Dialogue Interpreting as Intercultural Mediation
Integrating Talk and Gaze in the Analysis of Mediated Parent-Teacher Meetings

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<tr>
<td>AS</td>
<td>Asylum seeker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA</td>
<td>Conversation analysis</td>
</tr>
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<td>DI</td>
<td>Dialogue interpreting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EA</td>
<td>Evaluative assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FPP</td>
<td>First pair part</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IM</td>
<td>Intercultural mediation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INT</td>
<td>Interpreter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IO</td>
<td>Immigration officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IS</td>
<td>Interpreting studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>Patient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTM</td>
<td>Parent-teacher meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RFP</td>
<td>Rendition final position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPP</td>
<td>Second pair part</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TCU</td>
<td>Turn constructional unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TH</td>
<td>Therapist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRP</td>
<td>Transition relevant place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VoE</td>
<td>Voice of education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VoI</td>
<td>Voice of interpreting</td>
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<tr>
<td>VoL</td>
<td>Voice of the lifeworld</td>
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Abstract

The University of Manchester
Elena Davitti
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Dialogue interpreting as intercultural mediation: integrating talk and gaze in the analysis of mediated parent-teacher meetings

This study explores how the positioning of dialogue interpreters is shaped in mediated interaction through the combined investigation of two main units of analysis, i.e. assessments and gaze. The data used consists of a small corpus of authentic, video-recorded, mediated interactions in English and Italian. These encounters take place in pedagogical settings; in particular, the specific type of institutional talk analysed is that of mediated parent-teacher meetings, which represents uncharted territory for interpreting studies. An interdisciplinary approach encompassing conversation analysis and studies on non-verbal communication is adopted to explore how interactants orient to both verbal and non-verbal activities (mainly gaze) in the production and monitoring of each other's actions, in the initiation and maintenance of social encounters, and in the co-construction of meaning and participatory framework.

As for the verbal dimension, this thesis focuses on assessments, given that evaluative talk characterises the interactions under scrutiny. In particular, some tendencies (namely upgrading and downgrading renditions) in the way interpreters handle utterances embedding evaluative assessments have been identified, explored and linked to issues of identity and epistemic authority. One of the most innovative aspects of this work lies in the exploration of how positioning is realised not only verbally, but also non-verbally, by accounting for non-verbal features in the analysis of verbal interaction. Although non-verbal features have been recognised as part and parcel of human social interaction as well as important vectors of meaning and co-ordination (e.g. Goodwin 1981; Kendon 1990), their sequential positioning in relation to the production of the ongoing flow of talk and their use by interpreters to complement/replace specific verbal features is uncharted territory for interpreting studies. Since the groundbreaking work by Lang (1976, 1978), little research has integrated gaze in the analysis of the interpreter's (and participants) verbal output (e.g. Wadensjö 2001; Bot 2005). To enable its investigation, gaze is systematically encoded alongside specific conversational cues via the ELAN software, which interfaces audio-video input in a user-friendly hypertextual transcription. A specific gaze-encoding system has been developed for triadic interaction, building on Rossano’s (2012) one for dyadic interaction. These symbols have been mapped onto the verbal transcript of specific sequences, with a view to investigating how gaze is used as an interactional resource in conjunction with verbal behaviour when producing such sequences.

Through analysis of the actions performed via talk and gaze, the thesis investigates how displays of knowledge and epistemic authority are achieved and the impact of the interpreter’s shifting positioning on the unfolding interaction. The micro-analysis of transcripts is placed within a macro-analytical framework to explore whether interpreters work as intercultural mediators when they display an engaged behaviour and act as ratified participants. Findings show that the specific moves isolated, although trying to establish a common ground with the mothers, do not seem to contribute to participants’ empowerment and participation, thus suggesting the need for a more nuanced conceptualisation of intercultural mediation.
Declaration

I declare that no portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

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I would also like to thank my co-supervisor, Dr. Luis Pérez-González, and my advisor, Dr. Morven Beaton-Thome, for the valuable feedback that they have given me and for all the advice, ideas and encouragement along the way.

A big thank goes also to Prof. Ian Mason, Prof. Laura Gavioli and Dr. Federico Rossano for their advice and suggestions, and for letting me access material which is very relevant to my study and which has become a major source of inspiration for my own work. I am also indebted to my friends and colleagues Dr. Lukasz Kaczmarek and Dr. Sergio Pasquandrea, who have helped me shape my thoughts in different ways and who have given me inspiration and encouragement.

Sincere thanks go to the interpreters, school staff and families in Italy and in the UK who kindly agreed to be video-recorded, thus allowing me to gather the necessary data to explore a setting which is still uncharted territory in interpreting studies.

Last but by no means least, many special thanks to my family, to my parents Simonetta and Bruno and to my auntie Anna, whom I know is looking after me from above. Thanks for your love, unfailing support and belief in me throughout these years. I love you with all my heart.
Ai miei genitori, Simonetta e Bruno,
le persone più importanti
INTRODUCTION

This research sets out to explore the dynamics of interpreter-mediated interaction in pedagogical settings. In particular, I intend to investigate the activity of professional dialogue interpreters working in parent-teacher meeting (henceforth PTMs). The analysis is based on a corpus of three mediated, video-recorded interactions between teachers and families from migrant backgrounds collected both in Italy and in the UK (approximately three hours and ten minutes in total). The idea comes from my personal interest and training as a dialogue interpreter and from my professional experience in pedagogical settings in general, and PTMs in particular. The rationale for the choice of this setting is twofold: on the one hand, even though research on dialogue interpreting (henceforth DI) started to gain momentum in the 1990s, pedagogical settings have received relatively little attention compared to other institutional settings, such as healthcare (e.g. Baraldi & Gavioli 2007; Bot 2005; Wadensjö 1998) or courtrooms (e.g. Berk-Seligson 1990a, 1990b; Mikkelson 2008; Morris 2008), notwithstanding the crucial role of education and communication for the integration of migrants in the host society. On the other hand, there is an increasing demand for interpreters in this context, where they act as an interface between institutions and migrant communities.

Taking part in PTMs is just one of the multiple activities performed by dialogue interpreters in schools, where their status, tasks and responsibilities are seldom clearly defined. Dialogue interpreters are also expected to act as intercultural mediators, i.e. as communication facilitators and bridges between cultures, maximising the interactional ‘closeness’ among participants, while preventing conflict and enabling parties-at-talk to fully express themselves. This study builds on the assumption that the activities of interpreting and mediation are closely intertwined and cannot be investigated separately. DI is therefore studied as a form of intercultural mediation (henceforth IM), i.e. as a social activity whose goals are the promotion of cultural acceptance, participation, mutual understanding, and empowerment. This research explores whether these goals are effectively achieved in interaction, while building on the assumption that interpreters are necessarily ratified, fully-fledged participants in face-to-face scenarios.

The extremely engaged attitude displayed by the two interpreters in my data seems peculiar with respect to the behaviour described in other studies based on authentic data from different settings; it is therefore taken as a starting point for the analysis. My argument is that, by displaying active involvement, dialogue interpreters
do not necessarily function as intercultural mediators, i.e. as communication facilitators and bridges among cultures. What needs to be further investigated is the extent to which their involvement affects the unfolding of the interaction; a non-adversarial context like PTMs lends itself to the analysis of whether, and if so how, interpreters contribute to the establishment of co-operation, empathy and social solidarity, which seem to frame monolingual PTMs. This investigation can be carried out through the selection of specific moves and the analysis of their interactional consequences, with a view to examining how the interpreter’s positioning manifests itself in interaction and to achieving a more nuanced understanding and conceptualisation of IM.

The empirical evidence in support of the argument presented above is drawn from the combined investigation of two main units of analysis, namely evaluative assessments (henceforth EAs) and gaze. This represents one of the elements of innovation of the study, i.e. the attempt to bring the verbal and non-verbal dimensions together to explore this specific type of mediated institutional encounter. Given the inherent complexity of interpreter-mediated interaction with respect to monolingual ones, and the additional layer of difficulty added by the analysis of some specific non-verbal traits, I decided to restrict the scope of the analysis to these two features, which appear to play a dominant function in my data. Furthermore, to my knowledge, no studies on DI to date have combined an analysis of assessments and gaze.

Starting from the verbal dimension, through the selection, categorisation and analysis of EAs, I have identified some recurring patterns which provide interesting insights into the pronounced involvement of dialogue interpreters in PTMs. To this end, I have adopted a conceptual design which builds on the tools and notions defined by conversation analysis (henceforth CA), i.e. a rigorous theoretical and methodological framework that enables researchers to go beyond the analysis of mere turn-by-turn translation and to adopt a dynamic approach that accounts for the behaviour displayed by all participants in interaction. This is in line with the overall approach adopted by this study, which feeds directly into the body of research that investigates interpreter-mediated interaction from a dialogic and interactionist perspective. According to this perspective, the attitude and behaviour of all the parties-at-talk need to be accounted for in the analysis, as they all contribute to the co-construction of the communicative event. The ultimate focus is, nevertheless, on the interpreters and, in particular, on the interactional consequences of some specific verbal and non-verbal moves that they perform. In doing so, this study sheds light on some specific interactional dynamics
which characterise the data collected and answers the call for empirical research on authentic interpreter-mediated interactions.

Moving on to the non-verbal dimension, gaze is integrated as an additional variable to investigate whether it complements/supplements verbal resources and to gain a more comprehensive view of the interactional dynamics analysed. This is another element of innovation of this study, given that non-verbal features have generally been neglected by interpreting studies (henceforth IS). As recently highlighted by Pasquandrea (2011:455), few studies have focused on the “bodily resources used in managing and coordinating interaction, such as gaze, gesture, posture, body movement, object manipulation, proxemics, and spatial arrangement”. Hence the need to integrate this dimension, with a view to providing a small contribution to the rather scant but rapidly growing literature on the multimodal aspects of interpreter-mediated interaction.

The rationale for considering these two dimensions together is that gaze has mainly been studied “in association with variables exogenous to interaction [and] far less attention has been paid to gaze and body orientation in association with variables endogenous to interaction” (Robinson 1998:97-98). The goal of the analysis is not to find direct correlations between the use of gaze and the production of specific units of verbal analysis, but to explore how gaze is used by participants in the sequences isolated and how integrating this dimension can deepen our understanding of the actions performed by participants via verbal means. In other words, verbal and non-verbal resources constitute an integrated system, which needs be analysed as a whole, producing a deeper and more thorough understanding of the communicative dynamics of interpreter-mediated interaction.

The data collected is very rich and complex in nature; the approach adopted to investigate it can be described, firstly, as qualitative, although a general indication of the frequency of certain features is supplied. Secondly, it is also mainly descriptive rather than prescriptive in nature, as it does not aim to highlight the do’s and don’ts of interpreting, rather to investigate what happens in real life scenarios, and what is the interactional impact. Thirdly, it is interdisciplinary, as it combines recent developments in the field of IS, CA, non-verbal and intercultural communication studies. The reason for this choice is the acknowledgment of the complexity of DI practice and the consequent need to adopt a design that can account for the interplay of socio-cultural and interactional variables affecting the unfolding of the communicative event. This study acknowledges that the data could have been investigated from different angles and applying different theoretical and methodological tools. Nevertheless, the research
design adopted has potential for expansion and contributes to enriching a strand of research which is attracting increasing interest. Last but not least, the approach adopted is bottom-up, given that it does not build on a set of pre-determined hypotheses; rather, the overarching research question and set of sub-questions addressed in this study were shaped in the light of the most striking features which resulted from empirical data observation, and are formulated as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How do evaluative assessments and gaze shape the positioning of dialogue interpreters in mediated parent-teacher meetings (PTMs)?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) What actions do evaluative assessments perform?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) What tendencies can be identified in the way interpreters handle sequences embedding evaluative assessments?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) How is gaze used as an interactional resource in conjunction with verbal behaviour when producing such sequences?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) How is positioning realised verbally and non-verbally?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5) What is the impact of the interpreter’s shifting positioning on the interaction?</td>
</tr>
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</table>

The overarching research question highlights three keywords which constitute the *fil rouge* across the thesis, i.e. positioning, evaluative assessments and gaze; the way these notions are intertwined with other relevant ones and productively used to structure the analysis emerges from the sub-research questions, which will be answered consecutively in this thesis.

To start with, chapter 1 provides a backdrop to the study by introducing the object of analysis, i.e. DI, and the setting, i.e. PTMs. Particular emphasis is placed on the links between DI and IM, an issue which is relevant to the purposes of this study. The first half of the chapter provides a framework for understanding the main features and terminology associated with this professional practice. The second half of the chapter explores one of the original elements of this study, i.e. the setting of PTMs. In particular, it discusses findings from previous research on monolingual parent-teacher interaction, and presents some specific features which will be taken into account also in the analysis of mediated PTMs.

Chapter 2 lays out the theoretical framework of the research. Like chapter 1, it is divided into two parts. The first half focuses on the verbal dimension; it introduces and defines a selection of CA-based notions which will be used in the analysis and explains
the rationale for the choice of CA as a discipline that strongly informs my conceptual design. The second half deals with the non-verbal dimension; it reviews the research conducted on non-verbal communication, and then restricts the scope to a selection of studies on both monolingual and mediated interaction which have accounted for gaze and which provide a bedrock for the development of the present one.

Chapter 3 describes the methodology adopted to gather the data. In particular, it presents the procedures which have led to data collection and selection, from ethical and confidentiality issues, to the equipment used to video-record the encounters, the difficulties encountered and how they were solved, the system chosen to transcribe and encode the data and the criteria adopted to select the sequences for the analysis.

Chapters 4 and 5 contain the analysis of the mediated PTMs collected. In particular, chapter 4 characterises some specific traits of teachers’ talk, namely the tendency to produce EAs and the actions that they more often contribute to performing. Thus, it prepares the ground for the fine-grained analysis of the interpreters’ moves and their interactional impact. Chapter 5 shifts the focus onto the interpreter, while still accounting for the behaviour of all participants in the analysis. It defines and qualifies, with the support of empirical evidence, some moves which seem to be typical of the interpreter’s behaviour. These moves are defined in relation to EAs mainly, but they are also characterised by particular gaze configurations which have been useful to disambiguate certain cases and suggest a series of functions that assessments seem to perform in interaction. Counter-examples are also provided and accompanied by a discussion of how they contribute to the argument put forward in the study.

Finally, chapter 6 discusses the implications of the findings at different levels, namely participation, positioning and mediation. The second part of the chapter provides a more general account of the contributions of the thesis to various areas of enquiry, i.e. research on DI, IM, PTMs, assessments, interpreters’ training and the methodology for authentic data collection. Finally, the chapter addresses the weaknesses and shortcomings of the study as it has been conducted and presents some avenues for future research.
CHAPTER 1

Dialogue Interpreting as Intercultural Mediation in
Pedagogical Settings

1.1 Introduction

Globalisation and migration are two intertwined phenomena which have produced a socio-cultural shift in today’s world: an increasingly globalised society offers ever more opportunities for people of different cultural and linguistic backgrounds to interact and communicate with one another. This has led to a series of changes in the way relationships are established and managed in intercultural contacts, during which maintaining constructive communication, without misunderstandings and breakdowns, can be a challenging task.

Two main opposing trends seem to have emerged: on the one hand, a single vehicular language, namely English as a lingua franca (House 2006; Jenkins 2007; Seidlhofer 2001; Mauranen 2003), is being increasingly used in a number of settings by virtue of its status as a world (Brutt-Griffler 2002), global (Toolan 1997) or international (Modiano 2001; Widdowson 1998) language. On the other hand, linguistic and cultural barriers persist in a number of settings. Since Sapir (1929), a widely agreed assumption has been, as Tymoczko & Ireland put it, that “language and culture are intimately connected” (2003:1). The societies in which two or more ethnic groups live together speaking more than one language are confronted with numerous socio-cultural issues to negotiate. One of these issues is how migrant people can effectively communicate with the host countries’ institutions. Hence the growing demand for (inter)linguistic and (inter)cultural mediation to facilitate access to public services (such as courtrooms, immigration services, hospitals, schools) and to address some of the challenges posed by a new and complex world order. This research focuses precisely on this scenario, i.e. institutional interactions mediated by professional figures that I refer to as dialogue interpreters, whose role is extremely complex, multifaceted and still ill-defined.¹

¹ In this thesis, the term dialogue interpreters will never refer to untrained or ad hoc interpreters or to unskilled bilinguals used in this capacity; more details on the background of the interpreters involved in the interactions will be provided in chapter 3.
In particular, this study sets out to analyse DI as IM in pedagogical settings. The specific type of institutional meeting explored, namely PTMs, has never been investigated by research on mediated interaction, even though it presents some peculiarities vis-à-vis other institutional settings and confronts interpreters with a set of challenges that are worth exploring further. However, before embarking on the analysis of the data, a better conceptualisation and understanding of the object of study needs to be achieved. To this end, this chapter provides a targeted overview of the existing literature in the fields of enquiry addressed (namely DI, IM, PTMs) with a view to highlighting some areas of analytical interest, identifying existing gaps in current research and establishing the niche for this study.

The chapter is divided into two main parts. The first one qualifies the field of study, i.e. DI as an instance of IM and situates it within the broader frameworks of IS. Section 1.2 deals with the state-of-the-art of research in this field, by sketching its genesis and development through an overview of the most relevant literature and research strands. In particular, section 1.2.1, addresses the terminological and conceptual confusion surrounding this field of enquiry and introduces the terminology adopted. Section 1.2.2 argues in favour of the conceptualisation of DI and IM as two two essential and inseparable components of the same professional activity, and stresses the untenability of a dichotomising view. However, differently from what is commonly perceived, this does not mean that dialogue interpreters in face-to-face scenarios act by default as bridges between cultures and communication facilitators; what interpreters actually do as intercultural mediators remains a matter for enquiry. This point is crucial to the purpose of the study, which seeks to show that very active and pronounced involvement in interaction on the part of interpreters does not necessarily facilitate communication and the establishment of a common ground among the parties. Only further descriptive research building on the empirical observation of the performance of interpreters in interaction can help identify patterns and regularities in behaviour and evaluate their interactional consequences.

To this end, section 1.2.2 describes some ‘formats’ that mediated interaction can take, namely transformative mediation as opposed to dyadic separation, thus setting out the various options available, their possible impact on the whole communicative event and potential outcomes. This study, though relying on the idea that interpreters are fully-ratified participants, will explore whether some selected moves that they frequently perform in interaction fulfil the goals of transformative mediation or, on the contrary, contribute more to dyadic separation. This conceptual frame of reference,
laying down the different forms of communication that can be promoted by different interpreters’ actions, is useful to contextualise the micro-analysis of specific sequences carried out in chapters 4 and 5 and understand the final discussion in chapter 6. Section 1.2.3 suggests a possible way of looking at the multiplicity of ‘selves’ projected by dialogue interpreters in interaction and of talking about the dynamic and interactionally oriented construction of interpreters’ identity.

The second part of the chapter shifts the focus from the activity to the setting, i.e. PTMs, which has never been investigated in IS before. Section 1.3 (and sub-sections) characterises this type of communicative event by drawing on monolingual literature in the field, given the lack of studies investigating the dynamics of mediated PTMs. This introduction to the setting paves the way for the analysis of the specific traits of participants’ behaviour in mediated PTMs that will be conducted in chapters 4 and 5.

1.2 Defining the field of study: dialogue interpreting

DI is one of the expressions used to refer to the bilateral retour interpreting activity carried out consecutively, mainly face-to-face\(^2\) (Carr et al. 1997; Gentile et al. 1996) in a variety of settings belonging to the “public service sphere” (Baker & Saldanha 2008:43), namely health, social services, immigration, education, legal institutions, etc. These interpreter-mediated encounters are also referred to as triadic exchanges (Mason 2001) or as communicative *pas de trois* (Wadensjö 1998:12) due to their particular format, as they involve an interpreter as a third party in a communication process between individuals speaking different languages and coming from different socio-cultural backgrounds. This last feature also qualifies interpreter-mediated encounters as instances of intercultural communication.

By virtue of the settings in which they usually take place, meetings involving dialogue interpreters are considered a specific type of institutional and task-oriented talk (Drew & Heritage 1992:3), as they are called upon to fulfil specific purposes. Jacobsen (2009:155) defines DI as “a special type of oral translation facilitating access to public services by mediating between service users and service providers who do not share the same language” and, I would add, the same cultural background. Among the many definitions available, this one stresses the idea of DI as a form of mediation, which

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\(^2\) This mode of interpreting covers on-site as well as interpreting provided over the phone (e.g. Wadensjö 1999; Rosenberg 2007).
cannot be restricted to a mere language transfer operation, but is a much more complex and multifaceted activity (see 1.2.2). DI has nevertheless “suffered from serious problems of status and understanding on the part of those most vitally affected by it – the users” (Gentile et al. 1996:2). As a consequence, it is still a controversial concept, which has only recently started to attract increasing interest in IS and studies on conversational interaction and intercultural communication. Research in this field gained momentum in the 1990s, when it started to be recognised as a mode of interpreting, a profession and an academic discipline in its own right.

Early interpreting research mainly focused on conference interpreting, especially in the simultaneous mode. Professionalisation led to a growing academisation of this mode of interpreting, which has always enjoyed a higher status, prestige and remuneration compared to other low-profile non-mainstream forms of interpreting, such as DI (Diriker 2001). Research at the time could be qualified as prescriptive and normative; it focused on traditional areas of investigation, such as quality, which was established by carrying out a comparative analysis of interpreters’ rendition and original utterance(s) via the categorisation of ‘errors’, intended as what seemed to deviate from what was expected of interpreters (i.e. an accurate, faithful and verbatim rendition). Early contributions mainly consisted of manuals or handbooks providing guidelines and describing the practitioner’s work (e.g. Fukuii & Asano 1961; Herbert 1952; Ilg 1959; Paneth 1957; Rozan 1956; Van Hoof 1962). Conference interpreting also attracted considerable interest on the part of neighbouring disciplines, such as linguistics, psychology, neurophysiology. Thanks to the input from these disciplines, research also became cognition-oriented, i.e. it aimed to gain insights into the information processing and cognitive organisation underlying the interpreting process, with a view to better understanding the profession and finding effective ways of teaching it. To this end, researchers carried out experimental studies specifically designed to focus on some factors influencing the interpreter’s performance such as memory and attention span, information overload, ear-voice span, speech rate, phonological interference, noise (e.g. Barik 1969; Gerver 1969; Goldman-Eisler 1967; Oléron & Nanpon 1964; Seleskovich 1965; Treisman 1965).

In the 1980s a “process of diversification” (Pöchhacker 2004:36) started, which led to a reorientation of interpreting research: it could be described “as a vertical development, with empirical research probing ever more deeply into the cognitive processes underlying interpreting performance” as well as an “horizontal development, of diversification and opening up to interpreting domains beyond international
conferences and organizations” (Pöchhacker 2004:38-39). This was also the result of an increased interest towards non-mainstream forms of interpreting, namely DI, in the light of the “cultural perspective” (Baker 1996) or “cultural turn” (Cronin 2002) and “social turn” (Pöchhacker 2006) in translation and interpreting studies and of the pragmatic turn in language studies in general. Research moved away from its traditional areas of investigation and started to explore other features of interpreting, intended as an activity embedded in the social world of communication. This reorientation also produced a gradual shift towards a more descriptive rather than prescriptive, observational rather than experimental, interaction- rather than cognition-oriented approach to research. The aim was to shed light on what actually happens in interaction via direct observation of empirical, authentic data, without attempting to establishing the ‘do’s and don’ts’ of the interpreting activity, but contributing to an increased understanding of its multifaceted nature, which is not subject to any *a priori* rules and can be conducted in a variety of different ways. The focus was no longer exclusively on the product, but also on the process of interpreting, intended as a socially, culturally and politically situated activity embedded in and affected by its context of occurrence and linked to issues such as agency, role negotiation, power relations, control, institutional constraints, ideology, which have been traditionally explored by different disciplines.

A landmark event for the establishment of DI was the Critical Link conference on the theme of interpreting in legal, health, and social service settings that was held in Geneva Park, Toronto, Canada, in 1995 (Carr et al. 1997). Since then, Critical Link conferences have been held every three years (Vancouver 1998, Montreal 2001, Stockholm 2004, Sydney 2007, Birmingham 2010 – see Roberts et al. 2000; Brunette et al. 2003; Wadensjö et al. 2007). These events gather together researchers from different fields and countries to share hitherto isolated studies and findings; these conferences have acted as catalysts to networking and collaborative research. As stressed by Pöchhacker & Shlesinger (2002:8),

> with community-based interpreting coming into its own as an object of research, alongside the more firmly established domain of conference interpreting, we can safely begin to speak of the emergence of a broadly conceived discipline of IS.
Three large-scale studies carried out by practitioners-cum-researchers laid the groundwork and set standards for future research: Wadensjö’s (1992, 1998) PhD thesis on interpreting in immigration hearings and medical encounters, Berk-Seligson’s (1990a, 1990b) study of interpreting in American courtrooms and Roy’s (1989, 2000) description and analysis of a meeting between a deaf student using American sign language and a professor at a US university. Thanks to these and other equally important smaller-scale investigations, interpreting research broadened its horizons and raised issues of crucial importance. A shift therefore happened from research exclusively concerned with conference interpreting to a proliferation of studies looking at face-to-face interpreter-mediated interaction in a variety of settings, and seeking to determine appropriate methods for its systematic investigation (e.g. Alexieva 2002; Angelelli 2000; Carr et al. 1997; Gentile et al. 1996; Hale 2007; Mason 1999, 2001).

Those settings include healthcare (e.g. Amato 2007a; Angelelli 2003, 2004a; Baraldi & Gavioli 2007, 2008a; Bolden 2000; Bot 2005; Davidson 2000, 2001; Leanza 2005; Meyer 2002; Pöchhacker & Shlesinger 2007; Wadensjö 1998), courtroom (e.g. Berk-Seligson 1990a, 1990b, 2002; Fenton 1997; Fowler 1997; Hale 2004, 2008; Jacobsen 2003, 2008; Mikkelson 1998, 2008; Morris 1995, 2008), social services (e.g. Merlini 2009), police stations (e.g. Krouglov 1999; Wadensjö 1998), TV, radio interviews and talk shows (e.g. Straniero-Sergio 1999, 2007; Wadensjö 2000, 2008) and business settings (e.g. Fogazzaro & Gavioli 2004; Gavioli & Maxwell 2007). The pedagogical setting has, nevertheless, been relatively poorly explored by IS, despite the important function played by dialogue interpreters, who are expected to act as catalysts for the integration of migrant children and families in the educational institution (e.g. Balboni 2004; Favaro & Fumagalli 2004; Fiorucci 2000; Johnson & Nigris 1996; Tarozzi 2006). A review of work carried out in this setting is provided in 1.3.1.

An enormous variety of different theoretical and methodological approaches have been adopted to explore this specific form of interpreter-mediated interaction as a social, cultural and linguistic practice (for a comprehensive account, see Hertog & Van der Veer 2006). On the one hand, the cross-fertilisation of methodological and theoretical approaches drawing on disciplines ranging from applied linguistics to anthropology, sociology, and social psychology has certainly enriched our knowledge and understanding of this professional practice and academic discipline, which has become inherently interdisciplinary. On the other hand, this has often led to a certain theoretical and methodological confusion in the ways studies are conducted. This lack of conceptual clarity is reflected in the abundant and, at times, inconsistent terminology.
used to refer to the discipline as well as to the professional figure performing this type of activity, as will be shown in the following section.

1.2.1 The many names of dialogue interpreting

Throughout this thesis, I have chosen to use the term dialogue interpreting (Mack 2005; Mason 1999; Wadensjö 1992, 1998), an expression which seems to be best suited to cater for the wide variety of contexts and scenarios where this activity may be required. Nevertheless, no terminological agreement has been achieved yet, which is testament to the different ways in which this professional activity and field of enquiry are perceived. A number of expressions can be found in the literature to refer to the same form of interpreter-mediated interaction: among others, community interpreting (Carr et al. 1997; Hale 2007; Hertog & van der Ver 2006; Shackman 1984; Tebble 1992), public service interpreting (Corsellis 2008), liaison interpreting (Alexieva 2002; Erasmus et al. 1999; Gentile et al. 1996), cultural interpreting, escort interpreting or ad hoc interpreting (Hale 2007). The plethora of expressions available to describe this type of interpreter-mediated activity differ slightly in terms of the emphasis placed on specific aspects of the interpreting process, such as mode, setting, professional status or areas of specialisation of the interpreter (Hale 2007:27-30).

Among the arguments in favour of the choice of this expression, DI is “a term that seeks to encompass a group of activities seen as sharing an overall mode of interaction rather than a particular term”, thus transcending boundaries and focusing on the “characteristics of a particular mode of interaction, shared in many, quite diverse, socio-professional contexts” (Baker & Saldanha 2008:81). DI highlights the dialogic nature of this form of communication, as opposed to the monologic, unidirectional nature of conference interpreting modes such as simultaneous interpreting. This analytical approach was first put forward by Wadensjö’s (1992, 1998), who drew on Bakhtin’s dialogical view of language and mind (1979/1986) to develop a paradigm to study interpreting in community settings. Wadensjö explored how dialogue interpreters contribute to the creation of a relationship between primary parties in triadic interaction, and emphasised their role as mediators. Her inductive and empirical analysis of how a Swedish police inspector, a Russian-speaking defendant and their interpreter each make sense of the verbal interaction from their respective points of view highlights the inherently interactive or dialogic nature of face-to-face communication in general, and of interpreter-mediated interactions in particular. Wadensjö’s research is groundbreaking in its attempt to move beyond the boundaries of conference interpreting.
and adopt an interactionist approach to the analysis of DI. This landmark work has given momentum to a view of interpreting which has become widely accepted as a major line of enquiry, and has inspired a number of studies which have contributed to the refinement of this research design (e.g. Angelelli 2004a, 2004b; Banfi et al. 2006; Bolden 2000; Carr et al. 1997; Davidson 2000, 2001, 2002; Gavioli 2009; Mason 2001; Metzger 1999; Roy 2000; Traverso 2003; Pöchhacker & Schlesinger 2007).

According to this new “dialogic discourse-based interactionist” paradigm for the study of interpreting – to use Pöchhacker’s (2004:79) formulation – all the parties-at-talk contribute to the co-construction of meaning and understanding and “the outcome of interpreters’ work is dependent on the primary participants, on their mutual relations, on how they relate to the interpreter and on their communicative style” (Wadensjö 1999:248). As Napier (2007:409) puts it, “it can be said that interaction participants cooperate with one another to navigate discourse, and co-construct meaning”. Each mediated face-to-face encounter is unique, and its outcome is the result of a subtle combination and balancing out of strategies adopted and choices made by the interpreter and by the participants involved in a constant process of interactional negotiation. As Wadensjö (1998:272) states:

> The unpredictability of human interaction will confront DIs with situations where they will see a dilemma in applying predefined norms. Practice shows how these situations are handled. By exploring the practice, we may gain knowledge on which to base new, more elaborate norms as regards dialogue interpreting.

Since the establishment of discourse-based research, interpreters have been recognised as participants within dialogic interaction. The analysis of naturally occurring data in institutional settings, in which interpreters physically take part in the interaction, challenged the norm envisaging the neutrality and invisibility of interpreters, which seems to be no longer applicable to mediated face-to-face interaction (e.g. Davidson 2001; Gavioli & Maxwell 2007; Mason 1999; Straniero Sergio 1999; Wadensjö 1998). Hence the growing need to raise interpreters’ awareness of the complexity and multifaceted nature of their functions in interaction, as well as of the interactional implications of their (non-)verbal behaviour.
Most studies in the field of DI so far have focused on the verbal dimension of interaction, mainly drawing on the conceptual frameworks provided by discourse and conversation analysis (e.g. Bolden 2000; Brunette et al. 2003; Bührig & Meyer 2004; Davidson 2000, 2001, 2002; Mason 1999; Wadensjö 1998). This study, which largely draws on the interaction- and discourse-oriented paradigm presented above, contributes to this line of enquiry by linking the findings obtained from a linguistic micro-analysis of “talk-in-interaction” (Schegloff 1987), using the tools provided by CA, to a macro-level of analysis, with a view to understanding better the implications of the interpreters’ behaviour on the interaction. Such behaviour encompasses both verbal and non-verbal moves; hence the decision to integrate non-verbal features in my research design. In this respect, Mason (2001:ii) states that DI “cannot be studied just as a series of oral texts, in complete isolation from paralinguistic and other contextual features”. Nevertheless, previous studies on DI have failed to account systematically for proxemics or paralanguage in their analysis; only a few mention the importance of integrating this component in the investigation of mediated interactions (e.g. Bot 2005; Lang 1976, 1978; Mason forthcoming). The expression DI has therefore also been chosen as it seems to be broad enough to encompass the investigation of non-verbal features like gaze, which is conducted in this study.

Last but not least, according to Mason, triadic exchanges “are not limited to what is normally viewed as community interpreting – i.e. legal, medical and social services settings. They are also prominent in business negotiations, for example, in the field of diplomatic interpreting or interpreting in broadcast interviews” (Mason 2001:iii). This is another reason for the choice of the hyperonym DI, which seems particularly suitable to account for the specific setting investigated in this study, i.e. the pedagogical setting, as well as for the varied status and level of professionalisation in different countries. This point is particularly relevant to this study, which focuses on data collected in Italy and in the UK, where DI enjoys different levels of recognition.

Different countries have different approaches to deal with the rapid growth of DI, which is gaining importance in our multicultural and globalised society. This is testament to a certain divergence in the perception of this professional activity. On the one hand, countries like the UK, Norway, Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Australia and Canada, which have a long history of mass immigration, have been pioneers in recognising DI as an autonomous profession, setting professional standards and seeking to guarantee a higher level of professionalism via the establishment of accreditation and training schemes for interpreters and education programmes for service providers
working with interpreters. In the UK, the expressions public service interpreting or community interpreting seem to be most frequently used, thus placing emphasis on the setting in which interpreters are required to work. Once they have obtained the relevant qualifications, interpreters can join the National Register of Public Service Interpreters (NRPSI), which was set up in 1994. This body is responsible, at least in principle, for maintaining the quality of public service interpreters; it has recently approved a code intended to regulate the professional conduct of its over two thousand members (NRPSI 2011).

On the other hand, countries like Italy, Belgium, France, Spain and Portugal lag behind in the establishment of standards and certification systems, and allow local institutions and bodies to organise the provision of this service independently. As a result, *ad hoc* solutions are often found, such as the use of unqualified, untrained and often even unpaid interpreters (i.e. family members or people who are required to perform this task simply by virtue of their more or less in-depth knowledge of both the immigrant’s and host country’s languages), whose competence is often unknown and who have not received any formal training on how to cope with ethical issues (among the studies which have addressed this topic in medical settings are Bührig & Meyer 2004; Dubslaff & Martinsen 2006; Meyer 1998; Pöchhacker & Kadric 1999).

