompt. For instance, the Australian was 'cheerful, 'nice', 'casual', 'a positive person' who 'likes kids''. The speaker from southern England, too, was 'nice, friendly', and the only one described as 'sophisticated' (cf. Paunović 2009a on positive and negative 'prestige' associated with RP). All the participants agreed that the North-Midland American speaker was 'nice' and 'positive', like a 'funny neighbour', and so was the Californian speaker, who was also 'spontaneous'. The Northern Ireland speaker was 'normal' and 'ordinary', 'nothing special about him', a 'sweat-shirt-and-jeans' kind of person 'from a little town'. Even on those two occasions when negative attributes were volunteered, those were used apologetically, more as a justification for the speakers' "poor performance" in reading the passage, than as a negative judgement of their personality. Specifically, the Greek EFL speaker was described as 'careful',

and 'slow', while the Russian EFL speaker's reading was 'boring', because 'he's just that kind of person, disinterested'.

However, a closer look at the participants' evaluations revealed two important things. Firstly, it cannot be overlooked that the only two speakers negatively evaluated in terms of personal attributes were precisely the two expanding circle, EFL speakers. Although the negative evaluations were not expressed in strong terms, and were connected to the speakers' performance in the task rather than to their personality attributes, it was still noticeable that the EFL speakers were placed in a separate group by the participants, rated lower on this thematic dimension than all the other speakers.

Secondly, when observing the positive evaluations, an important difference could be observed in the *type* of attributes associated with specific varieties, that is, between the kinds of positive traits associated with different speakers. The following exchange, for example, was prompted by the speaker from California:

```
Jasna  ((hesitating)) Positive (0.4) a ↑positive
       per[son.
 Tesa              [Normal.
 Mara  Friendly... a friendly [person, yes.
Sonja                         [Friendly, warm.
 Tina  Something we're used to. That's the kind of
       language we are familiar with, like what we're
       talking here now.
Draga  Sounds normal.=
Nenad  =True, true.
 Vera  Does not sound strange.
 Mara  He sounds natural, like he's er (.) really that
       (.) what he says he is.
  Mia  It's really himself (0.2) his real self.
Jasna  Good pauhhhses also. ((laughter))
 Vera  Somehow (0.2) how can I say that that (0.3) he
       uses high voice (0.3) a higher pitch,=
Draga  =A wihhder £pitch range. ((several voices
       laugh))
 Vera  And I (0.2) I experienced that as (0.4)
       positive, as something positive in him.
Vaska  Cause he's so sponta[neous.
 Vera                      [Yes. [Yes.
Jasna                            [He's not pretending
       to be something [else.
Vaska                            [Not pretending to be
       somebody he isn't .
 Vera  It's like he's not reading (.) just like  he's
       talking normally.
```

Evoking the pattern observed in the previous quantitative research (Paunović 2009a,b), the speakers of varieties identified by the participants as 'American' (California, North-Midland) were described by attributes associated with ‘pleasantness’ rather than status, for instance, 'natural' and 'normal', 'something we are used to', as well as 'spontaneous', 'friendly', or 'warm'. On the other hand, the speakers of varieties perceived by the participants as closer to 'standard' RP were described by attributes commonly associated with status, such as ‘sophisticated’ (Southern England) or ‘calm’ (South Africa). It seems that in their social evaluations of speakers the participants indeed relied on the folklinguistic (Preston 2004) ideas of 'pleasantness', connected with closeness, and 'correctness', connected with status, associating the former with certain accents and the latter with others.

Finally, the readiness to 'profile', i.e. make inferences was the most striking property of this thematic category, compared to others. It indicates a possible order of importance in the construction of social meanings and evaluations, i.e. that the participants valued speakers' personality traits very highly, as a very important aspect of their identity.

More importantly, this was indicative, in Norenzayan and colleagues' terms, of "a very coherent and widespread theory about personality traits" (Norenzayan, Choi & Nisbett 1999:239), commonly found in language attitude investigations. The pattern of attribution in which one type of positive personal traits was associated with one group of accents, while a different type of positive personal traits was attributed to speakers of another group of accents, was indeed typical, and in line with the findings of previous quantitative research with Serbian EFL students, as well as with the findings of other studies, involving learners of different L1 backgrounds (cf. Chapter 3). This recurring pattern in the participants' responses was not a 'fundamental attribution error' in Ross' sense (1977), but was indeed indicative of a "preference for explanations [...] in terms of internal attributes" of the speakers (Choi, Nisbett & Norenzayan 1999:47) when it comes to the way they speak.

Age

Speakers' age was a topic the participants did not find very interesting. They ventured a guess only if explicitly asked to, and did not have much to say about it. However, when their estimations of a speaker's

age were compared to other evaluations of the same speaker and the overall attitude towards him, an interesting pattern occurred. Although the speakers were, actually, all aged 32 to 38, the speakers positively evaluated on other dimensions were judged to be younger, while those evaluated negatively on some other aspects were judged to be older.

For instance, while the speaker from Southern England, generally very positively judged, was described as a man in his 'mid-thirties', the speaker from Northern Ireland was judged to be a 'middle-aged man'. Similarly, the speaker from Australia, very well-liked in other dimensions, was described as 'maybe thirtyish' or 'younger', and 'pretty young', while the speaker from Scotland, judged negatively on some dimensions (though positively on others), was judged to be 'middle aged'.

This may indicate that, in the participants' attempt to make social sense of the speech samples, their evaluations operated in 'packages' of beliefs and attitudes, so that positive (or negative) evaluations were transferred from one domain into another.

The following exchange occurred spontaneously, without a prompt, after listening to the speaker from North-Midland USA. It shows how the participants clustered together quite different aspects of evaluation simply by virtue of their being all positive – in their opinion:

```
 Tina  ((smiles))a nice person=
 Mara  =early thirties (.) good looking,
       ((laughs, many voices also laugh))
Sonja  Middle to upper cla::ss.
Jasna  Educated (.) WELL-edu[cated,
 Tina                       [With a bri£ght future£
       ((several voices laugh))
Vaska  He could be an attorney (.) from the (0.4)
       [Eastern coast.
 Tesa  [Like from Boston Legal£ or e::rm Ally Mc ↑Beal£.

       ((laughs))
```

With just a couple of quick, short, but very effective brushstrokes, the participants painted a full-blown profile – a young, handsome, pleasant, successful, educated, middle-to-upper-class attorney from the East-Coast USA. This image emerged in their minds just from the sound of his speech, providing a living face to bind together the personality traits, social status and class, professional and educational background, and the regional or 'ethnolinguistic' identity of the speaker. It took them no more than 10

seconds to do this, and it was the most complete and most quickly produced speaker profile in the study.

This short exchange also illustrates the power of stereotypical images, how easily they are triggered by the sound of speech, and how closely visual and acoustic cues cooperate in our interpretations of the social world. The credit, of course, goes to today's popular culture, particularly the mass media, through which we get such images daily.

Race

The theme of the speaker's race was never spontaneously introduced by the participants, but when prompted, they produced inferences readily and quickly. What we were interested in was not whether their inferences would be accurate or not (and they were not), but what they would construct the speaker's racial identity from, and how confidently. The lexical items they used were 'white' or, more often, 'Caucasian', 'black' or, more often, 'African American', and 'Aboriginal'.

Eight speakers were quickly profiled as ‘white’, without hesitation or disagreement, while two speakers were construed as difficult to profile. However, when asked why they thought a particular speaker was ‘Caucasian’ or ‘Aboriginal’, the participants could not say what their inferences were based on, and often backed into a position of a much lesser confidence (using interjections, complex fall-rise pitch movement, segmental lengthening, facial expressions and gestures to signal uncertainty).

Construing the racial identity of the Californian speaker provoked a very revealing exchange:

6 voices	White (0.3) yes white. (.) CauCAsian
Vaska	I don’t know.
Interv.	*Can’t tell?*
Vaska	No. I can’t tell.
Mia	He ↑I:S white, he is.
Vera	He’s ↑NOT black (.) DEfinitely.
Tina	He’s not?=
Sonja	=I THINK [so.
Jasna	[No, he’s NOT (0.2) I can ↑HEAR that.
Interv.	*You can hear that, (0.2) in the way a person speaks?*
	((not cajoling, neutral))
Vera	Yes.=
3 voices	=Yes, ↓definitely.
Vaska	Not ↑a::lways,

Mara Yes, (02) no: e:::m again (0.3) ↑Movies (0.4)
>We have African Americans presented as
speaking< SLANG,(.) A::lways in the movies (.)
but there are ↑EDUcated African Americans (.)
who can speak PE::rfectly. (0.3)
Then you CAN'T tell (.) make a difference (.) if
he's black or, (0.3) doesn't ↑HAVE to be.
Vaska He could be ChiNE:se >for all you know< or (0.3)
↑ANYthing.
Mara Yes, you can't tell from his (0.3) ↑SPEECH (.)
WHERE he was born all right, but (.) not if he's
he's (.) white or black maybe (.)
only his education and that-

The most surprising was the conviction with which so many participants asserted they could 'hear' a person's racial background in the way s/he speaks, while only Vaska contended that she could not. However, Vaska's comments were not put forward as loudly and confidently as the others', and she did not choose to argue her point more energetically. But she did not change her mind, either, as obvious from her last turn in the exchange.

It was only towards the end of the exchange that Mara pointed to the role of social agents such as the media ('movies') in making certain social identities visible or invisible, and in promoting particular kinds of images about some social groups. She put this forward as a justification for the inference they had all made so quickly about the speaker's racial identity. That this whole turn was apologetic, indicating that she had realized that this kind of racial profiling was inappropriate, was obvious from the initial hesitation and pauses, interrupted structures, and the increased tempo, stress and loudness towards the end of the turn. The others, who had all loudly agreed with her in the first part of the exchange, remained silent during her last two turns, showing their agreement only by an occasional nod.

However, by stating that 'there are *educated* African Americans who can speak *'perfectly'* so you *'can't tell'* their racial background, Mara in fact expressed two beliefs – that you can speak 'perfectly' only if you are 'educated', and that if you speak 'perfectly', people won't be able to tell your race. What we see as the most problematic here is not the standardizing ideology in Milroy's (2001) sense, though it can be observed in the repeated association of 'speaking properly' and 'education', nor the fact that Mara's evaluations were based on the notion of 'correctness' in Preston's sense (1999, 2004), but the underlying belief that socially desirable speech is the one stripped precisely of its racial information, and not necessarily other

kinds of background information. In other words, if you are 'educated' and able 'to speak properly', it is all right (to a certain extent) if you show the 'traces' of where you were born, but not of your racial identity.

This ordering of indexicality (Blommaert 2005) was very worrying indeed, especially considering the fact that in the Serbian social context racial issues are not particularly difficult, in comparison to some others (ethnic, religious, economic). Or, conversely, it may be that the participants' ordering of importance in making social evaluations was such precisely because this problem is not immediately relevant in the Serbian social context. This latter interpretation is supported by the fact that no spontaneous comments were made about the speaker's race, and it was never the first theme to be introduced after hearing the speech sample.

Still, these findings suggest that from the perspective of intercultural communicative competence it is necessary to raise students' awareness about various issues that may be problematic in some contexts or that are ideologically loaded, even if they may not be relevant in the local context.

Ethnolinguistic background

For six out of ten speakers, the participants' first and spontaneous response was an attempt to identify their place of origin or 'accent'. Apparently, it was very important for the participants to be able to 'place' the speaker in terms of his 'ethnolinguistic'/ regional background. This can be interpreted as a sign of a certain processing order of acoustic information, but also as a sign that the participants attributed special significance to this bit of social information in encounters with unfamiliar speakers. Apart from the attribution of personal traits, this was the category in which they made inferences most quickly and eagerly.

Two things emerged as important in this category. One was the accuracy of accent identification, much greater for inner-circle varieties than for the others, and the other was the participants' readiness to make the inference, again, much lower for speakers whose accents were not identified with the inner circle.

The accuracy of accent identification in this study followed almost exactly the pattern observed in the earlier quantitative research of Serbian EFL students' attitudes (Paunović 2009b). Namely, the (in)accuracy of accent identification revealed that the participants' ethnolinguistic inferences

were based not on the actual familiarity with the phonetic properties of particular regional and social varieties of English, but rather on the abstract constructs of 'real' language in Preston's (2004) sense. The speakers from England and the USA were placed most accurately in terms of the 'language', but not in terms of the actual regional variety they used. The most confidently identified speaker was the one from Southern England, described as a 'typical Englishman'. The speakers from California and North-Midland USA were both very confidently identified as 'American', but beyond that, only one participant attempted to describe the Californian speaker as coming "from LA", with obvious hedging (*'I would say...' 'maybe'* repeated). Therefore, it was obvious that the participants operated with general constructs about 'real languages', such as 'American' or 'British' (Preston 2004). Similarly, the speaker from Atlanta, Georgia, was very quickly and confidently identified as coming from 'Texas' by almost all the participants. 'Texas', obviously, represented another symbolic construct, signifying 'Southern American' speech, as distinct form '(General) American'.

The three other inner-circle varieties were identified less confidently – the Australian speaker by only one participant, although she was rather confident, and repeated her opinion even though several other participants stated that he was from England. The speakers from Scotland and Ireland were both described, with uncertainty, as 'either Scottish or Irish', the lack of confidence indicated by hesitations, the tone of voice, interjections, and hedges (*'I think'*). Although made with much less confidence, the inferences about these inner-circle speakers were still made much more easily than those about the outer- and expanding circle speakers.

The speaker from Port Elizabeth, South Africa, was, in a way, the most difficult to place. The participants' reluctance to respond (a long silence before anybody spoke), and the range of possibilities they offered (*'somewhere here... ', 'North', 'South', 'Europe, but not Russia...', 'France', 'Germany', 'ex-Yugoslavia'*) indicated that his ethnolinguistic identity was as difficult to make out as his racial identity. The participants seemed to have assigned this outer-circle English speaker a sort of 'ambiguous' status, unable to pinpoint his social identity and make 'clear' inferences about him, and they repeatedly evaluated him as 'neither here nor there'.

An obvious difference, not so much in the correctness of identification as in the *willingness* to try and place them, was observed for the two expanding-circle speakers. The Russian EFL speaker was identified first as 'definitely not a native speaker', and only then as possibly 'Slavic' or

'Russian'. The Greek EFL speaker was the most difficult to place, and only four participants attempted, with a lot of hesitation, pauses, and hedges. Half the participants asserted that he could not be ‘a native speaker’, because his speech was 'way too *careful*".

What emerged as important in this category was the standardizing ideology behind the participants' evaluations and interpretations. Their responses to inner-circle varieties were noticeably different from the others. The inferences the participants made were never explicit value judgements, and can also be explained by the fact that 'American' and 'British' English were the varieties they had been exposed to the most and therefore the most familiar with. Therefore, this need not mean that they attributed higher social value to these varieties than the others simply because they were quicker to try and identify them. That could simply be a sign of closer familiarity.

However, one other detail does point to the influence of standardizing ideology in the participants' social judgements. The concept of the 'native speaker' was introduced in the discussion by the participants themselves, as an important attribute. Most importantly, this attribute was associated with the 'non-native', i.e. expanding circle speakers, and not with inner circle speakers. *Not* being a native speaker was the attribute offered as the main defining property of one of the EFL speakers, and as the first and most important property of his speech. It was almost as if being a 'native speaker' was not a property that inner-circle speakers *had*, but rather a property that non-inner circle speakers *lacked*.

'Correctness'

The notion of 'correctness' was another category that emerged spontaneously in the participants' evaluations of the ten speakers, in line with Preston’s experience that "[c]oncerns with correctness are more frequently mentioned than any others in overt discussions of language and variety" (Preston 1999:xxxiv; cf. Niedzielski & Preston 2003). The participants' overall positive frame of mind (which *is* important for future teachers) could be seen in the fact that, as with most other attributions, they volunteered positive judgements more readily than negative ones. However, it was also clear that they linked the idea of 'correct' pronunciation with that of 'native-like' pronunciation, since explicit evaluations of the 'correctness' of their speech was the first spontaneous comment offered for only two speakers –

the southern England one (*'proper English', 'like the BBC'*), and the speaker from South Africa (*'perfect', 'almost perfect pronunciation'*).

Three ideas can be discerned behind the participants' evaluations. Firstly, they did operate with the construct of 'proper' English, implying that there are also 'improper' Englishes, and 'perfect' pronunciation of the former, as opposed to the 'imperfect' pronunciation of the latter. They also pointed to the role of socializing agents, such as the media, in promoting the standardization ideology (*'like the BBC*'). They did not comment on the role of the educational system, but it can be assumed that the same kind of ideas are promoted at school, too.