Half of the data analysed in this thesis was collected in Italy; it seems therefore relevant to give a brief account of the situation in that country, which is among those most lacking in regulation. As stated by Rudvin (2006:57), “the use of unqualified interpreters is the rule rather than the exception; poor recognition of the profession and the need for quality training and accreditation lead to the rampant use of *ad hoc* solutions”, which may, in turn, cause miscommunication and “improper diagnosis, unneeded tests, loss of income, criminal charges being wrongfully laid or the failure to lay criminal charges when warranted” (Marzocchi 2003:42). The expressions *interprete di comunità* (community interpreter) and *interprete per i servizi pubblici* (public service interpreter) were adopted by the Italian Association of Translators and Interpreters (AITI) in 2000, to describe the person who “translates in the oral mode to provide

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3 The NRPSI has recently become an independent body, which is no longer associated with the Chartered Institute of Linguists (1 April 2011). This body is now facing a controversial situation, following the reform of the provision of public service interpreting in the Criminal Justice system issued by the Ministry of Justice. The Ministry’s decision is to outsource the provision of language services across the justice sector to commercial intermediaries. This reform has been highly criticised for representing a step back and possibly leading to a decline in the quality of interpreting in the Criminal Justice System; professional interpreters have been invited to sign a petition against this decision, which, in their view, puts the future of the profession and of the discipline at risk (http://www.ipetitions.com/petition/mojoutsourcing/). The latest news (20th October 2011) and further information available at: http://www.nrpsi.co.uk/ (last accessed December 2011).
linguistic assistance to foreign citizens (immigrants or refugees, usually belonging to minority ethnic groups) in their dealings with institutions, authorities and public administrations during their stay in the host country” (translation found in Merlini 2009:87, the original text in Italian can be found in AITI 2000:121). Nevertheless, these expressions have not become established in Italy.

The boundaries of DI have become even more blurred further to the rise of the so called figure of the (inter)cultural mediator. As explained by Merlini (2009:57-58, my italics), in Italy “the professional activity enabling communication between institutional service providers and immigrants is subsumed [...] under the broad category of cultural mediation (mediazione culturale)”. Cultural mediation is not the only formulation available; a number of variants have been suggested, among which mediazione linguistico-culturale (Gavioli 2009, in English linguistic-cultural mediation), mediazione interculturale (CRPA 2009, in English intercultural mediation).

The professional figure associated with this activity can be referred to as mediatore (inter)culturale ((inter)cultural mediator), mediatore linguistico-culturale (linguistic-cultural mediator) or, less frequently, as mediatore di comunità (community mediator) or mediatore socio-culturale (socio-cultural mediator, see Degano 2002-2003). The lack of conceptual clarity emerging from the array of different expressions used reflects a very chaotic and confused perception of this multifaceted professional figure.

As underlined by Rudvin (2006:57) there is a problem of ‘role clarification’: “the confusion between the figure and tasks of the cultural mediator versus the language mediator or interpreter should be addressed by both academic institutions and service providers”. A recent formulation is that of interprete-mediatore (in English interpreter-mediator, see Russo & Mack 2005; Amato & Gavioli 2008): it certainly represents an attempt to overcome the dichotomy and bridge the untenable gap between the two activities that these professional figures are required to perform, namely linguistic and cultural mediation. Nevertheless, this expression only applies to the professional figure, rather than to the actual activity (which, to my knowledge, has never been referred to as interpreting-mediation), and it includes no reference to the mode of interpreting performed in face-to-face scenarios. On the contrary, the expression DI puts emphasis on the type of communicative event and its technicalities; it refers to both the agent and the activity while placing emphasis on its dialogic and interactionist nature, which is inherent to any type of communicative event involving two or more parties and clearly differentiates DI from other modes of interpreting, such as conference interpreting.
The term *mediatore* (mediator) firstly appeared in Italy in a circular issued by the Ministry of Public Education (MPI 1990). In particular, article 6 stated that mediators play a crucial role in facilitating school-family relationships and communication and in promoting/fostering the language and culture of origin. Nevertheless, the circular did not spell out the role, competencies and requirements of this new professional figure. A step forward in this direction was not taken until 1998; Law 40/98 (about the regulation of immigration and of the status of foreigners) recognises the figure of intercultural mediators to provide ethnic minorities with linguistic and cultural support. A profile was also outlined in a document which appeared on the website of the Italian Ministry for Employment and Welfare Policies in 2003. It states that (originally quoted in Mack 2005:9, translation found in Merlini 2009:58):

The cultural mediator is a foreigner who, by virtue of specific training, has acquired professional competence in the field of intercultural communication. He differs from the Italian service provider, from the mere translation professional who is not necessarily trained for cultural empathy, and from the ad hoc mediator, be it a voluntary worker, relative, friend or fellow countryman. Coming from the same countries of origin as the migrants, he performs a double task: linguistic interpretation and cultural orientation. The mediator acts as a bridge between the migrants’ needs and the provision of public services. To establish a true dialogue between foreign service users

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4 Further dispositions were issued by the Ministry of Public Education, which stated the importance of the role of mediators in schools; among others, a Ministerial decree (MPI 2000) and a circular (MPI 2006) respectively pointed out the need to provide training for linguistic mediators and teachers working in areas largely affected by migration and devoted quite a considerable space to linguistic and cultural mediators.

5 The tasks of cultural mediators were more clearly spelled out later in a document issued by CNEL (2000), which stated that these are: ‘preventing occasions of potential conflict from arising, while favouring social integration and equal access to legal rights, and enhancing the resources of the immigrant citizens’ own cultures and values; helping foreign citizens integrate into the Italian society, by informing them about their rights and duties, and about the use of locally operated social, healthcare, educational and cultural services, both public and private, so as to guarantee equal access and use of those same services; facilitating the encounter of different people through linguistic-cultural mediation, which entails the ability to decode the codes - underlying the language and the totality of feelings, experience and values - of the two interacting parties (i.e. migrant and service provider); helping foreign citizens read and understand Italian culture with reference to their cultures of origin and mutual prejudices; promoting and enhancing the role of foreigners as a resource and opportunity within the wider socio-economic context” (translation from Italian into English taken from Merlini 2009:88)
and service providers, what is required is a decoding of ideas and behaviours, in addition to the translation of words.

The quotation above shows that a dichotomy is assumed to exist between the professions of linguistic and cultural mediator. The former, also referred to as interpreter, is supposed to have received language training, but not necessarily specific cultural training. The latter has linguistic competence, which is the result of belonging to the same ethnic minority as the migrants who need their services, even though s/he is not assumed to have any specific training in languages and interpreting techniques. The simple fact of belonging to the same ethnic minority apparently makes them able to act as bridges between migrants and the host institutions. As explained by Merlini (2009:59),

this somewhat idyllic picture of cultural mediation, however, does not take into account the many variables which may come into play and make the image of an unstable and conflict-prone “mediation zone” a truer-to-life representation.

The two threads of research on DI and IM have been dealt with in the literature as separate objects of investigation for too long. This has led to an implausible and untenable dichotomy between two practices which are very closely intertwined (Gavioli 2009). The stance taken in this study is that these two expressions refer to what is ultimately the same multifaceted activity of “mediating across boundaries of language and culture” (Pöchhacker & Shlesinger 2002:1). Building on Merlini (2007:282), I shall consider interpreting as a concept “encompassing all forms of oral translation, and mediation as the form it takes in most dialogical contexts”. It is thus necessary to discuss mediation as a form of interpreting, and vice versa, interpreting as a form of mediation, as I will argue in the following section.

1.2.2 Dialogue interpreting as intercultural mediation?

DI necessarily takes place in contexts of intercultural or cross-cultural communication. As suggested by Kondo & Tebble (1997:150), “the communicative situation involving the interpreter is always and by necessity an instance of intercultural communication”; Wadensjö (1998:75) states that, in face-to-face interaction, “interpreters cannot avoid
functioning as intercultural mediators through their translation activity”. Gavioli & Baraldi (2011:206-207) have recently suggested that researchers “look at interpreter-mediated interaction as mediation (e.g. Bush & Folger 1994; Winslade & Monk 2008) in intercultural settings, with particular attention to cultural diversity and to its treatment in the interaction (e.g. Carbaugh 2005; Kotthoff & Spencer-Oatey 2009)”.

To start with, I shall briefly clarify what is intended by the expressions intercultural mediation, intercultural communication and culture in this study. These core notions have been investigated from many different angles, so that it is sometimes difficult to provide an operational definition, without falling into excessive vagueness or essentialism (Verschueren 2008). For the purpose of this thesis, I have selected a set of definitions which seem particularly suitable as they describe these notions at the level of interaction. Culture is central to this discussion; a number of debates on how it can be defined, how it influences face-to-face interaction, and what is the link between language and culture have taken place in different fields of enquiry. Sacks talks about culture in terms of recognisability of actions. As he puts it (1992:226):

A culture is an apparatus for generating recognizable actions; if the same procedures are used for generating as for detecting, that is perhaps as simple a solution to the problem of recognizability as is formulatable.

This definition places emphasis on the level explored in this study, i.e. the level of actions (as defined by CA) implemented through talk and gaze by all participants in interaction (see 2.3.2). Exploring such actions and their impact can shed light on the dynamics of triadic intercultural communication, which has been defined interactionally by Ting-Toomey (1999:17) as “a symbolic exchange process whereby individuals from two (or more) different cultural communities negotiate shared meanings in an interactive situation”. Last but not least, intercultural mediation “is performed as intercultural communication […] in which interpreting creates mediation and mediation is practised as interpreting” (Baraldi 2006a:227).

As anticipated in the previous section, (inter)linguistic and (inter)cultural mediation have been traditionally considered as separate fields of enquiry. This is particularly evident in the literature on IM which has flourished in Italy over the last two decades (e.g. Aluffi Pentini 2004; Andolfi 2003; Balboni 1999; Balsamo 2003; Belpiede 2002; Castiglioni 1997; Ceccatelli-Guerrieri 2003; Favaro 2001; Favaro &
Fumagalli 2004; Fiorucci 2000, 2007; Luatti 2006; Renzetti & Luatti 2001; Santagati, 2004). These studies have mainly focused on the role of mediator taken up by a member of the cultural and linguistic minority group from a pedagogical, psychological and sociological point of view. The diversity and multiplicity of approaches adopted is testament to the importance that IM has gained as a practice contributing to the creation of a multicultural and pluralistic society. However, a criticism raised towards this literature is that it focuses too much on the “mediators’ roles, competence and training necessities, ignoring mediation as empirical interaction” (Baraldi 2006a:225-226). In other words, these studies have mainly placed emphasis on the socio-cultural value of such activity, on the mediators’ knowledge of values and expectations of different cultures, but they have ignored the fact that cultural values are ultimately expressed through language and have taken the mediators’ linguistic competence for granted by virtue of the mediators’ assumed belonging to the ethnic minority.

The approach put forward by recent empirical studies on DI (e.g. Wadensjö 1998; Amato 2007a, 2007b; Angelelli 2004a, 2004b; Baker 2006a, 2006b; Bolden 2000; Davidson 2000, 2001; Fogazzaro & Gavioli 2004; Mason 1999, 2006; Pugliese & Veschi 2006; Baraldi 2006b; Baraldi & Gavioli 2007; Gavioli & Zorzi 2008), and shared by this study, recognises that “interpreting is an important aspect of intercultural mediation, as mediators are mainly employed in institutions when linguistic difficulties are felt” (Baraldi 2006a:226). Even though it is widely agreed that linguistic competence on its own is not sufficient to perform mediation through interpreting (intended as a translating activity or as linguistic mediation) and to ensure cultural sharing, placing too much emphasis on the cultural mediation side seems to reduce the importance of the translating activity, which is part and parcel of it. Baraldi (2006a:227) clearly summarises the relation between the two activities: “interpreting opens up problems of cultural acceptance which can be dealt with through translation; however, mediation never follows interpreting; it always happens through interpreting”.

As language remains the primary means to carry out mediation, the analysis of talk-in-interaction is considered in this study as a valuable starting point to identify some recurring actions in triadic exchanges, and evaluate their impact. The gap between exclusively culture-oriented and language-oriented studies can be bridged by exploring the “potential for cross-fertilization between studies that focus on features of language production and those that focus on features of cultural production - two perspectives that are very closely interrelated in bilingual interpreter-mediated talk, such that each of
them can profit from taking the other into account” (Gavioli & Baraldi 2011:207, see also Gavioli 2009).

When we think of the term mediation, we think of ways of actively co-ordinating parties and modifying their relationship so as to achieve alignment and integration (Baraldi 2009). As explained by Picard & Melchin (2007:36, my italics), “central to all mediation approaches is that a third party helps disputants resolve conflicts by enabling parties to find their own solutions”. I have emphasised the final part of this sentence as it is relevant to my study, i.e. it stresses the idea that a mediator should enable parties to create the grounds for a new, shared meaning, promote the construction of an in-between space (e.g. Clark 1996; Davidson 2002) “where mutually enriching exchanges between migrants and natives may bring about social change and cultural transformation” (Merlini 2009:59). As will be shown in the second half of the chapter, this is also in line with the idea that in PTMs, parties need to communicate, exchange opinions and integrate individual knowledge in order to reach a common ground and common solutions.

The mediating side of interpreting is often conceived as the ability to handle potential conflicts caused by different cultural positions and expectations. Mediation has traditionally revolved around the notion of conflict, and it has been conceived and conceptualised mainly as a conflict-resolution practice. In DI, nevertheless, mediation is crucial not only when dealing with conflicting parties, but also with a view to preventing potential conflicts from arising. As suggested by Baraldi (2010), mediators in intercultural contexts in most cases will not have to solve escalated disputes. This is usually the case in PTMs, which cannot be defined an adversarial or conflict-prone communicative context; on the contrary, this setting is described, at least in monolingual conversation, as being characterised by cooperation and by the constant search for alignment among the parties. My data seems to confirm this idea; the interaction is apparently unproblematic, it unfolds smoothly, without any major breakdown or instances of clear conflict or tension among the parties, even though the topics addressed are at times very delicate. Nevertheless, as highlighted by Merlini (2009:59) “not even in more cooperative and friendly settings […] can the risk of tensions be ruled out completely”; even PTMs may become a site for conflict, as highlighted in 1.3

IM, therefore, differs significantly from conventional conflict mediation, as interpreters are required to prevent and handle what are sometimes very subtle, potential misunderstandings that may arise in intercultural interaction. In other words, IM cannot
be simply conceptualised as a conflict-resolution practice, as it also includes a preventive component, which is crucial to ensure a smooth unfolding of the event; nevertheless, preventing conflicts should not be synonym to ‘stifling’ the voice of one party or the other, and preventing one party or the other from fully expressing their opinions and feelings, thus leading to dyadic separation (Baraldi 2009). On the contrary, the promotion of active participation should be seen as one of the primary goals of IM (e.g. Baraldi 2003, 2009; Villano & Riccio 2008). As clearly explained by Baraldi (2009:122):

> Because they are considered destructive for the social systems, conflicts are generally intended to be negative types of actions. In the social systems, though, conflicts can also be observed as productive actions, taking the form of communicated refusals, doubts and worries. Changes in the social systems are normally created with the help of conflicts, which reveal participants’ problems and difficulties and allow their interactional management. While refusals, doubts or worries may contrast with or even destroy existing expectations, they also open up new possibilities of communication, helping social systems to change and renew themselves.

Mediation has nonetheless often been accused of maintaining the status quo within social systems and not being able to bring about any changes. In particular, it has been criticised for easing social problems, thus confirming power asymmetries rather than trying to solve them, and promote effective cooperation and, ultimately, effective integration.

A form of mediation which can help achieve the goals of mutual understanding and cooperation is transformative mediation (Bush & Folger 1994, see also Baraldi 2009; Baraldi & Gavioli 2008a); it can lead to changes in the social systems and produce alternatives to existing narratives (Baraldi & Gavioli 2008a) as well as promote “the participants’ empowerment in defining issues and autonomously deciding about them, and mutual recognition of their points of view” (Baraldi 2009:122). Transformative mediation therefore seems to offer a means of integrating immigrants and is crucial to facilitate access to information as well as to ensure equal opportunities. To be fully accomplished, however, two main communicative conditions need to be met, namely
equal distribution of opportunities for active participation in communication; and empathy, that is competence in assuming another’s perspective, integrating listening and understanding, interest in expression and a sensitivity to the needs of others (Gudykunst 1994) […] In this way, dialogue emphasizes conjunction among different cultural forms in communication, avoiding asymmetries and assimilation.

(Baraldi 2006b:62)

In triadic encounters, the establishment of these favourable conditions needs to be facilitated by interpreters, who are required to perform particular actions, such as actively intervening to give parties opportunities to talk, encouraging parties to deal with specific issues, strengthening specific identities, dealing with emotions, providing alternative narratives (e.g. Baraldi 2009:122; Gavioli & Baraldi 2011:208). The present study embraces the idea of interpreters as active participants in interaction, encouraging parties to voice their feelings and even contrasting opinions; this is considered a first step towards handling and, eventually, neutralising conflicts and achieving effective intercultural communication. However, different actions performed by interpreters need to be analysed on a moment-by-moment basis, as suggested by Bolden (2000:390), who, talking about medical encounters, explains that

the issue of how interpreters’ moment-by-moment behaviour fits into the activity currently in progress has largely been neglected. Instead, researchers have opted for a more global analysis of interpreters’ involvement which does not distinguish between the different activities that constitute medical encounters and the different requirements they impose on the participants. Without taking into consideration the specific activities in which interpreters engage, however, it is impossible to understand what guides interpreters’ actions at any particular time.

To sum up, through interpreting, not only are interpreters supposed to ensure mutual understanding and cooperation among the parties, but they are also expected to open up and explore intercultural problems while guaranteeing the expression of cultural diversity (Baraldi 2006a), promoting active interactional participation and
forms of intercultural adaptation (Kim 2001; Bush & Folger 1994; Mulchay 2001; Ayoko et al. 2002; Brigg 2003), ensuring understanding and mutual acceptance of different cultural expressions, bridging cultural differences (Gudykunst 1994) and empowering all the participants’ voices (e.g. Baraldi 2009). To this end, interpreters are “both drawing upon given, shared cultural knowledge and creating new knowledge that will become shared” (Rudvin 2006:58). This view stems from the assumption that interpreters act as ‘bridges’ and communication facilitators between different cultures (e.g. Bowling & Hoffman 2000; Shah-Kazemi 2000); in this study, a critical stance is taken towards this assumption. Different actions may promote different forms of communication; only through a combined analysis of micro- and macro-features of this situated practice will it be possible to gain insights into the real implications of specific interpreters’ moves.

Active engagement on behalf of the interpreters is required to fulfil the expectations that they will act as bridges between languages and cultures, fill in cultural gaps which may potentially lead to conflict and disruption in communication. This is in contrast with the long-flaunted notions of invisibility and neutrality, which represent two different stances that interpreters have too long been expected to take on in interaction. It is now widely acknowledged that interpreters are not mere “conduits” (to use Reddy’s 1979 metaphor), walking dictionaries simply echoing messages in another language. In DI, particularly, the very fact of being physically present in the interaction dispels the myth of dialogue interpreters as invisible entities or “non-persons” (Goffman 1959) and upholds the view that they actively participate in the communication process as fully ratified participants (Mason 2001). On the one hand, interpreters seem to enjoy a greater leeway; on the other hand, however, the notion of active participation remains very loose, and it is therefore difficult to provide interpreters with clear guidelines on how to behave in mediated encounters:

The undefined contours of the cultural mediator’s profile, the variety and complexity of tasks s/he is called upon to perform, the ill-traced confines between empathy and advocacy, the lack of technical instruction in interpreting and the absence of the “invisibility” norm account for an exceptionally wide room for manoeuvre, especially in the context of social services, frequently characterized by informal and cooperative interactions. This very freedom does not erase
tensions; it simply shifts them onto a different, less visible, but no less
critical arena.

(Merlini 2009:61)

This prompts a need to investigate, not whether, but what degree of intervention
is more appropriate. In this study, I suggest that participants in interaction, interpreter
included, rely on a series of cues (verbal and non-verbal), to determine what to do (or
not to do). In line with Merlini (2009:62), I believe that interpreters’ “behaviour can be
investigated as a manifestation of the identity, or rather identities, each individual
mediator chooses to project, rather than as a response to externally imposed
constraints”. Interpreters, in face-to-face scenarios, project a number of ‘selves’ in
interaction on the basis of contingent needs; these multiple identities are constantly
shifting and are negotiated on a moment-by-moment basis by participants. Such shifts, I
argue, can be pinpointed by analysing verbal and non-verbal cues. Mason’s discussion
of projected and perceived identities (2005) and positioning (2009) in DI is central to
this argument; he states that “a discoursal perspective […] is not adopted in the major
studies of DI published so far – e.g. Berk-Seligson (1990a), Wadensjö (1992, 1998) –
while Roy (2000) treats interpreting as a discourse process but is primarily concerned
with aspects such as turn-taking and managing the flow of talk” (2005:40).

The next section provides an account of the plethora of functions and tasks of
interpreters in mediated scenarios and how these have been broken down and defined by
selected previous literature. Empirical analysis will make it possible to examine whether
the same functions highlighted by previous models are also performed by interpreters
working in PTMs and to disclose some new ones, which are specific to this type of
encounter. Thus, the section highlights the complexity of dialogue interpreters’ activity
and stresses the difficulty of positioning their tasks and roles within mediated scenarios
while suggesting a way of accounting dynamically for interpreters’ multiple selves.

1.2.3 The multiple selves of dialogue interpreters

The complexity of the interpreter’s task has been widely acknowledged in the literature
on DI (e.g. Angelelli 2004; Baker 2006a; Bolden 2000; Davidson 2000, 2001; Mason
1999, 2006; Wadensjö 1998, 2006). These studies show that interpreters in face-to-face
encounters do not simply act as machine boxes or conduits of meaning, enabling merely
linguistic understanding among participants, and that interpreting, as an activity, cannot
be investigated via a simple comparison between a ‘source’ and a ‘target’ text. In particular, studies based on the analysis of naturally occurring data have shown that interpreters’ tasks go beyond translating others’ talk; they act as co-participants and co-constructors of meanings (e.g. Wadensjö 1998; Straniero Sergio 1999; Roy 2000; Davidson 2002). Thus, they perform an essential coordinating activity (Wadensjö 1998:145-150), which manifests itself in a number of ways, such as managing turn-taking, asking for clarification, asking to stop or to repeat, explaining (e.g. Bolden 2000; Davidson 2000, 2002; Jacobsen 2008; Mason 2005, 2006; Merlini & Favaron 2005; Roy 2000; Wadensjö 1998; Wadensjö et al. 2007).

The translating and coordinating activities are not mutually exclusive, but they are simultaneously present in DI; through them, interpreters contribute to establishing a conversational order while fostering the relationship among interlocutors, minimising misunderstandings and enhancing understanding, promoting participation and facilitating interpersonal relationships. A comprehensive analysis of the ‘role’ of dialogue interpreters also needs to account for a third, crucial functions taken up by them in interaction, i.e. that of responders (e.g. Wadensjö 1998; Baraldi & Gavioli 2007). This distinction originally builds on Goffman (1981:227), who developed a behavioural model for speakers in interaction; in particular, he pointed out that a speaker can act as principal, i.e. displaying ownership of what is expressed, as author, i.e. responsible for the ways concepts are formulated and words are uttered, or as animator, i.e. as a sound box. Wadensjö (1992, 1998) expanded on this model and developed an equivalent taxonomy of reception formats for hearers in interaction; she explained that a hearer can behave as responder, reporter and recapitulator. Interpreters constantly shift between these modes of listening and speaking; Baraldi & Gavioli (2007:173) point out the importance of their role as responders in interaction:

As a responder the interpreter gets an access to the emotions of the interlocutors and is thus in a position to provide her/his own understanding, support and confirmation of them. Combining the roles of responder, translator and coordinator the interpreter is in the position to promote affective expectations and communication in the interaction, enhancing the participants’ involvement and mediating between them. In this way the interpreter can be viewed as a dialogic mediator.
Merlini & Favaron (2005) borrow the notion of “voice” from Mishler (1984) to talk about the active presence of interpreters in interaction. Mishler developed and applied it to the setting of monolingual medical consultations; he distinguished between the “voice of medicine” and the “voice of the lifeworld”, intended as the “relationships between talk and speakers’ underlying frameworks of meaning” (1984:14). Merlini & Favaron (2005:267) adjust such concept to mediated interaction; they describe the “voice of medicine” as “designat[ing] an abstract, affectively neutral and functionally specific interpretation of facts, as well as compliance with a ‘normative order’, whereby the professional controls both content and organisation of the interaction”; and the “voice of the lifeworl” as “the expression of and attention to concerns stemming from events and problems of everyday life”. These do not necessarily correspond to doctors and patients respectively, but can be spoken by any participants in interaction according to the specific communicative goals that they want to achieve. The metaphor of voice can be extended to PTMs, where teachers’ talk can be described as combining the “voice of education” and the “voice of the lifeworld” in that they “strategically exercise their institutional authority in ways that validate their institutional power while paying attention to the interlocutors’ face, thus generally aligning with parents, while making their control seem consensually derived” (Wine 2007:1).

As explained by Merlini & Favaron (2005:267) “whereas in a monolingual encounter, the ‘burden’ of translating between the two voices generally falls on the physician, in cross-lingual and intercultural communication, dynamics become more complex with the appearance of a third voice, which will be referred to here as the ‘voice of interpreting’ (VoI)”. This adds a further level of complexity to the whole picture, which “would be relatively unproblematic if the VoI were seen to confine itself to echoing the other two through a mechanical translation pattern, whereby each utterance in the source language is transformed into an equivalent utterance in the target language” (ibid.). However, this is rarely the case in mediated interaction; the interpreters constantly shifts between strictly relaying a message to a more overt participatory role to assist and help in communication. As suggested by Bolden (2000:390):

What interpreters do or say is only partially, and sometimes hardly at all, limited to translating other people’s talk. Instead, interpreters’ actions manifest a choice between several alternatives available to them at any particular time within the framework of the ongoing
activity. These alternatives, ranging from ‘being a translating machine’ to having an independent interactional position, embody interpreters’ moment-by-moment decisions about what role will be the most appropriate in a particular interactional environment.

As noted in 1.2.2, dialogue interpreters are commonly expected to ensure smooth communication while self-presenting in an equidistant and neutral way and to act impartially between the interested parties. Wadensjö (2004:119) explains that conceiving interpreters as neutral and detached actors implies a recognition of interpreting as a monologising activity, while this study draws on the opposite assumption, supported by substantial literature in the field (e.g. Metzger 1995, Wadensjö 1998), according to which interpreting is an inherently dialogic activity, where interpreters are ratified participants (Goffman 1981) in a discourse process, thus actively contributing to the co-construction and unfolding of the communicative event through a number of (non-)conversational moves, and often becoming the privileged or only interlocutor of one of the primary parties (e.g. Angelelli 2004a; Mason 1999, 2006; Wadensjö 1998). As is demonstrated in numerous empirical studies, the interpreter’s presence in a face-to-face communicative situations can influence the course and direction of an interaction significantly, and have important consequences on the interactional exchange in terms of organisational format of interaction and, particularly relevant to this study, in terms of space given to the participants and outcome of the encounters (e.g. Wadensjö 1992, 1998; Roy 2000; Baker et al 2006; Baraldi & Gavioli 2007).

It seems therefore necessary to redefine the notion of neutrality as it has been traditionally conceived. A step forward in this direction was made by Baraldi & Gavioli (2008b:319, my translation), who point out that:

Neutralità non significa […] passività: neutrale è un’azione che non è “in difesa di”, cioè non è di appoggio a rivendicazioni, ma in favore di una presa di responsabilità, di un
This idea is fully embraced in the present study, which explores the interactional impact of specific actions performed by interpreters through verbal and non-verbal means with a view to seeing whether they lead to empowerment and encourage participants’ self-expression. As anticipated in the previous section, the question is no longer whether, but to what extent they can participate in a mediated event, what degree of involvement is appropriate in which setting and what are the consequences. As Merlini (2007:281) puts it, “within the community of interpreting scholars, the debate is still ongoing as to the degree of intervention which is thought to be acceptable before mediation gives way to advocacy”. As suggested by Mason (1999:152), “stances are not just the result of a free choice on the part of the interpreter but also a reaction to what is assumed by the principal parties as being the appropriate interpreter role”. Having said that, it has been widely acknowledged that the expectations towards and the practice of IM differ considerably from country to country, institution to institution due to the lack of a clear definition, standards and protocols. For instance, while in legal settings, interpreters are still seen as a translating machines, in healthcare or pedagogical settings there seems to be a growing tendency to expect that interpreters are able to put things in context and intervene to explain and give information, to anticipate potential misunderstandings and create empathy among the parties. These two opposite attitudes are two extremes of a cline; in-between lie many different sub-forms of mediation activities, each one affected by a number of variables and constraints.

An interesting taxonomy is suggested by Merlini (2009:65-66); it puts together Leanza’s (2005) and Jalbert’s (1998) typologies “to account for the more operative aspects of mediating conduct”. Figure 1.1 provides a schematic representation of such a model:

![Figure 1.1. Merlini’s (2009) model of interpreters’ roles in interaction](image)

*empowerment. Il mediatore promuove opportunità di azione, cercando di garantire la partecipazione attiva degli interlocutori. La mediazione può così avere una funzione di cambiamento sociale*.”
This model provides a categorisation of roles taken up by interpreters in mediated encounters and can be read from top to bottom as going from less active to more active involvement. It also relates interpreters’ roles to conversational formats, with roles 1-3 being linked to a mediated triadic format, role 5 to a monolingual dyadic one and role 4 being an intermediary category. Relevant to this study is the role of linguistic support, which is explained as follows (Merlini 2009:65):

The service users’ partial comprehension of the majority language or […] the use of a vehicular language and the service providers’ rough knowledge of it often lead to a situation in which the mediator steps in only to pre-empt or resolve communication breakdowns.

This is the case in all the encounters recorded, where the mothers (and, sometimes, also the teachers), have partial access to the language of the host country; this requires the ability, on the part of the interpreter, to adjust his/her behaviour to the contingent needs shown by participants. Another relevant label is that of co-provider, “which sees the mediator as a fully ratified participant in the interaction” (Merlini 2009:66). During a single mediated encounter, all these roles can be activated; in other words, the VoI encompasses and projects a set of multiple identities or selves “not only by conveying the needs of its own operational mode, but by altering a primary speaker’s selection of either the VoL” (Merlini & Favaron 2005:268) or, in the case of mediated PTMs, of the VoE. A more dynamic concept than the sociological notion of role seems therefore needed to account for these constant shifts.

Building on Davis & Harré (1990), Mason (2009) suggests that the notion of “positioning” is more suitable to account for the multiple functions and stances taken up by interpreters and by the other participants in mediated interaction. The main argument put forward is that the notion of role, which is extremely widely used in the literature, is linked to a pre-determined behaviour. Conversely, positioning is not pre-existent and pre-determined, it is a more dynamic notion, which captures the fluid nature of interpreters’ behaviour in interaction and better adjusts to the interactionist approach adopted in the present study. Positioning can be conceived as a shifting entity, which is emergent on a moment-by-moment basis through the interaction, the participants’ orientation to it and the mutual display and exchange of knowledge. In this study, I argue that these multiple positionings can be discerned via a multimodal analysis of participants’ behaviour.
To sum up, this section has highlighted a variety of functions that interpreters can play in interaction; these may vary significantly according to the different settings in which the interaction takes place, different countries and different levels of recognition of the profession. More in-depth analysis of authentic triadic interpreter-mediated encounters is needed to show whether interpreters effectively contribute to promoting relations between principal participants, creating bridges between institutions and migrants, thus acting as intercultural mediators, or whether the actions they perform through verbal and non-verbal means promote the alignment with one party or the other, thus empowering one over the other and effecting various interactional consequences.

The traits and features of interpreters’ behaviour in mediated scenarios highlighted so far are based on studies carried out in a variety of settings; these do not include the particular type of communicative event represented by PTMs, which has never been explored by studies on DI. Through the analysis of selected sequences of video-recorded and transcribed PTMs, this study seeks to gain insights into how dialogue interpreters perform their task in this well-defined pedagogical setting, where they seem to display an extremely pronounced involvement. Findings from linguistic analysis will be interpreted within a broader conceptual framework which builds on both linguistics and IM studies, with a view to gaining a more comprehensive view of the impact of certain interactional moves. Before moving on to that, the second half of this chapter is devoted to characterising the context of PTMs.

1.3 Defining the setting: characterising PTMs

PTMs are also referred to in the literature as parent-teacher interviews (e.g. Badger 2007; Baker & Keogh 1995) or parent-teacher conferences (e.g. Burgess & Johnson 1987; Pillet-Shore 2001), parent conferences (e.g. MacLure & Walker 1999; Newman 1997; Swiderek 1997), or parents’ evenings (e.g. MacLure & Walker 1999; Walker 1998). They have been investigated by research on monolingual settings, but they remain largely unexplored in IS. Due to the lack of literature on mediated PTMs, I shall build on research on monolingual contexts to point out some specific features of PTMs and consider whether they can also be found in the mediated data collected.

PTMs are described as the “cornerstone of parent-teacher communication” (Sanchez & Orellana 2006:212); they represent “the most frequently used (and most institutionalised) method of parent-teacher communication in schools and other educational settings” (Hanhan 1998:116) and, possibly, the only occasion parents and
teachers have to gather together and engage in face-to-face interaction. In PTMs, parents and teachers tend to have different expectations about what they perceive to be the overall purpose and agenda of the meeting (Walker 1998). For teachers, PTMs provide a chance to meet parents with a view to explaining recent changes in education, sharing their concerns and thoughts about students, testing whether families are aware of the problems that their child may be experiencing at school, answering parents’ questions and asking for parents’ support regarding students’ levels of application to work or their conduct in class (Walker 1998). It is also an occasion to interactionally accomplish a number of more practical tasks with parents, for example showing, explaining and signing off the school report issued at the end of each semester, choosing the secondary school to enrol children among a range of options available, or informing families of the activities and initiatives that the school is planning to undertake. For many parents, PTMs are one of the few opportunities they have for establishing good working relationships with their children’s teachers (Cuttance & Stokes 2000) and understanding “their child’s performance, situat[ing] that performance amongst the child’s peers, and provid[ing] guidance towards possible futures” (Walker 1998:8). In my study, the issue of different expectations seems to be even more accentuated, given the different socio-cultural backgrounds of parents and teachers. Parents, in particular, are the party who occupy the most vulnerable position, given their poor knowledge of the functioning of the host institution and of the host culture in general.

Pillet- Shore (2001:4) expands on the definition above stating that PTMs provide an interface between two social institutions: the school and the family. Teachers, acting as representatives of the school institution, invite parent/caregivers, representatives of the family institution, to the school campus – usually the teacher’s classroom – to discuss the individuals for whom they both serve as fundamental agents of socialization: the students.

These two social institutions are very interdependent; they have also been described as two “overlapping spheres” of society (Epstein 1995), which cannot be considered as separate entities, but can benefit from each other, work together as partners (e.g. Bobetsky 2003; Epstein 1995; Cuttance & Stokes 2000) and deploy complementary efforts to achieve common goals (Christenson & Sheridan 2001). This partnership can only be established via PTMs, which have been defined as “boundary phenomena”
(Badger 2007:11) in the sense that they are placed in the “treacherous and tender terrain” (Lightfoot 2003:xxix) where schools and families meet and intersect (e.g. Bastiani & Wolfendale 1996; MacLure & Walker 2000), thus constituting “a point at which the boundaries between school and home cultures become permeable” (Walker 1998:3).

As suggested by Pillet-Shore (2001:15), “because parent-teacher conferences serve as a point of intersection, a meeting place, for two social institutions - the school and the family - the interaction that takes place within this setting may be assumed at first glance to be inherently ‘institutional’”. Evidence of this is also the fact that, despite the lack of a rigid agenda, these interactions seem to exhibit a certain overall structural organisation and progress through a series of standard phases (Drew & Heritage 1992 – also discussed in 1.3.2). Furthermore, PTMs combine instances of institutional talk and ordinary conversation (Pillet-Shore 2001), thus resulting in a low level of formality.7 Thus, one of the main foci of early research has been the development of guidelines to help teachers and parents have successful meetings (see 1.3.1).

Another feature of PTMs lies in their goal-oriented nature; as suggested by Badger (2007:17), different purposes can be grouped according to the “arena of actions to which they relate”. Reporting on students’ performance at school is among the goals of these meetings (e.g. Afflerbach & Johnston 1993; De Moulin 1992; Goacher & Reid 1983; McLoughlin 1987; Mellor & Hayden 1981). This is also pointed out by Walker (1998:163), who states that PTMs are “unique interactional events […] concentrating on the assessment of a (frequently absent) individual”. PTMs are normally convened by teachers and are scheduled at least once each term, usually in coincidence with pupils’ report distribution. These meetings are part and parcel of schools’ assessments and reporting processes (e.g. Cattermole & Robinson 1987; Cuttance & Stokes 2000; Williams 1994) and “an established part of educational practice as a form of mediation between school systems and parents” (Badger 2007:9). Through them, schools implement their obligation to report on students’ progress and/or problems (Badger 2007:17).

7 Heritage & Greatbatch (1991) distinguish between two basic types of institutional discourse: “formal” (e.g. courts of law, certain types of classroom environments) and “non-formal” (e.g. doctors’ surgeries). The two contexts mainly differ in terms of turn-taking mechanism: in “formal” institutional interaction, “turn taking is strongly constrained within quite sharply defined procedures. Departures from these procedures systematically attract overt sanctions. The pattern of turn taking in these setting is uniform and exhibits overwhelming compliance with these procedures” (ibid.:27). Conversely, “non-formal” settings are characterised by less uniformity in the patterning of conduct; turn-taking frameworks allow for much more variation and negotiation for both institutional representatives and clients. As Drew & Heritage (1992:28) put it: “although the talk in these [non-formal] settings is clearly institutional in that official task-based or role-based activities occur at least some of the time, turn-taking procedures may approximate conversational or at least ‘quasiconversational’ modes”.

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2007; Wine 2007); this is why PTMs are perceived to have diagnostic and prescriptive purposes (Baker & Keogh 1995, 1997). Baker & Keogh (1995, 1997) and MacLure & Walker (1999) draw a parallel between medical consultations and PTMs, highlighting some common traits, such as the fact that teachers produce their own diagnosis (i.e. reporting), which is normally followed by “prescriptions and remedies in relation to a […] student’s academic well-being” (Baker & Keogh 1997:266). Solving problems related to children’s attitude (Cuttance & Stokes 2000; Goacher & Reid 1983; Leung & Yuen 2001; McLoughlin 1987; Mellor & Hayden 1981), performance and social relationships (Adelswärd & Nilholm 1998) can be identified as another purpose of PTMs; they therefore also serve a problem-solving function. Such a function is often performed via the production of recommendations on the part of teachers about how parents could help their children.

Reporting and recommending are two specific actions performed by teachers, often via the production of evaluations about the child’s performance and attitude in school. In line with Pillet-Shore’s (2001) findings, evaluating emerges as the dominant activity in PTMs: “the institutional business of evaluating students must get done within these conferences, through the co-participants’ interactions” (ibid.:15). This quote is particularly relevant to the purpose of the present study as it stresses the importance of dynamically co-constructing talk between teachers and parents, which fits perfectly within the interactionist approach adopted. While achieving this purpose, PTMs also provide parents and teachers with a forum in which they can share information, opinions and concerns about any aspects of the child’s performance and attitude at school (e.g. Cuttance & Stokes 2000; De Moulin 1992). Through their interactions, parties integrate their knowledge about the child (this point will be expanded upon in 1.3.3); they can also achieve what has traditionally been listed as another important goal of PTMs, i.e. strengthening the relationships between teachers and parents (e.g. Cuttance & Stokes 2000; De Moulin 1992; Walker 1998), which is considered crucial for the child’s academic ‘well-being’.

These meetings generally have a sensitive nature, as the issues addressed may be delicate (e.g. difficulties encountered by the child at school, problematic behaviour). Consequently, they can be stressful and difficult to manage (e.g. Leung & Yuen 2001; Stevens & Tollafield 2003; Walker 1998). Nevertheless, the default assumption that seems to frame them is that of collaboration and cooperation between teachers and parents, who “have the opportunity to pool their information and resources, to establish shared goals, and to work as a team towards meeting these goals” (Burgess & Johnson
Cooperation cannot however be assumed, but it must be negotiated among interactants. Parents and teachers tend to avoid confronting each other directly; for instance, advice is rarely overtly rejected and blame tends to be indirectly attributed. MacLure & Walker (1999) add that such an attitude displayed by parents may be perceived as disrespectful and hostile by teachers, who generally adopt several conversational practices to come across as reliable, competent and approachable and to bring about alignment. For instance, the production of assessments to trigger agreement, the use of hedging devices like pauses, prosodic shifts, softeners and mitigators (e.g. Baker & Keogh 1995; MacLure & Walker 1999) are among the strategies used by parties-at-talk to weaken the illocutionary force of their utterances and create a common ground. As explained by Montgomery (2005), negativity explicitly expressed by teachers has been shown to be detrimental to successful parental involvement.

Despite these practices, interactions not always unfold smoothly; according to Lightfoot (2003:xxii), PTMs are “crucial events because there is so much at stake for the children who cross family-school borders because they arouse so much anxiety and passion for the adults […] Underneath the polite veneer of teacher-parent conferences there are strong forces operating which may precipitate different kinds of outcomes”. PTMs can become a site for conflict when parents and teachers have diverging views or estimations of students’ abilities (Walker 1998; Baker & Keogh 1997); as a consequence, their relationship can become problematic, adversarial and possibly lead to disagreement or tensions. Conflicts, for instance, may arise when teachers deliver unwelcome news about students in relation to difficulties such as “grade retention, disruptive behaviour, poor study habits, possible special class placement, referral, testing, or medical attention” (Rose 1998:87), or when parents and teachers have differing and competing views about the student’s conduct and skills (e.g. Baker & Keogh 1997; Walker 1998).

Keeping the parallel with medical consultations, Silverman, Baker & Keogh (1998) point out that parents in PTMs seem to contradict teachers more than patients with doctors in medical consultations. Evans (2003) and Lightfoot (2003) also claim that parents do not necessarily refrain from disagreeing with teachers, questioning their knowledge, or showing anger or frustration towards a situation highlighted by teachers or a problem faced by the child. The authors also explain that parents may even complain about the situation, thus generating tension and putting teachers in the position of having to defend their evaluations; this situation may ultimately hinder any chances of a productive discussion on problem resolution. Lack of feedback from parents can
also be problematic; it may signal parents’ unwillingness to contradict teachers for fear that what they say could have a negative impact on their children (Lightfoot 2003; Mellor & Hayden 1981). This is also negative for teachers, who may therefore not have access to important feedback that could help them find the best solution to problems and provide sound advice for the child (Mellor & Hayden 1981).

Nevertheless, tensions do not necessarily represent a problem; they can even be seen as productive conflicts if they lead to the resolution of misunderstandings and, ultimately, “produce congruence and alliance between teachers and parents” (Badger 2007:17). This is an important point to be taken into consideration when analysing mediated PTMs; these meetings bring together teachers and families from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Migrant children usually find themselves in a vulnerable position and are confronted with a plethora of problems, such as difficulties in following the activity of the classroom and doing their homework at home due to their lack of knowledge of the language. Such problems, if neglected or not tackled properly, may greatly hinder their academic and intellectual progress, and ultimately prevent their integration in the classroom, where they often are isolated because of their difficulties in interacting directly with their peers. Migrant families may be exposed to a similar situation; parents often cannot speak the language and, as a result, they struggle to support their children’s learning process. Furthermore, they are not familiar with the educational system of the host country and, possibly due to their inability to understand the language, they not always attend PTMs; thus, they ‘self-exclude’ from a dialogue that, if successfully implemented, could be extremely beneficial to students.

These are just some of the issues which interpreters working in PTMs need to be prepared to deal with; even though the majority of research on mediated interaction has been carried out in healthcare and legal settings, it can be argued that the issues characterising PTMs can be equally sensitive, and therefore worth exploring further. Furthermore, the presence of the interpreter necessarily modifies the interactional organisation of talk and has an impact on its overall structural organisation, dynamics and on the relationships established between the parties. This is one of the reasons why understanding communicative dynamics starting from real data can give researchers insights into what is successful and what, on the contrary, may be detrimental to effective and emphatic communication between the parties.

To sum up, this section has highlighted some salient features of PTMs, starting from their inherently institutional but semi-formal nature. PTMs provide an interface between two social institutions which interact in a collaborative fashion to achieve the
common purpose of commenting on the performance and problems of a third actor who is often not present, i.e. the child. Hence their goal-oriented and sensitive nature, with evaluating and problem-solving emerging as two fundamental activities carried out during these meetings. I would argue that the features highlighted in this section are inherent to the communicative event of PTMs, irrespective of the country in which they take place. In my data, despite the different age and classes attended by the children, the problems pointed out are very similar (e.g. lack of proficiency in the language of the host country, problems while studying, lack of motivation to do their homework). What may vary from country to country is the format of PTMs, their overall structural organisation, the number of participants and the amount of time devoted to each encounter; for instance, general announcements can be made by teachers to all the parents together before starting the individual encounters, the setting can be more or less private, meaning that other parents may be present (or not) in the same room. This variable does not affect the comparability of my data, as will be discussed in 3.3.1. More studies on PTMs are nevertheless needed which compare data from different countries and find similarities or differences that could lead to the identification of conversational features and patterns across various educational sites (Keogh 1995). This thesis builds on a very small case study, which can however be considered a first step in this direction, and it is to be hoped that its findings will contribute to the growing body of both monolingual and mediated research on this setting.

The following section reviews the approaches adopted by research on monolingual PTMs with a view to situating the present study within the broader field of communication in pedagogical settings and justifying the conceptual and methodological approach adopted.

1.3.1 Research on PTMs: state of the art

Studies on PTMs have mainly been conducted in English monolingual settings, such as Australia (e.g. Baker & Keogh 1995), USA (e.g. Pilet-Shore 2001; Wine 2007), UK (e.g. MacLure & Walker 1999). As far as mediated PTMs are concerned, the few studies available (e.g. Sanchez & Orellana 2006) focus on the role of children as language brokers during meetings between parents and teachers, thus adopting a completely different point of view with respect to this study.
Italian monolingual literature on pedagogical settings has mainly concentrated on different aspects and dynamics of classroom interaction (e.g. Baraldi 2007; Ciliberti et al. 2003; Fasulo & Girardet 2002; Fasulo & Pontecorvo 2000; Fele & Paoletti 2003; Margutti 2010; Molinari 2010; Orletti 1981a, 1981b; Pontecorvo 2005). To my knowledge, no research on authentic, monolingual or mediated PTMs in Italian contexts has been conducted to date. Research on mediated interaction in Italian pedagogical settings has mainly focused on the figure of the mediator from a socio-pedagogical and ethnographic approach. Among others, studies like Favaro (2001, 2007), Johnson & Nigris (1996), Milanesi (2001), Tarozzi (1998, 2004, 2006) examine the role and tasks that linguistic and cultural mediators are required to perform in schools, ranging from supporting the migrant child in the classroom (helping pupils communicate with teachers and with their peers, providing linguistic support to the migrant child), to organising activities aimed to promote other cultures and encourage mutual exchange, to facilitating communication between families and teachers during PTMs.

Research on parent-teacher communication and home-school relationships over the last three decades has mainly been conducted within the field of education and sociology. Such studies have placed a lot of emphasis on the fact that both institutions play a vital role in children’s growth and development. They have also stressed the positive and lasting impact that parental involvement seems to have on children’s academic performance (e.g. Kellaghan et al. 1993; Sirvani 2007; Studer 1993; Swap 1993; Swick & Broadway 1997; Swiderek 1997; Stafford 1987; Trusty 1999). This literature maintains that a communicative and well-established teacher-parent relationship can be very effective and considerably improve students’ learning outcomes and school careers (e.g. Angelides et al. 2006; Bastiani 1993; Christenson & Christenson 1998; Jordan et al. 2001; Sanders & Epstein 2000; Sallis 1991; Xu & Gullosino 2006). As Lightfoot (2003:xxiii) puts it, the successful performance of children at school seems to depend largely on the ability of teachers and parents to build “productive boundaries between and bridges across them”.

The goal of achieving well-established parent-teacher relationships requires families, schools and communities to work together, as partners, with a view to solving problems and promoting constructive changes. This task goes beyond simply...
cooperating and sharing information; it entails actively seeking new solutions, taking on new roles and sharing knowledge and resources. To this end, the literature suggests that opportunities for schools and families to work together must be created (Rutherford & Billing 1995); there is no one-size-fits-all solutions, but new strategies to increase the effectiveness and frequency of parent-teacher communication need to be implemented and to be tailored to the individual needs of each party involved (e.g. Thompson 2008; Andrews 2008; Miller 1981). As stated by Bobetsky (2003:38), “effective communication requires an active partnership, nurtured by ongoing conversations throughout the school year”. Achieving such objectives is hard enough in monolingual interaction; it is no surprise that it may reveal even more challenging when communication involves families from different socio-cultural and linguistic backgrounds (e.g. Desimone 1999) interacting directly or through an interpreter. In the latter case, interpreters are required to provide the bridges described by Lightfoot above and to act as communication facilitators; as highlighted in the first part of this chapter, whether and, if so, how this actually happens is still a matter of considerable enquiry.

Among the main drawbacks of most of the existing literature on communication in monolingual PTMs is its inherently prescriptive nature and its attempt to find the key to successful PTMs. In other words, it provides guidelines for both parents and teachers on how to get ready for these meetings and interact with each other, without always making clear what the analytical grounds of such recommendations are (e.g. Lawler 1991; Rotter et al. 1987; Fuller & Olsen 1998; McLoughlin 1987; Studer 1993; Swiderek 1997; Newman 1997; Faber & Mazlish 1995). Pillet-Shore (2001:9-10) calls for the development of more empirical and descriptive research “analysing these conference interactions from within” and “providing a detailed understanding of how these interactions actually work”; this “is a necessary prerequisite for the specification and pronouncement of prescriptive recommendations” (ibid.).

As suggested by Freebody (2003), descriptive and qualitative studies on monolingual PTMs can be grouped into two main categories, according to the approaches and methodologies adopted and scope of the analysis, namely research about and research on educational practices. The first group includes studies which attempt to gather participants’ views and perspectives through a variety of (mainly ethnographic) techniques, from interviews to participants’ observation to focus groups, and then, as suggested by Badger (2007:40) “to interpret that data by imposing the researchers’ questions, interests and analytic frameworks and reporting their accounts of
the participants’ practices” (e.g. Cuttance & Stokes 2000; Leung & Yuen 2001; Lightfoot 2003; Power & Clark 2000; Walker 1998).

The second category includes studies focusing on the way participants interactionally construct their social activity; this is in line with the interactionist approach of the present thesis. Studies belonging to this category are descriptive, qualitative, empirical and discourse-based; they rely on transcripts of recordings from naturally occurring PTMs, which are then analysed adopting a variety of (mainly ethnomethodological) methods, according to the specific focus of the research, e.g. conversation analysis, discourse analysis, critical discourse analysis, etc. The body of studies that falls under this category is small, but growing (e.g. Adelswärd & Nilhom 1998; Baker & Keogh 1995, 1997; Leiminer & Baker 2000; Keogh 1992, 1999; Leiminer 1996; MacLure & Walker 1999, 2000; Silvermann et al. 1998). Those which have been particularly inspiring for the present work include Wine’s (2007) approach combining the ethnography of communication (Hymes 1972; Saville-Troike 1989, Duranti 1997), pragmatics (Brown & Levinson 1987) and interactional sociolinguistics (Gumperz 1982). Wine’s study focuses on teachers’ use of politeness strategies to frame themselves as approachable parties, thus eliciting alignment from the parents. Other relevant work can be seen in Badger (2007), who relies on ethnomethodology (Garfinkel 1967), conversation analysis and membership category analysis (Heritage 2004; Sacks 1995; Sacks et al. 1974) to investigate how participation is organised in PTMs, in particular how children identities are constructed in interaction. Randall (1991) carries out a linguistic analysis of three sample PTMs and arrives at a finding which is relevant to the purposes of this study: with respect to turn-taking of topic initiation, teachers tend to initiate the majority of topics dealt with during these meetings. Last but not least are two studies by Pillet-Shore (2001, 2003), which have been particularly inspiring for the present one. Building on CA as a theoretical and methodological framework to explore authentic data, she sheds light on the overall structural organisation of PTMs and on a series of practices used by teachers to “manage the delivery and reception of unfavourable evaluations and/or other negatively valenced utterances regarding students, creating and maintaining a favourable stance towards students throughout the conference interaction” (Pillet-Shore 2001:25).

A lot remains, however, to be discovered about the way parents and teachers interact with one another during these encounters. As stressed by Badger (2007:9-10), “the scarcity of research that examines the actual spoken texts of communication between teachers and parents (Baker & Keogh 1995; Leiminer & Baker 2000) means
that little is known about the actualities of teacher-parent interviews as interactional events (Keogh 1992; MacLure & Walker 2000). One reason for the paucity of research based on real data could be the confidential nature of these meetings. Like medical consultations and interactions in courtrooms, these meetings have a sensitive nature and delicate topics may also be dealt with; hence the difficulties in obtaining the permission from participants to (video-)record.

This also applies to mediated PTMs, which can be considered a special variation on monolingual PTMs because of the presence of the interpreter, who adds an extra layer of complexity to the interactional dynamics. Due to their triadic format and intercultural/interlinguistic nature, mediated PTMs cannot be conducted in the same way as monolingual PTMs. Nevertheless, a better understanding of the dynamics of these encounters, even in monolingual contexts, may lead to improved performances on behalf of the interpreters who are called upon to act as bridges and communication facilitators between the parties.

### 1.3.2 Structural organisation of PTMs

Despite their semi-formal nature, PTMs are not instances of casual conversation, but they are oriented towards achieving certain goals and fulfilling specific tasks, as outlined in 1.3. Similarly to doctor-patient encounters, parent-teacher interaction “may have an institutional mooring, but it also has an interactional bedrock” (Maynard 1991:486), i.e. all the parties-at-talk collaboratively engage in actions that are systematically shaped and reshaped over the course of the talk. In order to analyse these tasks and activities, one of the first steps to be taken is to examine whether there seem to be recurring constitutive parts, a common structure across different samples that may help characterise the specific genre of PTMs. This is why the literature on monolingual PTMs has attempted to characterise an ‘overall topography’ of such institutional meetings. In particular, Pillet-Shore (2001) has identified the main interactional stages which can be found across different PTMs and which seem to characterise this type of communicative event. Identifying some phases in interaction seems possible also due to the institutional and ‘ceremonial’ nature of PTMs, which have a ritualised and, to some extent, repetitive overall structural organisation (Badger 2007).

PTMs are a type of institutional meetings whose “shape, form, trajectory, content or character” (Schegloff 1992a:111), compared to other institutional contexts, is more open to local negotiation among the participants, possibly due to its semi-
formal nature. Literature has pointed out that teachers tend to steer the overall organisation by initiating what I refer to in this study as new courses of action (see 2.3.2), which can be explained here as new topics, tasks and activities. Nevertheless, the lack of a rigid agenda seems to allow for a certain flexibility in the way such topics, tasks and activities are organised and accomplished; in mediated encounters, this feature of PTMs may even result in fewer constraints imposed on the interpreter. Keogh (1999) also points out that, organisationally, schools send out the invitations for parents to take part in these meetings with a view to discussing students’ progress and problems; interactionally, teachers are the party who sets the agenda for the meeting. According to Pillet-Shore (2001:16):

The teacher within the parent-teacher conference setting is the co-participant who fits the ‘professional’ description most […] Parent/caregivers, on the other hand, take on an institutional role akin to that of a ‘client’. […] Because of this imbalance in experience with the conference setting, it is the teacher who is most likely to develop standard practices for managing the tasks of these encounters.

In her work on the overall structural organisation of monolingual PTMs, Pillet-Shore (2001:24) identifies some major phases into which a prototypical PTM could be divided, starting from the analysis of transcripts of interaction:

Co-participants progress through a series of phases, starting with an introductory phase featuring social talk (Phase 1), which leads to the reasons for the conference (Phase 2), which in turn gradually yields to the phase in which the parent questions the teacher (Phase 3), followed by a future-oriented discussion of the student (Phase 4), and finally an orientation toward closing down the conference (Phase 5), which, once ratified by both co-participants, gives way to an exchange of thanks and farewells (Phase 6).

These phases provide a working model that, as the author suggests, is not fixed; participants in PTMs can “manipulate [the order of phases] to meet the needs and demands of their ever-changing contexts” (ibid.:16). Expanding on each phase will provide a backdrop for the analysis of my data.
Phase 1 (‘introductory social/pre-professional talk’) is the phase “during which talk prior to the actual ‘business’ of the conference interaction takes place” (ibid.:16). This phase is normally characterised by greetings, and parents and teachers introducing themselves to each other. This first optional phase of the interaction is evident in two out of three of the interactions in my data, but is skipped in the third interaction, where teachers move straight into the business of the meeting. However, even when introducing themselves, in my data teachers tend to be very brief and quickly move into Phase 2 of the interaction, without any exchange taking place with the mother. This might be due to the mediated nature of the event, which does not allow for a ‘warming up’ exchange to occur normally, as would probably be the case in normal, monolingual conversation. Moreover, while in monolingual interaction this phase has been characterised as the one during which “introductions of the entire cast of characters take place” (ibid.:17), in my data the interpreter is never formally introduced alongside the other participants. This phase was instead dealt with independently by the interpreters, who briefly introduced themselves to each party upon arrival, usually outside the actual room where the encounter took place and before the official start of the meeting.

What normally follows is Phase 2 (‘reasons for and topics of the conference - progress and problems’) in which the co-participants get down to the business of why they are gathered together; during this phase, teachers, mainly, establish the reasons and the topics that will be addressed and start reviewing the student’s academic performance. This phase can be initiated by the activity of ‘reading the record’, i.e. a practice used by teachers, in initial or first position, to report on a student’s performance and behaviour from the school’s perspective. Teachers seem to be using such practice “as a method of reviewing the student’s current class standing for and with parents, providing an opportunity for both co-participants to be on the same proverbial and literal page, armed with the information they will subsequently use to evaluate and discuss the student’s past, as well as strategize about the student’s future” (ibid.:19).

This practice is recurrent in my data and can be found at different moments in the overall structural organisation (for example, see PTM 2f/3e/3f in Appendix A). Another feature confirmed is that the practice of ‘reading the report’ is often interspersed with teachers’ reformulations or personal comments on what is written on the report, which may open up new sequences or side sequences. In monolingual PTMs, “this does not appear to be a ‘news delivery’ phase inasmuch as it is a review of information, in principle made available to both the parent and teacher in the months preceding the conference” (ibid.:19). In my data, none of the parents had access to the
report before the actual meeting; the encounters are the occasion for teachers to disclose such information to parents, thanks to the presence of an interpreter who can make that information accessible and understandable to them.

After teachers have delivered their report about the child, in monolingual interaction the ‘baton’ of the interaction usually goes to parents, who deliver their own report from the family’s perspective; they respond to the teacher’s reports, describe the student at home, provide their own views and feedback to the teachers and voice their concerns, if any. This is an opportunity for parents to integrate their knowledge with the teachers’ knowledge, provide additional information about the student and/or the family that the latter may not be aware of. Furthermore, if the students evaluated during the meeting are confronted with academic and/or behavioural problems (as is the case in my data), parents and teacher may use the information that results from their interaction as a starting point to discuss possible solutions for these problems. If this occurs, parents and teachers engage in a sort of negotiation, during which teachers recommend some solutions and actions to help the student improve. Parents may explain their past and present efforts to help their child, overtly agree or disagree with the teachers’ recommendations or build on them to suggest their own. This negotiation terminates when both parents and teachers reach a mutually agreed upon solution or plan to support the student. This negotiation, however, does not seem to take place in my data.

Phase 3 (‘parents question teachers’) “features parents initiating topics and sequences, frequently asking questions of teachers, or delivering other types of first actions that make sequentially or conditionally relevant responses by teachers” (ibid.:20). Questions may be about different issues, from practical ones (such as about future activities and school trips) to questions about expectations regarding the child’s future performance or teaching methods, etc. This is also a phase during which parents may express their concerns and doubts, if these have not emerged previously. This phase, also, does not seem to be very dominant in my data.

Phase 4 (‘future-oriented/forward-looking statements about student’) is particularly relevant to the purposes of this study, as it concerns future-oriented talk about the child; it could be started by any of the primary parties, i.e. either the parent or the teacher. During this phase, participants generally discuss the child’s potential for improvement and project possible evaluations of him/her. It is considered a “transitional phase” leading to the ones which bring the interaction to a close. According to Pillet-Shore, this last phase is frequently initiated by the parent, who “signals this move to close by delivering summary assessments of the conference as a whole, formulating
his/her own understanding of the gist of the teacher’s evaluations-so-far of the student” (2001:22). In turn, teachers produce one or more summary assessment of the student, “usually reciprocal to the parent’s previous assessment” (ibid.:22).

Phase 5 (‘move to close conference/summary assessments of student’) in Pillet-Shore’s study is usually initiated by the parent, i.e. “the co-participant who is first to propose the move to close down the conference interaction” and who “signals this move to close by delivering summary assessments of the conference as a whole, stating his/her own understanding of the gist of the teacher’s evaluations-so-far of the student” (ibid.:22). Pillet-Shore also explains that teachers can, alternatively, bring the phase to a close by providing a summary of the parent and teacher’s agreed steps and solutions to support the student or of the student’s own potential for improvement. In my data, this is not the exception but the rule, i.e. when present, this phase is normally initiated by teachers and, more often, not translated to the mother by the interpreter.

Finally, Phase 6 (‘thanks and farewells’) represents the actual closing of the meeting, during which teachers may give parents any reports or artifacts for them to take home and parents and teachers thank each other before saying good bye. The feature that all these phases share (excluding the introductory and conclusive phase) is the fact that participants discuss and interact with a view to producing a comprehensive picture of the child; this is done by integrating their respective knowledge, which is a characteristic of PTMs that will be discussed in the next section.

1.3.3 Knowledge configuration in PTMs

PTMs are characterised by a specific knowledge configuration. Two types of knowledge are displayed by participants in interaction: on the one hand, knowledge of the institution and its functioning, on the other hand, knowledge of the assessable or ‘object’ of discussion. In monolingual PTMs, it is often assumed that parties share these two types of knowledge and have similar expectations about what is going on. Literature (e.g. De Moulin 1992) has stressed that taking part in discussions about students’ progress and problems can be useful for teachers and parents to share their own experience of the child, and to establish a common ground and cooperative goals for students. As highlighted in 1.3, the default assumption that seems to frame PTMs is that of collaboration and solidarity among the parties. On the one hand, teachers are described as co-operators (Wine 2007), appealing to a common ground and aligning with parents while keeping control over the event and its unfolding. Lighfoot (2003:72)
suggests that teachers should avoid practices which “cross the line between inquiry and intrusiveness” with a view to establishing fruitful boundaries with parents. On the other hand, parents are expected to actively take part in the co-construction of meaning and understanding by “providing feedback to teachers, describing the student at home and the family’s or the parent’s own perspective and the student’s performance” (ibid.). In other words, not only are parents expected to listen to teachers, but they are also expected to complement teachers’ knowledge with their own (Cuttance & Stokes 2000).

In doing so, parents and teachers are supposedly able to establish a productive relationship, to create a supportive environment to discuss students’ academic performance (Walker 1998) which enables both teachers and parents to work together as partners in managing their children’s learning (Cuttance & Stokes 2000). To maintain this direct relationship with parents, teachers need to strike a delicate balance between empathising with them and being resolute in suggesting what action should be taken to overcome these problems; teachers can indeed suggest what they believe would be the best solution, but they cannot impose it on the families. Furthermore, as suggested by Cuttance & Stokes (2000), a two-way communication can be established between teachers and parents, so that not only do the latter listen to what the former have to say, but they also contribute to the ongoing discussion by providing useful information about the child. The outcomes of this two-way discussion should then have an impact on later decisions about how school and families can collaborate with a view to supporting the child (ibid.). The downside of these claims, however, is that they stem from a prescriptive line of enquiry, and are not supported by clear suggestions on how such boundaries and cooperation can be practically established and maintained (Lightfoot 2003).

It has also been observed that “teachers and parents hold each other accountable for what happens in each other’s domain, as well as claiming accountability for their own spheres of influence” (Baker & Keogh 1995:291). Despite the assumption of collaboration and cooperation, this idea of partnership is not always accomplished in PTMs due to problems which may arise and hinder the communication process. These may have a different nature; for instance, there may be issues linked to the stressful and potentially ‘embarrassing’ nature of PTMs, especially when dealing with problems with the child’s conduct or academic performance (e.g. Walker 1998; Leung & Yuen 2001) or to the lack of careful planning of PTMs (Cuttance & Stokes 2000).
Another potentially problematic factor may be parents’ perception of not being welcome or of being provided with insufficient information by teachers, who rush through the encounter and do not allow enough time for a productive dialogue to take place (Power & Clark 2000). Wine (2007) points out that many parents are dissatisfied with the perception of these meetings as teacher-reporting events, rather than parent-teacher conversations (e.g. Lightfoot 1978, Maclure & Walker 1999, Swap 1993), thus as being characterised by a unidirectional flow of information and by a one-way dissemination of knowledge (Power & Clark 2000). Moreover, Walker (1998) claimed that, in some cases, parents feel that their offers to complement teachers’ knowledge by providing information about their children is rejected or downplayed by the teachers. This may be due to the different value given to the teachers’ professional knowledge as opposed to the lay knowledge of parents, which may, in turn, have an impact on parent-teacher relations, for example by making parents feel powerless and ‘voiceless’ (e.g. Maclure & Walker 1999; Walker 1998). Baker & Keogh (1995) stress that this is not always the case in PTMs; parents can question teaching methods, they can ask teachers to expand on their practices or on the students’ assessments provided and they can even produce a different assessment of students’ conduct and achievements, even though they often refrain from doing so, “fearing that it might rebound adversely on their offspring” (Walker 1998:172).

Mediated PTMs are characterised by knowledge asymmetry between teachers and parents in terms of institutional functioning and knowledge of the host society. Traditionally, one of the interpreter’s tasks is described as that of filling such cultural gaps, thus enabling the meeting to run smoothly, maintaining its cooperative character and giving both parties the possibility to fully understand what is going on and interact on a level playing field. This is one of the tasks which is often perceived as falling outside the remit of “interpreters” and within that of “cultural mediators”, even though this thesis assumes that such clear-cut distinction is not sustainable. In terms of knowledge of the assessable, i.e. the child, it seems however appropriate to talk about knowledge complementarity between teachers and parents, i.e. each of them knows about the conduct and skills of the child in a specific context are (the classroom and the home environment respectively). This knowledge configuration applies to both monolingual and mediated PTMs: both views are equally important and it is only by merging them that it is possible to gain a comprehensive picture of the child’s attitude and behaviour and to jointly find solutions to their problems.
Complementarity is about maximising rather than minimising the differences, ideally in order to integrate them in a coherent fashion. In monolingual interaction, the process of ‘knowledge integration’ is undertaken by parties autonomously when they share their own experience of the child. In mediated encounters, it is expected that interpreters acting as intercultural mediators are able to integrate the teacher’s and mother’s knowledge as to build a common ground that is necessary to collaboratively achieve a solution to any issues which may be highlighted during the course of the PTM.

Integrating knowledge and views may obviously lead to conflict and divergent view points. The stance taken in this study is that it is not the responsibility of the interpreter to prevent conflicts from happening; on the contrary, diverging points of view can be beneficial and actually enrich the dialogue between the parties. I believe that interpreters could manifest their active participation in the encounter by making sure that participants interact with some level of mutual understanding and can fully voice their opinions and views, so that the process of knowledge integration happens smoothly.

1.4 Conclusions

This chapter has provided the framework necessary to contextualise this work and situate its research foci, i.e. DI, IM and PTMs. Particularly relevant for my study is the theoretical and methodological approach to the analysis of real data that was developed in the 1990s, which is referred to as the “dialogic discourse-based interactionist paradigm” (Pöchhacker 2004:79 – introduced in 1.2.1). This approach is fully embraced in this thesis, where the interpreters’ behaviour is analysed as the result of constant local negotiation and construction of the interaction among all the participants. Furthermore, previous literature based on naturally occurring data has pointed out that interpreters in face-to-face scenarios need to be flexible enough to ‘juggle’ different ‘personas’ and project different identities on the basis of contingent needs. This approach has also provided a more dynamic way of understanding the multifaceted nature of the interpreter’s tasks and the interpreting activity, which cannot be boiled down to mere language transfer. To this end, the notion of positioning is used to investigate the identities projected by interpreters when specific verbal and non-verbal criteria are met. Last but not least, the first half of this chapter has also deepened our understanding of mediated interaction by showing that DI and IM are two intertwined and interdependent
activities, thus clearly setting the direction and stance adopted throughout the thesis. This is particularly relevant when examining the findings from empirical analysis through the lens of IM and evaluating what interactional consequences they seem to bring about.