Secondly, as illustrated by the following exchange, the property that decided five of the participants *against* identifying Speaker 4 as 'native' was precisely his 'almost perfect pronunciation', in Mara's words, *too* perfect to be 'natural', so he was immediately identified as 'definitely not native', as 'a foreigner'. The affective component was not decisive here, because the South African speaker did not evoke either positive or negative feelings (*'I don't like him, and I don't dislike him', 'It's all the same to me, totally'*):

```
Jasna  ((no hesitation)) ↑NOT a native speaker.=
 Vera  =Not native,[no.
Sonja              [Yes, I think that too.
 Mila  Perfect, almost perfect pronunciation
 Vera  [Yes.
Sonja  [Yes.
 Mara  It's not ↑natural (0.3) how phherfect it is. ((laughs))
```

The ideological assumption behind this is that 'education' can override the 'native – non-native' difference, and that 'correct' speech can be learned. Still, even when 'non-native' speakers attain 'almost perfect' pronunciation, they can still be 'recognized' as non-native. The fact that this discussion was prompted by the pronunciation of an outer-circle English speaker, and not an EFL speaker, revealed that the participants defined 'native speech' even more narrowly than 'correct' speech which can be attained through 'education'. Although they did not add value judgements here, and although they did not explicitly identify with either one of these two speakers, when compared to the rest of the 'package' of attributes associated with one speaker and the other, the participants, in fact, expressed two attitudes – they *liked* the 'native' speaker better, but on the other hand, *respected* the 'perfect' pronunciation attained by the one they believed to be 'non-native', since they associated it with his 'education'.

Finally, it should be stressed once again that the participants volunteered only positive comments related to 'correctness'. They did not *spontaneously* describe any of the varieties as 'incorrect' or 'non-standard', but brought this up only when asked to justify their inferences or elaborate on their evaluations. However, when they did express negative comments, these were pretty 'harshly' worded. It was in this context that probably the strongest negative comment in the whole study occurred:

Interv.	*Would you hire him as an English teacher?*
Jasna	((immediately, no hesitation)) ↓No.
Draga	No.↓No.
Mara	Here? ↓No. (.) But in Texas, **(.)** Why not.=
4 voices	=No, not [him.
Nenad	[Maybe, I don't know.
Tina	No, not here. I wouldn't.
Interv.	*Why not?*
Vera	(0.3) To teach ↓what? ↑ENGlish?! ((incredulous tone))
Interv.	*Yes, English.*
Vera	<↓He doesn't speak °the English language.°>

Although it may sound paradoxical, it was in this exchange, despite the overt expression of an uncharacteristically strong negative attitude, that we believe a very important positive idea could be found behind the participants' evaluation, and a kind of generally positive orientation to difference. Namely, as important as Vera's strongly voiced negative evaluation of the speaker was Mara's comment: '*Here? No. But in Texas, why not?*' It revealed her belief that the pronunciation of the Southern USA speaker, although – being 'incorrect' and 'substandard' – not suitable for the EFL teaching context 'here', could be seen as suitable 'there', in its *local* context. This indicated an ability to acknowledge relevant differences in the social contexts, even in the professional sphere of language education, where, in the participants' opinion, 'correctness' plays the most important role.

A similar awareness of the differences in the social context, and an acknowledgement of the notion of *appropriateness* in addition to the notion of 'correctness', was expressed with respect to the other socialization agent the participants repeatedly found important – the media. The following exchange immediately followed the one above:

Vera In the media (.) they must (0.2)↑properly pronounce (.) >they must be properly pronounced< (0.4) every feature has to be correct. (.) Every feature should be (0.5) ↑STANdard.

3 voices ((certain, energetic)) Yes.

Sonja Depends [on-

Mara [It depends on the kind of the TV show-=

Vera =OK, yes (.) Jerry Sprin[ger-

Vaska [and depends on how formal the show is(0.3) or informal,=

Mara = >depends on the kind of ↑audience that watches it or listens to it< (.) like the BBC for instance, it has to be er high (.) highly professional (0.4) if not (0.4) some other shows (0.3) not so good shows, well (.) ↑ANYbody- could do that.

Sonja ↓Right.

Although 'proper' pronunciation was explicitly listed as an indispensable prerequisite for the 'serious' media, which should promote 'correct' language, all the participants in this exchange quickly accepted Sonja's and Mara's view that 'it depends' on the kind of the show, its purpose, and its audience.

To put it briefly, the participants' views can be described as indeed deeply rooted in the abstract construct of 'correct' language. They also expressed a belief that it is only natural that 'correct' language should be promoted through the education system and the 'serious' media. However, they also expressed the belief that language variation is natural, acceptable, and appropriate in some social contexts. Therefore, the participants' general attitude to language variety could probably be best described as judicious readiness to bracket differences and allow for variation, depending on social contexts of language use.

Education

The patterns observed in the participants' evaluations of the speakers' level of education can best be described in dynamic terms, that is, how quickly and readily a given speaker was judged to be well-educated or uneducated. In this category, the participants proved to be especially prone to 'profiling', that is, making quick and confident inferences based on the sound of the person's speech. This can be explained as a sign that both the notions of 'correctness' and 'native-like' speech were, in the participant's

view, closely connected to 'education', that is, that they perceived the 'correctness' of speech as a matter of 'being educated'.

The speakers judged without hesitation to be well-educated were the ones from Southern England and South Africa. Virtually all the participants in the focus group voiced their agreement here. However, when asked to explain this inference, they offered very vague justifications, referring to the phonetic properties of speech, such as 'his tone of voice' or his 'good sounds'. Whether the evaluations of the speaker were positive or negative, he was judged to be 'well-educated' or 'uneducated' simply 'because he speaks like that'. It should be noted that all the speakers were recorded reading the same passage, so the differences could not be ascribed to lexical or grammatical 'deviations from the standard'. The participants' evaluations were based solely on the sound of his speech, his accent.

As quickly and stereotypically as the South African speaker was labelled 'well-educated, certainly', the Southern American speaker was described as uneducated, with no clear legitimization of the explicit profiling:

```
 Tesa  Because of the way he-=
Nenad  =speaks.
 Mara  Because of the way he pronounces certain words. He
       doesn't sound like a man who is eh (.) highly educated.
Vaska  The accent is ↑not the measure of your education, you
       [can't-
 Mara  [I know, but, he sounds (0.4)  >it's only my opinion,
       but he sounds< (0.4) he doesn't sound ↑EDUcated to me.
```

Only Vaska stated that 'accent is not the measure of your education'. The others were not easily dissuaded, and insisted that the speaker did not 'sound educated', although they used a hedge this time 'it's only my opinion'. But their 'opinion' was definitely based on the speaker's accent and the way 'he pronounces certain words'. A similar, quick and negative evaluation was offered for the Northern Ireland speaker, with only some hedges and hesitations (*'I don't know... it seems to me like that...'*).

However, while these four speakers were profiled as either educated or not very quickly and with certainty and strong opinion, the other six were evaluated much less readily and quickly, with more variety in opinions, and more hedges. As for the Australian speaker, only Draga ventured a guess, in an uncertain tone of voice "*Educated... I think... Educated?*". Even more symptomatic was the fact that the Californian and the North-Midland

American speakers were explicitly described as *impossible to evaluate* for education - *"he could be anything"*, *"it's impossible to say"*, and, as Vera put it, *"We cannot decide about his education or his social class or anything like that from what he said."*

When the speakers' evaluation on the thematic dimension of 'education' was compared to the same speaker's evaluation on other thematic dimensions, the typical pattern could be observed. As seen before, in the analysis of the types of personal traits associated with particular accents, the speakers of certain varieties, chiefly 'American' (California, North-Midland) were described by attributes associated with 'pleasantness', i.e. closeness and solidarity, while the speakers of varieties perceived as close to 'standard' RP were described by attributes associated with 'correctness', i.e. high status. The pattern found with respect to 'education' related to this pattern of attribution in a specific way. The speakers evaluated highly in terms of status and correctness, the Southern England and South African speakers, were construed as 'well-educated', too. However, the Australian speaker and the two 'American' speakers, positively evaluated on 'pleasantness' (*beautiful English, beautiful American English; sounds nice; I like it*) and closeness (*talking normally; natural; spontaneous; not strange*), were very difficult to evaluate in terms of 'education'. This once again showed that the participants' evaluations were deeply rooted in the abstract ideas, the constructs of 'pleasant', 'normal language' close to us, and the 'correct' language, associated with high status. Here, however, another dimension was added, since for the participants, high status was obviously closely connected with being 'well-educated'. Therefore, the three 'pleasant' varieties of English could not be linked to the high status deriving from 'education'.

Social status or class

Beside the thematic category of race, the speaker's social status and class were the theme virtually never brought up by the participants without a prompt. This kind of inference was never offered spontaneously, and never as the first comment upon listening to the sample. This ordering of themes suggests that in the participants' hierarchy of importance this social aspect was not positioned very high, at least not in the context of language variation and education. However, although never the first, the topic of the speaker's social background invariably emerged at some point during the discussion,

as a piece of information of *some* importance in the participants' construction of the speaker's social identity.

The speaker's social status proved to be a complex construct, and the participants drew on different things in making their evaluations. On the one hand, it was perceived as closely related to 'education', so the speakers evaluated as 'educated' were also interpreted as being of higher social status. For instance, the highest social status ('upper class') was ascribed to the South African speaker, also judged to be very 'well educated'. On the other hand, although seen as 'educated', the speaker from Southern England was evaluated as 'middle class', lower than the North-Midland American speaker ('middle to upper' class), who was not associated with a high level of education. This indicated that in making inferences about the speakers' social background, the participants relied on education to a great extent, but on other ideas, too, including the notion of 'correctness'.

The discussion about the speaker from Scotland brought the underlying notion of 'correctness' into focus, too, but in a somewhat different way. The participants commented on the social consequences of sounding 'wrong' and 'incorrect':

```
 Tina  This one ↑whhon't get a £job that easy! ((several
       laughs))
Draga  It doesn't have to be(0.3) I mean, he's from Ireland
       (.) that's how they ↑speak over there.
  Mia  I know, [but-
Sonja          [If you want to get a ↑JOB (.) you you'll do
       your best.
```

Despite Draga's attempt to verbalize the view that language varieties are legitimate, at least in their regional socio-cultural contexts (*'that's how they speak over there'*), most participants expressed the belief that seemed to them quite simple and obvious: if you want to get a job – *any* job – you should do your best to sound 'correct', that is, 'lose the accent'. They saw nothing wrong in the underlying idea that you should 'standardize' your speech if you want to be socially acceptable is commonplace in today's world.

In this thematic category, the role of stereotypes and even prejudice in making social evaluations was also noticeable. Stereotypical images, reflected in the traditional terminology used to describe class distinctions, were evoked by the sound of several speakers' accents. The EFL Greek speaker was described as 'a white collar worker', and *'definitely not a*

construction worker', *'maybe a student'* (this last image was felt to be the most suitable, so most participants agreed here). On the contrary, the speaker from Scotland was evaluated as 'definitely not a student', and *'maybe a blue-collar worker?*'. Popular mass media, once again, offered a handy image to help build a quick profile, in Mara's comment: *'Like that guy from The Simpsons... What's his name?'*

On the other hand, this thematic area was important because here the participants showed a certain level of awareness of the role of stereotypes and language ideologies in shaping our ideas about 'right' and 'wrong' in language. They explicitly commented on the role of stereotypical images in our social evaluations of others, as in the following exchange, which was part of the discussion following the Southern American speaker:

Mia	Like a farmer.=
Vera	=Yes!=
Draga	=[A farmer.
Jasna	[A far[mer.
Mara	[A cowboy. ((all laugh))
Interv.	*Couldn't he be for instance a businessman?*
5 voices	((very loudly, laughing)) ↑NO! ((definite \ tone))
Interv.	*A real estate agent? A student?*
Draga	((not so definitely)) [No,
Jasna	[No ((definite \ tone))
Mila	No::- ((uncertainty, doubt))
Vaska	Maybe a (.) businessman from ↑TEXAS (.) we don't know ehh (.) what they look like, and-=
Vera	=Yes, but a businessman (.) selling cows or sohhhmething, ((laughs))
Mara	Definitely ↑NOT a student, (.) or a teacher, or somebody-
Vaska	It ↑doesn't mean if he is from Texas that he is a ↑COWboy, or dull-
Tesa	He can be very rich in fact (0.2) All that oil... (all laugh and nod))

Although the exchange got a funny turn, and Vaska's dissonant comment did not make the others uncomfortable but was quickly accepted by the whole group, a huge discrepancy between the comments made quickly and spontaneously at the beginning of this exchange and those they all endorsed at the end suggests a likely discrepancy between their covert and most easily triggered stereotypical and prejudiced attitudes and the ones expressed 'on a second thought'.

Admittedly, the interviewer might have had some influence on this change of heart. The repeated invitation to the participants to make an

inference about the possible professional identity of the speaker may have been interpreted as disagreement or even disapproval of the evaluations they had made. Even so, they did show a readiness to accept the possibility that their attitudes could be shaped by stereotypes and prejudiced media-images.

The EFL teacher

Most of the thematic categories identified in the corpus were not pre-conceived, but emerged from the data, through the participants' volunteered contribution to the discussion. In the initial instructions, before the interview started, the participants were told that they were expected to share their thoughts, impressions and evaluations of each speaker after hearing a sample of his speech. Showing a great willingness to share their thoughts, the participants more often than not initiated the discussion themselves, and did not wait for the interviewer to ask any questions. Also, the discussion went on for as long as somebody in the group had something to say. The interviewer's job was very easy, and only occasionally was it necessary to spur the discussion, usually by a very general question, like 'What do you think?' or 'What's your impression?', or just 'Anything else?'. The intensive group dynamics throughout the interview allowed us to observe what topics and themes the participants introduced in the discussion themselves, instead of guiding their choices by pre-planned questions.

However, two questions were included in the planned interview design, because we could not be sure that the participants would raise them on their own, and they were central to the aim of the study. One was the question about the speaker's regional or ethnolinguistic background, and the other was the question of his estimated suitability as an EFL teacher. The latter of these was the last question asked about each speaker, when it was obvious the participants were not going to add anything else on their own.

The evaluations the participants made of the ten speakers with respect to this question were almost perfectly matched with the findings of the earlier quantitative studies (Paunović 2009a,b). Firstly, the participants were much 'harsher' in making this judgement than in any other, applying very strict criteria when evaluating the speaker's 'potential' as an EFL teacher. Only three speakers were immediately, unanimously and confidently evaluated as very suitable – the Australian, South African and Southern England speakers. The two speakers of General American were

judged as possible EFL teacher candidates, though merely ‘acceptable’ (*'Why not?' 'Yes, sounds interesting enough*', accompanied by non-verbal signals - facial expressions, shrugging of shoulders). The other five speakers were judged as unacceptable.

Secondly, an interesting underlying belief emerges when the five positive speaker evaluations are compared, because the participants offered very different justifications for them. The speaker from South Africa was described as 'a perfect choice', because he was 'responsible' and 'professional', and also because he was 'well-educated'. His accent was not mentioned; on the contrary, his speech was explicitly described as 'neutral', without traces of his background (ethnic, racial, geographical), and, in some participants' opinion, that was precisely the property that qualified him as a ‘good professional’, and thus a most suitable EFL teacher. The Australian speaker was positively evaluated because he showed 'enthusiasm' and sounded ‘great’, 'like an actor'. So, the features qualifying these two speakers for the job were mainly related to their performance and professional skill. Conversely, for the two American speakers, the positive evaluations were justified by their positive personal traits (‘interesting’, ‘spontaneous’). Therefore, it could be said that the participants' abstract image of an EFL teacher combined some personal attributes with professional skills.

However, the very positive evaluation of the speaker from Southern England, offered immediately, enthusiastically, without a moment's hesitation, was completely different from either of these two. When asked to explain why he would be a 'perfect EFL teacher', the participants did not offer his professionalism or his perceived skills as justification, not even his positive personal traits. They simply offered *no* justification, as if their evaluation were self-evident. And, in a way, it was – their positive evaluation was obviously based on the speaker’s 'native' accent alone. However, it was also important that none of the participants actually *verbalized* this, nobody explicitly mentioned this speaker’s accent, whether because they did not want to create the impression that they supported the stereotype of the 'perfect-RP teacher' (if they were aware of it), or because they were unaware of what *really* triggered this evaluation. In any case, of the speakers positively evaluated as suitable EFL teachers, this one was chosen for reasons different from those that legitimized the others.