The second half of the chapter has helped us reach a better understanding of the dynamics of monolingual PTMs and of the different approaches taken to investigate this setting via a selected review of the literature in this field. Exploring monolingual interaction has been crucial given that, as already pointed out, to date, no studies have explored the dynamics of mediated PTMs, despite the growing need for dialogue interpreters in this setting to mediate between migrant families and host country institutions. A better understanding of the main features and structural organisation of this type of institutional encounter has been achieved; the next step will be investigating whether the same characteristics are found in mediated meetings. Furthermore, the knowledge configuration highlighted in PTMs is key to the understanding of the issue of epistemic authority addressed in the next chapter and of the consequences of specific interpreters’ moves.

Similarly to chapter 1, where the two dimension of DI and PTMs have been dealt with separately, chapter 2 is divided into two main parts, focusing on verbal and non-verbal aspects of communication respectively. As for the verbal dimension, chapter 2 will present and define a selection of conceptual tools developed by CA to carry out the analysis of interaction on a moment-by-moment basis, and account for the behaviour of all participants. The notion of assessment will be introduced to explain one of the possible ways of delivering evaluations, which is one of the main activities carried out in PTMs. Chapters 4 and 5 will then rely on this notion to investigate some of the key practices which emerge from the analysis of selected sequences; the purpose of utterances embedding assessments, their handling by interpreters and the interactional consequences on the unfolding event will be discussed. For the non-verbal components, a critical review of the literature which has accounted for gaze in the analysis of monolingual and mediated encounters will be presented, with a view to increasing awareness of the role played by gaze in human interaction and developing a solid conceptual framework for its understanding.
CHAPTER 2

A CA-based framework for exploring verbal and non-verbal dimensions of mediated PTMs

2.1 Introduction

This chapter lays the theoretical foundations of the research design adopted in this study, which draws upon input from a variety of research strands. Hence its interdisciplinary and eclectic nature, which is necessary to encompass both verbal and non-verbal features in the analysis of mediated interaction. Bringing these two dimensions, which have traditionally been developed separately, into a new synthesis is challenging but crucial to overcome the compartmentalisation which has characterised IS for too long. My hope is to contribute to progress in the research on DI by proposing an innovative way of approaching crucial issues like positioning, involvement, participation, and alignment in mediated scenarios. The main distinguishing feature with respect to previous studies in the field (apart from a few exceptions that will be discussed later in this chapter) is the addition of a new variable to the analysis, namely gaze. In particular, I argue that the non-verbal dimension should start to be systematically included in future research; in face-to-face encounters, in particular, gestures, gaze and body movement are constantly used by participants to accentuate, punctuate and/or replace what is happening through the verbal means; therefore their interplay with verbal features and their interactional consequences need to be accounted for.

To start with, the approach adopted relies on an essentially descriptive and qualitative rather than normative approach to the data; this means that no a priori rules on how interpreters should behave are put forward, but any remarks or observations result from close inspection of authentic interaction. This also means that the approach adopted is inherently empirical, bottom-up, entirely based on the observation of authentic data, with a view to isolating interesting phenomena which emerge directly from it. Dynamism is another of its features, i.e. it is oriented to the process rather than the product of interpreting and is designed to investigate the unfolding of a triadic exchange on a moment-by-moment basis. A process-oriented approach focused on what happens (non-)verbally in interaction is a valuable starting point for the analysis of what participants achieve socially through specific actions embedded in their talk.
An approach of this kind has, nevertheless, some limitations. Firstly, a multimodal model which systematically accounts for both verbal and non-verbal dimensions of mediated interaction has not been developed to date. Multimodal analysis has mainly devoted its attention to monolingual interaction; approaches, however, vary considerably in the way they account for non-verbal traits in interaction. In this study, I have restricted the analysis of non-verbal traits to one feature, i.e. gaze; I will build on the analysis of monolingual dyadic interaction to develop a method of mapping gaze onto the verbal structure, which is presented in 3.3.2.

Secondly, interpreting does not happen in a vacuum, but is a complex process which is deeply embedded in its social context of occurrence, thus at the same influenced and influencing it. As pointed out by Pöchhacker (2004:137), the examination of ‘language as a structure’ is closely intertwined with the analysis of communicative performance (‘language as social action’). Research on the interpreter’s performance could therefore fruitfully draw on “the social as well as the linguistic and cognitive sciences to study the translational and interactional features of mediated communication” (ibid.). Therefore, some macro-structural features of the context in which the interactions take place and of the type of discourse carried out need to be considered, especially when investigating the interactional impact of specific verbal or non-verbal actions. My research design seeks to address these requirements by integrating the fundamentally linguistic-oriented micro-interactive approach to the dynamic co-construction of talk (with the additional analytical layer provided by the analysis of gaze) offered by CA with the perspectives provided by studies on DI as a form of IM, i.e. a socially situated activity whose goals are promoting cultural acceptance, participation, mutual understanding, the prevention of conflicts and, ultimately, integration (as discussed in 1.2.2).

A research design which describes what happens in mediated encounters starting from the empirical observation of authentic data can lead to a deeper understanding of how the interpreter’s positioning is shaped in interaction. Combined with studies on non-verbal communication (mainly focusing on the use of gaze in interaction), this approach can highlight recurring interactive patterns and further our understanding of how interpreters manage the complex spoken and embodied activity they engage in. Furthermore, it can shed light on the interactional consequences of certain actions undertaken by the interpreter, i.e. whether they contribute to restoring/promoting inclusion or, conversely, whether they seem to disempower one party or another, thus restricting the possibilities of effective engagement in communication. By relying on
some methodological tools (e.g. the ELAN software presented in 3.3.3) to integrate specific non-verbal moves in the analysis, this study addresses a substantial, long-felt gap in interpreting research, thus enriching an already promising research paradigm and indicating interesting avenues to be explored in the future.

The chapter proceeds through two main stages which provide some conceptual notions for the analysis of, firstly, the verbal dimension and, secondly, the non-verbal dimension. The aim is to select, within the research strands adopted, those concepts that are considered useful to address the issues raised in the research questions (see Introduction). As the chapter unfolds, these notions will be merged in a robust conceptual framework that has the potential to be further expanded and applied to other studies. Sections 2.2 and 2.3 introduce CA, i.e. the approach adopted for the investigation of talk; particular emphasis is placed on some key notions which have been successfully adjusted to the “multi-directional and multi-layered processes of interpretation” (Wadensjö 1998:8), with a view to clarifying the structure and organisation of social interaction. Identifying and describing some structural aspects of mediated exchanges is essential preparatory work for the analysis. The notions and tools selected to investigate the non-verbal dimension are introduced in section 2.4, after an overview of research in the field of non-verbal communication, with a particular focus on those studies which have integrated the use of gaze in the analysis of social interaction.

2.2 Exploring the verbal dimension of mediated encounters with CA

According to Hale (2007), to date four main approaches have been applied to the analysis of DI: interactional sociolinguistics and the ethnography of communication (Hymes 1972; Gumperz 1981, 1982), early micro-linguistic discourse analysis (Brown & Yule 1983; Coulthard 1985), CA (proposed by Schegloff & Sacks 1973) and critical discourse analysis used by Fairclough (1989, 1992) and Wodak (1995). These can be placed on a spectrum with CA at one extreme, i.e. the most detailed micro-analytic approach to linguistic features and turns in spoken interaction, and critical discourse analysis at the other, relating the linguistic analysis to macro-social issues (e.g. social roles and status of participants, distribution of power). The other approaches fall in-between, as they build on a detailed linguistic analysis but also take into account the socio-cultural context in which the interaction occurs. Although CA is often mainly seen as a methodology for the transcription of data, its main principles and notions to
describe the interaction and map some of its most recurrent phenomena will form the conceptual design adopted in this study. CA is certainly not flawless; the next section will highlight the rationale for its choice.

2.2.1 Rationale for the choice of CA: limits and capabilities

CA has substantially contributed to bridging the gap between linguistics, social psychology and sociology and which has been informed by several disciplines, among which anthropology, pragmatics, speech act theory, semiotics. As a branch of research, CA developed in the late 1960s and early 1970s; it may be considered a spin-off of the linguistic turn taken by sociology towards the end of the 20th century. Unlike purely linguistically oriented studies of spoken interaction, CA’s focus on talk developed not because of a special interest in the linguistic questions prompted, but because language was a key instrument to understand the complex structure of social interaction, how people perform actions and how conversational actions affect later interactional choices. Boden (1994) explains that conversation analysts are sociologists who have turned the problem of social order upside down. Their crucial question is not how people respond to social order and its normative constraints, rather how that order is brought about through their activities; CA therefore explores the way in which participants produce social order without presenting its findings as overly theoretical and abstract.

The object of analysis of CA is spoken interaction, referred to as conversation. This term is intended not in its colloquial sense, referring to ordinary, casual, mundane conversation, but with the meaning of “talk-in-interaction” (Schegloff 1987). This definition is broad enough to include a wide range of forms of talk produced in “actual occasions of organisational circumstances” (Garfinkel 1967:32). That is the case, for instance, of institutional interaction (occurring in courtrooms, hospitals, educational settings), which have been thoroughly explored by Drew & Heritage (1992) and Heritage & Greatbatch (1991). Mediated interaction falls within the heading of conversation; according to Goffman (1963:24), conversation as a type of social interaction “is bounded by the criterion of immediate, physical presence of its participants”; from the point of view of communication, “face-to-face interaction does not seem to present a single important characteristic that is not found […] in mediated communication situations” (Goffman 1953:113). Furthermore, even though

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9 Some suggestions were made to replace the apparently misleading term conversation; according to Psathas (1995), a more appropriate expression to define this discipline could be “interaction analysis”. 
conversation is defined in terms of talk, it is broad enough to encompass “other forms of conduct, [...] the disposition of the body in gesture, posture, facial expression, and ongoing activities in the setting” (Schegloff et al. 2002:1). A growing collection of CA-oriented studies also encompasses non-verbal phenomena, especially gaze (e.g. Goodwin 1981; Heath 1986 – see 2.4).

However, to date CA has mainly been applied to monolingual settings and, only recently, to DI (e.g. Amato 2007a, 2007b; Baraldi & Gavioli 2011; Bot 2005; Davidson 2000, 2002; Roy 2000; Wadensjö 1998; Gavioli 2009). The use of different languages and the triadic format of mediated encounters add an additional layer of complexity. Given the inherently conversational nature of DI as defined above, CA is used in this thesis to define the structure and machinery of this specific mode of interpreting, starting from the analysis of transcripts of authentic mediated interactions. It will thus be possible to carry out a systematic analysis of the impact of specific linguistic and non-linguistic cues on both the direction and outcome of the interpreted event.

Another feature of CA which makes it suitable to investigate DI as an instance of intercultural communication is that it does not take communicative competence\(^\text{10}\) for granted, but explores how it is constructed through talk. Studying a complex activity like DI requires the use of both the linguistic and the cultural competence of the parties involved in it (Goodwin 1981). CA’s main purpose is neither to assess speakers’ competence while talking nor to uncover hidden meaning or strategic intentions underlying social interaction while exploring the verbal behaviour of participants. Rather, CA aims to describe how the latter make sense of what is happening in interaction, to investigate and identify the practices that underlie their competence as users of a language, enable them to interact coherently in any setting and accomplish specific purposes, actions or activities. In other words, CA’s goal is to highlight the recurring conversational patterns used to achieve a common goal, which emerge from the practices that constitute social competence. As Atkinson & Heritage (1984) put it:

\[^{10}\text{The notion of communicative competence was introduced by Hymes (1971) to question Chomsky’s (1965) linguistic competence, one of the two elements in Chomsky’s performance/competence distinction. Linguistic competence identifies the idealised linguistic knowledge of a native speaker of a given language and his/her use of its grammatical rules; performance is, in a sense, a corrupted and disorderly form of linguistic competence. Hymes expanded on Chomsky’s notion of linguistic competence and developed that of communicative competence; it refers to the ability to master not only the grammar of a language, but also how language is used by members of a speech community in order to achieve their purposes. This notion was further expanded by Canale & Swain (1980) in the framework of a theory of education and learning, i.e. second language acquisition.}\]
The central goal of conversation analytic research is the description and explication of the competences that ordinary speakers use and rely on in participating in intelligible, socially organized interaction. At its most basic, this objective is one of describing the procedures by which conversationalists produce their own behaviour and understand and deal with the behaviour of others. A basic assumption throughout is Garfinkel’s (1967:1) proposal that these activities – producing conduct and understanding and dealing with it – are accomplished as the accountable products of common sets of procedures.

Many of our insights into the structure of interaction come from the pioneering work of Harvey Sacks, who led and trained a small group of researchers. These include Emanuel Schegloff, who studied the organisation and structure of social interaction by developing a series of landmark concepts which have also been applied to the field of interpreting, e.g. turn-taking mechanisms, repair strategies, sequences. Sacks and Schegloff together developed the idea of conversation as a possible site for organised social conduct. Gail Jefferson developed a wealth of resources fundamental for this empirical discipline, such as the internationally recognised standard of conversation analytic transcription (e.g. Jefferson 1984b, 2004). Anita Pomerantz focused on preference/dispreference organisation (e.g. Pomerantz 1984), Alene Terasaki was mainly interested in formal linguistics (Terasaki 1976), and Gene Lerner investigated particularly the turn-taking system (Lerner 1995). Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson, who came from a sociological and ethnomethodological background, analysed conversational behaviour from transcripts of audio recordings of ordinary spontaneous talk; their descriptive work was considered a promising movement towards the establishment of an empirically based grammar of natural conversation, even though their “methods create problems for others hoping to use their results, particularly for linguists accustomed to tightly defined categories” (Coulthard & Brazil 1992:51).

CA effectively enables researchers to provide a structural description of social spoken interaction through a set of tools designed to carry out a systematic micro-analysis of transcripts of natural audio-recorded data. CA relies on the analysis of authentic samples of interaction as they emerge from their context of production, without imposing any pre-determined categories, and it disregards experimentally induced data. It stresses the importance of focusing on interpersonal processes rather
than on the single actions of people in isolation from one another and it examines social activities as they unfold over time, rather than limiting the analysis to the outcomes of those developments. In other words, the interest lies in the process rather than in the product of social interaction, i.e. on how participants behave simultaneously and coordinate their actions in an intricate, jointly sustained, dance-like pattern to mutually regulate one another’s ongoing behaviour. As a result, the procedures and practice of interaction are no longer taken for granted, but abstracted, and considered a system of elements whose organisation can be an object of study in its own right, and which merits a critical approach (Goffman 1955, 1957).

One of the basic assumptions of CA is that verbal interaction is an orderly, context-oriented and rule-referenced social activity, characterised by specific structures that can be studied systematically via a set of tools and principles; the most relevant ones to the purposes of this study will be introduced in 2.3. As a conceptual framework, CA does not provide a prescriptive set of rules; it rejects preformulated theoretical or conceptual categories or assumptions and builds on the willingness to be led by the phenomena of study and “to elaborate the complexity of human actions as revealed through talk” and on the unwillingness “to settle for easy solutions” (Richards & Seedhouse 2005:1). Hence, the inherently practical and empirically grounded nature of CA, which draws on the idea that “nothing that occurs in interaction can be ruled out, a priori, as random, insignificant or irrelevant” (Atkinson & Heritage 1984:4).

Orderliness is the result of the participants’ orientation towards a common set of interactional devices and practices (Schegloff & Sacks 1973:290; Sacks 1984:22). CA’s goal is to search for patterns and regularities through which talk-in-interaction is made orderly and coherent; these devices serve as a guide for action, allowing for a fine-tuned adaptation to local circumstances while not imposing specific rules of behaviour. To use Sacks et al.’s (1974) terms, they are both “context-free” and “context-sensitive”. Context is central to CA, which “combines a concern with the contextual sensitivity of language use with a focus on talk as a vehicle for social action” (Drew & Heritage 1992:16). The idea of the primacy of the social act draws on speech act theory by Austin (1962), who argued that any time a speaker produces an utterance, s/he is performing a social action. Other scholars build upon this idea, stating that
people use language and concomitant forms of conduct to do things, not only to transmit information; their talk and other conduct does things, and is taken as doing things [...] By ‘actions’ here we are not referring to physical actions but to ones accomplished through the talk.

(Schegloff et al. 2002:5)

One of the major breakthroughs of CA is the acknowledgment that context not only determines language, but also that language constitutes context. According to Drew & Heritage’s (1992:12) definition, “context is treated as both the project and product of the participants’ own actions and therefore as inherently locally produced and transformable at any moment”. Firstly, utterances and the actions they perform are context shaped; the “term context is used to refer both to the immediately local configuration of preceding activity in which an utterance occurs, and also to the larger environment of activity within which that configuration is recognized to occur” (Drew & Heritage 1992:18).

Secondly, utterances and actions are context renewing: “since every current utterance will itself form the immediate context for some next action in a sequence, it will inevitably contribute to the contextual framework in terms of which the next action will be understood. In this sense, the interactional context is continually being developed with each successive action” (ibid.). CA’s emic perspective, i.e. its aim to determine which elements of context are relevant to the interactants at any point in the interaction (Seedhouse 2005:261) enables us to investigate how participants jointly build interaction and, with it, social reality, rather than seeing utterances, and the social actions they embody, as simply determined by the context in which they are embedded.

It is widely agreed that CA has proved capable of yielding substantial insights into the organisation of conversation intended as talk-in-interaction, with far-reaching implications for our understanding of social interaction. As it continues to extend its range of application, CA has implications on fields as diverse as pragmatics, cognitive science, and interpreting. Nevertheless, CA’s theoretical and methodological position remains controversial and has been addressed by different scholars (e.g. Schenkein 1978; Levinson 1983; Heritage 1989, 1984; Atkinson & Heritage 1984; Lee 1987; Sacks 1984). Despite the dynamic notion of context described above, one criticism addressed to CA is that it tends to restrict its scope to what is actually observable in the transcript of the recorded interaction. The structure of conversation is investigated exclusively via phenomena such as turn-taking, sequences, adjacency pairs, repairs. In
particular, it focuses on the sequential context of utterances, i.e. the first instance immediately preceding and following an utterance, thus disregarding the larger socio-cultural factors affecting the interactions.

This point is particularly relevant to DI, given that, differently from casual, ordinary conversation, mediated interaction usually takes place in more or less formal institutional settings (Heritage & Greatbatch 1991) situated within the broader framework of larger social systems, e.g. educational, legal, or health systems. As explained by Baraldi (2006a:232), “a relative predictability is assured only through social structures […] in global social systems, which create the cultural context for specific interaction”. I argue that this aspect should not be completely disregarded as it may partially influence the structure of the encounter itself, or at least provide a series of expectations to be fulfilled and desired outcomes to be pursued. In this respect, a limitation of traditional CA is its focus on micro- rather than macro-structural issues. In other words, CA offers a powerful interpretation of conversation as a dynamic, interactive achievement, and, as explained by Roy (2000:5-6), its tools can help investigate how interpreters handle issues like “negotiating such things as who has the turn, asking for clarification, prompting a response or turn from a primary party, explaining what one party or another means, or explaining that one participant does not understand the other”. However, CA may not be self-sufficient as a paradigm: “modelling conversation as a machine does not explain adequately just what interactants use the machine for, nor how the machine works in relation to macro-social structures” (Eggins & Slade 1997:32).

Awareness of the limitations of local structures is evident in previous studies on DI. Wadensjö (1998), for instance, states that a global context concerning social roles and cultural norms is relevant; other scholars observe the primary relevance of social status and power differential for explaining interpreter-mediated interaction (e.g. Cambridge 1999; Davidson 2000, 2001; Krouglov 1999). To address these issues, a “shift of orientation is required away from conversation as a form of social interaction that is incidentally verbal to conversation as a form of interaction that is fundamentally social” (Eggins & Slade 1997:32). This is the reason why the present study integrates CA with intercultural studies and non-verbal communication studies, in the attempt to, at least partially, make up for the limits of CA by developing a richer and more comprehensive approach.
Detractors of CA also underline the limits of investigating talk-in-interaction from a detailed and fine-grained observation of transcripts of relatively restricted datasets. This approach seems to diminish the validity of findings, given that it does not allow for any quantification. Large corpora of transcribed spoken material would certainly be best suited to draw generalisations. CA does not claim universal validity of its findings, but relies on restricted datasets, which are best suited for small-scale, qualitative work. This does not exclude the possibility of generating interesting findings; on the contrary, the fine-grained micro-analysis typical of CA can disclose very subtle mechanisms which are very likely to escape a more large-scale investigation, thus providing insights into the technicalities of spoken social interaction.

The ephemeral nature of talk means that no record is, however, normally available during or after a communicative event; as explained by Freebody (2003), it would not be possible for researchers to record in field notes all the possible details of any event as it actually happens. Therefore, participants and analysts cannot revisit the interaction in any tangible way to recall what was said, when, how, by whom. It is consequently difficult to establish with any degree of accuracy what the implications of certain moves were and to evaluate the most effective conversational practices used to communicate with others. CA overcomes this problem by relying on recordings of spoken interaction, which are then turned into transcripts. One criticism raised against this practice is that the possibility to re-listen to stretches of conversation provided by recordings seems not to respect the phenomenological reality of authentic, interactional streams of talk, and consequently, to hinder the immediate, first-hearing interpretation of utterances (ten Have 1990). In other words, CA researchers have been criticised for taking an “analytical distance” and for seemingly relying on an “overhearer perspective” to interpret what is happening in interaction (Lynch 1985). This is certainly a valid criticism; nevertheless, it does not rule out the possibility of obtaining valuable information from a close scrutiny of transcripts from authentic recordings. As affirmed by Sacks (1984; 1995) and Heath (1997), recordings of talk and their rendering into transcripts produce a publicly available record of the interaction that can be repeatedly returned to and scrutinised by researchers, who may agree with or confute previous findings.

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11 Qualitative analysis focuses on details and provides a full and complete description of the phenomena and items that may be of interest in a conversation. Quantitative analysis involves the measurement of the frequency of certain phenomena or items which are statistically relevant; results provided by quantitative analysis must be statistically reliable and allow for some kind of generalisation. Qualitative analysis can be paired with quantitative analysis; the former is often used to provide hypothesis that will be later tested through quantitative analysis. Attempts at integrating both quantitative and qualitative analysis in CA-oriented studies have been made, even though they are rare (e.g. Frankel 1984; West 1984; West & Zimmerman 1985).
ones, thus enriching the interpretation of an event by noticing aspects, identifying possible patterns and features which may have escaped other analysts.

Linked to the previous point is the fact that, according to CA researchers, transcripts should not be made with any preconceived hypothesis in mind, but should be used as a starting point to locate specific issues for investigation. On the one hand, this *modus operandi* should enable researchers to engage in a close analysis that allows them to move “beyond the ‘ordinariness’ and ‘obviousness’ of the participants’ actions, and towards an appreciation of the intricacy and artfulness of ordinary social experience” (Freebody 2003:92). On the other hand, however, encoding all the details would arguably be an extremely skill-demanding and time-consuming process, which would be unlikely to capture all the features of authentic spoken interaction anyway, due to its extremely complex nature.

Building on Cencini & Aston (2002:47), this study acknowledges that “no transcription is a complete record of a spoken event”, i.e. that transcripts of spoken interaction never represent recordings in full details, but are necessarily selective and provide a reasonably accurate rendering of the event. Selectivity is therefore an important principle to bear in mind when embarking on a project based on transcriptions, which are considered in this study as a way to represent recorded interactions in written form, not to replace it. As explained by Kvale (1996:165), “transcripts are decontextualized conversations, they are abstractions, as topographical maps are abstractions from the original landscape from which they are derived”. The transcription process requires a compromise between what to include and what to leave out, and the level of detail may vary according to one’s theoretical framework and research purposes. This does not diminish the usefulness of transcripts as a tool of investigation, which remains extremely valuable to carry out a fine-grained analysis of spoken interaction.

Related to transcripts is also the criticism that the more features they encode, the harder it is for laypeople to access and for researchers to make effective use of them, as they rely on a set of conventions which make the text difficult to read (for a description of the ones adopted in this study, see 3.3.1). To overcome this issue, transcripts should be easy to read, so that information could be quickly retrieved. When developing the transcription conventions, therefore, this study acknowledges the importance of another principle, i.e. that of readability. According to Maynard (1984:21), a possible solution to this issue could be using simplified versions of transcripts for reporting purposes at a
later stage, thus reaching a compromise between precision and readability (Atkinson & Heritage 1984).

To conclude, CA seems particularly suitable for gaining access to the process of interpreting as it provides a rigorous conceptual framework to describe and understand what we do in interaction on a moment-by-moment basis. Nevertheless, this study won’t exclusively rely on a rigid application of CA; the main principles will be presented and used in the analysis, leaving nevertheless scope for the integration of notions and ideas coming from different research strands, which will be useful when going ‘from micro to macro’. A selection of CA-based concepts and tools that are useful to characterise the structural organisation of talk-in-interaction will be adjusted to interpreter-mediated interaction, as explained in the next section.

2.3 Structural components of spoken interaction: key concepts

CA is centrally occupied with describing procedures and expectations through which participants produce and understand ordinary conversational conduct. This has led to a strongly empirical research orientation in which attention is drawn to organisational features of talk which are displayed, appreciated and used in the actual events of interaction (Drew & Heritage 2006). One of the main tenets of CA is that conversation is made an observably orderly phenomenon by the mechanism of turn-taking (Sacks et al. 1974). CA-led research has mainly used turns as a basic unit of analysis and explored phenomena such as the organisation of turn-taking, repair strategies, silence and overlapping talk, among others.

This study acknowledges the importance of turns and their organisation in interaction; however, it takes as a starting point a higher level of analysis, that of sequences of actions, which may be placed above the level of turns, but cannot be thoroughly understood without knowing how turns-at-talk function. Understanding how both levels are constituted and interact is therefore crucial; the following sections introduce and define the ‘toolbox’ of concepts and terminology which will be used to explore the data and construct the analysis. Emphasis will be placed on the sequential nature of talk, which is dynamically shaped by the interplay of smaller units (turns and adjacency pairs). For the sake of clear expositions, all these notions will be introduced progressively from turns to sequences; some extracts taken from my data will accompany their explanation, thus exemplifying their relevance to the study.
2.3.1 Turns and turn-management in interaction

According to many scholars (e.g. Allen & Guy 1974; Duncan 1974a, 1974b; Jaffe & Feldstein 1970; Sacks et al. 1974; Schegloff & Sacks 1973; Goodwin 1981), talk in face-to-face interaction proceeds through a sequence of turns, where a turn is defined as a stretch of speech uttered by one speaker, i.e. the continuous period of time during which a person is talking. Levinson (1983:295-296) defines a turn as the “time during which a single participant speaks, within a typical, orderly arrangement in which participants speak with minimal overlap and gap between them”. Despite the apparent simplicity of this definition, turns are very complex entities; the empirical approach adopted to investigate them has revealed that tracing their boundaries and providing a comprehensive description is a difficult and elusive task, which would go beyond the scope of the present work. In this thesis, a turn is defined as any utterance produced by a speaker which furthers the topic of the conversation, normally ending with a turn-shift, i.e. when another speaker takes the turn. If a turn does not result in turn-shift, there might be either a gap, i.e. pause, or overlapping talk, i.e. one or more speaker talking at the same time.

The fundamental social identities associated with turns are those of speaker and hearer, who both contribute, through their interaction and degree of involvement, to the establishment of the participatory framework (Goffman 1981). In triadic exchanges, interpreters act both as hearers and speakers, and their turns need to be closely explored with a view to evaluating their impact on the participatory framework and the positioning that they contribute to projecting. Furthermore, to engage in communication successfully, not only do participants produce utterances, but they also need to coordinate them in a meaningful way. In mediated interaction, where the parties cannot conduct the interaction autonomously, this coordinating function is mostly undertaken by interpreters (Wadensjö 1998). The understanding of the dynamics of mediated interaction will be based on the understanding of the basic principles underlying monolingual dyadic interaction.

An accurate specification of turns cannot be detached from the investigation of turn-taking mechanisms, i.e. the process through which turns are exchanged. Generally speaking, turn-taking practices organise the distribution of talk among participants, i.e. the allocation of opportunities to participate in conversation. As explained by Lerner (2004:4), turn-taking “shapes how speakers compose their contributions, it shapes where they position those contributions and it shapes when they get to participate”.

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Turn-taking is thus a structural component of speech exchange systems and one of the main tenets of CA, as it makes conversation an observably orderly phenomenon. In a programmatic paper that contributes to the establishment of CA as a distinct field of research, Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson (1974) developed a pioneer model which lays down the basis for turn-taking organisation in conversation as a form of talk-in-interaction. As explained by Sacks et al. (1974:727), turn-taking is “locally managed, party-administered and interactionally controlled”; far from being an effortless activity, it requires the linguistic, social and cultural competencies of all the parties involved in it. While exchanging turns, not only do participants convey some content or information, but they also accomplish specific goals, such as negotiating meanings, role-relationships and peer solidarity.

Examining the way turns are organised in conversation has revealed some finely coordinated processes of interaction occurring with it. Drawing on the regularities observed in empirical data, Sacks et al. (1974:700-701) point out a number of facts common to mundane conversation; firstly, speaker change recurs or at least occurs. Secondly, turn-taking tends to happen smoothly in conversation, with overwhelmingly one speaker talking at a time; this has been described as a basic design feature of participants’ construction of talk-in-interaction. Schegloff & Sacks (1973:293f) argue that any violation of such a rule (e.g. periods of overlapping talk or long periods of silence) would be a “noticed event” by the participants, leading to the use of repair strategies, i.e. “the mechanisms through which certain ‘troubles’ in interaction are dealt with” (Schegloff et al. 1977:373). These are conversational strategies that we use in conversation to restore the flow of talk whenever a possible breakdown occurs.

Sacks et al.’s model is revolutionary as it does not attempt to provide an a priori definition of a turn; on the contrary, turns are conceptualised as very dynamic and flexible entities, having discrete but mutable boundaries and whose order is not fixed.
but may vary. As highlighted by Goodwin (1981:20), “intrinsic structural elements of the unit being exchanged – its boundaries – seem implicated in the process of exchange itself”. It is nevertheless possible to identify the basic units of which turns-at-talk are constructed. These are also known as **turn-constructional units** (TCUs), and can be defined as “unit types with which a speaker may set out to construct a turn” (Sacks et al. 1974:702). TCUs can be “sentential, clausal, phrasal, and lexical constructions” (ibid.:702) used to accomplish those actions we use our speaking turns for. Unlike other basic linguistic units, such as morphemes and phonemes, TCUs are dynamic in that they are not defined or pre-determined by specific linguistic units, but they are locally produced and jointly created by interlocutors. They can be metaphorically referred to as building blocks of a turn, and can be thought of as syntactic units, even though, given the oral nature of conversation, their boundaries are influenced by other factors as well (e.g. prosody). Moreover, given that turns are jointly produced units of conversation, their correct interpretation also depends on factors such as the relative status of participants, the desired outcome of the event, other social variables and non-verbal factors, in addition to the purely linguistic dimension.

A key feature of TCUs is that, once the turn is underway, participants in an interaction can project how and at what point a unit-type will come to an end thanks to their knowledge of language and context. The point at which a TCU is complete is a place where the transition from one speaker to another may (but need not) occur. Unless special provisions are made by a current speaker, such as prefacing the talk with a story-preface to book a long turn (Sacks et al. 1974; Sacks 1995), a termination of a TCU constitutes a possible **transition relevance place** (TRP) (Sacks et al. 1974:705-706, note 15). Such TRPs are

> discrete places in the developing course of a speaker’s talk [...] at which ending the turn or continuing it, transfer of the turn or its retention become relevant.

(Schegloff 1992b:116)

According to Sacks et al. (1974:703) “transfer of speakership is coordinated by reference to such transitional relevance places, which any unit-type instance will reach”.

Sacks et al.’s model also provides a set of ‘rules’ which seem to govern turn-taking and are oriented to by speakers; such rules are not prescriptive, they have been developed on the basis of empirical observation of participants’ behaviour in interaction.
and describe how participants negotiate and what options they may select to allocate turns at TRPs. Turn-allocation practices are divided into two main categories (Sacks et al. 1974:703), as exemplified by Figure 2.1:

(a) those in which a next turn is allocated by current speaker selecting next speaker.
(b) those in which a next turn is allocated by self-selection.

According to the first rule, if the current speaker selects a next speaker, s/he must stop speaking and the selected party is expected to take next turn to speak. If, on the contrary, the current speaker does not select anyone, then there are two options available: either another speaker self-selects, in which case “first starter acquires rights to a turn, and transfer occurs at that place” (ibid. 704). Alternatively, if no other speaker self-selects, the current speaker may decide to continue, in which case the first rule will apply at the next TRP “and recursively at each next transition relevance place, until transfer is effected” (ibid. 704). This model also clarifies the issue of how to classify silence by distinguishing between gaps (intended as lapses in conversation) and pauses. In this study, gaps occur in case neither the current speaker nor another participant selects at a possible TRP, so silence falls. However, “a gap can be transformed into a pause if the silence is ended by further talk by the same speaker” (Sacks et al. 1974:715, footnote 16).

![Figure 2.1. A graphic representation of the turn-taking system described by Sacks et al. (1974)](image-url)
Sacks et al.'s (1974) mechanism puts self-selection of next speaker hierarchically prior to self-selection of current speaker; ‘current speaker continues’ is an option only if no next speaker self-selects. This has a series of implications for the organisation of activities which require ‘long turns’, consisting of more than one TCU (such as storytelling), for the repair of failures to achieve turn transfer and for the avoidance of silence. Explicit signalling is not necessary for the effective transfer of speaking turns, but it can contribute to its orderly management. In order to maintain a smooth flow of the talk within an interaction, participants in a conversation can use turn-holding and turn-yielding devices to signal their intention to take, hold or leave the floor.

To exemplify some of the points made in this section, extract 2.1 shows an instance, taken from my data, of a multi-unit turn uttered by one of the teachers (T2). She is commenting on the decision made by the examination board to only give the child ten minutes extra time during the maths exam and to let him use the dictionary, given his poor English. The double slashes (//) indicate the possible end of any TCU, thus a potential TRP, established on the basis of elements such as meaning completeness, prosodic intonation, pauses. Some particles which may be qualified as turn-holding devices are highlighted in bold.

[Extract 2.1 - PTM1f]

73 T2 ok so that’s their decision it has nothing to do with us // so: (.) he's put in a:-
74 another area (.) eh which is eh you know not (.) where everyone else is just to give
75 him a little quiet that he needs and that extra time so that he's not disturbed //
76 ehm: (1.35) now (.) I know he's quite frustrated with that (.) but (.) I'm quite happy
77 (.) especially with the (.) with the F for a first attempt (.) // when he came in (.) a little
78 bit after everyone else // he's done very well to do that

The forms of turns are shaped within this interactive dimension, in which TRPs provide the occasion for a next turn by another participant. The precise timing of the participants’ talk relative to each other is a fundamental element for the conduct of the interaction and change in speakership and may reveal a lot about the structure and components of turns. Depending on how people time their contribution to the interaction relative to one another, all sorts of inferences can be made about the

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13 The dataset and transcription conventions are explained in chapter 3; the extracts presented in this chapter are exclusively for the purpose of exemplifying the conceptual notions presented. In all the extracts presented, INT stands for interpreter, T stands for teacher and the number (1, 2 or 3) differentiates between the various teachers who were present in the meeting.

14 All the extracts presented in each chapter are numbered consecutively; the acronym PTM followed by a number and a letter refer to the sequence where the specific extracts come from, which can be found in Appendix A.
supportive or interruptive character of people’s contributions. According to Sacks et al.’s model (1974), speaker changes can occur at specific moments, on the basis of prosodic, pragmatic, syntactic and semantic factors. The smooth alternation of speaker and listener roles is therefore the result of the participants’ coordinated action to minimise both the duration of overlaps and time lapses between turns:

The unmarked value of the transition space is one beat of silence; that is, after possible completion of a turn, a next speaker ordinarily allows one beat of silence to pass before starting a next turn […] departures from that value (shorter or longer) are potentially marked and import-laden. One place where trouble can become apparent – for example, trouble in understanding – is in longer silences at the transition space.

(Schegloff et al. 2002:6)

In ordinary interaction, the length of a conversation, what parties are going to say and the relative distribution of turns are not usually specified in advance. However, there are different forms of institutional talk (e.g. debates, formal meetings and ceremonies) where the distribution of turns-at-talk tends to follow quite rigid rules and is characterised by a certain degree of predictability; this is the case of studies on turn-taking conducted in courtrooms (e.g. Atkinson & Drew 1979), news interviews (e.g. Greatbatch 1988; Heritage & Greatbatch 1991) and classrooms (e.g. McHoul 1978; Mehan 1985).

Even though CA-driven concepts have mainly been explored in monolingual interaction, they set the background against which my study will develop; turns are considered integral parts of sequences and contribute to defining the structure of spoken mediated interaction onto which gaze will be mapped. The picture becomes more complicated in triadic encounters: the dynamics of turn-management need adjustment to mediated events, which present considerable differences vis-à-vis monolingual interaction. Interpreter-mediated encounters are not instances of two-party conversation due to the physical presence of the interpreter who takes and manages turns. Nor are they instances of three-party interaction, as the role of the interpreter differs from that of the other participants and his/her turns are not always independent ones, but mostly linked to those uttered by primary parties. Moreover, access to talk is unequal as, by virtue of the bilingual nature of the encounter, there is always a party who does not understand, or only partially understands, what the other is saying. Although it is
possible that, at times, speakers feel as if they were addressing each other directly, they are constantly involved in a speaking turn exchange process with the interpreter, who takes up a coordinating role when managing the distribution of turns-at-talk and decides, by virtue of his/her superior knowledge of the content (Englund-Dimitrova 1997, Wadensjö 1998), when turns are to change and to whom. Similarly, Roberts (1997) uses the metaphor of the interpreter as a ‘chair’ to ensure that each party has his/her turn to speak. Turn-taking has been adopted as a starting point for analysis by scholars such as Metzger (1995), Roy (1989, 2000), and Wadensjö (1992, 1998), mainly due to the inherently conversational nature of DI. As explained by Roy (2000:36):

> Turn-taking in interpreting has unique and complex features that actively involve the interpreter in organizing, managing, constraining and directing the flow of talk. Interpreters make decisions to manage and orchestrate turns due to and because of the surface linguistic meaning and the social meanings inherent in the situation and its expectations.

Similarly to ordinary conversation, in DI there seems to be a lack of strict rules telling interpreters how they should manage the distribution of talk; this can be done in different ways and through a variety of means, verbal and/or non-verbal. A collaborative and action-oriented model that explains how turn-taking works in mediated interaction to construct a conversational common ground was developed by Davidson (2002). It does not reduce the interpreter’s contributions to mere echoic renditions of each speaker’s utterance into the target language. Rather, it accounts for his/her contribution as a speaking agent involved in the co-construction of meaningful utterances that “elicit the intended response from, or have the intended effect upon, the hearer” (2002:1275). The model describes three “meta-turns”, each of which encompasses “the collection of turns necessary for a speaker’s contribution to the discourse to be heard by the other interpretee” (ibid.:1284); it identifies as “liminal turns” those turns-at-talk where a language shift occurs and which are usually marked by the interpreter by a phrase, gesture, expression or gaze shift.

A related concept is that of floor. To understand this notion, a distinction between turn and floor must be drawn. These words are often used interchangeably, “though a floor may […] consist of several turns, just as it is possible to take a turn without having the floor. A person may even continue to control the floor while s/he is
not talking” (Pöhaker 1998:11). Regarding the structure of the floor, Pöhaker (1998:11) explains that it is considered “the expression of a cognitive network constructed by the participants in a conversation”. Hayashi (1991, 1996) draws on work by Edelsky (1981) and Shultz et al. (1982) to classify floors into different types (see Figure 2.1). The relevant distinction for the purposes of this study is the one made by Hayashi (1996), who distinguishes between two main floor types: single conversational floor, revealing only one floor in the current conversation built by a number of participants, and multiple conversational floor, when two or more floors occur simultaneously.

A frequent phenomenon that belongs to multiparty interaction is the splitting up of a single conversation into two or more sub-conversations, which is referred to using the CA term **schism** (e.g. Egbert 1997; Schegloff 1995b; Parker 1984; Sacks et al. 1974; Goodwin 1984, 1987; Goffman 1963). It frequently occurs in my interpreter-mediated data, which features four participants, i.e. two teachers, one mother and one interpreter. When schism occurs, it mostly follows the disengagement of teachers from the participatory framework; my analysis, in chapters 4 and 5, will encompass whether and how the interpreter handles the situation and restores or fails to restore inclusion through verbal and non-verbal devices.
This section has presented the basic units of analysis which will support the most fine-grained investigation of the interaction and explain its dynamics in monolingual and mediated interaction. The turn-by-turn organisation of talk can, however, be best appreciated by adopting a wider approach which focuses on longer stretches of conversation, with a view to exploring what turns do, rather than simply what they are about. All series of turns can be inspected to explore what sequences they enact, what responses may be relevant to them and what outcomes are being projected or pursued. The next section therefore addresses the next level of analysis, i.e. sequences and their main components.

2.3.2 Actions and sequences

Schegloff (2007:1) claims that “turns do not follow one another like identical beads on a string. They have some organisation and ‘shape’ to them, aside from the organisation as single turns and as series-of-turns […] they seem to be grouped in batches or clumps”. The most common tendency is to consider these clumps of turns as topical, i.e. hanging together because they refer to the same topic. However, the stance adopted in this study is that talk-in-interaction is better examined with respect to the dialogic actions intersubjectively performed by participants rather than topicality, i.e. the focus is more on what turns are doing than what they are about. A single TCUs can embody more than one action; a crucial question is, therefore, how can we characterise what kind of action(s) is/are getting done by TCUs. This is a controversial and highly-debated point of CA-led research, given the lack of a set of pre-determined labels to categorise actions. Schegloff (2007:8) responds to such criticisms as follows:

Unlike the other main analytic stance concerned with characterizing actions – speech act theory of the sort primarily associated with the names of John Austin and John Searle (Austin 1962; Searle 1969, 1975, 1976), we do not begin with classes or categories of action named by terms like the above and deconstruct them analytically into the conceptual components that make some particular act an instance of that class.
Not all the actions performed by one or more TCU(s) can be referred to by common vernacular terms like announcing, telling, complaining, requesting, agreeing, disagreeing, offering, etc. Categories to be applied to sequences “are common sense, not technical categories and should be treated accordingly” (Schegloff 1984b:30). This systematic way of proceeding has pros and cons; on the one hand, the lack of an exhaustive list of clear criteria for the identification of actions allows for the creation of a potentially infinite number of labels which do not fit into a specific set of categories. As a result, this may lead to undue complexity and hinder rather than facilitate systematic analysis. On the other hand, however, a more ‘open’ approach may lead to discover ‘new’ actions that have no vernacular name and that speech act theory could not ordinarily undertake to analyse. The analysis of actions and their construction clearly shows how CA tends to be a very fluid discipline, which puts emphasis on the complexity of conversational organisation rather than streamlining its processes.

The starting point of the analysis is neither the name of a type of action, nor the class of action, but the observation of stretches of talk embedded in their context of occurrence, with a view to identifying what the speaker appears to be doing in that instance and what response it elicits (or fails to elicit). This builds on the idea that utterances are not single events, that their organisation in conversation is not random and does not depend on some elusive, intrinsic quality, but on preceding and successive turns in conversation. Likewise, the actions embedded in one or more TCUs do not randomly succeed one another, but each one projects the relevance of a second, thus continuously generating and being generated by a local context. In this respect, a core notion developed by CA is the sequential organisation of talk, i.e. the idea that turns-at-talk are organised sequentially with a view to establishing social order and accomplishing social activities of various kinds. This builds on the idea that utterances are interconnected on the basis of the principle of conditional relevance, i.e. the next turn-at-talk of a participant in a conversation normally shows understanding of the prior turn and of the action(s) it has been designed to do; it also provides a context for and raises expectations about the next turn to come. In other words, each turn has a retrospective effect, i.e. it sheds light on what was previously said and can be interpreted as a direct consequence of the action(s) that it made conditionally relevant; and a prospective function, i.e. it has a conditional constraint to the following one(s) and projects the expectation that an appropriate response will be uttered so that a given sequence can be continued and completed. Turns must therefore be interpreted according to their position in the sequential context. The principle of conditional
relevance also makes a turn interpretable as relevant or irrelevant to the prior one, and the absence of a relevant next turn something noticeable. As Schegloff (1968:1083) puts it:

Given the first [utterance], the second is expectable; upon its occurrence it can be seen to be a second item to the first; upon its nonoccurrence it can be seen to be officially absent – all this provided by the occurrence of the first item.

The analysis of these sequentially chained actions accomplished through talk cannot be divorced from a moment-by-moment inspection of the interaction unfolding following the guiding principle “why that now”. Hence the usefulness of CA as a conceptual and methodological framework, which is in line with the general principle in DI according to which “to understand what is being said, an interpreter must understand first why it is being said” (Davidson 2002:1276); this is further evidence of the suitability of CA as a framework to break down and understand the complexity of DI.

When we think about clumps of turns in action terms, we are dealing with courses of action; this term refers to the fact that, to be considered accomplished, most actions require at least the occurrence of some sort of response or reaction by the other participant(s). Initiating an action, therefore, initiates the development of a course of action concertedly produced by more than one participant. For example, a request can be considered accomplished only when the recipient provides the information requested; likewise an offer is completed only when the recipient accepts or rejects it. This means that the occurrence of one or more utterances and the action(s) that they implement open up the possibility (and sometimes the normative expectation) for the occurrence of another set of utterances or actions that would allow the current action to reach its completion. This may be achieved in two or more turns (as in the case of mediated interaction), even though the participants’ orientation to the achievement of the initial action remains the same.

Clumps of turns performing one or more actions can be referred to as sequences: this term is used in a technical way, following the CA-driven definition of “courses of action implemented through talk” (Schegloff 2007), i.e. stretches of talk that seem to hang together and have a particular relatedness to each other, thus constituting a unit in its own right, over and above the turns-at-talk that compose it, through which a course of action is initiated, worked through and brought to closure. Sequences emerge
dynamically from the constant interplay between different smaller units, “turns-within-sequences” (Drew & Heritage 1992:18), whose shape and trajectory becomes apparent on a moment-by-moment basis, as the interaction unfolds. According to Richards & Seedhouse (2005: xv):

In their turns at talk speakers conduct social actions of various kinds […] and all aspects of linguistic production, including lexical, syntactic, phonetic and prosodic, are organized in terms of, and fitted to, a turn’s position in a sequence of turns/actions.

Previous discussion of turns and their organisation is relevant, as the levels of analysis of turns and sequences are closely intertwined. As pointed out by Heritage & Maynard (2006a:13-14) in their analysis of communication in medical care: “turn design is a feature of sequence organisation, sequences are compiled into particular activities”, which compose the interactional event as a whole.\(^{15}\)

The reason for applying the notions presented above to my study is twofold. Firstly, interactions may be considered systems in which different and alternate actions are inserted into a continuous process and each participant’s action is followed by other participant’s action until the system is concluded. Any moment of an interaction, even a mediated one, can in principle be scrutinised with the help of sequences. My analysis focuses on sequences performing specific actions (namely reporting and recommending – see 4.2) that will enable me to observe how teachers’ initiatives and parents responses (if any) interact through the interpreter over a long stretch of meeting, thus providing for an overall orderliness of the interaction. Secondly, as pointed out by Wadensjö (2004:108),

in studies of written translations, “source text” and “target text” can be used as both analytical and empirical units. Texts that can be labelled in this way exist as artefacts. In dialogue interpreting they don’t.

\(^{15}\) It is worth pointing out here that sequence organisation and sequential organisation are not synonyms (e.g. Schegloff 2007); the latter is a more general term referring to the relative positioning of utterances or actions. Sequence organisation is a type of sequential organisation whose scope is the organisation of courses of action enacted through talk in an orderly, coherent and meaningful succession of actions. Sequences can be inspected or tracked to see what courses of actions they are progressively implementing, what possible responses may be made relevant and what outcomes are being pursued.
In these encounters, primary parties’ and interpreters’ utterances co-exist in sequences of embodied utterances.

The idea of “sequences of embodied utterances” is particularly relevant to the present study, which builds on the idea that actions are ‘laminated’ (Goodwin 2010), i.e. they are composed of different layers and performed by combining different resources to display (or fail to display) co-participation and alignment. The verbal and non-verbal dimensions complement each other in building actions and accomplishing coherent courses of action. Before integrating the non-verbal dimension, the next section presents some other mechanisms and notions which provide an analytical apparatus for the investigation of sequences and of the unfolding of the interaction as a whole.

2.3.3 Adjacency pair and the system of preference/dispreference

A crucial notion to the understanding of sequences and how they are formed is adjacency pairs. This concept refers to a sequence of actions and makes it possible to explore the mechanisms which make an action relevant to other actions. A broad range of sequences in talk-in-interaction seems to be produced by reference to the practice of adjacency pairs (e.g. Schegloff & Sacks 1973; Sacks et al. 1974; Hutchby & Wooffitt 1998; Schegloff et al. 2002; Schegloff 2007); as a consequence, adjacency pairs can be considered the basic unit of sequence construction comparable to the way TCUs serve as a resource for turns construction. In their simplest form, adjacency pairs are sequences containing pairs of utterances which are organised on the basis of the principle of conditional relevance (introduced in 2.3.2) and produced successively by different speakers. Examples of adjacency pairs are question/answer, greeting/greeting, complaint/apology, where the first pair part (FPP) creates expectations for a second pair part (SPP). FPPs select next speaker, make a second pair part conditionally relevant and set constraints on it. Therefore, the absence of an expected SPP is a noticeable omission that requires some sort of repair strategy (see 2.3.1). Sequences are recognisably complete at the end of an SPP, at the onset of further talk which is not part of the possibly preceding utterance.

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16 It is worth pointing out here that there are sequence organisations not based on adjacency pairs, like, for instance, some forms of storytelling and telling sequences.
When it is proposed that action sequences are organised as adjacency pairs, it is not claimed that these sequences are produced invariably as succeeding actions. As Drew & Heritage (2006:3) put it: “the adjacency pair notion does not command our attention as a statement of empirical invariance”. Interaction is not structured on the basis of statistical calculations, therefore action sequences are never completely predictable. A first speaker’s production of an FPP proposes that a second speaker should relevantly produce an SPP which is accountably due immediately on completion of the FPP. However, this is not always necessarily the case.

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The model sketched in Figure 2.3 is bi-dimensional: it accounts for the progression of sequences (horizontal dimension), whose sequential positioning does not materialise until they are realised moment-by-moment in interaction. Moreover, it clearly shows that sequences can expand well beyond the minimal two-turn sequence which the adjacency pair itself constitutes (i.e. the adjacency pair base sequence) to include turns which are taken before and after the base pair part. This may occur via pre-sequences of various types (e.g. pre-invitations, pre-offers, pre-announcements) which are disciplined

![Figure 2.3](image-url)
by the projected FPP and whose aim seems to be that of maximising the occurrence of a preferred SPP. Insert sequences orient back to the FPP or forward to the SPP; they are initiated by the recipient of an FPP to perform a sequence whose parts are in a preferred relationship with the SPP and made conditionally relevant by the FPP. Post-sequences are minimal or larger continuations of an SPP; they are not disciplined by any projected structural component and represent therefore important loci for variation.

The flexible character of sequences is particularly visible in interpreter-mediated interaction, where an intermediate ‘translating’ move provided by the interpreter is normally expected in order to achieve an SPP from one of the primary parties relevant to an FPP uttered by the other (Davidson 2002). A more appropriate way to designate this double implicature could be to adjust the structure of adjacency pairs to triadic exchanges, i.e. to have an adjacency trio, which is a term chosen to convey both the general meaning of ‘group of three things’ and, in a figurative sense, the reference to a performance by “three voices” (Merlini & Favaron 2005:271 - for a discussion of the notion of voice see 1.2.3). An unmarked form of this pattern is schematically represented in Figure 2.4:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{P1 question} & \rightarrow \text{INT translation} \rightarrow \text{P2 answer} \\
\text{P2 answer} & \rightarrow \text{INT translation} \rightarrow \text{P1 assessment/next question}
\end{align*}
\]

\text{Figure 2.4. A graphic representation of adjacency-trio system (Merlini & Favaron 2005)}

However, what happens in mediated interaction between the production of an FPP and the production of a relevant SPP is not pre-determined; at any TRP of the current speaker, the interpreter can potentially intervene and provide his/her translation. Nevertheless, the translation contribution is not necessarily produced on a turn-by-turn basis, but it may be temporarily suspended by the interpreter. As explained by Gavioli & Baraldi (2005:14), suspension is mainly done by two types of interpreter’s contributions:

a. a reformulation of previous request (for e.g. pursuing a particular response) b. minimal responses, such as acknowledgment tokens or continuers eliciting the interlocutor to go on. These sequences are generally followed by a shift back to translation.
The interpreter’s moves can assume different forms (e.g. Davidson 2002; Gavioli & Baraldi 2005); they may temporarily deviate from the main course of action, thus having different interactional consequences on the unfolding of the event and on the participants’ opportunities to offer their own contributions. Alternatives to the interpreter’s translation on a turn-by-turn basis are the interpreter’s direct response (which may, however, exclude the recipient from taking part in the interaction), or the interpreter’s temporary suspension of the conditional relevance of an FPP, for instance to ask for clarification or provide explanations. The contribution uttered by the interpreter at this specific moment in interaction may or may not display relatedness to the FPP, and may slightly alter or completely redesign the trajectory of talk, thus triggering certain responses and leading to a marked pattern which may facilitate, delay or hinder the successful completion of the ongoing course of action.

Another notion which is closely linked to that of sequence and adjacency pair is that of **preference/dispreference**. This concept has been explored by many authors, among whom Levinson (1983), Pomerantz (1984), Sacks (1987) and Schegloff (1995a). The basic idea is that an FPP makes relevant various types of responses by the recipient; as explained above, the action(s) which get(s) enacted by an utterance is/are coherently related to the ones which have preceded and to the ones which may follow via a mechanism of sequential implicativeness. For example, a recipient of an invitation, offer or request may accept or decline it, requests can be granted or rejected. Different types of SPP which are made relevant by an FPP are not equally valued; provided that sequences are the vehicles to accomplish some actions, the response which favours the accomplishment of such an action is defined as the “preferred” SPP while the one which hinders such achievement is defined as “dispreferred” SPP. Although a number of exceptions have been noted (Pomerantz 1984), in general ‘positive’ responses, such as acceptances and agreements, are preferred SPPs and are systematically sought after; ‘negative’ responses, such as refusals, rejections, disagreements are dispreferred SPPs, and are systematically avoided or remedied. Another parameter which seems useful to establish the preferred or dispreferred nature of an utterance is the promptness with which they are produced. As explained by Heritage (1984:267), “actions which are characteristically performed straightforwardly and without delay are termed ‘preferred’ actions, while those which are delayed, qualified and accounted for are termed ‘dispreferred’”.
As was the case for sequences and actions, the terms “preferred” and “dispreferred” are to be considered technical conversation analytic terms used to characterise “sequential properties of turn and sequence construction, not participant desires or motivations” (Schegloff 1988:445, see also Heritage 1984). These types of responses correspond to different alignments towards the project undertaken in the FPP and their design may or may not contribute to the maintenance of social solidarity. Generally speaking, the preferred format responses for FPP are affiliative actions which are supportive of social solidarity, while dispreferred responses are destructive of it (Heritage 1984). Therefore, as explained by Pillet-Shore (2001:11), who applies this notion to the investigation of monolingual PTMs,

one way that the bias in favour of conflict avoidance and the maintenance of social solidarity can become manifest in talk-in-interaction is through these preferred and dispreferred turn shapes. Within the parent-teacher conference setting, preference organization informs how the coparticipants design and deliver their evaluations of students.

The notion of preference/dispreference is particularly useful to the purpose of this study, given that it is closely linked to that of favourable or unfavourable evaluations delivered through the production of assessments; these will be introduced in 2.3.4.

To conclude, this research applies the notion of sequence organisation to mediated encounters with a view to highlighting new aspects related to the impact of the dialogue interpreter’s actions on the unfolding of the encounter and whether they lead to interactional inclusion/exclusion, engagement/disengagement of either of the parties. As stated by Gavioli & Baraldi (2005:6):

A key issue in either interpreting and in research on intercultural communication is that of observing ways in which interpreters’ activity, either translational or non-translational, allows for actual involvement of participants in talk and provides them with a space to contribute and participate in interaction.
The quote could be slightly adjusted to enlarge the scope of analysis to encompass not only the “translational and non-translational” activities, which fall within the verbal dimension, but also the “non-verbal” contributions made by the interpreter and by the other participants in interaction, building on the assumption that actions are not exclusively implemented through talk. These are crucial factors to take into account in the analysis of how mutual understanding, empowerment, participation, social solidarity, engagement, in a word successful intercultural communication is interactionally achieved.

To sum up, the term sequence is used in a rather technical way, following the CA-based definition of courses of action implemented through talk and constituted by TCUs, each performing one or more actions. Each sequence implements a specific course of action and relies on the production and alternation between FPPs and SPPs, which are connected by link of preference or dispreference. In spoken interaction in general, and mediated interaction in particular, a sequence does not necessarily present a linear structure; on the contrary, SPPs can be temporally quite distant from their related FPPs, and sequences can present a complex internal structure. The concept of adjacency-trio based sequences is particularly useful to describe the triadic interactional configuration. The question to ask at this point is how to isolate those sequences in my data which seem best suited to carry out the analysis. The next section will suggest an answer to this question.

2.3.4 Assessments and epistemic authority

One of the main elements which distinguishes this study from previous ones on DI, despite the similar research interest and tools of investigation, are the fundamental units of analysis chosen as points of departure, i.e. assessments and gaze. Building on Pomerantz (1975, 1984), Goodwin & Goodwin (1992) and Stivers & Rossano (2010:9), assessments can be defined as evaluative acts, typically performed by an utterance that offers an evaluation of a reference with a clear valence, i.e. that contains a positive or negative predication of a referent or state of affairs. In my data assessments mainly refer to the child’s attitude and academic performance or the family conduct.

There are several reasons for choosing assessments as a basic unit of analysis for the verbal component; firstly, they are frequently found in the data gathered, possibly by virtue of the dominant evaluating activity of PTMs’ talk. Secondly, assessments seem to provide a relatively stable structural unit that can be identified and isolated within the
stream of speech, even when embedded in multiunit turns (i.e. consisting of more than one TCU), whose boundaries are difficult to identify, especially in mediated talk. In other words, assessments are identifiable building blocks which can be used to isolate specific turns and sequences and which contribute to the segmentation and ‘packaging’ of larger courses of action. Assessing has been described as a social practice through which participants mutually display their shared co-experience, access, knowledge, expertise, experience, and authority over the object being assessed (Heritage & Raymond 2005). By producing assessments, speakers express a clear stance as well as the epistemic right to evaluate the assessable. Monolingual literature has also claimed that assessments are widely-used interactional devices for the negotiation of solidarity, alignment, affiliation, support, and the implementation of institutional tasks (e.g. Goodwin & Goodwin 1992; Pomerantz 1984; Heritage & Raymond 2005; Raymond & Heritage 2006).

Two dimensions are central to the study of assessments, namely their sequential organisation and the epistemic stance that they convey. Assessments may be produced in a variety of different formats (e.g. with both interrogative and declarative sentence types) and may be found in various sequential positions, acting as a response to or extending an ongoing sequence. Typically, as pointed out by Maynard (1997), they follow informing acts and are employed by participants to converge on newsworthiness and valence, i.e. to “achieve accountable (mutually visible and oriented-to) good or bad news” (ibid.:123). Since Pomerantz’s seminal work (1984), most literature on assessments has focused on the sequential organisation of assessment pairs in monolingual interaction (e.g. Golato 2002; Goodwin 1986; Heritage 2002; Heritage & Raymond 2005) and how they are jointly constructed and oriented to by participants to achieve shared experience (e.g. Goodwin & Goodwin 1992). In storytelling, for instance, assessments can be used to express support (e.g. empathy, encouragement, etc.) after some troubles-telling, thus aligning as a recipient, or they can be used after a story’s punch line to signal understanding and appreciation of preceding talk. These assessments are mainly produced as SPPs; thus they respond to the action(s) previously performed by the speaker. Another type of sequential organisation investigated in the literature focuses on assessments at the end of extended sequences, when working as closing-implicative devices (e.g. Goodwin & Goodwin 1987; Antaki et al. 2000:242).

To my knowledge, no studies of DI have relied on assessments as an analytical unit; I therefore draw on monolingual literature to describe their main characteristics. In this study, I deal with assessments which are embedded within utterances produced by
speakers to perform either a report or a recommendation; given the focus on the interpreters’ conduct and choices, in chapter 5, I explore how such utterances are rendered, and identify some patterns in my data. Using a CA-perspective, the first step in my analysis is identifying the assessments and the sequences in which they occur, building on the basic assumption that they are not inserted randomly in the flow of talk but they are positioned to perform specific actions and may initiate or contribute to new trajectories of talk. Assessments are therefore not investigated on their own, but the analysis takes into account the sequential environment in which they are produced, what main action(s) is (or are) performed via the utterances in which they are embedded (e.g. complaining, insulting, praising, etc.), their verbal and embodied displays, as well as the assessor’s identity and his/her relation with the assesseable. In particular, I focus on assessments which are produced by teachers to evaluate a reference or state of affairs while acting as a vehicle or format to accomplish other actions (Schegloff 2007:73-74), i.e. as structuring devices and interactional resource built within turns designed to perform specific actions, namely reporting and recommending. Hence the expression evaluative assessment (EA) that will be used to refer to them. Thirdly, assessments (and their sequential environment) provide a structural unit to pinpoint gaze with a view to investigating whether it is used as an interactional supplementary/alternative resource to verbal behaviour. Extracts 2.2 and 2.3 represent two instances taken from my data of utterances produced by teachers and embedding EAs (highlighted in bold):

[Extract 2.2 - PTM1b]

14 T2 “let’s just see then” (1.93) right so (.) I would say Ax is doing very very well in science (.) I know that his results aren’t as (.) high (.) as he’d like (xxx) ‘d like

[Extract 2.3 - PTM1m]

164 T3 I’ve been pleased with the way Ax has worked on it most of the time (.) ehm
165 sometimes (.) a little bit of a lack of focus

I also focus on another tendency displayed by interpreters, i.e. that of adding one or more EAs towards the end of their rendition. I shall refer to these assessments as rendition final position (RFP) assessments, and I will point out a series of functions that they seem to perform in interaction. Extracts 2.4, taken from my data, shows an instance of an utterance embedding RFP assessments produced by the interpreter (INT).
As explained by Goodwin & Goodwin (1992:165), regardless of their sequential positioning,

assessments show a view of the assessable as something perceived by an actor who both takes up a particular alignment to it and sees the assessable from a particular perspective, one that may be quite different from that of a co-participant who is simultaneously assessing the same event.

In other words, assessments show an analysis of the ongoing talk, they convey an evaluative orientation while eliciting responses from co-participants, which may or may not be produced. My particular interest lies in the assessment’s property to “claim and publicly display an interpretive perspective” (Mondada 2009:358), thus in their potential to affect alignment and affiliation in interaction and reveal the epistemic position of the person who utters them. Any time an evaluative act is performed, the party who has produced it claims his/her right to evaluate the matter addressed. In other words, all participants in unmediated interaction have “first-order rights” (Heritage & Raymond 2005) to know and describe their own experiences and thoughts. The production of assessments generally requires some kind of access to the state of affairs being assessed (Pomerantz 1984); therefore, assessments can be seen as a way of indexing epistemic rights and responsibilities related to knowledge and information within the talk. The way these are rendered by interpreters can shed light on the latter’s “relative rights to perform these evaluation” (Heritage & Raymond 2005:16), positioning and alignment.

In PTMs, teachers have the authority to evaluate what happens ‘in the classroom’, as they are the only ones who have access to the child in that specific environment. Thus, it may be argued that the embedded assessments produced by teachers within their multiunit turns constitute a claim of epistemic authority about the assessable or referent, i.e. the child. Building on Pilet-Shore (2001:56-57), the terms favourable and unfavourable will be used to “refer to utterances that reflect favorably or unfavorably on the student, involving some form of praise (though not necessarily
affirmatively constructed) or criticism, respectively”. Extracts from my data featuring favourable and unfavourable EAs produced by teachers will be provided in 4.2 (and sub-sections). Through assessments, teachers frame themselves by expressing their knowledge of and projecting their stance towards the assessable, thus displaying and eliciting, or failing to elicit, alignment and affiliation with the party addressed. In other words, assessments may be seen as devices whose analysis may provide an insight into the teacher’s personal stance towards the object being assessed. However, the teacher’s knowledge is limited, as it cannot be extended to what happens ‘at home’, i.e. where the mothers hold socioepistemic authority. As explained by Heritage & Raymond (2005:16):

The distribution of rights and responsibilities regarding what participants can accountably know, how they know it, whether they have rights to describe it, and in what terms is directly implicated in organized practices of speaking.

Shifting our focus to mediated interaction, assessments seem to be a particularly powerful notion to identify those moments within the flow of talk where the voice of the interpreter can be heard, where s/he displays epistemic authority to make an evaluation and what impact this has in terms of alignment and participatory framework. According to Heritage & Raymond (2005:19), in monolingual face-to-face interaction “participants work to manage the relationship between rights to assess and sequential position by manipulating the design of turns out of which their assessments are built”. In mediated interaction, the analysis of the extent to which the valence or intensity of assessments is modified in the reformulation from a source to a target language may provide insights into the interpreter’s positioning, stance and epistemic rights in the interaction. The issue of epistemic authority and rights is closely linked to the phenomenon, well known to dialogue interpreters, of ‘ownership’ of meaning. As explained by Mason (1999:154), “a particular lexical choice selected by the interpreter to relay one interlocutor’s meaning may be taken up or challenged by the other interlocutor as if it emanated not from the interpreter but from the other speaker”. In my analysis, I shall borrow some of the terminology used by Heritage & Raymond (2005) in their work on epistemic authority to describe the main features of the shifts produced by interpreters’ renditions and the impact that they seem to have on the management of interpersonal relationships in interaction. Through the production of assessments, participants construct shared
experience and position themselves with respect to one another; as explained by Lindström & Heinemann (2009:309), “one resource for managing these levels of positioning is the evaluative scale of assessments that allow a speaker to either up- or downgrade her assessments relative to those of her recipient” (see 5.3 and 5.4).

Having presented the tools for the investigation of the verbal dimension, the chapter now focuses on the non-verbal dimension, which is part and parcel of communication (e.g. Knapp et al. 1978:272). I first review studies which have explored this dimension from a variety of angles; as a second step, I focus on the integration of gaze in the analysis of verbal communication, with a view to selecting the notions and tools which are most suitable for the purposes of this project.

2.4 Exploring the non-verbal dimension of spoken interaction

Non-verbal behaviour is defined as a variety of communicative behaviours that do not carry linguistic content (Knapp & Hall 2010); this broad heading encompasses a number of different features such as facial expression, postural position, hand or head movements, smiling, head nods and eye gaze. A thorough definition of non-verbal communication is provided by Kendon (1981:3):

The term “non-verbal communication”, as it is currently employed, is most frequently used to refer to all the ways in which communication is effected between persons when in each other’s presence, by means other than words. It refers to the communicational functioning of bodily activities, gesture, facial expressions and orientation, posture and spacing, touch and smell, and of those aspects of utterance that can be considered apart from the referential content of what is said.

The state of physical co-presence of participants, the body, its disposition and display deserve particular attention in the analysis of interaction. Goffman expands on this point stating that talk is the basic medium of encounters, but it is not all; “the body is not simply used as an ‘adjunct’ to communication in situations of co-presence, it is the

17 It must be stressed that non-verbal communication includes not only kinesic and proxemic features (i.e. body language, gestures) but also other features which accompany verbal behaviour in conversation, for instance voice quality, pitch, loudness, timing and prosodic features, like intonation and stress. Exploring these signals is an extremely complex task and is beyond the scope of this thesis. For a thorough discussion of the pros and cons associated with this label and some alternatives, see, among others, Knapp et al. (1978).
anchor of the communicative skills which can be transferred to disembodied types of messages” (Giddens 1998:257). In this respect, Goodwin (2000:1491) talks about the need to investigate the public visibility of the body as a dynamically unfolding, interactively organised locus for the production and display of meaning and action.

As an expression, “non-verbal communication” came into use in the mid-fifties “encompassing interdisciplinary research in such fields as communication theory, experimental psychology, biology, social anthropology, animal behaviour, and linguistics, especially within the context of semiotic studies” (Bühler 1985:49). Non-verbal communication has traditionally been investigated in monolingual encounters by psychologists, sociologists and psycholinguists studying the relevance of non-verbal behaviour to interpersonal communication, by anthropologists who are interested in how these processes help integrate societies, and by ethnologists, extrapolating the results of animal studies to human behaviour.