Lastly, the legitimizations offered for the negative evaluations of five speakers as potential EFL teachers revealed three things. One was the underlying belief that a 'foreign' accent was unacceptable for this role,

because for the two expanding-circle speakers their ‘accent’ was explicitly pointed out as the disqualifying property. Another was that not even 'native' accents were acceptable, if they were too different from the 'correct' variety. Of the five speakers judged unsuitable as EFL teachers, three were actually native speakers of English regional varieties – Southern American, Northern Irish, and Scottish varieties.

The third underlying idea was that the private and the public spheres were sharply divided in the participants' view of the EFL teacher's social role. For instance, one variety provoked most ambivalent reactions. While listening to the Scottish speaker, almost all the participants smiled, nodded in approval, and later expressed how much they liked the way he sounded (*'I love him!', 'I'd like him to be my best friend!', 'So cute!'*). Even so, he was readily and unanimously rejected as a possible EFL teacher. This exchange illustrates how they justified this:

Interv.	*And as an English teacher?*
7 voices	((immediately, no hesitation)) ↑NO!
Nenad	Not in ↑MY private £schoo:l of English! ((laughter))
Interv.	*Can you tell me why not?*
several	hmm, ha:: ((the \ tone roughly meaning ‘no need to ask’))
Vera	He doesn’t speak ↑English.
Interv.	*You said you loved him, right? He could be your ‘best friend’?*
Draga	That’s not the same.
Vera	That’s not important, this is professional.
Mila	Teaching is a profession.
Mara	If he speaks like ↑that (0.3) no one would understand him.
Vera	Yes.
Jasna	Actually, ↑WE couldn’t understand him, let alone other students- ((several voices of agreement))
Vaska	We ↑COULD understand him, but-=
Draga	= I mean, personally, I’d like to know him, and I’d like to know how to speak like that, I like it, but not as a teacher. (0.2) No.

This shows how the participants constructed the abstract social identity of an EFL teacher. Being a teacher is 'not the same' as being a friend, because 'teaching is a profession'. It is a social role which entails a whole package of norms, first and foremost 'speaking properly'. So, even though we may like an accent in our 'private' life, it is not acceptable for a teacher to speak with such an accent. And although the participants raised

the issue of intelligibility as legitimisation, Jasna's comment was revealing – 'we *could* understand him, *but*...'. This little 'but' summarizes perfectly the still controversial issue of what kind of models, standards and aims are considered acceptable in EFL teaching. Theoreticians and researchers may argue some standpoints, but, as often shown in empirical investigations, students and EFL teachers have views and beliefs of their own. It seems that the participants in this study, as prospective EFL teachers, shared the dilemma worded by Deborah Cole (2007) – "How do I *respect* difference and yet maintain *standards*?"

To end with, another exchange by the participants was important, pointing to their perception of the social role of teachers but also other socialization agents, primarily the media. When asked to explain the negative evaluation of the Southern USA speaker as an EFL teacher, several participants legitimized the judgement by the speaker's accent, which they explicitly described as 'substandard': *'It's not a standard accent, not what's required for students... for foreign language students'*.

But this time, the participants' reasoning developed an important turn. Thinking about the evaluation they had just made, and trying to understand where it came from, they once again brought up the topic of the media and their role in perpetuating common stereotypes, and expressed the view that the media are a powerful tool for the promotion of certain cultural and social values.

Sonja Maybe we associate this accent with colloquial speech?
Maybe that's why we think- ((hesitates))
Tina Maybe it's some kind of ↑prejudice, because of it we think that someone is (.) uneducated (0.3) or stupid-
Sonja Yes, that's it.
Tina Or ignorant.
Mila A farmer-=
Mara =Movies and TV shows are (0.4) the main culprit for that, because er (.) in movies and TV shows (.) you always have that the people from Texas, or from the ↑South (.) are uneducated.
Jasna Yes!
Mara The uneducated ones, and from the North are are usually the educated, the principals, businessmen-
Tesa A-ha-
Mila So, it's probably ↑THAT (.) TV shows-

Vera According to their (0.3) their (.) how do we say this? (0.2) to their rules, maybe he's a perfectly (0.2) average person, even (0.3) a special one (.) where he lives.

Sonja's comment represented a first step away from the previous judgemental evaluation, and Tina explicitly introduced the issue of prejudice. Mara's comment about the role of the media in shaping language attitudes runs along the lines of Pavlenko and Norton's (2007) warning that the media fundamentally influence the kinds of 'imagined communities' individuals find desirable, by making certain identity options "publicly visible and politically valued" while excluding others by making them 'invisible' or devalued (*ibid.*, 675). Here again, the participants opened the space for this speaker to be 'perfectly' acceptable in his own social and cultural context. Most importantly, they showed an awareness of the powerful influence of the stereotypical images we receive through the media and use as short-keys in our evaluations of others.

We find this ability of the participants to recognize stereotypes, prejudice and negative imaging, and to – at least occasionally – rise above them and accept the legitimacy of difference, promising indeed. Although the views, beliefs, and attitudes they expressed were, at times, quite conservative and traditional, especially when it comes to their idea of what an EFL teacher should be like, it is very important that they were able, now and then, to take a step back and take a critical look at their own attitudes, beliefs and stereotypical views.

Final thoughts

The participants in this study, as EFL students and prospective teachers, showed several things. Firstly, the thematic categories and concepts identified in their discussions indicated a certain order of importance in making social meaning and social evaluations of others. Personal traits, regional and ethnolinguistic background, and the speaker's perceived level of education were more important than his age, social status/class or race. Consequently, the participants indeed proved to be prone to 'linguistic profiling' in these former domains more than in the latter, making quick social inferences about the speakers' personality, regional/ethnolinguistic background, and level of education based only on the way their speech sounded.

Secondly, the ideas of 'correctness' and 'pleasantness' in Preston's folklinguistic sense (Preston 2004) were important undercurrents shaping their social interpretations, pleasantness being linked to the personal sphere

of life, and correctness rather to the professional and public spheres, particularly to certain social roles, such as the role of EFL teachers or the media. At the same time, the participants' construct of 'correct', 'proper' speech had flexible, fuzzy edges and could not, in fact, be identified with any specific variety, or any fixed set of specific speech properties. Rather, it was an *idea* in Preston's sense (2004), but this idea was essential in their construction of the notion of EFL teaching.

Although they showed little awareness of their 'ideologically loaded' attitudes (Milroy 2001:53), that is, were much less aware of some social interpretations of the phonetic properties of speech than of others (e.g. those related to social status or race), and although they felt particularly those interpretations concerning 'correct' and 'educated' speech to be 'given' in Fairclough's sense (2003:58), they did show some level of positive orientation to difference, acknowledging the appropriateness of variety depending on the social context. They also acknowledged the possible influence of stereotypes and prejudice on their social interpretations, but also pointed to the responsibility of social agents in promoting certain images and values.

The study illustrated how the participants constructed social meaning from the information available only through the sound of speech, how their interpretation of this speech was 'mediated' by their own attitudes and beliefs, and thus necessarily made subjective (Dervin 1983:2), and how they accepted some pieces of information [...] as 'fact' and disregarded others (Dervin 1996:3), in the specific social and cultural context of EFL learning and teaching. The technique of focus group interview also made it possible to observe how the group constructed meanings and interpretations collaboratively (Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005), influencing each other's interpretations and often reaching a common 'meaning' after starting from different ideas, illustrating the point that sensemaking is a process of learning, too (Dervin 2003), and integrating this experience "into their understanding of the world around them" (Kolko 2010:3).

From the point of view of developing intercultural communicative competence, this study, like many previous ones, showed that language attitudes were indeed the filter through which the participants perceived other people's speech. The participants' inferences and social interpretations were often triggered by the phonetic properties of speech, without their being aware of that.

Therefore, to avoid 'errors of attribution' in intercultural communication, students' positive attitudes to language varieties need to be developed, but what may be even more important, particularly for future EFL teachers, is a general raising of their awareness of what the process of sensemaking involves, how our language attitudes influence our social judgements, and how meaning is constructed in communicative situations.

9. WHAT DID THEY SAY? WHAT DID THEY MEAN?

Overview

Few research studies have investigated how intonation is perceived by EFL learners, especially with respect to its discourse, pragmatic, interactional and illocutionary functions. Even fewer studies can be found that investigated the role of intonation in EFL students' process of meaning construction and interpretation. In this study, we focus on EFL students' ability to perceive and make sense of the messages carried or supported by intonation in three different types of communicative situations. Think-aloud verbal reports (Bowles 2010; Ericsson & Simons 1993) were chosen as the methodological tool for data collection, to gather students' own reports on how they comprehended and interpreted the presented conversation samples. The study also aimed to investigate whether explicit training in English phonetics influenced EFL students' ability to perceive and interpret intonation, so the performance of first-year and third-year English department students was compared. The findings did point to a certain influence of explicit phonetic training, at least with respect to the students' level of awareness and their metacognitive and metalinguistic skills.

The aim

This study focused on the process of meaning construction, sensemaking and interpretation in EFL students' comprehension of speech. The aim was to observe how they would develop an understanding and interpretation of a communicative situation when presented with an audio or video excerpt that contained stretches of spontaneous conversation. A more specific aim was to investigate how the students would interpret prosodic

and intonational signals in these situations, and to what extent they would be aware of the role played by prosody in their interpretation. Finally, another aim was to observe whether explicit phonetic training made a difference in the students' ability to interpret information conveyed or supported by intonation.

To investigate the students' process of thinking, the reasoning behind certain interpretations, and the way they observed different cues and signals, qualitative methodology was chosen. No initial hypotheses were made about the students' process of sensemaking or the role of prosody in meaning construction, so, in Perry's sense (2005), this study can be described as qualitative and exploratory. Although no specific practical applications of the findings were formulated, it can still be described as positioned between the basic and applied poles of Perry's continuum, since the findings point to some possible implications for EFL learning and teaching.

The methodology

The participants in the study were students of the English Department at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Niš. Of the twelve participants (three male and nine female), seven were first-year students, and five were third-year students. First-year students had had no training in phonetics prior to the study, while third-year students had completed two courses in Phonetics and Phonology. All but one were L1 Serbian speakers, whereas one participant was a native speaker of Greek. According to the Department curriculum, first-year students' proficiency in English could be described as B1+ level, while third-year students were B2+ to C1 level by the CEFR scale. The participants were randomly chosen from a larger list of volunteers, and constituted a convenience but purposeful random sample (Patton 2002:240).

The main data gathering technique was the think-aloud verbal protocol (Ericsson & Simons 1993, Bowles 2010). This technique, in which a participant is asked to say aloud whatever s/he is thinking while performing a certain task, is more commonly used in investigating how meaning is constructed while dealing with written texts, in investigations of reading strategies and the process of translation. Still, although the 'texts' used in this study were spoken and not written, this technique was chosen for two reasons. First, unlike interviews, think aloud protocols involve minimal

intervention of the researcher in the participants' process of speech decoding. With carefully selected materials, and the participants' freedom to choose the size of the material sample on which to share their thoughts, think-alouds indeed offered a close view of the process of constructing meaning – or at least as close as we can get.

Secondly, unlike psychoacoustic experiments, in which the variables are pre-defined and necessarily defined very narrowly, the qualitative think-aloud verbal protocol offers the researcher an opportunity to explore various potentially important elements that occur spontaneously in the participants' verbalization of the sensemaking process, and thus observe something that would otherwise not surface.

These assumptions indeed proved right during the study, and the think aloud protocols were successfully completed by all the participants, providing a rich corpus of data for the analysis.

For purposes of triangulation, two additional techniques were used – short semi-structured interviews after the think-alouds, and researcher's notes taken during the think-alouds and the interviews.

The materials

As elicitation materials for the think-aloud protocols, three sets of audio and video clips were used. They were chosen to illustrate three communicative situations of various degrees of interactional constraints and structure (Markee 2007:1017): 1) ordinary, mundane talk by the participants in an event, 2) partially structured institutionalized talk, talking about an event, and 3) maximally structured institutionalized talk, during a courtroom exchange.

The first situation was exemplified by an excerpt from the computer-animated movie *Toy Story 1* (1995, Disney/ Pixar production, directed by John Lasseter, featuring the voices of Tom Hanks and Tim Allen). The excerpt was 1.05' long and was chosen to illustrate "casual everyday talk that typically occurs between friends and acquaintances", as a "default speech exchange system in talk in interaction" (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson 1974, in Markee 2007:1017).

The second situation was illustrated by an excerpt from a live TV show, *Late Night Show with David Letterman,* with CNN reporter Anderson Cooper as the guest (CBS production, February 9th 2011). This excerpt was

3.23’ long and was chosen to illustrate semi-institutionalized talk in a rather relaxed atmosphere of a non-structured interview typical of a talk show.

The third situation was illustrated by an excerpt from the movie *A Few Good Men* (1992, directed by Rob Reiner, with Tom Cruise and Jack Nicholson, based on Aaron Sorkin's play). This excerpt was 1.50’ long and was chosen to illustrate an emotionally charged argument, a clash of views as part of a courtroom exchange between the defense attorney and a witness in a military trial.

For each situation, the participants were first presented with the audio recording only, and then the video. This was possible because the situations were chosen so as not to be too dependent on the broader context and visual information for interpretation. The visual information was not crucial for comprehension in any of the situations, but had different degrees of importance, gradually smaller from situation 1 to situation 3. Presenting the participants first with audio information alone and only then with the video information made it possible to observe the importance of visual information in the participants' process of meaning construction.

The materials used for the think-alouds were, therefore, not excerpts of naturally occurring speech. Despite the obvious advantages that samples of natural speech would have had, the choice of structured and controlled conversation excerpts from three popular kinds of media materials (animated cartoon, live TV show, artistic film) was preferred for two reasons. First, they made it possible to illustrate a wide range of intonation meanings and functions in relatively short conversation excerpts, while natural speech would be impossible to control in this respect. Second, considering the fact that the participants were EFL students, this kind of material was easier to understand than natural speech would be; besides, it was the type of materials the participants were familiar with, since excerpts like the ones used in the study are commonly used in language practice classes, for various class activities.

Material analysis

Before they were used in think aloud protocols, the materials to be presented to the participants were analysed in three ways. As a first step, each clip was transcribed using the Jeffersonian version (Jefferson 2004) of the Conversational Analysis notation. As pointed out by Goodwin (1994), as

well as by Markee (2007), the Jeffersonian system of CA notation is ethno-methodologically oriented, and thus probably best suited to capture intonational features of speech and 'talk-in-interaction' – overlap, delay, emphasis, volume etc. – treated as relevant in one way or another by the parties in the interaction (Hepburn & Potter 2009). Despite some criticisms this transcription system has received (cf. Gumperz in Prevignano & Luzio 2003:18), and although it cannot encode all the small details of phonetic realization, it was still considered the most suitable for the purposes of the analysis in this study, particularly because researcher's notes made it possible to make additional descriptive records of important elements such as tone of voice, facial expressions, or gestures.

As a second step in the analysis of the think-aloud materials, in each of the three clips, the specific functions of intonation, and meanings conveyed or supported by intonation were identified and classified. The classification relied on Vaissière's systematization of intonation functions (Vaissière 2005:237), and included the following categories:

- informational function (distinguishing between given and new information, signalling the focus or parenthesis);
- interactive function (signalling turn-taking, topic end or continuation);
- modal function or signalling communicative intent (assertion, question, order, etc.);
- attitudinal function – signalling the speaker's attitude toward what is being said (doubt, disbelief, etc.), or towards the listener (politeness, irony, etc.);
- emotional arousal (joy, anger, etc.); and
- the characteristics of the speaker (sex, age, identity, sociocultural background, language variety, psychological state, etc.).

The first clip, or Situation 1, contained examples of the informational function (focus/ parenthesis, contrast), modal function (assertions vs. questions), emotional function (expressing fear, surprise, disappointment), and attitudinal function (the speaker's attitude toward the listener – sarcasm).

The second clip, or Situation 2, being an excerpt from an interview, contained primarily examples of the interactional function of intonation (turn-taking, keeping or yielding the floor signals, backchannelling), but also some examples of the informational function (focus, given vs. new information), and the modal function (communicative intent).

The third clip, or Situation 3, illustrated primarily the attitudinal and emotional function of intonation, but also contained examples of the informational function (focus, contrast).

All the functions identified in the materials were coded and marked in the material transcripts.