In the present study, conversation, in the form of mediated dialogic exchanges, is taken to include linguistic as well as non-linguistic behaviour. This is in line with Kendon (1990:3):

If spoken language is to be accounted for, this must be in terms of its relationships with other modes of communication. The communicative functions so often assigned to language can be, and often are, accomplished by non-linguistic means and the reverse is also the case.

The element of mediation and the presence of an interpreter in face-to-face interaction add a further level of complexity to the whole picture; mediated encounters are communicative events with their unique and complex features, embedded within a process of verbal interaction, i.e. a “process of conversational exchanges between two primary speakers and through an interpreter” (Roy 2000:3). Even though non-verbal features have been recognised as part and parcel of human social interaction as well as important vectors of meaning, co-ordination and monitoring of activity in DI (e.g. Mason 2000; Wadensjö 2001), their sequential positioning in relation to the production of the ongoing flow of talk and the ways in which interpreters use them to complement and/or replace specific verbal features is still uncharted territory for IS. These issues have only relatively recently become an object of serious scientific enquiry in DI. To date, there is no well-established paradigm offering the theoretical notions and methodological tools necessary to account for both dimensions in interpreter-mediated
interaction. The difficulties involved in gathering authentic data in video-recorded form have no doubt hampered investigation of these issues in community settings. The inclusion of the non-verbal dimension in the present study seems therefore essential to address a long-felt and substantial gap in IS, and to provide a methodological foundation for future research.

To underpin the investigation of this dimension in a consistent and robust manner, I will draw on findings from previous research carried out in fields as diverse as psychology, anthropology, and structural linguistics. These will not be discussed in detail; rather, I shall restrict the focus to one non-verbal feature, i.e. gaze, which will be systematically added to the investigation of the participants’ verbal output. The analysis will produce insights into the role of participants’ gaze in mediated encounters, moving beyond the function of gaze in signalling attention and co-ordinating turns towards observation of the ways in which gaze both reflects and influences patterns of participation and the establishment of a direct relationship among participants.

2.4.1 Non-verbal communication in monolingual and mediated interaction: an overview

Although, as highlighted by Knapp & Hall (2010:18), non-verbal studies represent “mainly a post-World War II activity”, the history of empirical studies of non-verbal communication can be traced back to Charles Darwin, who was one of the most influential precursors. His study *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* (1872/1965) pioneered some methods of research and raised some theoretical issues (such as the questions of innateness versus social learning of non-verbal behaviour and of the communicative use of expressive signs) that remain controversial in the field but were validated by subsequent research (e.g. Ekman 1973). Because “non-verbal studies have never been the province of any particular discipline” (Knapp & Hall 2010:18), Darwin’s contemporaries from other fields, mainly German anthropological psychologists, showed equal interest in non-verbal behaviour, in particular in communicative systems like language, gestures and facial expressions. Their work, however, was much less groundbreaking, as it mostly consisted of compilations of anecdotal reports from ethnographic studies. Under the influence of Nazism, some extremist sections of German psychology started to promote an ideology of racial

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18 This historical overview of non-verbal communication studies mainly builds on Scherer & Ekman (1982), Knapp & Hall (2010), and Knapp (2006) (see also Duncan 1969; Ducan & Fiske 1977).
determinism, with a view to demonstrating the superiority of the Aryan race as manifest in behavioural patterns. This ideology was based on the deterministic view that people behaviour is predetermined and is not affected by contextual and environmental changes.

In the attempt to counteract this dominant trend, David Efron, a social scientist by training, started to collect evidence that would disprove the claims made by German psychologists. His classic study on the gestures of Jewish and Italian immigrants in New York (Efron 1941) represents a milestone in the field of non-verbal behaviour, both in terms of theoretical rigour and appropriate methodology. It combines naturalistic observation with experimental induction; the extensive use of videos and frame-by-frame analysis to document sequences of non-verbal behaviour has become crucial to the investigation of non-verbal behaviour in successive studies (e.g. Bateson & Mead 1942). Among his main contributions to research is the recognition of the role of culture in shaping our gesture and body movements, which are therefore not predetermined. Further methodological advances were the development of a detailed framework to classify non-verbal behaviour and of a rudimentary transcription system based on drawings to code iconically the salient aspects of body movement patterns and his reliance on observers to determine how particular gestures would be decoded. Efron’s focus was on body movements and the fact of disregarding facial expressions, which can contribute significantly to the interactional process, are among the limits of his research.

Studies carried out in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s led to remarkable developments in the field of non-verbal behaviour and resulted in approaches and methods to the study of non-verbal communication that have inspired more recent research. A classic piece of research published in this period is Ekman & Friesen’s (1969) paper on the origins, usage and coding of non-verbal behaviour. Other scholars focused on various aspects of non-verbal communication: for example, Exline (1963, 1974) on eye behaviour, Hess (1975) on pupil dilatation, Argyle (1975) and Argyle & Cook (1976) on bodily communication and mutual gaze, Goldman-Eisler (1967, 1972) on pauses and hesitations, Dittman (1972), Dittman & Llewelyn (1968, 1969), Kendon (1972) on the relationship between body movement and speech. These studies have the merit of recognising the interconnection between body movements and the flow of speech, and of laying the foundations for the strand of research that was fully developed in the 1980s, when it became clearer that non-verbal behaviour cannot be understood fully without linking it to the co-occurring verbal behaviour. Theories then started to
account for both dimensions more systematically, placing emphasis on interactive situations and shifting the focus from the individual to all participants’ behaviour (e.g. Kendon 1983; Streeck & Knapp 1992).

Generally speaking, the approaches taken to the study of non-verbal behaviour varied widely and led to a plethora of research strands, which mainly differed in terms of focus, namely the individual or the interaction. The former approach tends to place more emphasis on the biological and psychological determinants of non-verbal behaviour; the latter has been adopted mainly by sociologists and anthropologists and is more concerned with the nature of social interaction, and the sociocultural factors affecting interactive processes. Furthermore, studies focusing on the individual have traditionally been experimental and quantitative in nature, while research focused on interaction has privileged qualitative observation to describe moment-by-moment changes in behaviour in social interaction, and structural rather than quantitative description of short segments of interaction. By underlining these two different strands my aim is to point out that, despite their differences in philosophical tradition, scientific interest, perceived research priority, strategies and methods, these approaches ultimately complement each other, given the number of variables to be taken into account when exploring human social interaction.

My approach to the analysis of the verbal and non-verbal dimensions in mediated encounters follows the interaction-based line of thought, which has been strongly influenced by the “structural approach” to the understanding of interaction. This approach builds on input from several different research strands, including aspects of pragmatic social philosophy, interpersonal psychiatry, information theory and cybernetics, structural linguistics and ethology. Its name results from the attempt to provide an account of how, in terms of behaviour, occasions of interactions are organised. Despite the lack of a fully formalised methodology, the theoretical orientation informing the structural approach builds on specific assumptions about the interaction process, which are clearly outlined by Kendon (1990:15):

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19 Attempts at combining the two focuses were made, among others, by Ekman’s (1972) investigation of the impact of stress on the communicative behaviour of Japanese and American students, both individually and in social interactions, to ascertain the influence of social rules and situational determinants on communicative behaviour. Scherer (1980) focused on the individual and social situational variables determining the behaviour of public officials in dealing with clients, aiming to assess both the individual behaviour and the effect on the nature of the interaction as a whole.
Each interactional event, it is assumed, is not created de novo, but is fashioned as the participants draw from repertoires of behavioural practices (units of language, gesture, orientation, posture and spacing, and the like) that are widely shared and follow certain organizing principles that are commonly adhered to, within any given communication community. It maintains that communication in interaction is a continuous, multichannel process and it seeks to provide descriptions of the structural characteristics of the communication systems employed in interaction.

The work of the anthropologist Ray Birdwhistell (1952) is one of the groundbreaking studies which applies a structural approach to the field of non-verbal behaviour, building on the methods of structural linguistics. Behaviour (encompassing also non-verbal signals) is conceptualised as a rule-governed, holistic, hierarchically organised system; human non-verbal behaviour is described as organised in a culturally shared code with a design similar to that of language. Following Pike’s (1954/1967) attempt to extend the methodology of linguistic description to social behaviour other than speech, Birdwhistell extends the methods of descriptive linguistics to the study of body movements (kinesics) and space (proxemics). The underlying idea is that body motion can be ultimately framed as a series of patterns, a repertoire of behavioural practices (verbal units, gesture, posture and spacing, orientation and the like) combined according to shared rules comparable in status to the rules characterising morphology, syntax, phonetics, etc. Following in Efron’s footsteps, Birdwhistell carries out a microanalysis of human behaviour using slow motion and frame-by-frame analysis. His transcription system is considered one of the first attempts at comprehensive symbolic transcription of non-verbal behaviour. Although this system has mainly been used for illustrative purposes, its impact on the discussion about how to transcribe and analyse non-verbal behaviour cannot be denied.20

The most influential methodology associated with the structural study of interaction is context analysis (Scheflen 1963), a method of investigation developed to deal with the structure of complete interactional events. It originates in 1955 at the Center for Advanced Studies in the Behavioural Sciences in Palo Alto, California and is the result of collaboration among psychiatrists (e.g. Fromm-Reichmann, Brosin),

20 For a detailed description of Birdwhistell’s approach, see among others Kendon (1982) and Ekman (1957).
anthropologists (e.g. Bateson, Birdwhistell, Kroeber), linguists (e.g. Hockett), who gathered together to discuss the organisation of interaction in psychotherapy sessions and develop a rigorous and repeatable, but not pre-determined, method of observation to provide a robust basis for the explicit account of cues relied upon for intuitive clinical judgements. The main tenets of context analysis are the importance of investigating the behaviour of people in its context of occurrence and the idea that a given act (glance, posture shift, gesture) has no intrinsic meaning, but can only be understood in relation to the behaviour of other people in interaction. According to this approach, any aspects of behaviour, any forms of action manifested by participants in interaction must be taken into account as having a potential impact on the building of the communicative event. A gesture, particular gaze direction or head movement is not an end in itself, but it gains significance from the way it is analysed and responded to by recipients, thus leading to the conclusion that meaning is formed in the social interactional process. This last point is closely linked to the assumption that the interactive functioning of any item of behaviour displayed by people depends on the context in which it occurs. As Bateson (1979:15) puts it, “without context, words and actions have no meaning at all”.

Hence the need to describe the overall structure of interactional events, in order to account for the place that these acts occupy within it and to adopt an integrated approach to the investigation of interaction based on the assumption that no mode of communication is more salient than another, but that all aspects of the actions performed by participants are closely intertwined. These requirements were met by three different contributions from three different strands. Firstly, information theory and cybernetics, which, “when adapted to a framework for the understanding of interaction, led to a comprehensive conception of how behaviour could function as communication and […] to wholly new modes of observation and inquiry” (Kendon 1990:20). Secondly, the natural history approach proposed a detailed analysis of what can be observed in interaction in order to account for its natural orderliness, without imposing any pre-determined category system. The adoption of this approach led to the need to focus on samples of authentic interaction, which could be obtained thanks to the techniques provided by cinematography. Audio-video technology became a necessity of such research, and confronted researchers with the need to develop methods to conceptualise and transcribe the behavioural flow in all its complexity and to treat behavioural patterns as basic units of analysis. The development of the technology of video-recording paved the way for comprehensive naturalistic study of social interaction as multimodal interaction. Thirdly, some systematic methods for transcribing speech
and dealing with other relevant features of behaviour, such as posture, body motion and spacing, were developed within structural linguistics. Notwithstanding the different points of departure for the analysis, CA and context analysis seem to approach the phenomena of human interaction in a very similar way. Both approaches are the result of the collaborative application of ideas and notions from several different disciplines, and carry out a structural analysis of face-to-face interaction, even if they differ in terms of focus.

Even though CA has taken spoken components of interaction as a starting point for its analysis and been mainly concerned with issues linked to the organisation of talk, a line of studies aiming to integrate both the verbal and non-verbal dimensions can be identified. Relatively recently, CA has extended its methodology of close sequential analysis of talk-in-interaction to the organisation of bodily interaction in its full audio-visual detail; for instance, Goodwin (1981) investigates how participants employ gaze, bodily orientation and posture in the construction of speaker-recipient relationships within and between turns; Schegloff (1984a) explores the relationship between gestures and turns-at-talk. In addition to the sequential structures of (verbal) interaction, the simultaneity of different modalities of interaction (speech, gaze, gesture, facial expression, manipulation of objects, etc.), their fine-grained, interactive co-ordination, and their context-sensitive deployment have become a new focus of studies. A growing body of research has produced insights into practices of multimodal interaction in conversational, institutional, and media contexts, discovering new phenomena and shedding new light on classic topics of CA, such as the organisation of turn-taking and conversational openings and closings (e.g. Goodwin 2000; Mondada 2006a; Stivers & Sidnell 2005; Streeck et al. 2011). This multimodal approach to the analysis of talk has, however, mainly concerned monolingual interaction; to date, multimodality in interpreter-mediated interaction has received scant attention, as I will show in the second half of this section.

In line with the rule-oriented nature of CA, the structural approach treats the occurrence of systemic patterns of behaviour as having a predictable structure and organisation (Scheflen 1973); participants recognise and orient to them, and perceive the non-occurrence of some expected element as a noticed event, a “faux pas” or a “brick [that] was dropped” (Kendon 1990:1-2). According to Kendon (ibid.:4):
An individual, when engaged in face-to-face interaction, could be regarded as if engaged in a skilled performance, analogous to the way in which the driver of a car or the pilot of an airplane must continuously organize his behaviour so that it is patterned to meet the complex demands of the situation and still keep the car on the road or the place on course.

This is also consistent with recent trends in the field of IS, which place more emphasis on the process rather than on the product of interpreting, i.e. on understanding the dynamics of mediated events as they unfold.

Another feature shared by both context analysis and CA is the mostly micro-analytic work they carry out, i.e. the focus is on very limited strips of behaviour recorded within encounters. Exceptions can nevertheless be found; in his study, Scheflen conducts a comparative analysis of psychotherapy sessions, which leads him to consider the organisation of the event as a whole, alongside the details of interaction within the event. Likewise, in his detailed study of counselling interviews, Erickson (1975, 1979) puts emphasis on what he calls the “phasic structure” of such events; he shows ways in which participants keep one another oriented to a given phase of the event and deploys a variety of means (both linguistic and kinesics, posture and orientation included) to move from one phase to the other. In his study, Heath (1986) attempts to examine the entire structure of his encounters, from beginning to end, focusing on its different stages, thus enlarging the focus of traditional CA, which has always prioritised the local organisation of talk. Both Scheflen and Heath recognise that sequences of turns-at-talk take place within the frame of an encounter, whose structure above the level of turns must be taken into account. This is particularly true for institutional talk where, despite the higher or lower level of formality, there is an agenda which seems to govern the structure and timing of what happens in interaction. Their notion of phase and stage are similar to that of sequence as defined in the present study, where the analysis concentrates not only on micro-portions of interaction, but also on longer stretches of talk implementing recurring courses of actions which seems typical of the encounters analysed.

The approaches to the studies of non-verbal communication presented so far provide a backdrop which sustains the theoretical framework applied to mediated interaction, given the lack of well-established research design encompassing both dimensions in IS. Merging these approaches seems therefore to result in a solid and
sound conceptual design for a deeper investigation of mediated interaction. As highlighted above, IS has largely neglected the impact and importance of non-verbal communication. Early IS encompassing the analysis of the non-verbal dimension have explored the impact of non-verbal cues on the interpreter’s performance, mainly in conference (simultaneous) interpreting settings. Although it is acknowledged that interpreters receive inputs from various channels, namely auditory and visual, only the former has traditionally been the object of attention. Two early papers from Bühler (1980, 1985) focus on the significance of non-verbal communication for quality assessment in simultaneous interpreting, and on the importance for interpreters to receive signals through the visual channel. One important aspect that can be retained from Bühler’s study and which is, in turn, taken from research on non-verbal communication in unmediated interactions, is the use of body movements cues as turn-taking cues; in particular, changes in gaze direction (e.g. Kendon 1981:22; Beattie 1981:297ff), and their distinction into turn-initiation and turn-termination cues (De Long 1981:251ff) are relevant also for the investigation of mediated face-to-face interaction.

The most comprehensive semiotic account of interpreting is provided by Fernando Poyatos (1993; see also 1987, 1997a, 1997b), a leading expert in the field of non-verbal communication studies who investigates “the broad range of semiotic phenomena extending between the verbal and the situational dimension” (Pöchhacker & Shlesinger 2002:206). He applies his conceptual framework to the manifestations of non-verbal features in the communicative activity of interpreting, extending his investigation to other modes of interpreting (consecutive, liaison, face-to-face interactions in institutional settings). His work has influenced a number of later contributions, mostly on quality in conference interpreting, a major topic of research in IS; among others, Ahren’s (2002, 2004) study on non-verbal indicators in simultaneous interpreting, Collados Ais’ (1998) PhD thesis on non-verbal communication in simultaneous interpreting and Bacigalupe’s (1999) work on the impact of visual contact on simultaneous interpreters’ performance.

Among the major limitations of previous studies is the lack of an interactionist approach to the analysis of data, and the methodologies adopted, which are mostly reliant on interviews and questionnaires (e.g. Bühler 1980, 1985) rather than on a close and combined analysis of videos and transcripts. This can be justified by the fact that most of the research was focused on conference interpreting, and particularly restricted to the simultaneous mode, where the interactional dimension is very limited, given its
overall monologic format. Shifting the focus to the non-verbal behaviour displayed by
the interpreter, it may be argued that kinesic and proxemic features “are only of
marginal importance in simultaneous interpreting, since the interpreter is not usually
observed, and does not have recourse to body language as a communicative device”
(Shlesinger 1998:6). This is not the case in the face-to-face mode of DI, in which the
dimension of non-verbal communication is of greater significance. For instance, in
terms of gaze, each participant can potentially establish eye contact with any other
participant, unless they are instructed otherwise; avoidance or withdrawal of eye contact
will itself convey some meaning. As highlighted by Wadensjö (2004:108):

A cornerstone in a dialogical theoretical framework is the
embodiment of spoken language. Applied to studies of dialogue
interpreting this means that there is a need to highlight participants’
bodily orientation, gestures and gaze.

Studies adopting a discourse or conversation analytic approach to mediated face-to-face
encounters have, however, mainly focused on transcripts of verbal output, without
integrating a systematic encoding and analysis of non-verbal features, unless in the form
of bracketed comments when they are particularly relevant to the understanding of the
whole piece of interaction (e.g. to explain some unclear stretches of audio input or to
give a rough idea of what happens among participants when silence falls). This may be
due to several different reasons. Firstly, there can be difficulties in securing video-
recorded data of authentic mediated face-to-face interaction, often due to the delicate
and strictly confidential nature of these encounters. Secondly, there are problems posed
by the lack of a systematic reasoned model explaining how non-verbal features can be
encoded consistently in a transcript and, consequently, how they can be taken into
account in the analysis of data. According to Shlesinger (1998:3), “while transcription,
however laborious, can provide us with a representation of the interpreter’s linguistic
output, its failure to reflect the concomitant paralinguistic\textsuperscript{21} dimensions is a major

\textsuperscript{21}The investigation of what falls under the heading of “paralinguistic behaviour” or “paralanguage” is
central to the study of conversation. As underlined by Abercrombie (1968:59), “paralinguistic phenomena
are non-linguistic elements in conversation. They occur alongside spoken language, interact with it, and
produce together with it a total system of communication. They are not necessarily continuously
simultaneous with spoken words. They may also be interspersed among them, or precede them, or follow
them; but they are always integrated into a conversation considered as a complete linguistic inter-action”.
Non-verbal communication includes not only kinesic and proxemic features (i.e. body language, gestures)
but also other features which accompany verbal behaviour in conversation, for instance voice quality,
drawback”. Even though no aspect of non-verbal communication should be disregarded in the analysis of interaction, accounting for all verbal and non-verbal features characterising communicative events would be extremely complex and cumbersome; the whole transcription process would be time-consuming and transcripts would probably reach a level of detail that would hinder their readability and usefulness for the researcher.

Linking observations of the interpreters’ and other participants’ verbal behaviour to some specific non-verbal features could, however, provide new insights into the dynamics of the challenging activity of DI. Thirdly, interpreter-mediated encounters are, by definition, intercultural events which bring together participants from different socio-linguistic backgrounds. Hence the difficulty of accounting for non-verbal behaviour in its multiple manifestations, given its close ties with individual cultures and habits; this represents a further level of complexity vis-à-vis monolingual interaction, where a certain degree of mutual knowledge and understanding of each others’ non-verbal behaviour can be assumed.

The limited set of studies which have attempted to integrate some aspects of non-verbal communication into the analysis of DI include Apfelbaum (1998) on the rhythmic synchronisation of interpreter-mediated interaction based on the interpreter’s projection of next turns; Roy (2000) on sign language interpreting; Ticca (2008, 2010) on the impact of non-verbal factors on the behaviour of ad hoc interpreters; Wadensjö (2001) on interpreters’ proxemics in interpreter-mediated psychotherapeutic encounters; Bot (2005) and Mason (forthcoming), who focus in particular on how gaze patterns affect the participatory framework in mediated therapeutical encounters and asylum seekers’ interview respectively. These last two studies will be expanded upon in this thesis, as they represent, to my knowledge, the only research in DI that has integrated gaze in its analysis (see 4.3). A very recent study which adopts a multimodal account of interpreter-mediated interaction has been carried out by Pasquandrea (2011), who applies a multimodal approach to the analysis of mediated doctor-patient interaction. Taking a CA-based approach, he shows the extent to which doctors rely on multimodality and discusses the impact on the overall organisation of the mediated encounters. Despite the same interactionist approach adopted, which accounts for the behaviour of all the participants in interaction, my study differs from Pasquandrea’s in pitch, loudness, timing and prosodic features like intonation and stress. There is scope for future studies of mediated communication to focus on one or more of these features.
that it is centred on the interpreters and aims to investigate their changing positioning in interaction.

This section, which is by no means exhaustive, has presented some major lines of enquiry within the field of non-verbal communication, placing particular emphasis on their development over time and on the theoretical and methodological framework adopted in monolingual and mediated interaction respectively. This is relevant to the present study, whose most innovative aspect is the integration of the non-verbal dimension to the investigation of verbal, mediated interaction. In particular, this section has paved the way for a more thorough understanding of the actual object of analysis, i.e. gaze in interaction; the next section will restrict the scope to this pervasive feature of conversational practice.

2.4.2 The study of gaze in face-to-face interaction

The importance of gaze as an interactional practice in human communication has been widely acknowledged, even though this specific non-verbal feature has received relatively little attention over the past twenty years. As far as terminology is concerned, various labels have been used to refer to the same phenomenon: visual interaction (e.g. Exline 1963; Simmel 1921), looking behaviour (e.g. Cline 1967; Gibson & Pick 1963), visual behaviour (e.g. Exline et al. 1965), eye signals (e.g. Ellgring & von Cranach 1972), gaze (e.g. Argyle & Cook 1976; Argyle & Ingham 1973), gaze direction (e.g. Nielsen 1964; Kendon 1967; Vine 1971), stare (e.g. Ellsworth et al. 1972), direct gaze (e.g. Ellsworth 1975). The term mutual gaze (e.g. Argyle & Cook 1976; Argyle & Ingham 1973), i.e. simultaneously exchanged looks between two people, has also been referred to as mutual glance (e.g. Simmel 1921), mutual visual interaction (e.g. Exline 1963), looking into the line of regard (e.g. Lambert & Lambert 1964), eye contact (e.g. Argyle & Dean 1965).

Early studies on gaze in social interaction (mainly in American English or other European languages) carried out by social psychologists and researchers in kinesics during the 1960s and 1970s have pointed out that participants spend a considerable amount of time looking at each other’s face, and these moments play a crucial role in the unfolding of the interaction itself (e.g. Argyle & Cook 1976; Argyle & Dean 1965; Argyle & Graham 1976; Exline 1963; Goodwin 1981; Gullberg 2003; Gullberg & Holmqvist 2006; Kendon 1967). Strong empirical demonstration of the relevance of gaze to face-to-face communication and of the impact of the eyes directed towards or
away from others, which may signal interpersonal visual (lack of) attention and interest, is provided in particular by the work of Kendon (1967), who carried out a detailed investigation of gaze structure, Goffman (1963, 1967), Argyle & Cook (1976), Scheflen (1974), Exline (1974), and Goodwin (1980).

Given the lack of studies in IS linking gaze performance to interpreters’ (and participants’) verbal output and the call for further empirical research on how gaze is used in different settings, different cultures, different participant roles and in performing different actions (e.g. Rossano et al. 2009), I will build my analysis on those studies which have focused on gaze in monolingual (dyadic and multiparty) interaction, and which have adopted a CA-led approach to its investigation (e.g. Goodwin 1981; Kendon 1990; Rossano 2012). As explained by Rossano (in press), these studies have mainly focused on three dimensions, namely the relationship between gaze and the participatory framework, the regulatory function of gaze and its role in action formation. The first two dimensions are particularly relevant to this research; studies focusing on those provide interesting methods and findings which can be extended to and compared with mediated interaction. As a second step, I will introduce the few studies that have integrated gaze in the analysis of DI. Due to the qualitative nature of this research, the goal of my analysis is not to discover universally valid patterns of behaviour, rather to establish a method of enquiry that combines the analysis of two crucial dimensions which can no longer be treated separately.

Goodwin and Kendon are among the scholars who provide the most detailed account of gaze-pattern unfolding over the course of a turn and in relation to participants’ roles (i.e. speaker and hearer). According to Goodwin (1981:31-32) “a speaker first looks away at the beginning of his turn but turns his gaze steadily towards the person he addresses as the completion of the turn approaches. The hearer, at that point, looks away from the speaker thus initiating his own turn”. Kendon (1967) accounts for the speaker’s looking away at turn beginning in terms of cognitive planning, i.e. the speaker is formulating what he or she is about to say. Kendon (1990) also notices that while hearers tend to give speakers long looks interrupted by brief glances away, the latter alternate look towards and look away from the recipient of approximately equal length. Relying on a case-by-case analysis of data, supported by quantification in a small corpus, Goodwin proposes two ‘rules’ (1980: 275, 287, 1981:57) which, like the ones put forward for the organisation of turn-taking in conversation, are not prescriptive but based on empirical observation and account for participants’ gaze behaviour:
(1) A speaker should obtain the gaze of his recipient during the course of a turn at talk.
(2) A recipient should be gazing at the speaker when the speaker is gazing at the hearer.

Through these rules, Goodwin claims that participants’ gaze behaviour is interrelated rather than interdependent, and suggests a system of norms to which participants are oriented during turns-at-talk.

Among the corollaries stemming from these two rules is the fact that the speaker is expected to gaze only at a gazing hearer, while the hearer may gaze both as a gazing and non-gazing speaker. This observation seems to establish a preferred sequencing for the gaze of the parties at turn beginning, with the hearer expected to bring his gaze to the speaker before the speaker brings his gaze to the hearer (if the speaker’s gaze is brought to the recipient before the recipient has begun to gaze at the speaker a violation of rule 2 occurs). Sequencing in the opposite order produces a situation where the speaker is gazing at a non-gazing hearer; this implication of the rule is consistent with Kendon’s (1967:33) finding that a speaker looks away at the beginning of his utterance, while the hearer normally gazes towards the speaker. A situation where at the beginning of a turn no hearer is looking at the speaker is allowed; however, to satisfy the rules, the hearer’s gaze should be brought to the speaker early in the turn and the speaker should avoid looking at the hearer until the turn is well underway. If the recipient is not looking at the speaker, the latter has remedial resources (e.g. phrasal breaks, pauses, restarting the turn) to solicit and obtain the recipient’s gaze. Contrary to previous findings, Rossano’s study (2012), which is based on the investigation of the use of gaze during questions in dyadic interaction, shows that in a situation where participants tend to look at objects (e.g. pictures) relevant for the task at hand, the speaker nonetheless tends to look at the addressee while asking a question but the addressee does not necessarily look back. This does not entail the need for remedial action (e.g. cut-off, pauses, restarts, sound stretches) to get the recipient gaze, thus suggesting that a situation is possible where there are questions during which none of the participants looks at the other.

Another observation is that the speaker should gaze only at a gazing recipient but does not have to gaze at that party continuously, while a recipient can gaze either at a gazing or a non-gazing speaker but should be gazing at the speaker (frequently) whenever s/he is being gazed at by the speaker (the speaker is under no such obligation – the speaker’s gaze towards the hearer can be intermittent). Such a distribution of rights to look at the other is consistent with findings made by a number of different
investigators to the effect that hearers gaze at speakers more than speakers gaze at hearers (e.g. Goodwin 1981:32; Nielsen 1964; Kendon 1967:26; Argyle 1969:107; Exline 1974:74; Allen & Guy 1974:139-140). For the interaction to unfold smoothly, what is ultimately needed is a trade-off between too much gaze (which may produce anxiety) and too little (which may communicate detachment or lack of interest). Direct examination of conversation has revealed that hearers do not continuously look at speakers; rather, during the course of a turn, the hearer will gaze away from, as well as towards, the speaker of the moment. Given the presence of both alternatives within the turn, it seems difficult to establish the special importance of either (e.g. Sacks 1963, Schegloff 1972, Schegloff & Sacks 1973: 290, Garfinkel 1967). If the speaker does not gaze at the hearer anywhere in the turn, the relevance of the recipient’s gaze towards the speaker is nowhere established. The rule thus provides for the possibility of turns in which gaze between the parties does not occur. Turns of this type are found within conversation, though typically in particular sequential environments, for instance during periods of disengagement.

Among the most important studies which have focused on gaze behaviour as a display of attention and (dis)engagement in social interaction is Goodwin’s (1981). For instance, looking away is a noticeable and potentially sanctionable event, given that it displays diminished engagement in the participatory framework; however, looking away while engaging in a competing activity appears to be a less sanctionable event. Rossano (2006a, 2012) further refines these claims by stating that the actual freedom of participants to remove their gaze from speakers seems to be related to the ongoing course of action and that gaze withdrawal may have different imports depending on the sequential positioning where it happens.

Further research on the relationship between gaze and participatory framework has suggested that gaze can also indicate special states of recipiency (e.g. Heath 1984, 1986; Robinson 1998); in particular, recent work by Rossano (2006a, 2012) has shown that gaze behaviour seems to vary according to the social actions in which participants are engaged, namely extended turns vs turn-by-turn talk. In this respect, gaze to the speaker can be used to signal the recipient’s recognition that the latter is launching on an extended turn at talk (as in a story), while it may not be necessary in turn-by-turn talk (as in question-answer sequences); gaze away from the other participant can also be used to signal the closing of larger units, i.e. that the recipient recognises that a multi-turn sequence is completed.
Another important theoretical and methodological question regards the units in which the analysis of gaze (and non-verbal behaviour in general) is to be conducted. Early research on spontaneous monolingual conversation has mainly related gaze to turns-at-talk, thus highlighting its regulatory and monitoring functions, i.e. how gaze affects and coordinates turn exchange in interaction and its role as a display of attention, (dis)engagement and recipiency. In his pioneering study, Kendon (1967:24) conceives gaze direction “both as an act of perception by which one interactant can monitor the behaviour of the other, and as an expressive sign and regulatory signal by which he may influence the behaviour of the other”. Hence also the expressive function of gaze, i.e. gaze used to signal that the channel of communication is open, to seek feedback, establish and recognise social relationships, convey affiliation or threat (e.g. Argyle & Cook 1976). As explained by Argyle & Cook (ibid.:74): “we can express hostility by looking away when the usual thing would be to look at the other”.

For the purpose of this study, I will mainly focus on the regulatory and monitoring functions of gaze, which have long been recognised and explored by, mainly, research on Indo-European languages and in Western societies. Valuable empirical evidence of spontaneous gaze behaviour is presented in the early work by, among others, Argyle & Cook (1976), Argyle & Dean (1965), Kendon (1967), Duncan & Fiske (1977), Goodwin (1980). For instance, Argyle & Cook (1976:121) suggest that “glances are used by listeners to indicate continued attention and willingness to listen. Aversion of gaze means lack of interest or disapproval”. According to Kendon (1967), Duncan (1975), Duncan et al. (1974, 1977), speakers’ gaze can function as a turn-yielding cue, i.e. to signal that they are ready to relinquish the floor (as suggested by the fact explained above that speakers tend to gaze away at the beginning of a turn and then to move their gaze towards the hearer towards turn completion).

However, later studies (e.g. Beattie 1978, 1979; De Ruiter 2005) have highlighted that no immediate, systematic correlation seems to exist between gaze and turn-taking. For instance, Beattie (1978, 1979) suggests that looking away from the hearer at turn beginning and gazing at the hearer towards turn completion may simply be related to variations in cognitive load, rather than to the regulatory function of gaze. Recent, extensive work conducted by Rossano (2005, 2006b, 2012) on sequential analysis of Italian dyadic interactions claims that gaze is not organised primarily by reference to turns-at-talk, but around larger structures, such as sequences of talk and the development of courses of action. Most of the shifts and variations in gaze direction seem to occur at the beginning or at a possible completion of these structures,
accomplished through one or more sequences of talk, as well as in close proximity to self-repair and speech disfluencies. This approach is particularly relevant to the present study as it shows that gaze can be better understood in terms of sequential analysis of actions, rather than directly in terms of the turn-taking apparatus or displays of engagement, recipiency and attentiveness as claimed by earlier research. Rossano’s work is also relevant as it focuses on interactions carried out in Italian, which is one of the languages used in the encounters recorded; while, as highlighted above, most CA literature focuses on monolingual interactions in English, Rossano’s study sheds light on some specificities of analysing Italian interaction within a CA framework.

The regulatory function of gaze has also been investigated from two more standpoints. Firstly, it has been explored in terms of turns allocation in multiparty interaction, i.e. as a way of addressing participants in interaction. As explained by Goodwin (1979: 99) “the gaze of a speaker should locate the party being gazed at as an addressee of his utterance”, and the gaze of a hearer in return can affect the construction of that very same utterance. By their patterns of gaze and other non-verbal signals, all participants position themselves and others within the exchange. Gaze aversion, for example, may constitute an important means of signalling neutrality or detachment on the part of the speaker, while avoidance of mutual gaze may signify indifference or lack of due consideration on behalf of one of the primary parties. In this way, the interplay of patterns of gaze seems to be closely bound up with role and status and, therefore, with issues of identity and power.