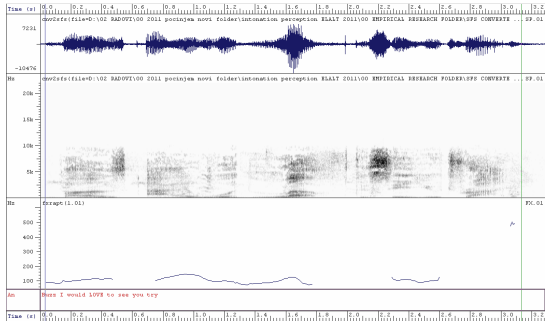
The third step in the preliminary analysis of the materials was the acoustic analysis of each clip to identify the relevant phonetic properties and cues through which the meanings and functions of intonation were signalled. The full acoustic analysis, performed by the *Speech Filing System* v 14 software (M. Huckvale, UCL, London), will not be presented here, but the following tables and figures illustrate some of the points analysed in each of the three audio clips. Table 1 summarizes the information about the pitch and intensity cues used in two tone units (TU) to express sarcasm:

Table 1. Clip 1: minimum, maximum and mean values of F0 and intensity for two TU expressing sarcasm

F0 min	75.0 Hz
F0 max	497.9Hz
F0 mean	117.9 Hz
Intensity min	36.5 dB
Intensity max	72.0 dB
Intensity mean	62.0 dB

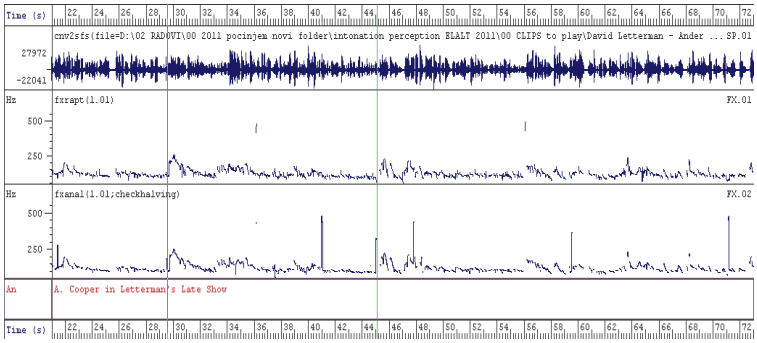
In Clip 1, the speaker's being sarcastic (attitudinal function) in 'Buzz, I would LOVE/ to see you try' was signalled by the intensity maximum and an abrupt fall from the maximum F0 value in the focus position of the first tone unit (TU), followed by lower intensity and F0 values in the next TU, with a very low fall as a TU-final tone, as shown in **Table 1** and **Figure 1**.

Figure 1. Clip 1: Sarcasm in 'Buzz, I would LOVE/ to see you try'



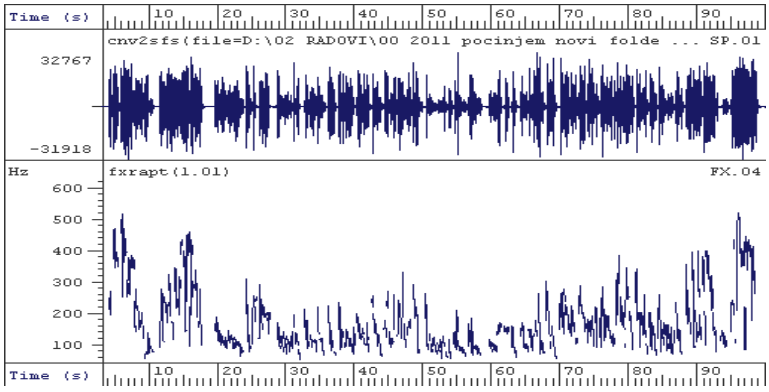
In Clip 2, as illustrated in **Figure 2**, high F0 peaks were used as signals of turn taking, introducing a new topic of conversation, and also as a signal that the speaker was not ready yet to yield the floor.

Figure 2. Clip 2: F0 peaks signalling turn-taking and floor-keeping



Similarly, as can be seen in **Figure 3**, in Clip 3, a high key, very high F0 peaks and very high intensity were used as indicators of emotional arousal.

Figure 3. Clip 3: Emotional arousal signalled by high F0 peaks and high intensity



Think aloud protocols

The participants took turns performing the think aloud protocols over the period of 6 days. The participants' responses during the protocol were highly individualized, and took from 25 to 57 minutes to complete, since the participants were instructed to take as much time as they needed, and to follow their individual pace during the task. After signing the informed consent, each participant had some time to read the instruction sheet, to get acquainted with the playback software using short practice audio and video clips (which were not part of the research), and to get used to the recording setting.

When ready, each participant would start his/her session by playing the first audio clip bit by bit and responding to it by saying aloud what s/he was thinking immediately upon hearing the bit played. Each participant decided how long a portion s/he would play, how many times s/he wanted to replay it, and each took as much time as s/he needed for the response. The participants were instructed not to restrict their answers in any way, but to verbalize as much of their thinking as possible. The video clip was played only after the participant had finished talking about the audio clip, and then the participant would comment on it, too. The same procedure was repeated for each of the three situations.

When the think-aloud was over, as a round-off part of the session, the participants took a short interview, with a series of questions that required them to think back about the experience, and to focus particularly on intonation. The interview was loosely structured and allowed the participants the freedom to comment on the experience as they wanted, so questions were asked only if the participant did not volunteer a comment related to the topics the interview was meant to focus on. Some of the things the participants were asked were: whether they had paid attention to the speakers' intonation while trying to understand them; how much intonation had contributed to the meanings conveyed; whether they thought it was more important in some situations than in others; whether they could remember any specific examples from the excerpts. Finally, they were asked to provide feedback on the think aloud protocol itself and describe the experience of doing it.

The protocols resulted in 385 minutes (6 hours and 42 minutes) of the recorded materials, while the interviews produced 27 minutes of additional materials.

Researcher's notes consisted in written observations taken down during the participants' think aloud sessions, and were used as an additional source of data for triangulation.

Protocol analysis

The analysis of the data obtained through the think aloud protocols and interviews included the following procedures. First, the recordings were transcribed verbatim, including the pauses, hesitations, non-verbal vocalizations and repetitions. The transcripts were recoded for anonymity.

The transcript corpus was first analysed quantitatively, using the TextSTAT 2.8 software for content analysis (Hüning 2007), in order to identify words, phrases, concepts, and themes of potential interest. The corpus consisted of 18,814 words/ tokens, and 2,515 word-forms.

The next step included a qualitative conceptual content analysis of the corpus (Berelson 1952; Carley 1990, Weber 1990) to identify the topics, themes and concepts of interest, and to categorise and classify them. The analysis focused on the linguistic level, too, to observe how the linguistic expression reflected the identified themes. The corpus was manually coded into content categories, and each concept was analysed in the context in which it occurred, since the software allowed for the concordance or key-word-in-context analysis (KWIC).

The analysis of the data relied on the basic principles of qualitative content analysis, but also discourse analysis and, in the preparation phase of material analysis, some elements of conversation analysis. Since some themes and concepts were pre-conceived – e.g. those based on the major functions of intonation that were identified in the elicitation materials prior to think-alouds – while others were allowed to emerge from the data, the research can be described as partially grounded or emergent (Bryman & Burgess 1994b).

Interpretation

The analysis revealed a number of topics, concepts and elements that fell into three main thematic categories relevant for the research aim. The first one was the category most appropriately described as the 'sensemaking

strategies'. The strategies the participants applied in the process of meaning construction were identified via the linguistic tools they used, lexical, syntactic and prosodic.

The second thematic category was labelled 'aspects of intonation'. This category comprised the themes and concepts identified in the participants' explanations of their thinking process that explicitly or implicitly pointed to some aspects of the speakers' intonation that triggered the participants' interpretation in the process of meaning construction. We primarily focused on the functions and meanings of intonation identified in the conversation samples in the prior analysis of the elicitation materials (based on Vaissière 2005, and Chun 2002), but also included some additional themes and elements that emerged in the participants' comments.

The third thematic category can be labelled 'intonation awareness', because it included those elements that showed the participants' explicit recognition of intonation functions, or their awareness of the role played by intonation in communicating the meaning. These included explicit mentions of *intonation* and *melody*, but also other lexical and syntactic elements, e.g. verbs such as *sounded*, *heard*, and nouns such as *tone, voice* or *sound*. The term 'intonation' was taken in its broader meaning, to include some other prosodic elements, such as pauses or loudness.

Sensemaking strategies

The participants' responses in the think-aloud protocols revealed that they used several strategies in making sense of what they had just heard or seen. These included the ones commonly found as reading strategies used in dealing with written texts, and some additional ones, specific to dealing with audio and video materials.

One of the most frequently used strategies was **prediction.** While listening to the audio clips or watching the videos, the participants relied on assuming and guessing about what might come next, what they expected the speaker to say or do next, or how the preceding move, action, or line would affect the behaviour of the other participants in the situation.

The use of this strategy was identified through the lexical content of their comments, accompanied by some non-verbal and verbal elements, for instance, the use of pauses and interjections (*er, oh, well, hah, aaa*), and words and phrases such as *maybe, I think, probably, I'm thinking/started*

thinking, I imagine, I believe, kind of, sort of, like, or the use of modal verb phrases with *could*, *might* or *may*.

(1) I **think** he**'ll be** (0.3) like really HAppy (.) in the middle of all that- <S I-1>[1]

(2) I **believe** that somebody **could** actually believe this man (.) **could** be persuaded <S III-2>

As shown by these examples, the participants also made predictions about the actors' future state of mind, emotions, or effects on other actors in the communicative event. This strategy was used in all the three types of situations illustrated by the three audio and video clips.

The strategy the participants used even more frequently involved **making inferences.** This strategy was similar to making predictions, but involved focusing on the present moment and interpreting what had already happened. In addition to the content of the participants' comments, it was reflected in non-verbal elements, such as pauses and interjections (- *yeah, yes, OK, a-ha, Right*), and verbal elements, words and phrases such as *actually, because, obviously, definitely, basically, I mean, completely*, or *likely*, and the use of modal verb phrases with *must*.

(3) I **think** he's not criticizing (.)er (0.3) but commenting on the protest… Basically he's insinuating that- <S I-4>

(4) I am having a little doubt (.) **what's the story behind this** (0.4) it **must** be important **because** they are yelling (.)I want to see the video.((laughs)) <S I-3>

(5) and shouting(0.5) he's shouting and(.)**you can imagine** he's in a (.) sort of high position **because** he can YELL at a colonel. ((laughs)) <S III-4>

This strategy was used across all the three situations illustrated by the eliciting materials, and was probably the most frequently used one, whether the participants showed awareness of what triggered the inference or not. Inferences were made about all the aspects of the communicative

[1] The code in the brackets following each example shows if the example comes from a first-year student (S I) or a third-year student (S III).

situation, about the actor's state of mind, emotions, attitudes, personality, social background and position, motivation, or behaviour.

The justifications and explanations the participants sometimes offered for their inferences pointed to the elements of the situation that induced them. These included a variety of details in the speaker's speech, or the context of the situation. For instance, in example (4), the participant makes an inference about the 'story behind this' based on the actors' behaviour in the situation, specifically, his tone of voice ('because they're yelling'). But in example (5), another participant makes a different inference, about the actor's social position, based on the same element of the situation ('because he can yell'), which this participant perceives and interprets in a different way. These examples illustrate how complex the process of sensemaking is, and how selective our observation of the different pieces of information in the communicative situation can be. As pointed out by Dervin in the Sensemaking theory, "all information is subjective", and information seeking, use and transmission is a "constructing activity", involving "personal creating of sense" (Dervin 1983:2). For our participants, too, interpretation and meaning construction was a subjective process, in which different individuals focused on different aspects of the situation, and made different inferences from the same cues.

Another strategy commonly used by all the participants and across all the three situations was **self-correction**. This was used as a second step in the process of sensemaking, after a prediction or inference was made, and after the participant obtained more information to check the prediction or inference against – and it proved to be wrong. The participants' process of sensemaking and meaning construction consisted in cycles of constant checking and re-checking – they used new pieces of information to check their hypothesised interpretations against, and did not hesitate to reject the interpretation if it proved to be inconsistent with the new information. But when it proved to be correct, the participants did not hesitate to express satisfaction, as in example (8):

(6) OK. I was **WRONG.** ((laughs)) When he said- <S I-3>

(7) Wow… so(0.3) I'm (.) **maybe** (0.4) I **may have been wrong** when I said a reporter(0.3) a reporter would- <S I-4>

(8) Ha, ha, ha (.) I'm laughing because it **IS**\ a cartoon, and I **knew this** (0.3) (laughs))<S III-2>

Probably the most important strategy used by the participants was **relying on the context.** It was a complementary strategy to making inferences, predictions and self-corrections, constituting the basis on which these were built. The context comprised three kinds of elements: first, the circumstances of the situation, the setting, space and time, and the other participants in the communicative event; second, the details of the message, its content and form, including the prosody and the phonetic details of its realisation; and third, the students' own previous knowledge, experience and understanding of the world.

In the analysis, we tried to identify how an element of the context contributed to the participants' construction of the meaning assigned to the event, and to observe how it was made explicit through the participants' elaboration of the previously made inferences, as illustrated in the following examples.

(9) …**yeah,** the person of a LOWer rank is yelling at the person of a HIgher rank, **so it must be** unusual and imPORtant. <S III-4>

(10) **I think** this is some kind of movie (.) mmm (.) yeah, a war movie (0.4) or an action movie (.) **because** they are shouting. <S III-3>

In example (9) the participant relied on his/her knowledge of the world, specifically the military hierarchy, in interpreting the relationship between the two participants in the interaction, and their particular behaviour. In example (10), the participant also used his/her previous knowledge about different kinds of movies to make a prediction.

This part of the analysis abundantly illustrated the point made by Gumperz, that "conversational inferences are made by human agents, acting in the real world" (Prevignano & Luzio 2003:9), and that "linguistic signs interact with social knowledge in discourse" (Gumperz 1982:29). We could say that in making inferences about the meaning of the communicative situations they observed, our participants indeed focused not only on the "meaning assessment in the established sense", but also on the "social relationships that are continuously negotiated and renegotiated by means of the same interpretive processes by which content is assessed" (Gumperz, in Prevignano & Luzio 2003:12). It also illustrated Devin's (2003) definition of sensemaking as a process in which we rely on the 'entirety of our

knowledge', previous experiences, emotions, views, beliefs, and our understanding of the world.

Visual information constituted a very important element of the context, and the participants repeatedly commented on this. While trying to understand the communicative situation just by listening to it, they oftentimes stated that they 'wished they could see what was going on', or that it was 'difficult to figure out' what the speaker meant, and that it would be 'much easier' to just look and see. The following examples come from the participants' responses given while listening to audio clips:

(11) I need pictures ((laughs)) I can't wait to see the video <S III-3>

(12) Now I'm thinking how much EASIER it would be just to SEE them. <S I-3>

(13) It is MUCH EASIER when you look and see than (0.3)than when (.) you are just listening (0.4) Because it leaves you a LOT to imagine <S III-2>

(14) Maybe (.) when it is just a voice you can't get the WHOLE impression about that person, I don't know (0.4) I prefer to SEE it. <S III-3>

(15) OK, I REALLY want to watch the video now. <S I-2>

Although the materials for the protocols were selected so as to be possible to understand just by listening, in terms of what happened, how many participants were involved, and what they did, the participants repeatedly stated that they 'needed' the visual information, too. The situations were graded in terms of how much information was contained in the visual representation, but the participants did not notice this difference, and stated they 'lacked' the visual information in all the three situations alike, because, as put by a participant in example (14) above, 'you can't get the *whole* impression about the person' when it is 'just a voice'.