Secondly, research (e.g. Goodwin & Goodwin 1986; Bavelas 2002; Rossano 2010; Stivers et al. 2009; Stivers & Rossano 2010) has suggested that gaze can be used not only as a resource to regulate turn-taking or monitor another participants’ behaviour, but also as a resource to mobilise response from recipients. A crucial role in this respect is also played by the accompanying facial expression, posture and gesture. Relevant to this study is Bavelas et al. (2002:576-577), who found that, in their data, “the listener tended to respond when the speaker looked at her, and the speaker tended to look away soon after the listener responded. Together, speakers and listeners created and used the gaze window [mutual gaze] to coordinate their actions”. The term “gaze window” describes a situation in which mutual gaze is established between speaker and hearer; this specific configuration is characterised by the fact that the speaker’s gaze mobilizes a response, and that the hearer’s response (mainly in the form of an acknowledgement token or continuer – see Goodwin 1986, Schegloff 1982) seems to lead to speaker’s gaze withdrawal. The gaze window configuration differs from the gaze patterns
described by previous literature, where a speaker gazing at a hearer towards the completion of his/her turn signals his/her readiness to relinquish the floor. Conversely, this configuration does not affect turn transition, as no alternation between speaker and hearer occurs.

Another finding which is relevant to the purpose of this study is taken from Stivers & Rossano (2010), who claim that when speaker’s gaze is addressed to a hearer while producing an assessment, the latter tends to respond to it, while the lack of a response occurs more frequently when the initial assessment is uttered without the speaker gazing at the hearer or deploying any other resource to mobilise a response. Further evidence in support of the claim that speaker gaze may work as a response-mobilising device is provided by Rossano’s (2010) work, which shows that not only is speaker gaze to a recipient used to coordinate the development and closure of sequences and courses of action, but it can also serve as a way of putting pressure on the latter so that s/he provides feedback devoid of turn-transition function (see also Kendon 1967; Bavelas, Coates & Johnson 2002) or to pursue a response which is perceived as missing (see also Rossano 2006b, 2009).

Two basic assumptions stemming from the research presented so far can also be extended to mediated interactions. Firstly, the direction of gaze plays a crucial role in the initiation and maintenance of social encounters, and in the co-construction of meaning and participation frameworks. As Kendon (1990:5) puts it, “how the display of the direction of visual attention is coordinated in relation to who is speaking in a conversation may play an important role in the process by which utterance coordination in conversation is achieved”. Secondly, through mutually held gaze, individuals commonly establish their openness to another’s communication. According to Goodwin (1981:30):

Gaze is not simply a means of obtaining information, the receiving end of a communication system, but is itself a social event (…) within conversation, gaze of the participants towards each other is constrained by the social character of gaze and this constraint, rather than purely informational, provides for its organization and meaningfulness within the turn.
Studies carried out in monolingual interaction have looked at evidence that speakers in natural conversation have the capacity to modify the emerging meaning of their utterance as they are producing it according to the characteristics of their current recipient (Goodwin 1979). The conjunction between a recognisable event in the utterance of the speaker and the place where the recipient’s gaze reaches the speaker is in line with the possibility that the hearer’s gaze, or the lack of it, may affect the speaker’s behaviour during the construction of the utterance (Goodwin 1980).

Very little research has been carried out so far specifically into gaze in DI. In mediated face-to-face encounters, whether the parties should gaze at each other or at the interpreter while speaking and/or listening to the interpreter rendition is still a controversial issue. There are some specific settings (e.g. medical) where primary parties are instructed or choose to look at each other and not at the interpreter during the interaction (e.g. Bot 2005). To this end, the interpreter is often asked to sit behind one party or the other. These instructions seem to stem directly from the idea of interpreters as non-persons, invisible entities. Research has progressed, and this study embraces the idea that interpreters are primary parties in interaction, who take different positionings and may influence the unfolding of the communicative event. Given their mediated nature, the interactions analysed are also instances of multiparty conversation, thus they are more complex to analyse than dyadic ones in terms of next-speaker selection and of the establishment of who is being addressed by the current speaker.

The first analysis of gaze behaviour in mediated interaction is Ranier Lang’s (1978) study about the importance of gaze for signalling involvement or exclusion. He describes the video-recording of court cases in Papua New Guinea where an interpreter translated consecutively; in particular, he focuses on a five minute sequence, observing mainly the gaze, posture and gesture patterns of each participant. Among the findings from this research is that seating arrangements, which to an extent predetermine and influence the range of gaze in DI encounters, vary widely even in courtrooms; Lang also observes that participants tend to use averted or directed gaze and gestures, such as hands outstretched, in a systematic way, as important signalling devices for showing attention and for the distribution of turns at talk. Another specific finding is that the interpreter’s preference for averted gaze, intended to signal neutrality or detachment, may interfere with smooth turn taking in that important cues may be missed.

Quite a considerable gap followed Lang’s pioneering attempt at accounting for non-verbal features in mediated interaction, until Wadensjö (2001), which, as pointed out by Pöchhacker (2004:150), is one of the few corpus-based studies on non-verbal
communication in DI. Her study explores the co-construction of interactive spoken discourse focusing on the interpreter’s spatial position and its impact on gaze behaviour in therapeutic interviews. In particular, it shows that something apparently as simple as seating arrangements and the resulting sightlines and opportunities for eye contact may have considerable impact on the experience of the participants and on the outcome of the exchange. The inclusion of the interpreter within a “shared communicative radius” (Wadensjö 2001:83) with the other participants appears to have a positive impact on the quality of the experience for various reasons. For instance, it makes the interpreter’s coordination work available to all participants and it allows him/her, by verbal and non-verbal means, to distinguish between the “speaking self” and the “meaning other” (Wadensjö 1998). The seating configuration, which is often the result of casual distribution, seems to emerge as a crucial factor for the success of the interaction.

A third study that has accounted for gaze in DI is Bot’s (2005) analysis of the influence of the interpreter on psychotherapeutic sessions with traumatised asylum seekers. This study focuses on a particularly sensitive and unexplored setting, where “the choice of words, tenses and mood each influence the effect of the intervention” (ibid.:5). Her research is particularly relevant as the theoretical perspective adopted echoes the emerging trend in the field of DI of conceptualising all individuals as participants in the co-construction of the communicative context (e.g. Wadensjö 1998; Angelelli 2004), which is one of the underlying assumptions of the present study as well. To carry out the analysis of several video-recorded encounters, Bot adopts a mixed methods approach, which encompasses, among other, interviews and concept maps; a CA-based approach is applied to investigate the coordination of turn-taking. By examining verbal (e.g. overlapping talk and pauses) and non-verbal (e.g. gaze and gestures) behaviours, Bot demonstrates that participants in her data have different patterns of turn-taking behaviour than individuals in monolingual interactions (for a more accurate discussion of gaze dynamics in her data, see 4.3). She also concludes that gazing at a non-speaking patient could be perceived as intrusive, given that this is not what normally happens in monolingual interaction, and provides some evidence of gesture and gaze used to facilitate turn-taking (e.g. hands-in-lap position, that is to say the absence of hand gesture, which coincided in one session with turn transfer).

Last but not least, Mason (forthcoming) has studied the use of gaze in mediated immigration hearings. In particular, he focuses on the gaze patterns displayed by five immigration officers and five interpreters, due to the fact that asylum seekers were not shown in the video-recordings. His study confirms the importance of gaze shift in turn
management, finding that, in the data analysed, turns may be allocated by the interpreter’s head movement alone and that the immigration officer may seek to encourage the interpreter to take a turn by shifting gaze from the asylum seeker to the interpreter. Gestures, nods and verbal prompts may assist this process. The study also provides additional evidence of the regulatory and monitoring functions of gaze that have long been recognised as typical in spontaneous gaze behaviour (for a comparison of Mason’s, Bot’s and my findings in relation to gaze patterns, see 4.3). Furthermore, an important aspect of Mason’s study is that it suggests that the expressive function of gaze, involving the signalling of affiliation or threat, may also be at work in interpreter-mediated encounters.

The studies mentioned above, despite being replicable, have not led to any larger-scale investigations. They have, however, opened up a rich seam for further research and call for further investigation to be carried out. As underlined by Pöchhacker & Shlesinger (2002:207), the complex role of visual cues is surely one of the most relevant points of interface between IS research and a broadly semiotic approach to communication studies. The same holds true, of course, for the posture and position of spoken-language interpreters in face-to-face interactions. (…) – another object of study which remains open for empirical investigation.

2.5 Conclusions

This chapter has established an analytical framework that accounts for specific features of two closely interconnected dimensions, i.e. verbal and non-verbal communication. Linking them together is essential to build a robust conceptual framework that may help fine-tune research in the field of DI. In particular, the chapter identifies and defines a set of tools, in the form of interactional devices and practices, which will help address the research questions posed by this study.

The first part of this chapter defines the concepts used to carry out the analysis of the verbal component of the interaction, and explains how they relate to each other and how they can provide a structural description of something as ephemeral, volatile and transient as spoken interaction. These notions are turns, actions, sequences and evaluative assessments; they will help answer particularly the first two research questions, namely what actions are performed by evaluative assessments and what
tendencies can be identified in the way interpreters handle utterances embedding evaluative assessments. The second part of the chapter focuses on non-verbal communication and explains how gaze can be a productive feature to gain further insights into the dynamics of mediated interaction. This is particularly relevant to answer the third research question, which asks how gaze is used as an interactional resource together with verbal behaviour when producing such sequences. The fourth and fifth research questions draw on all the notions defined here, as they respectively ask how positioning is realised verbally and non-verbally and what is the interactional impact of such shifting positioning.

Interpreting data can be investigated from different angles and through different lenses according to the aspects that the researcher is interested in exploring. Through a CA lens, participation is explored as a temporally unfolding process through which separate parties demonstrate to each other their ongoing understanding of the events they are engaged in by building actions, through their verbal and non-verbal behaviour, that contribute to the progression of these very same events. Particular emphasis is placed on the resources used by participants to project upcoming events so that coordinated actions can be accomplished. This approach does not construct typologies of different kinds of participants; ‘speaker’ and ‘hearer’ are no longer treated as structural categories, but the hearer is somebody who displays detailed analysis of, and stance towards, the unfolding structure of the talk in progress through verbal and embodied displays; the speaker takes these displays into account as s/he organises his/her own actions. The triadic nature of the encounter and the interactionist approach adopted lead to the need to reconsider the tasks and functions of all participants in interaction and account for the presence of a third party, i.e. the interpreter, as a fully ratified participant, producing and responding to ongoing actions on a moment-by-moment basis. In this study, this aspect will be explored by focusing on the interpreter’s changing positioning, which becomes evident through the relationship between speech and non-verbal behaviour.

Closely linked to this point is the impact that interpreters’ moves may have on the participatory framework. CA and studies on non-verbal communication provide a framework of systematic procedures to see whether, and if so how, mutual orientation between speaker and hearer is achieved and/or restored, and how it seems to be constructed by taking into account both vocal and non-vocal actions of all the participants in interaction. The terms engagement and inclusion, disengagement and exclusion will be used to refer respectively to a state of orientation and non-orientation
of one party towards another. Engagement and inclusion, like disengagement and exclusion, are built through the ongoing process of interaction, where each party’s body and gaze display an analysis of what the other is doing. In particular, the terms inclusion and exclusion will be used to identify the consequences of another participant’s behaviour on participation, while engagement and disengagement focus more on the participant’s self. According to Goodwin (1981:96, 124-125):

Participants utilize both their bodies and a variety of vocal phenomena to show each other the type of attention they are giving to the events of the moment, and, reciprocally, the type of orientation they expect from others. […] [Engagement displays] permit those present to display to each other not just speakership and hearership but differentiated attention to, and participation in, the talk of the moment.

There are a range of engagement possibilities to manifest coparticipation in different ways and which can influence the courses of action. Displays of disengagement characteristically occur during lapses in conversation; they treat “someone who is physically present as in a certain sense not relevantly present, that is not the subject of observation or a locus for joint, collaborative activity” (Goodwin 1981:96). Disengagement can also be intended as self-exclusion; during periods of disengagement participants are explicitly displaying lack of orientation towards each other and non participation in collaborative activities such as talk. However, there is a possibility that such official displays of non-collaboration are organised interactively and sustained collaboratively by the careful, systematic work of participants who maintain an ongoing monitoring of each other and an orientation towards the possibility or relevant changes in their mutual participation status.

Processes of reengagement do not operate in a vacuum but are built upon the type of analysis in which participants are engaged during disengagement, even though the boundary between full engagement and mutual disengagement is not always clear-cut (Goodwin 1981). Participants are afforded a space within which they can reorganise their bodies and actions in a way that enables them to display to each other their understanding of what is happening. The transition from engagement to disengagement may occur smoothly, not as an explicit event in the talk or act of disaffiliation. Participants’ verbal and non-verbal moves suggest their understanding of the change in participation status that the speaker is proposing, the acceptability of that course of
action and their co-participation in it. The analysis also investigates how transition from engagement to disengagement is accomplished in mediated interaction and whether the interpreter’s active participation contributes to restoring engagement among primary parties and bring about inclusion, thus enabling effective (intercultural) communication among them.

Having established a conceptual framework and discussed how and why it can be productively used in the analysis, chapter 3 introduces the data and the methodology used to gather it; in particular, it focuses on the various stages of data collection and the technological support used to video-record the encounters, it introduces the encoding system developed to transcribe talk and map non-verbal behaviour onto it and presents the criteria used to select and characterise the sequences best suited to my analysis.
CHAPTER 3
Data collection and selection

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology adopted to collect a dataset of more than three hours of video-recordings of authentic, mediated PTMs. Particular emphasis is placed on the challenges that had to be faced and on the solutions found to overcome these obstacles. Section 3.2.1 focuses on the preparatory work for the recording phase, including dealing with issues of confidentiality, ethics, and consent. Section 3.2.2 then moves on to the technicalities of data gathering, equipment used and the environmental conditions in which video-recording took place. Once the methodological foundations for data collection have been explained, section 3.3.1 describes the main features of the set of interactions gathered. The data is described in terms of a set of variables, including number of participants, seating arrangement, language pair, content of the meeting. Firstly, the techniques and transcription conventions used to deal with the verbal component of interaction is explored. Secondly, section 3.3.3 presents the gaze encoding system devised to map gaze onto the verbal structure. The chapter then suggests a tangible way of bringing verbal and non-verbal features together via the ELAN software, the pros and cons of which will be highlighted in 3.3.4. Section 3.3.5 anticipates some of the procedures used for the analysis in chapters 4 and 5. This section explains how I make use of my data to achieve the purposes of the study; it addresses the criteria used to select the interactions to transcribe and the application of the theoretical notions presented in chapter 2 to the investigation of the data. Finally, section 3.4 provides some conclusive remarks and paves the way for the analysis carried out in chapters 4 and 5.

3.2 Gathering authentic, naturally occurring data

As matter of conceptual clarity, the expression ‘authentic data’ refers to the fact that all the interactions recorded were not elicited for research purposes but occurred naturally. This section presents two of the main obstacles with which any researcher who is willing to work with authentic data will be confronted and which occur in the
preparatory phase and while on fieldwork respectively. Firstly, I discuss the confidentiality and ethical issues that have to be dealt with while laying the foundations for the project. Secondly, a retrospective and critical analysis of issues that emerged during fieldwork is provided, with a view to raising awareness of the difficulties, isolating some criticalities and variables, commenting on potential pitfalls and advantages.

3.2.1 Pre-fieldwork preparation: ethical issues

The collection and analysis of a corpus of audio and video-recorded and transcribed authentic interaction necessarily involves an early critical assessment of the ethical issues involved; ethics is a crucial part of responsible research. Therefore, not only were the months prior to fieldwork devoted to reading the literature and identifying gaps in current research, but they also served to lay the foundations to obtain ethics clearance, following the procedure established by the University of Manchester.

The first step in this process is to obtain ethical clearance from the University Research Ethics Committee, which decides whether the project is suitable, and whether it meets the University’s ethical standards and criteria. In January 2009, before the beginning of fieldwork, I therefore produced and submitted a comprehensive report to the Ethics Committee for evaluation. This report anticipated the ethical issues that could arise in my project and how they would be dealt with. I also committed myself to taking every care to ensure that the conceptual design adopted was reliable, to provide detailed explanation of the data and methodology used and to report the results obtained truthfully, as a way of ensuring transparency and integrity. The ethics declaration form was submitted together with two other crucial pieces of documentation, i.e. the participants’ information sheet and consent form, which were produced both in English and Italian. Formal ethical approval was received approximately a month after submission of the relevant documentation.

One of the main difficulties when producing this material was to make sure that it reflected the nature of a project that was still taking shape and which, therefore, was subject to shifts in focus and scope, while remaining an accurate account and providing participants with all the information they needed to decide whether to take part in it or not. Another difficulty was to render the information sheet easily accessible to people who are not familiar with research in IS. To this end, the information sheet was kept brief and clear, without however neglecting clarity and comprehensiveness. Its format is
that of a question and answer sheet that introduces the project and the researcher, raises a series of points (e.g. goals and duration of the research project, criteria used to select participants, procedures for data collection, storage and anonymisation) and spells out the freedom participants enjoy to accept or refuse to take part in it and withdraw at any moment, should they change their mind. Among the conditions for video-recording is also the possibility for participants to choose to have the camera switched off at any point if they feel uncomfortable about being recorded.

All participants in the recorded interactions (interpreter included) were required to read the information sheet, and give verbal as well as written consent by signing a consent form prior to any actual recordings. The information was sent out to schools and interpreters in advance and some time was secured before each meeting for participants to talk directly with the researcher and ask for clarifications or discuss any issues. Responses to the project were mixed, often reluctant at first, especially towards the issue of video-recording. The purposes of the project had to be clearly spelled out; in particular, interpreters had to be reassured that the project was not aimed to assess the quality of their performance, and it was necessary to explain to teachers that no sensitive information would be disclosed to third parties. Difficulties were also encountered when dealing with families, given that the schools did not provide me with their details, so that it was not possible to contact them directly beforehand. The documentation was therefore sent to each school, which forwarded it to the parents involved.

3.2.2 Fieldwork: recording procedures

Ideally, researchers who are willing to video-record real interactions would use one camera per participant, each pointing exclusively towards one of the parties. This technique is deemed very effective for obtaining a comprehensive view of the whole encounter and, consequently, for analysing the verbal and non-verbal behaviour of each participant in great detail.

For the purposes of this project, the encounters were recorded using two digital cameras. This was determined by the resources available to the researcher, the purpose of the research itself and the level of detail that it would be required to capture. Furthermore, while a larger number of cameras would certainly provide a more complete account of the interaction, it could be perceived as threatening by participants.
As a consequence, participants may feel uncomfortable being recorded, with a detrimental impact on the authenticity and naturalness of the data collected.

As for spatial arrangement, the cameras were placed in two strategic points, both within reasonable distance from the participants, with a view to capturing the audio and gaze movements without being too intrusive (see Figure 3.1):

- one central camera was placed in such a way to capture the four participants, their seating arrangement and position in relation to each other. It gives a comprehensive view of the interaction as it unfolds. However, it does not provide a full frontal video of the participants’ faces; some of them are visible in profile only.

- one angled camera was directed at the interpreter and the participant who sat next to him/her, with a view to capturing their expressions, gaze and gestures. This camera provides a side-view particularly on the interpreter, who is the main focus of the analysis.
The two cameras were turned on simultaneously at the start of the meeting and they were not turned off until the meeting had concluded, so as to record a complete event from beginning to end, without interruptions. They were not moved or adjusted to the participants’ movements. Furthermore, relevant to the purpose of authenticity is the fact that participants were not instructed on what they could or could not do, on how to sit or move. This choice certainly exposed my project to more risks, but also enabled me to minimise the intrusiveness and impact that the equipment could have on participants’ behaviour.

During the recordings I was allowed to stay in the room; however, I decided to leave the room, only entering a few times to make sure that the recording was proceeding smoothly. This proved very useful in a couple of circumstances; once, I noticed that one of the cameras had stopped working unexpectedly, so I could restart it and minimise the damage that a loss of data would have caused (I could rely on the other camera for the very short section that was missing). In another case, the freedom I
was granted to look after the equipment enabled me to cope with a variable that I had not considered, namely light. I noticed that, at sunset, one of the teachers was overexposed to the light which entered from the window, so I walked in and adjusted the blinds. Had I not been able to do this, the light could have irreparably hindered the quality of my data and prevented me from carrying out any analysis on gaze. During the recordings I became increasingly aware of the importance of carefully thinking ahead and anticipating all the possible difficulties that one may be confronted with. Furthermore, I understood the importance of never taking anything for granted; there may indeed be some unexpected variables which require a certain degree of flexibility and prompt action.

It may be argued that participants’ awareness of my presence there, however unobtrusive, could cast doubts on the validity of the analysis. This situation is often referred to in the literature as “the observer’s paradox” (Labov 1972:209-210). Originally, the term refers to the challenge sociolinguists are faced with while doing linguistic research in the community: their aim is to describe how people talk when they are not being observed, and the paradox lies in the fact that the only way to obtain data is by systematic observation. My stance in this respect is that the downside of having participants’ behaviour potentially slightly affected by such awareness disappears when compared to the advantages and richness of video-recorded data. Furthermore, I could test participants’ post-meeting reactions about the equipment; they all declared that, except for a few initial moments, cameras were not perceived as obtrusive, threatening devices. On the contrary, they seemed to be perceived as an integral part of the environment in which the meeting was taking place, and were seemingly not causing discomfort or affecting the behaviour of those who were being recorded.

Focusing on the audio quality of the recordings, I also placed a very small, unobtrusive digital recorder on a corner of the table around which participants were seated; its purpose was to act as a ‘safety net’ in case the audio provided by the camera was too poor to enable me to transcribe the interactional exchanges. I did not have the chance, during the meetings, to stop the cameras and check the sound, so I had to find a way to minimise the risk of not obtaining sufficiently high audio quality. The stretches which were most difficult to transcribe were overlapping talk and moments of schism (for a discussion of these concepts, see 2.3.1). These would be hard to transcribe even with an excellent audio quality; this is the reason why having more than one audio source could help increase the accuracy of the transcripts. Generally speaking, the audio quality provided by the digital cameras was adequate when listened to through
headphones. It is probably not as clear as it would be with an external microphone; this could be taken into consideration for future projects.

All the recordings were saved as .wav, .mp3 and .mp4 files in a secure folder on the researcher’s computer and they were not made available to any other person except the project supervisor. The encoded transcripts of each selected file were also stored in electronic format as .doc and .eaf files. Confidentiality and anonymity were preserved for the participants by the use of pseudonyms in the transcripts for all parties involved. Personal names were reduced to an initial followed by an ‘x’ (e.g. Ex, Bx), which identify the names of the children when mentioned in two of the three interactions recorded. The identity of participants cannot be inferred from textual data, transcriptions or from the analysis. Each file is labelled with a code which follows the format: PTMX_YYY where X is a numerical value from 1 to 3 and YYY is a 3-letter acronym which identifies the encounters via the location in which they were recorded (MCR for Manchester, FRL for Forlì and CST for Castrocaro).

3.3 Analysing authentic mediated parent-teacher meetings

The dataset comprises approximately 3h10m of authentic meetings between teachers and parents from migrant families that were video-recorded in Italian and British pedagogical settings between February 2008 and February 2009. This dataset is unique in two main respects: it provides authentic material video-recorded in a little-explored setting and the encounters are recorded from two different cameras, which is very unusual due to the difficulties in securing video-recorded data.

Data comparability is a potentially critical issue that was seriously taken into account during the first phases of this project; it certainly represents an important aspect to consider when dealing with authentic data collected in different countries. The three encounters that I managed to secure are fully comparable in terms of the following characteristics:

- Number of participants: four participants each in total, one mother from a migrant background (Egypt in PTM1, India in PTM2 and Nigeria in PTM3), two teachers and one qualified dialogue interpreter. Part of PTM2 saw the presence of one child, who mainly acted as an overhearing presence and was not taking active part in the co-construction of the event (except for a couple of occasions in which he was briefly addressed by the teacher, e.g. PTM2g lines 331-335).
• Language pair: English and Italian. English (in PTMs 2 and 3) and Italian (in PTM 1) are used by the mothers as vehicular languages since no interpreter speaking the specific regional variants of their native languages was available.
• Background of the interpreters: a point of interest which differentiates the current study from previous ones is the fact that the dialogue interpreters involved are not from the same sociocultural background as the migrant party, but use a vehicular language to communicate with the latter; as pointed out above, this was due to the lack of mediators speaking the same (rare) native languages as the migrant mothers involved in the interaction.
• Setting: schools during PTMs. The encounters recorded, due to the need to involve an interpreter, were scheduled outside of general parents evenings, as to avoid the time constraints imposed by the latter type of event. Even though my PTMs have been collected in two countries, with different education systems, it can be argued that they are fully comparable, as conditions are specifically created for them to take place and are very similar in the two countries.
• Conversational purposes: parents and teachers meet to discuss the grades obtained by the children, their school report, attitude, progress and problems. In all the encounters analysed, teachers and parents are meeting for the first time, even though they all take place half-way through the school year, at a time when teachers are likely to have met families already.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meeting Setting</th>
<th>See seating arrangement</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PTM1</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Acronym and information</strong></td>
<td><strong>Nationality</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK Priestnall School, Manchester</td>
<td></td>
<td>T1 Teacher 1 Deputy Head Teacher</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T2 Teacher 2 Science</td>
<td></td>
<td>T3 Teacher 3 English</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M Mother</td>
<td></td>
<td>INT Interpreter</td>
<td>Egyptian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INT</td>
<td></td>
<td>T1 Teacher 1 Deputy Head Teacher</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T2 Teacher 2 Science</td>
<td></td>
<td>T3 Teacher 3 English</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M Mother</td>
<td></td>
<td>INT Interpreter</td>
<td>Egyptian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INT</td>
<td></td>
<td>T1 Teacher 1 Deputy Head Teacher</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T2 Teacher 2 Science</td>
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<td>T3 Teacher 3 English</td>
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<tr>
<td>M Mother</td>
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<td>INT Interpreter</td>
<td>Egyptian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INT</td>
<td></td>
<td>T1 Teacher 1 Deputy Head Teacher</td>
<td>English</td>
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<td>T2 Teacher 2 Science</td>
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<td>T3 Teacher 3 English</td>
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<tr>
<td>M Mother</td>
<td></td>
<td>INT Interpreter</td>
<td>Egyptian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INT</td>
<td></td>
<td>T1 Teacher 1 Deputy Head Teacher</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T2 Teacher 2 Science</td>
<td></td>
<td>T3 Teacher 3 English</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M Mother</td>
<td></td>
<td>INT Interpreter</td>
<td>Egyptian</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **PTM2**        |                         | **Acronym and information** | **Nationality** | **Language** | **~ 2 hours** |
| Italy D. Alighieri School, Castrocaro | | T1 Teacher 1 Maths | Italian | Italian |
| T2 Teacher 2 Italian | | M Mother | Indian | English |
| INT Interpreter | | T1 Teacher 1 Maths | Italian | Italian |
| T2 Teacher 2 Italian | | M Mother | Indian | English |
| INT Interpreter | | T1 Teacher 1 Maths | Italian | Italian |
| T2 Teacher 2 Italian | | M Mother | Indian | English |
| INT Interpreter | | T1 Teacher 1 Maths | Italian | Italian |

| **PTM3**        |                         | **Acronym and information** | **Nationality** | **Language** | **~45 minutes** |
| Italy A. Manzoni School, Forli | | T1 Teacher 1 Italian, History, Geography | Italian | Italian |
| T2 Teacher 2 Maths | | M Mother | Nigerian | English |
| INT Interpreter | | T1 Teacher 1 Italian, History, Geography | Italian | Italian |
| T2 Teacher 2 Maths | | M Mother | Nigerian | English |
| INT Interpreter | | T1 Teacher 1 Italian, History, Geography | Italian | Italian |

| **TOT** |                         | **Duration** | **~ 3 hours 10 minutes** |

Table 3.1. Schematic representation of the main features of the dataset collected
One of the substantial differences between the meetings, apart from their respective length, is the seating arrangement chosen by the participants. In two schools, PTMs took place in one of the classrooms, while in one case (PTM1) the meeting was held in a boardroom where teachers usually gather together to discuss school-related issues. All the four parties (teachers, mother and interpreter) are seated around the teaching desk or table, in close physical proximity; as noted in the previous section, participants were not instructed where to seat, but decided freely how to arrange themselves in the room. Furthermore, I had no advance knowledge of the physical arrangement of each classroom, so I had to adjust my equipment accordingly once the participants took their seats. Table 3.1 also shows a graphic representation of participants’ seating arrangements; in PTM1 and PTM3, teachers and mothers sit opposite one another, they can see the interpreter out of the corner of their eyes while gazing directly at each other without changing their main orientation towards one another. Conversely in PTM2, the teachers and the mother are seated in a less immediately available way in relation to one another, with the latter in the middle. In Wadensjö’s (2001:82) terms, participants do not share the same “communicative radius”; in order to look at the interpreter, the mother has to turn her head away from the teachers and vice versa. This may facilitate the establishment of a privileged communicative axis with the interpreter, but prevent mutual engagement with teachers.

Another relevant point regards the additional information which may be acquired about participants. As a conceptual and methodological framework, CA is only concerned with what happens in interaction, regardless of other contextual information about participants. In this study, the only piece of information gathered beforehand and used as a criterion for the selection of the interaction to be recorded is the background of the interpreters, mainly in terms of education and training. I considered this relevant with a view to gathering a comparable set of data that could provide evidence of what trained interpreters do at work. Given the lack of a clear status for interpreters and mediators, I considered as ‘professional’ any interpreters who had received some kind of linguistic and cultural training, and who were not taking the assignment on an ad hoc basis but worked in face-to-face encounters on a regular basis. The interpreter who took part in the meetings recorded in Italy has worked for several years for a cooperative of mediators whose task is to provide linguistic and cultural support to schools, hospitals and social services in the local area. Her working languages are Italian (mother tongue), English and Chinese. She holds a degree in English and Chinese (BA level) and undertook some training courses on interpreting and intercultural mediation techniques.
funded by the local regional authorities. The interpreter who took part in the meeting recorded in Manchester is a freelance qualified interpreter and translator who set up his own translation and interpreting business more than a decade ago; he was contacted through a local project aimed to encourage the take up of lesser taught languages at school and, consequently, the integration of minority students and their families. He also has Italian as his mother tongue, and works in bilateral settings on a regular basis.

3.3.1 Dealing with the verbal component: CA-based transcription conventions

Audio and video recordings are essential to fulfil the purposes of this study. However, they are not sufficient in themselves for a systematic investigation of interaction, given the “transient, highly multidimensional, and often overlapping events of an interaction as they unfold in real time” (Edwards 2003:321). A number of different approaches can be taken to the analysis of talk in general, and mediated talk in particular, but production of transcripts is a common, necessary first step when approaching real data (e.g. Heritage & Atkinson 1984; Hutchby & Wooffitt 1998; Baker 1997; Heap 1997). As already highlighted in 2.2.1, transcripts are considered a useful tool to enable researchers to easily detect some specific features and regularities of interaction that would probably escape an ordinary listener (ten Have 1999). However, even when extremely detailed, transcripts are far from being exhaustive and objective written representations of talk.

It is indeed virtually impossible to reproduce all the characteristics of spontaneous human interaction in writing (O’Connell et al. 1993; Cook 1995), as there are several levels encompassing many features (e.g. pauses, prosody, body language and so on) which do not have a counterpart in writing. In particular, we may highlight the following different levels of transcription:

- Linguistic level: all the words spoken by speakers are transcribed, when comprehensible (orthographic transcription). Figures and dates are fully spelt out. Punctuation signs are avoided.

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22 The following subdivision is adjusted from the European Parliament Interpreting Corpus (EPIC) transcription conventions, developed by the SITLeC (University of Bologna) Website: http://dev.sslmit.unibo.it/corpora/corporaproxject.php?path=E.P.I.C. (last accessed December 2011).
Paralinguistic level: transcription encompasses features such as truncated words, lengthened words, pauses, etc. The expression *paralinguistic phenomena* or *paralanguage* is also used to refer to non-verbal communicating activities which accompany verbal behaviour in conversation (such as gestures and proxemics).

To reflect these features in writing, a set of transcription conventions was compiled; it follows the principles of selectivity and readability (addressed in 2.2.1), and builds on the CA tradition, especially on the conventions progressively developed by Jefferson (1984b, 2004) to capture those phenomena relevant to the sequential organisation of talk (i.e. location of silence, overlapping talk and overlap onset, etc) and which are most commonly used in CA-based research (e.g. Psathas 1995; Schenkein 1978; ten Have 1995).

In my transcripts, speech has been generally normalised to conventional British English orthography. Variants of pronunciation are not specified; capital letters and punctuation marks are used to signal specific features of speech production rather than grammatical boundaries as in conventional writing. Given the ultimate focus on the dynamics of the interactions as a whole rather than on micro-analytical level, I have restricted the quantity of features encoded to a selected set included in Table 3.2. The open-ended nature of the transcribing process, nevertheless, allows researchers to encode further elements as the focus of analysis becomes progressively refined. Thus, transcript conventions may be subject to constant remodelling, updating, changes, revisions, additions, deletions, following repeated listening of recordings and development of insights throughout the course of a study.
A left-hand bracket generally marks the point at which the current talk is overlapped by other talk.

### BEGINNING OF OVERLAP
(3 main possibilities)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>T1</th>
<th>I think we can start</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T2</td>
<td>it’s time to</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>T1</th>
<th>I think we [can start* as we don’t have much time left [cause* the school is closing down* in an hour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T2</td>
<td>it’s time to*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INT</td>
<td>mhm*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T2</td>
<td>right*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(1) When utterances start up simultaneously, they are linked together by single left-hand brackets.

(2) When utterances overlap but do not start up simultaneously, the point of the overlap onset is marked by a single left-hand brackets joining utterances on different lines. The turn overlapping the current one is visually indented and positioned where the overlap starts (overlap onset).

(3) In case of multiunit turns uttered by one participants and overlapped at different moments by next speakers’ talk without leading to a change in speakership, I have not broken the turn into different lines, but I signal the overlap onset by a left-hand bracket, followed in serial order (on different lines) by the talk that overlaps it, with the indication of who utters the specific stretch produced in overlap (different colours are used here to clarify this point).