Auditory and visual information were felt by the participants to be closely related, particularly when it came to the speaker's facial expression. In example (16) the participant points out that our interpretation of what we hear is reinforced and supported by the visual information and facial expression, and in example (17) the participant states that certain intonation meanings depend on facial expression for correct interpretation:

(16) he has this (.) terrifying (.) face (.) facial expression (0.5) and I don't know (0.4) he has something (.) **it can be heard from his voice (0.5) but I didn't notice it till this moment** (.) like you can experience all the wars and battles he'd been part in (.) and (0.4) then again (.) **without the video I'm not sure I would be able to make this connection** (.) It's only a supposition (.) because I'm not sure ((laughs))<S I-3>

(17) You can't say something sarcastic if you are smiling happily, you can smile, but sarcastically ((laughs)) or **you can't say something serious if you are smiling.** <S III-3>

While watching the video version of a situation, the participants often stopped to comment on the experience of trying to make sense of the situation while just listening to the audio clip, and reflected on the differences between the two kinds of experience:

(18) I heard the laughing while listening to the audio clip (0.3) but I didn't think what it was, didn't think about it. <S III-3>

(19) I see a slight difference between what I've seen and what I heard the first time. <S I-4>

(20) I don't have the impression (0.5) as I thought before (.) that he's brave, trying to act brave. Now (0.5) it's not now like it was before while I just heard his voice (.) the expression on his face (.) it's different now. <S III-3>

Finally, another particularly important part of the sensemaking process was the participants' **critical self-awareness** or self-reflection**.** This strategy was not identified very frequently in the corpus, yet, it did emerge occasionally, illustrating the point made by Kolko (2010) that the process of sensemaking helps us 'integrate' our experiences into our "understanding of the world" (Kolko 2010:3). It showed that sensemaking is an endless cycle, through which we learn about both the world around us and about ourselves. We find it very important that the participants, at least occasionally, were able to recognize some factors and forces working against comprehension in communicative situations, even if those included their own bias or prejudice.

(21) **I don't know I'm just (0.3) I'm stuck (0.5) I'm very (.) I'm just (.) er (.) I'm not very TRUSTING** when American reporters are concerned (0.4) because of their reports from SERbia. <S I-5>

(22) I kind of tune out when he speaks. Not that I don't TRUST him but (0.3) I just (.) listen to every third word he says (0.4) because (.) I just don't like seeing that (0.4) that's insincere (.) And since the image is like that, then what he says is pretty biased (.) **Or I am biased against it, I guess.** <S I-7>

As illustrated by these examples, during the process of sensemaking as a "retrospective development of plausible meanings that rationalize what people are doing" (Weick 1995; Weick *et al.* 2005), the participants considered themselves part of the process, and sometimes reflected on their own influence on the construction of meaning. We find these comments, albeit few, very important because they indicated the participants' awareness that sensemaking is a subjective process, in which our own beliefs, views and biases influence the way we 'bracket' the cues from the environment, trying to "create an account of what is going on" (Maitlis & Sonenshein 2010:551).

To sum up, the analysis of the participants' responses within this thematic category showed that they, generally, employed the same strategies as the ones commonly observed in reading for comprehension, mainly making inferences, predictions, and interpretations relying on the elements of the context. The same strategies were identified in the participants' interpretation of all the three communicative situations used in the protocol, despite their differences in the degree of interactional constraints and structure (ordinary conversation, partly structured institutionalized talk, maximally structured institutionalized talk).

The context in which speech was interpreted played a crucial role in the participants' meaning construction, and included all the properties of the actors' speech, and all the elements of the communicative situation, but also the participants' own experience, knowledge, socio-cultural background, understanding of the world, beliefs and attitudes, which constituted a filter through which they perceived and interpreted communicative situations while trying to make sense of them.

Aspects of intonation

The second thematic category included the participants' responses in which we could observe that the participant made certain interpretations or inferences relying on the prosodic cues used by the actor to convey some meanings and functions of intonation. The responses in which it was made explicit that the participants were *aware* of the contribution of intonation to their interpretation of the communicative situation were categorized separately, but here we included all the examples showing that the participants relied on a prosodic cue from the conversation in the construction of meaning, even if they were not aware of what had triggered their interpretation.

The basis for this part of the analysis was our prior analysis of the elicitation materials, in which the functions and meanings of intonation were identified in each conversation, coded, and acoustically analysed to identify the prosodic cues used by the speaker to convey the given meaning or function. The participants' responses which were in accordance with the expected interpretation ('most likely inferences', Prevignano & Luzio 2003:17) were taken as instances of interpretations triggered by the given prosodic cues. The interpretations that differed from the expected ones were also taken into consideration in the analysis. If there was an explicit sign in the immediate context that such an interpretation was triggered by the speaker's prosody and not any other element of the context, such examples were also included in this category.

Finally, the inferences and attributions the participants made (for instance, about the speaker's personality traits, motivation, etc.) were also included in this category if there was something in the local or broader context that indicated the inference or attribution was based on a phonetic property of the speaker's utterance. This last part of the analysis was inherently the most subjective of the three, because it depended on the *researcher's* interpretation of the *participants'* interpretation, so we grounded it in the explicit and identifiable elements of the local context in the participants' responses, e.g. lexical, grammatical, non-verbal, or prosodic. Researcher's notes were a valuable source of information in this part of the analysis, as they included records about each participant's non-verbal behaviour during the protocol.

The participants' responses placed in this category comprised several meanings and functions. Their frequency of occurrence in the corpus was an

aspect we considered important here, so they are presented and discussed in that order.

The most readily interpreted aspect of intonation was its **emotional function** ('emotional arousal', Vaissière 2005:237), since emotions were usually the first thing the participants tried to 'read' from the way the speaker sounded:

(23) I can't understand why he **sounds so angry.** Somebody opposes him? <S I-6>

(24) This other guy is- wants (0.4) they're both **angry** but this guy he's like **really MAD** (0.4) and **disappointed.** <S III-1>

(25) He's **definitely angry**(.) and his **feelings are hurt.** <S III-3>

(26) I think he was like **really HAppy** because he was in the middle of all that … because **it's like he'd never felt like that.** <S I-1>

(27) like a hero (0.3) that's it (.) I think he **feels proud** of being a part of that action (0.4) although there was a moment **he was upset or scared**- <S III-5>

All the utterances identified in prior analysis as instances of the emotional function of intonation triggered some kind of response and comment from all the participants. Even those parts of the conversation which were not coded for this function in the prior analysis were sometimes interpreted by the participants as carrying some emotional load. There was no difference between the three communicative situations in this respect – emotions were always the first thing the participants noticed in the speaker's utterance and tried to interpret.

However, apart from Situation 3, in which the participants uniformly interpreted the speaker's emotional arousal conveyed by his prosody as anger, in the other two situations the participants often disagreed about what specific emotion the speaker expressed, and assigned different interpretations to the same utterance or move. In other words, although they did interpret the prosodic cues as carrying information relevant for the emotional function, the participants did not 'read' the message in the same way.

This supported the commonly highlighted observation that there is no one-to-one relationship between the prosodic cues and the 'meanings' they

are used to convey, particularly when it comes to the emotional or attitudinal functions, and that they can be interpreted only in the given context. In their attempt to make sense of the communicative situations, the participants tried to interpret the prosodic cues and assign them specific emotional meanings. But the conversation excerpts apparently did not provide enough contextual information for the participants to arrive at more uniform interpretations of emotional meanings carried by the speakers' prosody. Still, they did 'read' the prosodic signs correctly in that they interpreted them as carrying information relevant for the speakers' emotional state.

The second most frequently found kind of inferences, in a way related to the emotional and attitudinal functions of intonation, were those about the speaker's **personality** or **disposition**, ('characteristics of the speaker', Vaissière 2005:237), illustrated by the following examples

(28) he ***seems*** artificial to me (.) but ***maybe it's just my (.) impression***. <S I-4>

(29) **Ah,** that person (.) he's nosy. <S III-5>

(30) He's very proud and sure of himself **(0.4)** he really believes in this idea of loyalty. <S III-1>

(31) Anyway, they both ***sound like*** STRONG men. <S I-2>

(32) **OK.** This guy (.) he is HONEST. <S I-5>

(33) And his mind's open (0.4) he doesn't whine about the things, he just says what he sees even if he gets beaten over it. <S III-2>

As several of the examples above illustrate, in making inferences about the speakers' character or disposition the participants often expressed a degree of critical awareness that this kind of interpretation is subjective. This was reflected in the verbal elements they used, such as *seem*, or *impression*, in the non-verbal signals (facial expressions, shrugging of shoulders), and even in the prosody they themselves used (pauses, complex fall-rise pitch accent tones, rising final tones for statements).

Furthermore, the participants did not hesitate to verbalise their evaluation of the inferred characteristics of the speaker. They usually voiced their positive or negative evaluation immediately upon making the inference about the speaker's disposition, or, as in example (34), when they had an opportunity to check their interpretation, formed on the basis of the auditory information, against the visual information. Sometimes, as in example (35),

they could not distinguish the evaluation of the message content from the evaluation of the speaker's personality:

(34) I STILL **don't like** this guy, now that I saw him. <S I-2>

(35) Yeah, **I like him. I like what he's saying. I like people** who can do that. <S I-2>

Although obviously not strictly an 'aspect of intonation', these responses were included in this thematic category because the participants made it clear that their inferences were based on the phonetic aspects of the actor's speech. This falls in line with the findings of numerous earlier studies in language attitude research (cf. Chapter 3) which used matched-guise or verbal-guise techniques, based on this kind of idea – that people tend to attribute personality traits to speakers based on the sound of their speech. Beside our earlier studies (Paunović 2009a,b), the one presented in Chapter 8 of this book also supports this observation.

Another aspect of intonation frequently identified in the participants' responses was its **attitudinal function**. The materials contained several examples of attitudes conveyed by the speaker through prosodic cues, and the participants readily responded to them.

Signalling the speaker's *attitude to what is being said*, prosodic cues were used to encode the speaker's *certainty* and *doubt.* The participants observed these cues and interpreted them as expected in almost all the cases.

(36) He looked SO(0.4) **sounded like**(0.3) convin- as if he could convince EVERYbody that what he is saying and what he did was right, although we know he was WRONG (0.5) **but the way he speaks, so confident**. <S III-2>

(37) and he **sounds really sincere** while talking about what happened. <S I-6>

Several conversation parts in the materials contained prosodic cues used to signal the speaker's *attitude to the listener*, such as *sarcasm* or *interest*: The participants observed these cues and interpreted them as expected, too, as in the following examples.

(38) …so it's about **jealousy**, and **sarcasm** (0.4) but a very light kind (.) probably **irony**, there's a fine line between them. <S I–7>

(39) I think this guy is really **sarcastic** somehow (.) definitely **sarcastic** (.) his voice is like (.) he seems like (0.4) "I'm a boss, you are stupid" <S III–4>

(40) He's so **sarCAStic** ((laughs)) I would LOVE to see you try ((imitates his intonation perfectly)) <S III–4>

(41) It's obvious he **doesn't like him**, because (0.4) he's **making fun of him** the entire time (.) and not very cooperative (.) and is not very friendly towards him (0.5) Here he's making fun of his laser. <S I– 5>

The attitudinal function of intonation was recognized by the participants almost without fail. All the participants interpreted almost all of the utterances from the audio materials as expected, and on the first listening. There was no observable difference between the three kinds of situations illustrated by the three audio/video clips in terms of the participants' interpretation of the cues intended to signal the attitudinal function of intonation.

The last type of responses included in this thematic category because the participants made them on the basis of phonetic information were inferences made about **the speaker's background** - *socio-cultural,* such as class, or *regional/ ethnolinguistic***,** reflected in his or her accent. This could be termed the **sociolinguistic** function of intonation (Chun 2002:55), or another aspect of 'the characteristics of the speaker' in Vaissière's terms (2005:237):

(42) OK, this other guy must be some kind of **upper class** person. <S I–5>

(43) Sounds like (0.3) they have an **American accent** both of them (0.3) really sounds like **a spokesp**erson of some organization (0.4)they usually have these **perfect accents**, **clear accents** (.) not fancy talk. <S I –7>

(44) In every single TV series or (.) film (.) they put this crafty character or an inventor or scientist (.) usually with an **English accent.** Because it IS a sign of intelligence, I mean (.) it is PERCEIVED as a sign of intelligence (.) no one can deny that <S I –7>

Very frequently, the participants also tried to infer other kinds of background information from the sound of the actor's speech, for instance, his/her *age,* as in examples (45), (46) and (47), his/her *personal identity* (48-50), or his *professional identity* (53, 54). It was very frustrating for the participants when they could not infer this kind of information from the materials, and they often verbalized both their frustration, and the fact that they 'considered this important', as the participant in example (45) put it.

(45) I'm actually interested, I cannot really say **how OLD he is** (0.3) and I usually consider this important. <S I-6>

(46) The suspect is probably **older** than the man who (0.4) is questioning him <S I-3>

(47) … he's **old** (0.3) not **THAT old,** but **middle aged** <S I-1>

(48) His voice is so **familiar**(0.3) Who is this actor? I almost have the picture and then it's gone (.)sounds **very familiar** but I can't- <S III -4?

(49) but I did **recognize some voices** (.) the cowboy (.) his voice was more **familiar** <S I-7>

(50) I have NO idea who the person is ((**very disappointed**)) <S I-4>

Upon seeing the video clip, the participants usually reflected on the differences between the two interpretations – the one based only on the sound of the speaker's voice, and the one that had the support of the visual information.

(51) **Oh!** ((**surprised**)) Now, I was expecting a YOUNGER person, that's for sure, **his VOICE**- <S I-7>

(52) Yes, that's this old guy. **I thought he was old from his voice.**<S I-6>

(53) (0.3) the one who went to Tunisia (0.4) **I thought that he was younger** (.) MUCH younger (.) **by his VOICE,** and I think that (0.4) I thought a young man (0.3) would be interested in (.) in making his career- <S I-3>

(54) Ah, I don't know why (.) I imagined him like more (.) **adventurous type of person.** Maybe because of this show he came in a suit and all elegant, but I imagined him more (.) like **a safari person.** <S III-2>

Examples (53) and (54) illustrate that in making sense of the communicative situations the participants operated with bundles or packages of information that they interpreted together. The sound of the speaker's voice obviously triggered attributions, inferences and interpretations that were complex constructs, bringing together the speaker's age, personality traits, professional identity, as well as the socio-cultural and regional or ethnolinguistic background, and illustrating Chun's (2002:75) and Vaissière's (2005:256) point that in communication the functions of intonation cannot be divided into 'neat, clear cut categories', but that they largely overlap.

Summing up the findings discussed within this thematic category, we can observe that, apart from making inferences about the speakers' personality, background (social, cultural, professional, regional), and personal identity ('recognizing' the speaker), i.e. the function of intonation labelled 'the characteristics of the speaker' by Vaissière (2005:237) or the 'sociolinguistic' function by Chun (2002:55), the participants interpreted the emotional and attitudinal functions of intonation the most readily.

A methodological point should be stressed here. Namely, the 'frequency of occurrence' in this thematic category was not based on the mere number of examples in the elicitation materials that contained certain meanings and functions of intonation. The 'frequency of occurrence' was found by comparing the number of examples of each identified function/ meaning of intonation to the number of responses in which the participants actually interpreted them in the expected way, or any other way that suggested they had observed the prosodic signal and responded to it. Therefore, the participants indeed responded most readily and most frequently to these two functions of intonation.

Nothing could be identified in the participants' verbalizations of their process of thinking that would suggest that they responded to the prosodic signals encoding other functions of intonation – modal, interactive, or informational (Vaissière 2005) or pragmatic, discourse and grammatical (Chun 2002), or even the highlighting and phrasing functions (Grice & Baumann 2007:26-27).

On the one hand, functions and meanings such as grammatical or informational and interactive operate mostly at the subconscious level, and are both used and interpreted automatically by the participants in a communicative exchange. They are part of the repertoire of tools that guide our spoken communication and interpretation of talk like an 'automatic pilot'. As pointed out by Gumperz, "it is something that we do without thinking and

without reflection. We don't think about how we're going to say things. We think about what we're going to say and then we automatically select our style of speaking" (Gumperz 1979/ 2003:272). The same kind of automaticity characterizes speech interpretation.

On the other hand, however, there are certain discourse and, especially, pragmatic and 'modal' functions that the participants could have observed and responded to the way they did respond to the attitudinal and emotional functions. For instance, Situation 1 contained interesting examples of the informational function, particularly signalling contrast, and of the modal function (assertions). Situation 2 contained many instances of the illocutionary function, particularly of turn taking and floor keeping, with some uncharacteristic interruptions. In Situation 3, there were also examples of the informational function, signalling contrast. All the three situations also contained some examples of the pragmatic functions of intonation, e.g. polite requests. All these prosodic signals must have been 'caught' by the participants at some level, since they did demonstrate an overall complete comprehension of the situations, particularly after the second encounter with them, through the video materials. However, they were never touched upon in the participants' think-aloud verbalisations, which suggests that the participants indeed focused on the emotional, attitudinal, and sociolinguistic functions much more than on these others.

Intonation awareness

The last thematic category delineated in accordance with our research aims was the one comprising those responses that showed the participants' awareness of the role played by intonation in their interpretation of meaning. The responses classified into this thematic category were of two kinds – those that included explicit mentions of *intonation*, *tone,* or *the melody of speech*, and those that referred to intonation in a more implicit manner, by means of various lexical elements, such as verbs (*sounded* or *heard*), nouns (*voice, tone of voice,* or *sound*), or non-lexical elements, such as the participants' imitation of the sounds produced by the speakers. Example (55) illustrates the explicit mention of intonation, while examples (56) and (57) illustrate the implicit reference to intonation; example (58) illustrates imitation of the speaker's prosody:

(55) If he just said Did you order the code red? with a normal **intonation**, the meaning would have been completely different. But he shouted, he's really angry, and you could get that through its **intonation**. <S III-4>

(56) Well, this is interesting. He changes at times (.) from a very confident person, **he sounds a bit different now**- <S I-4>

(57) His choice of words, yes, but (.) also his **tone of voice**. I can picture him sitting very (0.3) very confidently in his chair. <S I-4>

(58) You can really HEAR his sarcasm, You can DO\ it **((imitates the speaker's high key, high fall tone))** and You can do\ it ((low key, low-fall tone)) (0.4) **like completely different meaning.** <S III-3>

As can be noticed in the examples above, the direct and explicit mentions of *intonation* came mostly from the third-year students, and only one first-year student – the others referred to intonation mostly implicitly. This thematic category was, in fact, the only one in which a difference could be observed between the performance of the first-year and third-year students. In the other two thematic categories, with respect to using the sensemaking strategies and responding to prosodic cues, no differences were observed. Here, however, they were notable.

The one first-year student who did use the term 'intonation' used it both times in a negative context. Moreover, s/he expressed the belief that intonation was *'not really'* a clue to meaning, at least not in that particular context:

(59) They have a similar **intonation** (0.4) it always goes up, up, and up.<S I-3>

(60) While listening I couldn't really tell when (.) he was telling jokes (0.4) trying to make a joke (.) because (0.4) if it weren't for the voices (.) from the audience, I wouldn't really know. **Intonation is a clue, but not really** <S I-3>

On the contrary, explicit mentions of intonation occurred in the responses of all the third-year students, and rather frequently. They used intonation as justification for many of the inferences they made about the

speakers, and also mentioned other prosodic properties of speech, such as pauses, or stress, as in the following examples:

(61) Obviously speaking like soldiers, **with that intonation** (04.) that **intonation** (.) **stressing** some parts of the sentence (.) for example HOnour (.) or ARmy. <S III-5>

(62) Well, his **tone is rising**, he started calmly and (0.4) now he **raises his voice** and the **tone** of his sentences, the **intonation** is changing. <S-III-2>

(63) I think this is some kind of movie (0.4) an action movie, because of this… kind of (.) **intonation** (0.4) that you expect in an action movie- <S III-4>

This was the most important difference that occurred between the two groups, showing that the third-year students possessed both the awareness and the metalanguage to discuss the role of intonation in their process of meaning construction.

This difference was even more noticeable in the materials obtained through the interviews that followed the think-aloud protocols. The aim of the interview was to focus the students' attention on intonation explicitly, and to observe whether they would be able, while thinking back about the three communicative situations, to remember any instances of intonation used by the speakers to communicate a particular meaning, and how they would explain the role of intonation in their process of sensemaking.

Two points could be observed in the interview materials.

Firstly, it was only in this last part of the session, in the interview, that the students mentioned some functions of intonation other than emotional, attitudinal or sociolinguistic. When asked to remember some specific things they inferred from the speaker's intonation, some participants did remember the grammatical or even modal function.

However, those were only third-year students. With first-year students, the examples they remembered included, once again, mainly the emotional and attitudinal functions, or the speakers' socio-cultural background and personal characteristics, as in examples (64) and (65). One first-year participant, though, mentioned that intonation was used for signalling information structure and focus (example 66), and also the

speaker's communicative intent (example 67) – of course, not in those exact words, but the way this participant put the observations was very vivid.

(64) it's easy, I see OK, he's **angry**, or **sad**, or **confused**(0.4) Jack Nicholson sounded **irritated**, Tom Cruise sounded **inquisitive**– <S I-2>

(65) In the second clip, Letterman, (.) his tone of voice is like he wants to know more, like he's **interested REALLY**. And the reporter was (0.3) like **REASONABLE**. <S I-1>

(66) And maybe he's like just **INTONATING** some parts he wants to **EMPHASISE** <S I-1>

(67) the way (.) Letterman asks questions (.) the way he starts his question and then **the points at which he increases his voice and then goes down** (0.4) it does tell you (.) again (.) it's very typical (0.5) it ↑does give you this (.) impression of (.) **whether he's serious whether it's a joke, whether it's not something as important, or he's commenting on something, or he's just suggesting something**, and (0.4) He does that. **With questions he's just suggesting answers.** <S I-4>

Most third-year students, on the other hand, when asked to remember some specific examples of what was communicated by intonation, mentioned the grammatical function, and the speaker's communicative intent, too, as in the following examples:

(68) Especially in the audio clips, intonation helped me to understand **whether it's a question or command**, or what- <S III-3>

(69) (.) in the second clip somehow it wasn't funny WHAT he was saying, but the way in which he was saying, it was actually **his intonation** that told me that **he was joking and trying to make a joke** of this scary and disturbing thing. <S III-1>

Secondly, and more importantly, in the interview, virtually all the participants stated that they thought intonation was very important in communication, and that it had contributed greatly to their comprehension of the three situations. However, only the third-year students were able go beyond this general statement, to offer specific explanations of the ways in which intonation was important in their construction of meaning. The first-

year students could not – they could not say why or how intonation contributed to their interpretation of meanings, as illustrated in the following examples:

(70) Yeah, yeah, intonation, yeah of course. But **I really couldn't say why. Or how.** I don't know. <S I-6>

(71) I don't know. I **can't really explain, that's something you just have to hear.** <S I-2>

(72) I was paying attention, but **kind of in the back of my head.** <S I -2>

(73) How important? Intonation is REALLY important. But I **take it for granted,** I **don't really think about the way it works,** it simply does. **I think about the effect it has,** I don't really think **about the way it SOUNDED.** <S I -7>

(74) I guess I don't think about it (0.4) maybe because it's just like **an automatic thing. I don't stop to think about it** (0.4) but I guess it does (.) it obviously DOES make a difference For me personally, it's probably (0.4) **I don't think about it at ALL**\. ((laughs)) <S I-5>

Observing this last thematic category, it can be said that the third-year students' previous training in phonetics and phonology indeed influenced their level of awareness of the role played by intonation in communicating certain meanings, and of the various aspects of intonational functions. First-year students were not inferior in *interpreting* the meaning of the communicative situations, but showed little awareness of the role played by intonation in their construction of meaning. They lacked both the concepts and the metalanguage to bring it to conscious awareness. Or, as concluded by a first-year student in the last example above – they didn't think about it at all.

Final thoughts

Although the participants must have relied on prosody much more than consciously aware, in the verbalisation of their sensemaking and interpreting process only the emotional, attitudinal, and sociolinguistic functions and meanings were made visible. A whole array of interactional, modal, informational and pragmatic signals carried by intonation were simply not 'registered' by the participants in any way, and were never included in their account of what they were thinking about while trying to 'decode' the meaning of the communicative situations.

The students' responses to the last question in the interview, which asked them to reflect on the experience of the think-aloud protocol, suggested two interesting things. One was that this experience helped the participants realize that sensemaking, meaning construction, and interpretation of intonation happen at both the conscious and the subconscious levels – apparently, much more at the latter. "Thinking was easy, verbalizing was difficult," one participant said.

The other thing, illustrated by the examples below, points to the implications of these findings for EFL classroom practice:

(75) I think.(.) it kind of **changed the way I understood the things** (0.5) sometimes I just went too far, extended the associations too much (0.5) maybe I talked too much ((laughs)) <S I- 6>

(76) I know this was not a test, and it wasn't important, but (.) **only by KNOWING that I should THINK hard about it** (.) **and pay attention** (.) **my point of view was somehow (.) changed.** <S I -2>

(77) Maybe it even **leads you better and maybe quicker to the meaning**(0.4) **makes you focus more and understand better.** <S III- 5>

While reading comprehension, reading strategies and critical reading skills are widely acknowledged and included in classroom practice, the skills required for a thorough interpretation of spoken communication are still neglected or taken for granted. In EFL teaching, spoken communication is usually tackled only from the point of view of speaking practice for fluency, and, maybe, some 'pronunciation' practice, mainly at the segmental level. When pronunciation practice includes suprasegmental properties, it is

usually the production of correct word-stress patterns and some basic intonation contours.

However, 'critical listening' is also an important communicative skill, and can be practiced. Raising students' awareness about the specifics of the L2 intonation, and, particularly, about the complexities of the process of speech interpretation, is crucial for 'critical listening'. Becoming more alert to the small things in the local context that provide clues for interpretation is equally important, and can also be practised. As pointed out by Grice and Baumann (2007), that would reduce "the danger of attributing unexpected intonation patterns as (solely) a function of the attitude or emotional state of the speaker" (Grice & Baumann 2007:32).

This is particularly important in intercultural communication. As Gumperz repeatedly reminds us, the role of "typified communicative practices in interaction" is vital (Prevignano & Luzio 2003:2), and intercultural miscommunication is often caused by applying the interpretation and inferential practices of our cultural and linguistic community when communicating with others (Gumperz 1979/2003). The various communication cues we use to signal social relationships, politeness, turn-taking, repair, expectations, and many other important aspects of interaction, are partly linguistic and partly cultural, very difficult to change (Gumperz 1982), and very easy to 'stumble on' in intercultural communication, due to "cultural differences in communicative styles and strategies" (Janney & Arndt 2005:38).

If they are not aware of all this, EFL students may simply miss or automatically misinterpret such prosodic (and other) signals, without even being aware that they are not decoding the message in the way intended by the speaker. Some aspects of intonation are universal, but many more are language- and culture-specific, and even for basic emotions, such as anger, joy, or fear there may exist important differences in the ways they are prosodically encoded. The conversational, interactional and modal functions of intonation may be even more different and difficult to decode. As Vaissière (2005:253) puts it, "[n]one of these functions should be considered as more or less important than any other: they all coexist in everyday conversation and listeners as well as students of intonation will have to cope with these basic facts".

Practising the skill of deciphering different aspects of communicative situations, including the role of the different elements of the context, as well as the pragmatic, discourse, informational, interactive and modal functions

of intonation, would undoubtedly enhance students' (intercultural) communicative competence, and shatter their false impression that intonation is just another vehicle for communicating emotions.

10. STUDENTS' GLOSSARY OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

Overview

Intercultural communicative competence (ICC) comprises several key notions – culture, communication, intercultural interaction – which are very complex, dynamic, and shifting, and can mean different things for different people. The qualitative study presented in this chapter aimed to explore how a number of concepts related to ICC would be construed and defined by EFL students – prospective L2 teachers. The findings suggest that teachers need to be much better prepared to teach L2 with intercultural communicative competence in mind.

The aim

Investigating, from the critical pedagogy stance, how prepared L2 teachers in the USA are to teach for intercultural communication and diversity, Diaz-Greenberg and Nevin (2004) set off from Nieto's (1994) view that each reform should start by listening to 'student voices'. In the study presented in this chapter, we tried to do the same, through a qualitative study of EFL students' understanding of several terms related to intercultural communicative competence.

The study aimed to investigate EFL students' understanding of some concepts central to ICC, such as 'culture', 'successful intercultural communication', or 'politeness', and to observe what aspects of these complex notions students would focus on.

The participants

The participants were English Department students at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Niš. There are two things in the participants history that were relevant for this study.

Firstly, since many of the English Department students later choose a teaching career, an important component of the English language and literature (ELL) curriculum is the EFL Teaching Methodology pre-service training. It consists in two courses, obligatory for all students, taken in the third year of study. The theoretical course comprises topics such as language acquisition vs. language learning, Krashen's hypotheses, the place of culture in EFL teaching, motivation, individual student differences, multiple intelligences, testing, and the characteristics of various EFL teaching approaches and methods, including content-based and task-based learning. The practical part of the training includes lesson planning, observation, and a teaching practicum in a primary or secondary school.

Another course important for this study because we wanted to observe its potential influence, too, was an elective course in developing intercultural communicative competence, introduced in the ELL curriculum in 2007/2008, i.e. two years prior to this study. The course is a one-semester elective, taken in the third year of study. It aims to increase students' intercultural sensitivity and awareness by focusing on the concepts of culture, intercultural communication, and various factors that can influence intercultural (mis)understanding. The theoretical framework of the course includes several models of culture (Hall 1959, 1976; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner 1997; Hofstede 2001), Bennett's *Developmental model of intercultural sensitivity* (Bennett 1986, 1993), and the concept of ICC as formulated in the context of L2 teaching (Byram 1997). The practical part of the course includes some ethnographic observation and reflection (journals, interviews), and writing an analytic or reflexive essay.

Therefore, two different groups of students were chosen. All participants were experienced EFL learners, with 9-11 years of EFL learning experience, but one group consisted of 1st-year students (=49), with no previous courses in ELT Methodology or ICC, and the other group consisted of 3rd-year students (=20), most of whom (=16) have completed the elective course in ICC.

Data and analysis

The research instrument was an open-ended-item-questionnaire. Its first part explained the aims of this anonymous study and asked for the participants' background information about the length of studying English and the participation in the ICC course. The second part asked the participants to provide their own definitions for ten words/ phrases. The concepts chosen for the study were the following: *globalization, culture, intercultural sensitivity, successful intercultural communication, stereotype, prejudice, openness, polite, appropriate, annoying*. The last item in the questionnaire asked the participants to fill in the blank in the statement '*I belong to the _____ culture'*, and to give an explanation or elaboration. Following Brown (2009), open-response items were chosen for the advantage of being flexible and offering a possibility to explore the participants' ideas rather than restricting or influencing them.

When transcribed, the corpus consisted of 9,255 word tokens (1,403 word forms), as shown by the preliminary quantitative analysis in the TextSTAT program (Hüning 2007), performed before the qualitative content analysis to highlight the concepts and themes potentially relevant for categorization. The *concordance analysis* option made it possible to observe the identified concepts and themes in the contexts in which they occurred.

The qualitative conceptual content analysis of the corpus involved manual coding, classification and grouping of the concepts into content categories in order to identify the relevant topics, themes and concepts, and to categorise and classify them. The analysis was only partially grounded or emergent (Bryman & Burgess 1994b), since the concepts the participants were asked to focus on were given, while we also allowed for the possibility that important concepts may emerge from the data. Each concept was analysed in the context in which it occurred.

Culture and cultural identification

Defining the concept of culture, the respondents focused primarily on its **structural elements**. **First-year students** listed several cultural elements very frequently: *customs, traditions, behaviour, language, history,* and *religion.* All the elements mentioned, however, fell into three thematic

blocks: first, those related to the most obvious elements of life and products of culture, such as *cuisine/food, literature, architecture, music, monuments, sports*; second, those referring to visible manifestations of culture related to behaviour, such as *habits, folklore, holidays, festivals, rituals*, and specifically *slava-celebration;* finally, there was a third thematic group of very rarely brought up but heavily emotionally loaded terms, such as *heritage, treasure*, *ancestors, orthodox* and *[cyrilic] alphabet*, echoing the common, almost institutionalized ways of depicting Serbian culture in the media.

Only a few responses moved beyond the visible to include notions such as *way of life* or *everyday life*, and very rarely *norms, values, moral patterns, moral rules, standards, principles,* and *ethics.* Only two respondents made an attempt to include the **functions** of culture, related to regulating people's interaction, or to identity function:

> [1] *... a culture can be observed in terms of people's behaviour, too, of what is acceptable.* (S1-36)[2]
>
> [2] *Culture is like a treasure of a country. People preserve their culture and care about it because it is their identity, their national identity.* (S1-31)

As for **cultural groups**, first-year respondents most commonly saw culture in terms of *nation, country, a people*, or *ethnicity*, while only a few referred to *a group of people* or *a community*, but even then modified as *living in one region*. Furthermore, many participants defined culture from an objectivised point of view, as something that *belongs to a group of people*, something that *exists in a country,* or *characterizes* it, or is *emblematic of* a nation, and very rarely as something *shared,* something *an individual belongs to* or, as put by one participant, '*interwoven in one's mind'*.

Concerning their personal sense of **cultural identity**, first-year students identified most readily with their national, Serbian culture, repeating the ideas and vocabulary offered in the general definitions of culture, and focusing on differences:

> [3] *When I say 'my culture' I usually mean Serbian culture, I mean that I am from my country, that I have habits that the people in my culture have, and that my language is different.* (S1-13)

[2] As in the previous chapter, the code given in brackets after each example shows if the answer came from a first-year student (S1) or a third-year student (S3).

[4 *When I say I belong to a certain culture it means that I'm part of one nation or a group of people who share the same customs and celebrate the same saints and holidays. Culture is something that distinguishes one nation from another.* (S1-19)

Still, there were several responses that showed the participants' awareness of possible multiple cultural identities, of cultural groups other than ethnic or national, and of the fact that cultural identity is something actively constructed by the individual through the choices s/he makes:

[5] *I belong to the URBAN culture. I like urban clothing, MTV style. I listen to alternative music and don't tend to become traditional in any sense, so totally opposite of traditional.* (S1-17)

[6] *Serbian. Honestly, I don't approve of all the Serbian traditions and customs, but as you asked to answer what culture I belong to I wrote Serbian that is the culture I know the best. However, it doesn't mean when I get to know other cultures that I won't like them more. Many factors influence my opinions and feelings. After all, I am not someone who blindly believes in something* (S1-20).

In the group of **third-year students**, differences could be observed between those participants who had attended the ICC course and those who had not, the latter offering responses in line with the typical responses of the first-year group, while the former offered a markedly different view of culture, evident mostly in the lexical items they chose to use. Namely, they described culture as a *shared* system, something a group of people *have in common*, the things people *value*. They often took a subjective stance, seeing culture as something *an individual shares with a group*, or something a person *considers him/herself part of*. They singled out primarily *values, beliefs,* and *way of life* as important identifying components of a culture, as well as *attitudes* and *rules* that govern the behaviour of the people in the cultural group.

Similarly, they showed awareness of different **cultural groups** and used terms such as *group, community* and *society,* and not *nation*. Several respondents did not want to identify with any one culture (*I don't have a feeling that I belong here or there.* S3-12), and two highlighted the role of socialization and the fact that culture is socially transmitted:

[7] *I identify with my family first, and then with my country. My culture simply involves my set of beliefs and habits instilled in me by*

my family, with the addition of the cultural influence of our country. (S3-15)

[8] *I know that the sense of belonging is vital in anyone's existence, but the only 'groups' that I can say I belong to are my family and the group of my close friends. And, of course, I belong to the group of students of the English department :-)* (S3-18)

Unlike these, a number of participants did not hesitate to specify Serbian national culture as the one they identified with, but the explanations stressed the importance of the subjective feeling of belonging to this cultural group, the values they choose to share with the group (9), or an awareness that a national culture is not homogenous (10):

[9] *Serbian. But when I say that I belong to the Serbian culture I mean that I use the Serbian language as my mother tongue, that I am fully aware of the values adhered to by the Serbs. I feel like I belong to the Serbian culture.* (S3-19)

[10] *Serbian. When I refer to my (Serbian) culture what I have in mind is actually the southern Serbian lifestyle and values, since, as I have noticed, they differ greatly from the northern Serbian values and lifestyles.* (S3-13)

To sum up, in this thematic category some important differences emerged between the views expressed by third-year students and first-year students, indicating a lower level of intercultural awareness and sensitivity in the younger group.

Intercultural communication

The concepts identified in the participants' responses fell into two conceptual classes – the stance taken (positive/ negative, objective/ subjective, general/ particular, individual), and the aspects of communication highlighted.

As for the concept of **intercultural,** many **first-year students** defined it as objectivised, as a relationship of *cultures*, and not of specific *people*. Many responses stressed *cultural differences*, and understood *intercultural* mainly as *different*, while only one respondent also mentioned cultural *similarities*. With respect to the concept of **communication**, the

respondents rarely elaborated on what it involved and defined it mainly as the ability to *understand* others. Only one highlighted the importance of *knowledge about other cultures* for easier communication, one stressed the importance of speaking different *languages fluently*, and only one mentioned cultural *awareness*:

> [11] *...being aware of differences between cultures and respecting those differences when interacting with someone from that culture.* (S1-47)

Considering the concept of **success** in communication, most participants did not elaborate, or offered simple paraphrases or qualifications, e.g. *really communicate, good and* fluent *communication.* Several voices, however, made an attempt to go beyond this and also included *acceptance, respect, not being judgemental, avoiding stereotypes, having no prejudice, reacting positively*, being *politically correct*, and even *overcoming* cultural differences.

Third-year students' responses, particularly with those students who had attended the ICC course, differed in that they invariably focused on the individual interaction between people, and defined **intercultural communication** in a broader way as *interaction,* and *establishing relationships*, in addition to *understanding, exchange,* and *transmitting meanings, information and ideas*, or even, by one respondent, as '*the ability to actually convey the intended message regardless of cultural differences*'. Most importantly, they defined **successful** communication in a much broader way. Some responses stressed the prerequisites – *it is achieved by being open-minded and flexible*, *without using stereotypes*, and some the outcomes – *when conflicts are resolved peacefully*. One participant brought up the topic of social assessment (*when we try not to judge or offend them if you disagree*, S3-18), while one brought up the importance of being *aware of your own culture*, and also of *appropriate behaviour* and *adequate interpretation of others' behaviour* (S3-13).

Intercultural sensitivity, probably recognized as a technical term, was very difficult for **first-year** students to define, and as many as 17 offered no definition. Of those who did, many used hedges such as *maybe, I think, I guess, I'm not sure*. Some respondents interpreted it as a negative feeling, a kind of cultural apprehension, as *when one culture is sensitive about some situations and words,* or *when people are sensitive about their*

traditions and culture, or even *when you are against other cultures.* Still, most recognized it as a positive attitude to other cultures, using lexical items such as *accept, respect, understand*, and also being *tolerant,* and trying to *find similarities*. Few respondents offered a deeper view: one stressed the importance of *politeness and appropriate behaviour towards other people and their cultures*, one highlighted the *willingness to connect* with others, and one stressed the importance of *awareness*, and *the way one perceives people who come from different cultures.*

In contrast, **third-year** respondents offered more comprehensive definitions, focusing on the aspect of intercultural awareness (*being aware, possessing the knowledge and capability*), but also the attitudinal (*being open-minded*) and behavioural aspects (*being polite, possessing the skill – or art – not to insult other people*). Most importantly, they stressed the importance of being able to '*interpret other people's behaviour in terms of their own culture*' (S3-13).

The difference between the responses of the two groups was particularly obvious in defining **openness. First-year students** did not place it in the context of culture and intercultural communication, but rather focused on interpersonal relationships, defining it as the quality of being *extrovert* and *communicative.* Most defined it as a *readiness to express your feelings, thoughts and opinions and not hide them*, as being *direct, frank*, and *straightforward*, or *not easily embarrassed*, and even as being *talkative and friendly, sociable*. Few responses came closer to the context of communication and intercultural interaction, defining openness as *being free to cooperate*, or *being able to connect with people*, and *being ready to listen and take anyone's opinion into consideration*. Three participants explicitly referred to communication and stressed the importance of *gaining new knowledge*, and being *open to learn something from other cultures*:

> [12] *Open-minded, ready to learn different things, to step out of our own standpoint and change our views, accept different things, or if not accept then understand them properly*. (S1-47)
>
> [13] *When we possess openness we're open-minded. We're open minded when we're not sexists, racists and then we're open to other people's culture, and style, or way of life*. (S1-17)

Conversely, **third-year students** focused on communication and viewed *openness* as a key prerequisite for intercultural understanding, as seen in the lexical expressions they used e.g. *ability, capacity,* but very often

willingness, readiness, and *desire*, and *being curious* and *not afraid.* This choice of words can be interpreted as their view that a person plays an active part in developing intercultural competence and making intercultural communication work, and that its success depends on the choices interactants make. While first-year students saw openness primarily from the perspective of individual psychology, or as a personal trait one either possesses or not (*'the ability of* ***certain*** *people'* S1-46), third-year respondents described it as something one can develop and acquire. One participant, again, stressed the fact that in communication we make assessments of others, and defined openness as *when you don't think bad about others just because they are different*. *Acknowledgement, respect* and *acceptance of differences* were also stated by several respondents.

For **first-year students, stereotype** and **prejudice** proved a bit problematic to define, primarily because they could not tell the difference between the two notions. However, taken together, their responses painted a pretty complete picture of what stereotypes are, and included several important aspects of this concept, e.g. that stereotypes are *opinions, beliefs,* and *pictures* or *images* (one respondent even used the phrase *mental image*), *tags* or *labels*; that they are *generally accepted, repetitive, widely spread*, that they are often *not true*, that they are *fixed* and *very difficult to change*; that they are ascribed to groups of people (*characteristics people give to a certain group of people*); that *jokes are often based on them*; that the opinion is formed *about a group of people or things based on our experience with a few representatives of the group,* i.e. that they are *generalized* pictures, *always connected with a person or a people whether justified or not.*

Prejudice, however, was almost exclusively seen as a synonym for stereotypes. The difference, when noticed, stated that prejudice involves *negative* opinions, *non-accepting attitudes*, as well as a lack of experience with or knowledge about the thing – *when you judge something before knowing anything about it,* that it is a *wrongly formed opinion,* or *based on stereotypes.*

The responses mainly focused on the beliefs and opinions, disregarding the predispositions for certain behaviours. Only a few respondents connected prejudice explicitly with our evaluations of social and cultural groups, and one participant made an interesting observation that prejudice involves a comparative evaluation of self and others, and is in the function of self-image:

[14] *When you have prejudice against somebody you usually think that you are better than them.* (S1-29)

Again, **third-year students** did highlight the difference between the two terms, but offered otherwise similar definitions as first-year students. Stereotypes were seen as *opinions* or *images, characteristics, compressed opinions, beliefs* or *ideas,* usually *overgeneralised, fixed*, and *assigned* to whole groups of people.

The only observable difference was that the students who had not attended the ICC course focused mainly on *national groups*, while those who had referred to *cultural groups, groups of people* and *cultures*. Only one respondent focused on the aspect of social assessment of individuals, stating that it is *a fixed image about a particular person because s/he belongs to a certain group of people* (S3-17).

Similarly, prejudice was defined mostly in terms of *opinions* and *beliefs*, as a *usually negative preconception, formed without sufficient knowledge about a group*, but the interactive assessment aspect, e.g. *attitudes, assumptions*, and *judgement*, was included somewhat more frequently. Only one respondent explicitly referred to the behaviour component, stating that prejudice usually involves *acting on those compressed opinions about a whole group* (S3-14)

Finally, the notion of **globalization** showed important differences between the two groups of respondents, not so much in the overall – positive or negative – attitudes they expressed, but in the facets of globalization they chose to foreground.

Regardless of whether the overall attitude was positive or negative – positive ones reflected in the use of lexical items such as *unifying, connecting, bringing together, mixing*, negative ones in items such as *imposed, enforced, eliminating, erase*, *exploit*, *take control*, or *unification* – **first-year** respondents mostly focused on the spreading of ideas, processes, and products over the world, and saw it as a process which is *partly economic and partly cultural*. One participant highlighted the use of *the same language and the same rules everywhere,* but very few focused on communication: one defined globalization as the *process of connecting people on the global level*, one as *interest in others' social political and cultural organization,* and only one stated that it *makes the world more open and available to people*.

Third-year students expressed the same variety of overall attitudes, positive (*removing cultural barriers, merging of different cultures,*

connecting different parts of the world) or negative (*an attempt of a few organizations to rule the whole world, one culture assimilating other cultures, the tendency to impose the same values and way of life to the whole world*), but generally focused on communication and interaction aspects much more, stating that *the world is becoming one entity and extremely connected* (S3-8), that globalization represents *an increasing interaction and interconnectedness among different countries of the world* (S3-15) or that *the time needed to exchange information is reduced to a minimum* (S2-17).

Perception and assessment of culturally shaped behaviour

The last thematic group of items invited students to define the notions of being *polite, appropriate* and *annoying,* focusing on the pragmatic aspects of communication.

Again, as in defining the notion of openness, **first-year students** focused only on the interpersonal level, and showed no awareness that what is considered polite, appropriate or annoying is culturally shaped.

Annoying was defined exclusively from the personal and local standpoint, as something that *irritates me*, something *getting on your nerves*.

Polite was almost unanimously paraphrased as *nice, kind, well-behaved* and *cultured*, and only a few responses stated that it included *being sensitive to others, thinking about their feelings, acting so as not to offend others*, and *respecting other people.* Only one respondent focused on the interactive aspect of the notion, stating that it means *maintaining good relationships with other people*, while only one showed an awareness that the notion is shaped by cultural views – acting *in accordance with social norms* (S1-48).

Similarly, most responses simply paraphrased **appropriate** as *suitable, adequate* or *fitting the situation*, and few respondents showed an awareness of its cultural load, defining it as something that is *within the standards of accepted social norms in a culture* (S1-29), that it is *the behaviour in accordance with the norms of that culture* (S1-20) or *something that is expected of us to do* (S1-14). Only one student explicitly highlighted the role of both verbal and non-verbal norms, stating that appropriate is *somebody who uses the required manners, language, and behaviour* (S1-46).

In contrast, almost all **third-year students** stressed the socially and culturally shaped nature of what we feel to be **polite**. Being *considerate, respecting others* and *trying not to offend them* were always placed in the context of a particular culture, as in these examples:

> [15] *What is considered polite is not universal; polite is pleasant and in accordance with the rules and principles of the culture in question.* (S3-13)
>
> [16] *Behaving in accordance with one's culture's code of conduct, displaying socially appreciated behaviour.* (S3-19)

Similarly, **appropriate** was defined as something that is *not offensive to another group of people*, but also as something *in accordance with the rules, beliefs and behaviours of a community*, and repeatedly defined as *depending on the culture in question*.

Annoying was also placed in this context, stressing that what a person from one culture finds annoying may not be annoying for others, and that it is something that is *at variance with the accepted norms*, something that *breaks the culturally established norms*.

Final thoughts

Summing up the interpretation of the ideas and views offered by EFL students and future EFL teachers in this small-scale study, we could say it does suggest that intercultural communication training makes a difference. Overall, the students who had attended this, not very ambitious, elective course in ICC did show a deeper understanding of the complexity of intercultural communication, an awareness of the factors that can influence it, and, on the whole, a more 'decentralized' stance, which can be interpreted as a sign of better intercultural competence, at least in the domain of intercultural awareness and sensitivity.

In this sense, these findings fall in line with those of a similar previous study (Paunović 2011), which also aimed to investigate the possible influence of the elective ICC course on English Department students' intercultural sensitivity, critical intercultural awareness, and attitudes to cultural differences, by analysing the students' (=40) weekly journals (=42) and final essays (=40). The qualitative content analysis singled out the

concepts and themes pointing to the ideas, cultural elements, and communicative contexts students found relevant. The findings of that study also indicated that intercultural communication training had positive effects on the students' overall intercultural sensitivity, and that they expressed overall positive attitudes towards cultural diversity.

However, a closer look at the findings of both our earlier (2011) and the present study shows that all students focused primarily on the visible structural elements of culture, and only a few moved beyond the level of the visible, to show an awareness that culture comprises the norms, values, moral patterns and rules, as well as a way of life. Cultural groups were mostly understood in terms of national cultures, and rarely in terms of 'communities', while the students' own expressed sense of cultural identity was also defined most readily in terms of the national culture. The awareness of possible multiple cultural identities, or cultural identification with groups other than national was not readily expressed even by those students who had passed the intercultural training, although some differences could be observed in the reasoning of this latter group.

Intercultural communication was a notion construed primarily through the prism of cultural *differences*, which was probably expectable, while as the main component of successful intercultural communication the participants highlighted knowledge, as the cognitive component of intercultural communicative competence, where they included the knowledge of foreign languages. Their awareness of the importance of the affective and attitudinal components, however, was much lower, as was their awareness of the importance of certain communicative skills for successfully bridging intercultural gaps.

Again, the participants with some prior intercultural training, indeed showed a deeper understanding of what success in intercultural communication entails, showing an awareness about the danger of stereotyping and the importance of an open-minded attitude to different others. Most importantly, they construed the notion of intercultural sensitivity as including knowledge and skills to 'interpret other people's behaviour in terms of their own culture', which is probably the most significant observation in this study.

Being exploratory and limited, this study showed that much further research is needed with prospective EFL teachers, employing more diverse quantitative and qualitative methods, e.g. to assess students' intercultural

competence and sensitivity, including the actual use of linguistic and other symbolic devices in specific communicative situations.

One good example of a study that included the investigation of the EFL students' behavioural component of ICC is the extensive research reported by Lazarević (2013). She used a mixed-method approach to investigate EFL learners' (=336) intercultural competence at the tertiary level of education. The participant groups comprised university students from serveral departments, including English Departmant students as prospective EFL teachers.

The qualitative part of the study focused especially on the learners' responses to intercultural encounters, observed by means of the instrument known as *culture assimilator*. The instrument was especially designed by the researcher for this study, and included a number of 'critical incidents', i.e. scenarios illustrating intercultural misunderstandings. These were used in interviews to explore the EFL learners' ability to explain these misunderstandings, the kind of attributions they would make, and the cognitive, affective, and, indirectly, behavioural components of their ICC.

Lazarević found that the participants mainly relied on their own cultural frames to explain intercultural misunderstandings, and "resorted to stereotyping, generalized descriptions and dispositional attribution" (Lazarević 2013:230). Their low levels of intercultural sensitivity and empathy were coupled with the characteristics of Defense and Minimalist stages of Milton Bennett's model (1993). Therefore, the author concludes that it is necessary to include intercultural communicative competence development in EFL teaching at the university level in a much more substantial way (Lazarević 2013:232).

From our point of view, the most important finding of Lazarevic's study was that the intercultural competence of English Department students was not significantly better than that of other students, showing that the level of language proficiency and intensive language practice cannot, on their own, increase the students' level of intercultural competence.

Bearing in mind Byram's warning that '[o]ne becomes intercultural only when experience is subject to analysis and reflection which lead to action' (Byram 2009:212), the insights offered by research such as Lazarević's (2013) or the research we presented here, should be used as a basis for changes in L2 teacher education, necessary if the idea of teaching

for intercultural communicative competence is to be brought to life in L2 classrooms.

11. CAUGHT IN THE WEB: EFL TEACHER EDUCATION

The last question this book addresses brings together the discussions launched in the previous chapters to focus on the implications of adopting intercultural communicative competence as the main goal of L2 learning and teaching. This question, like the proverbial coin, has two sides: the language learner, and the language teacher.

From the perspective of the EFL learner, developing intercultural communicative competence, as previously discussed, means developing a complex of cognitive, affective and behavioural competencies, a set of skills, abilities, and aspects of knowledge (*'savoirs',* Byram 1997), but also "values, attitudes and beliefs for intercultural citizenship" (Byram 2006:116). In John Corbett's (2003) words, the central goal is still the development of language proficiency, but "wedded to the equally important aim of intercultural understanding and mediation" (Corbett 2003:2).

Indeed, language learners are expected to grow into 'diplomats', or 'language and culture mediators' (Coperías Aguilar 2007:77), able to view different cultures "from a perspective of informed understanding", to "understand the language and behaviour of the target community, and explain it to members of the 'home' community – and vice versa" (Corbett 2003:2). In the terminology of critical pedagogy, this means being able to "shuttle between different communities" and recognize "the systematic and legitimate status of different varieties of English" (Canagarajah 2006:26-27). Or, in Byram's terms, learners need to develop a "critical understanding of social phenomena in their own and foreign countries" (Byram 2003: 66).

Byram and colleagues (Byram *et al.* 1994) quote a Great Britain state-school document in which ICC is defined as the ability to:

> [...] appreciate the similarities and differences between [the students'] own and cultures of the communities/countries where the target language is spoken; identify with the experience and perspective of people in the countries and communities where the target language is spoken; use this knowledge to develop a more objective view of their own customs and ways of thinking (Byram *et al.* 1994:15, in Corbett 2003:2).

Moreover, it is pointed out that intercultural learning is never complete, and that the intercultural learner is expected to be "someone who is always in the making, ready to acquire new knowledge or abilities" (Coperías Aguilar 2010:95-96), someone who has developed a capacity for 'autonomous learning', since "being an intercultural speaker is a lifelong activity" (Coperías Aguilar 2010:95-96).

To answer thus defined needs of intercultural language learning, language teaching needs to be intercultural, too. As repeatedly pointed out, L2 teaching needs to "develop appropriate learning theories and teaching methods to ensure a proper integration with the skills and knowledge comprising ICC" (Byram 2003: 66).

As for teaching methods, many would agree with Kumaravadivelu (2006a,b) that in our 'post–method era' there are no perfect and universally applicable methods. Instead of searching for *a* method, EFL teachers need to develop a complex set of skills, abilities, attitudes, and aspects of knowledge, and a 'critical awareness' that would enable them to constantly re-examine their goals, aims and teaching practices.

Different aspects of teachers' competencies have been emphasised. Sandra Lee McKay (2002) highlights cross-cultural pragmatic competence, in both L2 teachers and learners. Coperias Aguilar points out that an EFL teacher has to be "a mediator rather than a transmitter of knowledge" (Coperías Aguilar 2010:96). Johnstone concludes that teachers should not be only "deliverers of a fixed curriculum", but "reflective professionals who frame and re-frame problems and test out their interpretations and solutions" (Jonhstone 2004:661). Brown stresses the importance of appreciating "the specificities and valuable contributions of the learners' local culture and mother tongue in creating a new linguistic expression in the new language" (Brown 2006:687).

Brown shares the perspective of critical pedagogy, and Kumaravadivelu's (2006b) view that learners, teachers, and teacher educators should be 'coexplorers' of the local linguistic, sociocultural, and political circumstances, in 'context-sensitive language education'. Kumaravadivelu's (2012) latest model of L2 teaching, which comprises five core modules – *Knowing, Analyzing, Recognizing, Doing,* and *Seeing* (KARDS) – transforms teachers from deliverers of knowledge into 'strategic thinkers' and 'exploratory researchers'. Similarly, the sociocultural, 'social constructionist' approach of Hua and colleagues (Hua, Seedhouse, Wei & Cook 2007) views language learning and teaching as acts of social interaction, in which "the roles and relationships of the learner and the teacher are socially constructed [and] their social identities are formed and transformed" (Hue *et al.* 2007:1). Critical pedagogy stresses that the process of L2 learning and teaching should be placed in the social context and 'interrogated in relation to power' (Canagarajah 2005:931), 'with a political conscience' (Pennycook 2004:784). Teachers should focus on issues of difference and variety, and critically question any concept or way of thinking (Holliday 2005).

Therefore, language teachers are "agents of social change" (Kramsch 1995:91) with a great social and political responsibility. Their role is to help students explore the 'possibilities for alternative futures' (Pennycook 2006:61), in a *'third space'* (Kramsch 1995:89, referring to Bhabha 1992:58) in which they can construct and express their unique identities. Pavlenko and Norton (2007), too, see L2 learning as a process of 'identity re-construction' (Pavlenko & Norton 2007:671) in which learners 'expand their range of identities' (Pavlenko & Norton 2007:670). However, since various ideologies can influence what the learners perceive as available or desirable identities, making them aware of such ideologies and demystifying their influence is crucial in L2 teachers' job.

For all these reasons, the social role of foreign language teachers, as "visible social actors [...] committed to promoting equity" (Jokikokko 2005: 72), has become particularly important. But it has also become almost impossibly difficult, and, as pointed out by Carnagarajah (2006), there are no easy answers for teachers.

There are no easy answers for teacher educators, either. As difficult as the task of EFL teachers is in guiding their students through the complex

process of developing intercultural communicative competence, so much more difficult is the task EFL teacher education faces. As Kinginger (2002) warns, "language teacher education shows clear signs of crisis" (Kinginger 2002:193). Indeed, it is very difficult to meet the complex needs of the future language teachers as defined above.

In this respect, 'locally situated' empirical research, exemplified by the three studies we presented in our previous chapters, is indispensable. In addition to their contribution to understanding EFL students' intercultural communicative competence and their processes of interpretation and meaning construction, such research studies are valuable because they point to the questions and areas we need to address in EFL teacher education and include in our formulation of the *learning outcomes* in the EFL teacher education curriculum.

For instance, the first one of our studies showed that the participants' language attitudes were indeed the filter through which they perceived other people's speech. Their inferences and social interpretations were triggered by the sound of speech at a deep, subconscious level, and this was particularly obvious in some domains, such as personal attributions or education, but emerged in all other domains, too, from social status and race to the professional profile of language teachers. This suggests that raising future EFL teachers' awareness of how social interpretations are triggered by speech, and how language attitudes shape those interpretations should be an important aspect of their pre-service education.

Particularly important is encouraging a positive orientation to difference and the awareness of the appropriateness of different language varieties in different social contexts. Another important thing suggested by these research findings is the need to raise awareness about the power of stereotypes and the responsibility of different social agents in promoting certain images and values. In addition to the media, the role of teachers and the educational system are crucial in this respect.

The second study we presented pointed to the importance of the communicative skill of 'critical listening'. Raising students' awareness about the role of various linguistic (and non-linguistic) details as realised in the local communicative context is essential, bearing in mind the complexities of the process of speech interpretation. Especially important is the role of prosody, which still does not receive enough attention in either EFL teaching or EFL teacher education. The role of prosody has been shown to be particularly important in intercultural communication, where applying the

interpretative and inferential practices of our own cultural and linguistic community can be the cause of miscommunication. Raising future EFL teachers' awareness about the cues that can be used to signal social relationships, politeness, conversation management (e.g. turn-taking, repair, expectations), and other important aspects of interaction, is essential, because the use and interpretation of these cues is largely culture specific. Therefore, in EFL teachers' education, the skills of appropriate and effective language use should be coupled with the skills of 'deciphering' different aspects of communicative situations, particularly the prosodic cues used in speech.

Probably most importantly, our third study showed that although the goals of EFL teacher education sketched here may seem unattainable, ICC training does make a difference. The findings of this study indicted small but systematic differences between the students who had had some experience with ICC contents and those who had not, particularly in the domain of intercultural sensitivity and awareness. However, our findings also indicated that prospective EFL teachers need a much deeper understanding of the notion of culture, and an awareness that it includes not only the visible structural elements, traditionally focused by L2 culture teaching, but also systems of norms, beliefs, values, rules, ways of life and worldviews beyond the visible level, manifested in different 'orientations' to time, space, and various aspects of human relationships. Also, the findings suggested that EFL teachers need a better understanding of multiple cultural identities and possible cultural identification with different groups simultaneously, in intercultural as well as in 'monocultural' contexts.

Much further research with prospective EFL teachers and different EFL learner populations is needed, to investigate different aspects of intercultural communicative competence. In our studies, we focused on the underlying processes in speech interpretation, but what should also be addressed is the evaluation of the students' actual level of intercultural competence by means of empirically tested scales and instruments. Particularly important, too, would be a more detailed evaluation of the effects of ICC development university courses, and certain parts of the EFL Teaching Methodology training.

Another aspect of ICC that needs to be addressed in a much more systematic way is its 'behavioural' component. In formal educational contexts, it is not really possible to observe 'real-life' intercultural encounters, but some methods and techniques that simulate real-life

situations, notwithstanding their shortcomings, make this possible to a certain extent, as shown in Lazarević (2013), discussed in Chapter 10.

All research findings so far (Lazarević 2007, 2013; Lazarević & Savić 2009; Paunović 2011) including the empirical research presented in this book, suggest that the issue of prospective EFL teachers' ICC is not systematically and sufficiently addressed in their education. In order to equip L2 teachers with what they need for their future work, L2 teacher education needs to focus on all the three components of the prospective EFL teachers' professional 'pack' – attitudes, knowledge, and skills.

Firstly, future EFL teachers need to understand the professional circumstances in which they teach EFL, to be aware of the conceptual options (EFL, ELF, LFE, IE) from which they can choose what to endorse, and what each of them entails. This is particularly important from the attitudinal point of view, because we need to encourage prospective EFL teachers to develop positive attitudes to teaching for ICC, as well as equipping them with the knowledge that would help them make professional choices themselves. To paraphrase Lies Sercu, teachers need both to be *willing* to teach for ICC and to know *how* to do so (Sercu 2005: 90).

Then, with respect to the knowledge component of EFL teachers' competence, they need a deeper understanding of the ways in which culture affects communication. They also need a thorough understanding of the concept of ICC and its three core components – knowledge, attitudes, and skills, together with the two important additional aspects of intercultural communication, appropriateness and effectiveness (Spitzberg & Cupach 1984). This includes an understanding of the concept of cultural groups in the contemporary world, and of the concept of intercultural communication in terms of 'interdiscourse communication' (Scollon *et al.* 2012). It also includes understanding the dynamic negotiation of identities through interaction, in intercultural communication as well as within what we commonly see as 'monocultural' contexts.

Future EFL teachers also need to understand what many theories of social interaction bring to the front – that our interpretation of communicative events and our processes of sensemaking and meaning construction are filtered through a thick layer of our attitudes, beliefs, values and culturally shaped practices. In other words, prospective EFL teachers need knowledge not only *about* different cultures and their visible

manifestations, but primarily of what culture is, how cultures can differ, and how culture affects communication and meaning construction at all levels, including the level of social meaning, social roles, positions and relationships.

The 'knowledge' and 'skills' components should also include the pragmatic and discourse-signalling or conversation-managing use of linguistic (and non-linguistic) devices, such as strategies for negotiating meaning, asking for and giving clarification, building rapport, managing interruptions and repair, managing conversation flow, and signalling discourse structure. It is also necessary to deal in a more substantial way with issues of genre, style, and register, as well as those of rhetorical figures and, particularly, prosody. The use of prosody for functions other than emotional, attitudinal and grammatical, to signal discourse structuring and pragmatic information, has been shown to be particularly important.

The most difficult aspect of developing these competencies in future EFL teachers is the fact that, unlike the 'native-speaker model' era, we have no ready-made recipes to offer that would work universally across different contexts. What we can do is make our students aware of how these linguistic (and non-linguistic) devices work in English and in their mother tongue, and prepare them to be alert to the possibility that they may not work in the same way in other cross-cultural contexts. Therefore, awareness raising about these aspects of communication may be the most important pre-requisite for their successful *negotiation* of meaning.

That is why critical thinking skills are essential in EFL teacher education, including both critical reading and critical listening, as well as the skills of careful 'ethnographic' observation, description, and analysis, including critical reflection and self-reflection. The 'ethnographic' competencies are particularly significant, bearing in mind the teacher's need to observe the specific context of their specific learners' language development and use. As the third facet of this package, presentation skills are also necessary, both in spoken and in written language, which would include the use of strategies and devices that help us organise and present our ideas so as to make them clear for different 'others'.

Finally, the EFL Teaching Methodology component of teachers' pre-service education should offer the practical, applicable aspect of knowledge and skills that would enable EFL teachers to make well-informed methodological choices in integrating ICC-oriented content with other aspects of their work, in both syllabus organisation and lesson planning. As

for the practical tools and techniques, the ones prospective EFL teachers have gained insight into and been trained to use in their own education will also be crucial in their work with EFL students. Minute ethnographic observation, critical reading, attentive listening, and pragmatic, conversational and discourse strategies should provide teachers-to-be with a useful starter pack of tools to build on in their future work 'in the field'.

Obviously, weaving this intricate web of knowledge, skills, and competencies cannot be simply a matter of prospective teachers' EFL Teaching Methodology training, but must become the goal of their overall education. By the same token, developing the *language learners'* intercultural communicative competence cannot be the goal of *only* EFL teaching, but needs to be a broader goal of their education as a whole.

The times, 'they are a-changing'. We may feel we are not ready for this change, but it has already happened.

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INDEX

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Tatjana Paunović
THE TANGLED WEB:
Intercultural communicative competence in EFL
First edition

Publisher
FACULTY OF PHILOSOPHY
UNIVERSITY OF NIŠ

Represented by:
Goran Maksimović, PhD

Front cover:
SUSAN JOHNSON BOLTER
When sparks fly
susanjartist.com
susan1artist@aol.com

Book cover:
Darko Jovanović

ISBN 978-86-7379-286-6

Printed by:
SCERO PRINT, Niš

Print run
300

Niš, 2013.

First edition published 2013 by Faculty of Philosophy, Niš

CIP - Каталогизација у публикацији
Народна библиотека Србије, Београд

371.3::811.111
81’243:159.953.5
81’272

PAUNOVIĆ, Tatjana, 1964-
The Tangled Web : intercultural, communicative, compentence in EFL / Tatjana Paunović. - Niš : Faculty of Philosophy, 2013 (Niš : Scero print). - 241 str. ; 24 cm

Autorkina slika. - Tiraž 300. - About the Autor: str. 241. - Bibliografija: str. 211-235. - Registar.

ISBN 978-86-7379-286-6

a) Енглески језик - Настава b) Страни језици - Учење c) Социолингвистика
COBISS.SR-ID 198748940