### END OF OVERLAP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>T1</th>
<th>I think we [can start our meeting* as we don’t have much time left</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T2</td>
<td>it’s time to*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The point where overlapping utterances end (if they end simultaneously) or where one of them ends in the course of another is marked with an asterisk.
| **PAUSE** |  | Full stop in parenthesis denotes a micropause (less than a second). Numbers in parentheses mark noticeable silences/pauses. n = length of the pause (in seconds and tenths of seconds).
<p>|
| --- |  | Pauses are generally noted within a speaker’s turn. It is assumed that there is always a micropause between the end of a prior turn, which allows transition to the next and change of speakership. It is however not systematically encoded. When placed between two turns, (n) denotes a silence which is not immediately attributable to any of the parties in the interaction and therefore might be worth encoding with a view to exploring why it occurs at that point and what its function might be. |
| <strong>GAP</strong> | (xxx) | Three ‘x’ in brackets indicate a point where material has been omitted from the transcript for different reasons (e.g. impossible to hear due to background noise or low tone of voice). |
| <strong>TRANSCRIBER DOUBT</strong> | (aaa) | Words in parentheses indicates a hearing that the transcriber was uncertain about (e.g. because in overlap). |
| <strong>QUESTIONS</strong> | ? | Question marks are used for constructions that function pragmatically as questions; they indicate that the speaker is addressing a question to an addressee and probably expects a response (unless in the case of rhetorical questions). |
| <strong>CUT-OFF</strong> | xxx- | A single dash indicates a sudden cut-off of the immediately prior work or sound, i.e. a noticeable and abrupt termination. |
| <strong>SOUND STRETCH</strong> | xxx: | Colons indicate that the sound immediately preceding has been noticeably lengthened. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>EVENT</strong></th>
<th>(( xxx ))</th>
<th>Brackets contain a description of something that can be heard and/or seen rather than transcribed (e.g. a participant coughing, background noise, etc).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>EMPHASISED TALK</strong></td>
<td>XXX</td>
<td>Capital letters indicate words or pieces of talk noticeably stressed or emphasised or loud (change in volume). Given that prosody and intonation are not the focus of the present analysis, I have adopted this category to include a wide range of vocal phenomena which may characterise specific stretches of talk.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>QUIET TALK</strong></td>
<td>°xxx°</td>
<td>A degree sign encloses talk which is produced low in volume (may include lower tone of voice, whisper, etc); as it was the case for emphasised talk, quiet talk is a broad label for a range of difference voice realisations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SCHISM</strong></td>
<td>[[xxx xxx xxx]]</td>
<td>Double opening and closing squared brackets encompassing talk indicate the start and end of a schism respectively. To make it visually clear, brackets are highlighted in bold. What is uttered outside the square brackets is produced in a sequential order.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BACK-TRANSLATION</strong></td>
<td>xxx</td>
<td>Italics and a smaller font are used to mark the English back-translation of talk originally uttered in a different language (Italian).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LAUGHTER</strong></td>
<td>@</td>
<td>@ symbol is used to represent laughter; standing alone it indicates laughter (in all its different realisations) uttered by the current speaker but not affecting the tone of the talk (one or more @ indicate a different intensity of the laughter). No in-depth analysis of this phenomenon will be carried out. This is the notation that I use for a change in voice quality, i.e. stretches of talk uttered in a laughing tone. The term laughter includes various ways of laughing while speaking: chuckling, giggling, tittering, sniggering, etc. @ symbols mark the boundaries of the stretch of talk uttered in this tone; after the second @, a return to normal voice quality is implied.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.2 CA-based transcription conventions for the verbal component
Transcripts were particularly helpful, especially in the first stages of the project, to notice specific participants’ features, among which an interesting one was the different conversational styles displayed by the two interpreters. In the case of PTM1, the interpreter tends to take the floor quite often and translate shorter chunks of speech, thus providing what Gavioli & Baraldi (2011) have recently defined “immediate renditions”. In other words, the interpreter adopts more frequently a turn-by-turn rendition mechanism, through which he seems to make “participation by the third interlocutor relevant after each previous participants’ turn” (ibid.:227), thus seemingly facilitating direct contact between the institutional representative and the layman. Conversely, the interpreter in PTM2 and PTM3 tends to let the parties (generally the teacher) talk for several turns before delivering her rendition, which is therefore suspended or delayed. This attitude is in line with what Gavioli & Baraldi (2011:228) refer to as “suspended contributions, particularly through indicators of listening activity, such as continuers or acknowledgment tokens”. In this case, the interpreter tends to produce renditions as “formulations” (e.g. Heritage 1985; Garfinkel & Sacks 1970; Heritage & Watson 1979), which involve “summarising, glossing and developing the gist of the informant’s earlier statement” (Heritage & Watson 1979:100). Through this approach, the interpreter seems “to give the participants space to talk, to deal with problematic issues, and to understand in greater depth what is to be translated” (Gavioli & Baraldi 2011:227). Despite the different approaches adopted, this study will highlight some similarities in the way interpreters’ contributions are constructed verbally (namely via EAs) and non-verbally (namely via gaze), in the attempt to verify whether they seem to effectively promote or, or the contrary, hinder direct contact between the parties and what is their interactional impact on the encounters.

Last but not least, the very nature of mediated interaction is bilingual; hence the need to add back-translations to the transcripts to make them accessible to non-Italian speakers. My approach to back-translation mainly follows a common sense principle whereby glosses are as close as possible to the source utterances without altering the pragmatic impact of what is being said. However, a few adjustments were made from time to time, especially when a literal, word-for-word translation would have hindered understanding.
3.3.2 Dealing with the non-verbal component: gaze encoding system

As far as the encoding of non-verbal features is concerned, multimodal analysis and CA offer a range of systems which have been adopted by different authors. Previous studies have made large use of still shots (e.g. Lerner 2003; Mondada 2006b; Norris 2004; Robinson & Stivers 2001; Schegloff 1998) or clips (e.g. Schegloff 2002; Bolden 2003 – online versions) integrated with various types of annotations (e.g. Robinson & Stivers 2001, where no symbols are used for gestures or gaze but only verbal description – see also Norris 2004; Schegloff 1998, 2002, 2005) and/or symbols (e.g. Schegloff 1984a; Frers 2009), depending on the specific analytical focus.

If we restrict the scope to those studies which have encompassed gaze, we may quote Goodwin (1981), which builds on Jefferson’s system for the transcription of talk to devise a system to map gaze onto it;23 “x” indicates a place where one participant’s gaze reaches another in the transcript, a continuous line signals that a party is gazing continuously at another, and a dotted line represents the movement needed to bring gaze to another. Heath (1984, 1986) adopts a similar system, where a dotted line indicates movement to bring gaze to another and a line made of commas movement to withdraw gaze (see also Robinson 1998).

In the present study, I build on a very recent system developed by Rossano (2012); unlike previous ones, it has the advantage of being very visual, thus intuitively clear, while previous systems require some time and effort to use and decode. Rossano’s set of approximately sixty symbols to encode gaze orientation was developed for monolingual, dyadic interaction; it is quite sophisticated in that it also accounts for gaze movement. However, one disadvantage of Rossano’s symbols is that they can only be used to encode gaze, and do not allow for the integration of any other non-verbal feature.

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23 Usually, speaker’s gaze is mapped above, while recipient’s gaze is mapped below the transcribed utterance.
I have adjusted this system to mediated, triadic interactions. Given the very experimental nature of this attempt, there is large scope for improvement and refinement. However, the basic system developed so far provides an immediate graphic representation of what happens in interaction, which can help the reader identify, among others, moments of inclusion/exclusion, look-away or look-down.
The symbols developed have been mapped onto the verbal transcript as shown in Figure 3.4; their exact position has been identified via the use of a dedicated software (ELAN – see 3.3.3). My symbols do not signal gaze movement; in other words, each symbol is placed at the exact moment in interaction where a certain gaze configuration is reached. Furthermore, not all eye movements are recorded; for instance, a speaker’s occasional looks away while gathering thoughts and planning what to say next have not been encoded as they do not represent gaze shifts to another participant and, consequently, a change in participants’ gaze configuration.
Among the disadvantages of this system is that it is time-consuming, therefore not suitable to encode large portions of transcript. However, if, as is the case in this thesis, the analysis is restricted to selected sequences, such a system can provide interesting insights into what happens in terms of gaze. The fact of having gaze directly linked to the transcript can be helpful to disambiguate the meaning of certain verbal behaviours or pauses.

This encoding system is far from complete; symbols have only been developed for the gaze configurations found in my dataset. However, it has the potential to be expanded and further refined in the future. Last but not least, symbols have so far been devised for a triadic situation; the fourth participant who is not represented is one of the teachers, i.e. the one who is not talking at a given moment. Developing a system for multiparty interaction would have been too complex and would have exceeded the scope of the present study. This could, however, represent a useful avenue for future projects.

### 3.3.3 Bringing the verbal and non-verbal dimensions together: using ELAN

Over the last decade, technological advances have enormously increased the possibilities for carrying out detailed analysis of audio and video output together. For the purposes of this study, I have relied on the ELAN software (Eudico Linguistic Annotator), i.e. an annotation tool that enables researchers to create, edit, visualise and search annotations for video and audio data. It was developed at the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics in Nijmegen (Netherlands), with a view to providing a sound technological basis for the annotation, analysis and documentation of multimodal
recordings, i.e. video and audio data. ELAN is specifically designed for the analysis of language, sign language, and gesture.

As shown by Figure 3.5, ELAN’s display is very user-friendly and enables researchers to upload up to four videos (of the same encounter but taken from different angles and/or focusing on different participants), in order to gain a comprehensive view of the whole event and of the non-verbal behaviour displayed by its participants. Video and audio output are directly linked to transcript’s annotation and to time, thus providing the researcher with all the necessary sources of information at once.

The entire transcription process can be carried out using the software; each participant is assigned a tier with the transcription of what s/he has uttered in interaction on the same line. A tier may be defined as a set of annotations containing the same information; ELAN enables researchers to add an unlimited number of annotation tiers defined by the user. All the tiers are displayed simultaneously, one below the other. This specific display is particularly useful for the annotation of overlaps, among others, as well as to represent the sequential organisation of talk. Annotation involves three steps: defining the linguistic type and assigning a name to the tier, selecting the correct time interval and entering the annotation. Tiers vary according to the specific purposes of the study; one may have tiers to encode utterances, turn constructional units, words, glosses, repairs, false starts, etc. If needed, ELAN also provides an option to have the
wave form of an audio file displayed (this require the creation of an additional audio file in .wav format). In terms of video and audio formats, ELAN is very flexible; transcripts and annotations can be exported as text files.

As far as gaze is concerned, I firstly devised a simplified set of symbols (e.g. /V for “look away”) that could be used in ELAN; these symbols were then simply replaced by the corresponding ones shown in Appendix B once the transcripts were exported on a .doc file, for illustration and analysis purposes. The presence of video, audio and transcript together, and the possibility to listen in loop to selected chunks of talk, facilitated the encoding operations and increased the accuracy of the result.

Prior to my project, this software has never been used to carry out studies of interpreter-mediated interaction, but its potential is clear as a very valuable instrument to explore how the verbal and non-verbal dimensions unfold and complement each other in mediated encounter. In particular, ELAN enables researchers to carry out the analysis of transcripts moving beyond the turn level and including details of the actions performed and the sequential organisation of participants’ talk as important variables that affect verbal and non-verbal features in interaction.

The last point to be covered regards the criteria adopted to select the material to transcribe and encode, given the time-consuming nature of this process which makes it more suitable to carry out a qualitative rather than quantitative analysis. The next section explains step-by-step the procedure followed to select and isolate the sequences which became the object of the present study.

### 3.3.4 Procedures for analysis

The selection procedure follows a ‘micro to macro’ approach, i.e. from the selection and isolation of pieces of interaction characterised as EAs, to the analysis of their functions within the utterance and sequential environment in which they are found, to the identification of the sequence to be transcribed and encoded. This procedure builds on Pomerantz & Fehr (1997), who suggest that the researcher begins by choosing an aspect of interest noticed in the data. Once the focus is selected, the sequence within which it occurs needs to be identified. Identifying a sequence entails, first of all, locating and highlighting its boundaries in the transcripts. To this end, Pomerantz and Fehr’s (1997:71) suggest that, firstly, researchers “locate the turn in which one of the participants initiated an action and/or topic that was taken up by the participants” in the
interaction and, secondly, that they “locate the place in which the participants were no longer specifically responding to the prior action and/or topic”.

As anticipated in previous sections, the units of analysis adopted in this study are EAs, which emerged as important features from the empirical observation of my data, rather than from preconceived assumptions about it. All the EAs uttered by teachers, mothers and interpreters have been included in the selection (for a quantification see 4.2). Assessments are analysed within the utterance in which they occur, with a view to investigating to what extent they seem to contribute to the action(s) performed by participants through that specific stretch of talk. The action(s) create(s) an expectation of a response, which may take various shapes and formulations and lead to various consequences. In other words, actions are considered in relation to one another because an action in a speaker’s utterance calls for an appropriate next action.

As suggested by Pomerantz & Fehr (1997), the different ways in which turns are shaped to deliver actions are not to attribute to conscious choices or deliberation of alternatives on the part of the speakers; they are to be seen as the product of an ongoing negotiation and interaction, without taking into account speakers’ intentions or thoughts. In their analysis, researchers need to take into consideration the number of alternatives for how a turn can be packaged, even though this does not mean that speakers consciously consider that range of alternatives in the production of their turns. The analyst’s role is to consider how the turns are packaged by the speaker and how they are delivered, as well as to investigate the interactional impact on the basis of the responses produced.

The boundaries of sequences are marked by the onset and completion of a course of action and result from the moment-by-moment negotiation of participants. According to Leiminer & Baker (2000:138), this approach to the transcript operations is “preliminary to studying the talk to show how matters are raised, managed and resolved” by the participants in the interaction. This modus operandi also proved useful to produce a general ‘map’ or categorisation of the actions characterising each PTM and of their unfolding over time; this has helped confirm that, in terms of overall structural organisation, mediated PTMs follow similar pattern to those identified by literature on unmediated PTMs.
3.4 Conclusions

This chapter provides an essential link between the theoretical notions presented in chapter 2 and the investigation of the dataset that will be carried out in chapters 4 and 5. In particular, the working methods and procedures introduced here are essential to understand how theory can be practically implemented to address and answer my research questions.

The methodology adopted does not purport to be the only or most effective one to provide a solid support to the analysis. One of the main reasons for its choice is that it provides a systematic approach to the investigation of gaze and how it is used in interaction. To proceed in the most rigorous possible way without exceeding the scope of a PhD project, I have restricted the features to be analysed to a very limited set. This methodology could, however, be expanded to encompass other non-verbal features which may be relevant to the analysis of mediated interaction, such as gestures or facial expressions. Building on my PhD experience which, by definition, is individual, I would stress the importance of collaborative work to carry out projects which aim to examine both verbal and non-verbal behaviour. Different views and thoughts on the same stretch of video or sequence of transcript may be extremely beneficial to the final interpretation of specific features. A similar philosophy is shared by CA, where it is common to organise collaborative data sessions, during which data samples chosen by the analyst are discussed in a (usually) friendly and informal environment. In doing so, the analyst can benefit from technical input from experts in the field, but also from the fresh scrutiny of outsiders coming from different research areas, which may enrich the interpretation of the data. This technique has been adopted in the initial stages of this study, too; it has proven beneficial to select the focus of analysis and to learn how to examine the data while limiting the influence of personal bias. Data sessions are, however, most common at the analytical stage; I believe it would be useful to adopt a similar, more collaborative approach also in the initial stages of research, which are crucial to the validity and accuracy of the analysis that builds on them (for a discussion of this point, see 6.5).

Finally, I shall stress the fundamental role played by videos in the analysis; they are crucial to access features such as gaze, but the use which is made of them needs to be carefully thought through in accordance with the final purposes of the study. As highlighted in 3.3.2, videos have been used in various ways by different studies, namely in the form of still shots integrated in the transcripts, or videos embedded in the
transcript (when an online version was available) or via a reproduction of the features
the analyst was interested in via a series of symbols. The approach adopted here in this
respect is new, and produces more readable data, even though this means reducing the
number of features to be considered. Depending on the object of analysis and on the
methodology adopted, videos can be used in different ways; a less analytical, moment-
by-moment approach to the data may simply benefit from the observation and written
description of what happens in the videos, without the need to encode any specific
features.

Having presented the conceptual design and methodological frameworks
underlying this study, the next two analytical chapters will show how the tools and
notions selected can be practically implemented and related to each other with a view
to answering the research questions.
CHAPTER 4
Characterising mediated PTMs

4.1 Introduction

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 set out to address my overarching research question, i.e. how does the combined analysis of sequences embedding assessments and gaze contribute to better understanding the positioning of dialogue interpreters in mediated PTMs. The starting point for the investigation is the pronounced involvement displayed by dialogue interpreters in the meetings under scrutiny. As explained in 1.2 (and sub-sections), studies of DI have shown that interpreters are active participants in mediated interaction and that their contributions are not simply a gloss in a target language of the interlocutors’ utterance(s) in a source language. Dialogue interpreters are expected to wear more than one hat in interaction and to fulfil a number of tasks which go beyond mere linguistic translation. Wadensjö (1998:75), in particular, describes the (implicit and explicit) coordinating and mediating functions of dialogue interpreters, which are now widely acknowledged in this field of research (for a discussion of the coordinating function of interpreters see 1.2.3).

As pointed out in 1.3, the default assumption which seems to frame PTMs is that they establish collaboration and affiliation between parties, which is also one of the main tasks that interpreters acting as intercultural mediators are supposed to fulfil. One of the aims of this research is to ascertain whether and, if so, how, mutual understanding, alignment and social solidarity are achieved and maintained in mediated PTMs. In particular, I argue that, in my data, the task of creating a common ground, which is normally undertaken by teachers in monolingual PTMs, seems to be carried out by the interpreters, despite the lack of any \textit{a priori} negotiation and distribution of tasks between the two parties. The interpreters in my data seem not merely to align with teachers, but to behave like teachers, thus making it difficult to trace clear boundaries between the two professional figures and to distinguish between their respective tasks and responsibilities. This general impression stems from direct data observation; it will be investigated further to establish whether it is confirmed by a fine-grained analysis of the interaction and, if so, to provide empirical evidence of where and how this behaviour seems to manifest itself most clearly. In particular, I examine whether interpreters, through the specific moves isolated, actively seek to create opportunities
for parents to engage in interaction, thus encouraging dialogic interaction and acting as bridges between cultures.

Before embarking on the analysis of interpreters’ renditions it is, however, necessary to characterise the type of talk that they are called to interpret and to isolate the units of analysis which will be relied upon. In monolingual PTMs, talk tends to be unidirectional, i.e. it is initiated by the teachers and directed towards the mothers. EAs are frequently uttered by teachers in this type of communicative event by virtue of the dominant evaluating activity carried out. This also applies to my data, where teachers tend to steer the overall structural organisation of PTMs and carry out the evaluation of, mainly, the children’s performance and attitude at school. Section 4.2 therefore presents some instances of teacher-produced talk, with a view to characterising EAs and situating them within the courses of action in which they are most frequently found and which, as I argue, they seem to contribute to performing.

Adjusting Goodwin’s (1990:300) quotation to my analytical focus, I am interested in exploring how assessments are used by teachers as “ways of packaging experience” and “display[ing] the social organization of knowledge”. EAs are fairly easy to identify within the flow of talk; therefore, they have been selected as a basic unit of analysis and provide a starting point for the isolation of the sequences to investigate.

In mediated PTMs, EAs are mostly proffered by teachers and interpreters, where the latter may either re-produce them in the target language on the basis of the utterance produced by the teacher or produce them independently, building on their own interpretation of the teacher’s talk. It seems logical to characterise teacher-produced EAs first, before moving on to the analysis of specific tendencies identified in the way interpreters handle utterances embedding EAs (addressing sub-research question 2 – these will be discussed in 5.3 and 5.4).

Given that assessments, by definition, express stance and epistemic position (see 2.3.4), the analysis of the way they are handled by interpreters within broader sequences seems to prove useful to identify those moments in interaction where the “voice of education” and the “voice of interpreting” can be heard (for a discussion of “voice”, see 1.2.3). The production of EAs seems therefore to provide a clear indicator of interpreters’ shifting positioning; the underlying assumption is that EAs constitute building blocks which contribute to the construction of a more articulated and refined architecture, i.e. the course of action implemented through talk. This will help understand how the interpreters’ moves that will be the object of analysis in chapter 5 fit within the overall organisation of mediated PTMs. As a second step, I shall analyse
“how the information [...] may be differentially accessible to various recipients” (Goodwin 1990:300) when it is handled and elaborated by the interpreter to be rendered in the target language, what response, if any, is elicited and what are the consequences in terms of mediation (these points will then be discussed in 6.2 and 6.3).

Gaze has proved another clear indicator of positioning; in particular, the large amount of mutual gaze between interpreters and each of the parties-at-talk and the way gaze is used at specific points in interaction provides further evidence of the engaged attitude displayed by interpreters, and proves to be a feature that can help disambiguate a specific stance and attitude. This is why the combined analysis of gaze and verbal behaviour is considered crucial to characterise interpreters’ conduct in mediated interaction more accurately. Before mapping gaze onto the sequences isolated, 4.3 will identify some general gaze patterns that emerge as typical in the PTMs analysed; this will be done in comparison with other studies which have analysed gaze patterns in mediated interaction in different institutional settings and which were introduced in 2.4.2.

In Chapter 5 the focus will be shifted to the interpreters’ way of dealing with utterances embedding assessments, and to the extent to which this affects the direction of the ongoing interaction. Chapter 6 will provide a final discussion of the findings, focusing in particular on the impact of the interpreter’s moves identified in terms of mediation, i.e. whether (and, if so, how) they contribute to collaboratively building shared understanding and bringing about integration through the interactive work of the parties-at-talk (addressing sub-research question 5). Chapters 4, 5 and 6 therefore constitute a series of chapters, each one contributing to the progression of the argument, i.e. that interpreters displaying a very active involvement in interaction do not necessarily function as intercultural mediators, i.e. as communication facilitators and bridges among cultures by default.

4.2 On teacher-produced evaluative assessments

In my study I have isolated 154 stretches of evaluative talk embedded in multi-unit utterances that can be identified as instance of EAs (including both favourable and unfavourable ones). These are distributed as follows:
- 66 teacher-produced EAs
- 79 interpreter-produced EAs
- 9 mother-produced EAs

As noted in 2.3.4, since Pomerantz’s seminal work (1984), most literature on assessments has focused on the sequential organisation of assessment pairs in monolingual interaction as well as on assessments at the end of extended sequences, when working as closing-implicative devices. This last set of studies in particular informs the analysis carried out on what I have termed RFP assessments (which will be discussed in 5.3). The data collected, however, shows alternative sequential organisation, which is sensitive to the context and activity carried out, as well as to the triadic format of the exchange.

Focusing our attention on teacher-produced EAs, the ones isolated in my study are similar to those analysed by PTM literature, mainly Pillet-Shore (2001, 2003), who deals with the way evaluations are delivered in monolingual parent-teacher conferences. EAs bear a clear evaluative import and convey the speaker’s stance towards the referent or state of affairs. This evaluative import is usually conveyed by stretches of talk embedding terms such as (positively or negatively) qualifying descriptors (well, eager, happy, distracted), nouns (difficulty, progress) or verbs (to benefit from, to hinder). In common with monolingual PTMs is the fact that teachers, in my data, show an overall preference for favourable assessments rather than unfavourable ones, as indicated by Table 4.1:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Favourable</th>
<th>Unfavourable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PTM1</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTM2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTM3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1. Distribution of favourable and unfavourable EAs in my data

---

24 This figure includes both EAs produced as a translation of a source utterance (59 instances) and EAs independently produced by interpreters in various sequential positioning (20 instances).
25 As explained in chapter 2, this study will not analyse assessments like ok, good but only EAs that contribute to the evaluation of the child’s and or the family’s performance and attitude.
Furthermore, like in monolingual PTMs, EAs are often coupled with more descriptive and informative accounts of the referent, thus constructing more complex structural units (such as multi-unit turns) which may fulfil more than one purpose and are designed to implement larger interactional activities. For instance, extract 4.1 features two instances of EAs (highlighted in bold) produced by one of the teachers (T3), namely *going well* (favourable assessment of the child’s general performance at school) and *it does seem to me to have improved a lot* (favourable assessment of the child’s progress in English) embedded in a turn which could be seen as being made of three TCU, given that a possible TRP can be placed after each double forward slash added to the transcript. Both EAs, and the more descriptive account *his English is communicating*, contribute to constructing the same reporting turn.

[Extract 4.1 – PTM1n]

185  T3  so (.) a- at the moment (.) *going going well* // (.) ehm: (.) and his ehm his English is (.)
186  is communicating // *it does seem to me to have improved a lot*

The placement of EAs within an utterance can be flexible; in the case of teacher-initiated assessments, they may precede or follow the more descriptive account. The EAs isolated are often found either in initial position, i.e. they act as task-initiating devices by starting a new course of action, thus contributing to the sequential development of the meeting. More rarely, they can be found in response to a question or request for clarification asked by the parent (e.g. PTM1e, PTM1i) or in final position, used as task closing devices (e.g. PTM1f, PTM2a). However, one of the basic assumptions in this study is that EAs are not produced randomly in the conversation, but are used to shape larger social interactional activities. In other words, not only do EAs contribute to the evaluating activity, but they also contribute to designing two types of actions, namely reporting and recommending. In my study, the 66 instances of teacher-produced assessment are distributed as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Reporting turn</th>
<th>Recommending turn</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PTM1</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTM2</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTM3</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 4.2. Distribution of EAs between reporting and recommending turns*
While contributing to shaping these actions, the EAs identified in the mediated PTMs under scrutiny are indeed a vehicle to provide an evaluation of a referent or state of affairs, thus displaying the way in which teachers see the assessable as well as a certain epistemic stance, attitude and positioning vis-à-vis, mainly, the child.

4.2.1 Reporting

The practice of reporting has been defined as a “process of communicating the results of the assessment to the stakeholders in appropriate forms” (Badger 2007:1). Reporting is one of the most typical actions performed in PTMs as well as the main way in which teachers account for students’ achievements and problems and inform parents about them. Adjusting Badger’s analysis (2007:124), the main ‘themes’ about which reports are most frequently produced (presented in no particular order) are children’s attitude to school disposition, growth and progress, knowledge and skills, work practices, relationship with peers. In my study, reporting is intended as an inherently evaluative activity, which could be schematically illustrated as follows: REPORTING = EA + ACCOUNT. The action of reporting is often performed via multiunit turns where the account is the core, informative component of the compound form, and corresponds to the ‘objective’ information provided about the assessable. EAs are the evaluative stretches of talk providing the speaker’s personal view of the referent or state of affairs. They may take the form of one or more TCUs, and their positioning within the compound form is flexible.

Reporting turns are delivered in three main ways: they can be uttered by teachers spontaneously (e.g. PTM1b, PTM2a) or they may be produced as a result of the activity of ‘reading the record’ (e.g.PTM2h). Hybrid forms are also found in my corpus (e.g. PTM3e/f), where teachers start off by reading the school report and intersperse their reading with personal comments on what is written. EAs coupled with informative accounts contribute to clarifying the stance taken up by teachers; in particular, they seem to be used to intensify favourable accounts or attenuate unfavourable accounts of, mainly, the child’s performance and attitude at school. In the latter case, like in monolingual PTMs, teachers may add favourable evaluations in an attempt “to avoid delivering unfavourable evaluations baldly” and to “mitigate, qualify or otherwise attenuate unfavourable evaluations of students in their efforts to create and maintain a favourable stance toward students throughout the conference interaction” (Pillet-Shore 2001:44).
Below are some extracts from the transcripts exemplifying this point; utterances are transcribed from their onset until the moment another speaker (usually the interpreter) takes the floor. The goal here is to show some recurring features of teachers’ utterances; sequences are therefore not transcribed in full (sequence transcripts can be found in Appendix A), but the position of the utterance in the sequential development of talk is explained, if relevant. To start with, I present some typical examples of favourable reporting utterances featuring EAs working as intensifying devices. Favourable reports are mainly produced by attributing active agency to the child, who is referred to explicitly in the third person and is paid tribute for the results achieved.

[Extract 4.2 - PTM1d]

33 T2 ehm (.) he's very very eager in lessons to become involved (.) [which is great

The formulation chosen by the teacher to describe the child’s attitude in class (he’s very eager) already projects a positive evaluative report, which is further intensified by which is great, placed at the end of the utterance and clearly expressing what the teacher’s stance is with regard to the child’s attitude.

Extract 4.3 shows a moment where the teacher is reading aloud and commenting upon the grades obtained by the child as stated on the school report. Once again, EAs are placed towards the end of each teacher-produced utterance, to intensify and make explicit the evaluation behind the numerical score.26

[Extract 4.3 – PTM3d]

132 T2 English (.) in inglese: (.) sette perchè: (.) è bravo

English in English seven because he is good

[...]

141 T2 e disegno chiaramente otto perchè è davvero bravissimo

and art obviously eight because he is really good

26 Numerical or letter scores are hardly ever found in my corpus as stand-alone evaluations, but they are normally accompanied by EAs of that score or of the student, thus clarifying the teacher’s stance (as in monolingual PTMs, see Pillet-Shore 2001:26). In monolingual PTMs, this would not present a problem, but due to the intercultural nature of the mediated encounters analysed in this study, mothers may not be familiar with the grading systems adopted by schools in the host country. As a consequence, stand-alone evaluations based on numbers or letters may not bear any evaluative import for the mothers, who cannot measure them against any scale. In my data, this gap in knowledge is dealt with differently by the two interpreters. The interpreter working in PTM2 and PTM3 explains the numerical grading system adopted in Italy before the activity of reading the report starts, thus fulfilling one of her tasks as intercultural mediator. In PTM1, however, this does not happen, i.e. the interpreter does not explain how the letter grading system works in the UK. The lack of EAs working to clarify the evaluative import of teacher-produced utterances leads to a request for clarification. For an examples taken from my dataset, see PTM1e, lines 52-57, in Appendix A.
In extract 4.4, a first TRP could be placed after *understand* (line 120), thus delimiting the boundaries of the account; however, T2 expands her TCU by means of an EA which provides a positive value judgment of the descriptive account previously produced; by virtue of the sequence-closing position in which it is produced, it seems to work as a summary assessment (Pillet-Shore 2001, 2003).

[Extract 4.4 – PTM1h]

119  **T2**  
  *eh where possible in lesson he will use (. ) my computer and use google translator if*
  *there's [anything* he doesn't understand so [he's* (. ) he's taking the initiative to*
  * (. ) to help himself*

EAs can be placed in different sequential positions within the utterance; EAs acting as summary assessments can also be placed in initial position, as is the case in extracts 4.5 and 4.6, where EAs clearly explicitate the favourable nature of the evaluation, then further substantiated by the more informative account that constitutes the utterance.

[Extract 4.5 – PTM1a]

  1  **T1**  
  *the next one is his (. ) eh art work (. ) and he is making progress (. ) and is*
  *currently working on a grade C*

[Extract 4.6 – PTM1h]

113  **T2**  
  *ok ehm so that's (. ) that's exams (. ) but in terms of classwork Ax is doing very well*
  * (. ) his book is (. ) you know very well laid out (. ) very neat (. ) he does his homework*
  * (. ) and hands [it in on time*

Many analogies with the findings from monolingual PTMs can also be found when delivering unfavourable evaluations, through which teachers raise problems about, or criticisms of, the children’s or family’s attitude or performance. This suggests that teachers do not seem to modify the way they talk or deliver evaluations in triadic exchanges. As will be shown in the next chapter, what seems to change is the degree of responsibility taken by the teachers for the outcome of the events, and the fact that they give considerable leeway to the interpreter, without sanctioning or questioning their attitude.
In particular, my data shows that EAs are often used as mitigating devices of a potentially dispreferred action (namely the unfavourable evaluation). The tendencies in the way teachers build their unfavourable reports are generally in line with the ones identified by Pillet-Shore (2001:35) in her monolingual data, which could be summarised as follows:

There is a strong tendency for teachers to position “+” (favorable) evaluations before “-” (unfavorable) evaluations; teachers will deliver multiple, consecutive “+” evaluations, but not consecutive “-” evaluations; and teachers also attempt to follow “-” evaluations with “+” evaluations, whenever possible.

Generally, in my data, most instances of favourable EAs are placed before the unfavourable evaluation, as is the case in extract 4.7.

[Extract 4.7 – PTM2h]

365  T2  il discorso loro è questo che: in questi piccoli gruppi lavorano molto bene (. )
      the thing is that in these small groups they work really well
366  problema è che quando si trovano da soli ( .) @non fanno niente@ cioè il discorso
      the problem is that when they are on their own they don’t do anything I mean the issue
367  di fare il compito a casa da soli non sono autonomi: nella
      of doing the homework at home they are not autonomous on their own

Extract 4.7 starts with a favourable EA produced by T2 (in questi piccolo gruppi lavorano molto bene, line 365), which is then followed by the instance of negative evaluation, clearly stating that there is a problem, i.e. the fact that when the children are on their own, they do not do anything (line 366). A further device used to mitigate this negative account is the laughter (signalled by the symbol @ in the transcript); this observation is consistent with the literature on the use of laughter in conversation, according to which one of its possible uses is as a mitigating device (e.g. Jefferson 1979, 1984a).

Extract 4.8 is similar, and is one of the hybrid instances of reporting turns delivered partly by reading the school record, partly by commenting spontaneously on it. In particular, T2 is commenting on the child’s attitude, saying that he sometimes tends to impose his behaviour on his classmates. The EA (line 144) precedes the
negative evaluation (lines 144-145), which is further expanded via a more descriptive account.

[Extract 4.8 – PTM3e]

144 T2 e nel comportamento abbiamo scritto generalmente adeguato (.) va a volte richiamato and in the behaviour we wrote generally appropriate sometimes he needs to be rebuked
145 perché tende a imporre ai compagni la sua volontà [cioè è* [mol*to: (;)ehm: cerca because he tends to impose his will on his mates I mean he’s very he tries
146 proprio di: (;) vuole far fare agli altri quello che vuole [lui* (;) devono stare zitti quando he wants to make the others do what he wants to do they must be silent when
147 lo dice lui (;) poi a lui dà molto fastidio la confusione perché probabilmente in Nigeria he says so then he is very annoyed by confusion because probably in Nigeria
148 non era abituato he was not used to

Extract 4.9 shows another practice (also found in monolingual PTMs) used by teachers to mitigate the delivery of an unfavourable evaluation i.e. the fact of “removing all agency and thus any mention of the student as actor” (Pillet-Shore 2001:41).

[Extract 4.9 – PTM1m]

164 T3 I’ve been pleased with the way Ax has worked on it most of the time (;) ehm
165 sometimes (;) a little bit of a lack of focus

In extract 4.7 a clear reference to the children as the referent of the evaluation is provided by the pronoun they (in Italian the use of the pronoun loro as a subject is optional, given that the verb conjugated in the third person plural makes it immediately clear who the speaker is talking about). In extract 4.9, the child is only explicitly referred to while delivering the favourable EA by using his name (i.e. Ax, anonymised in the transcript for confidentiality reasons); the second TCU (sometimes a little bit of a lack of focus, line 165) does not feature any subjects or verbs, but exclusively a qualified noun (lack of focus), further mitigated by the quantifier a little bit. Pillet-Shore (2001:41-42) describes a similar instance in her data, and explains that “by removing the student as the agent and removing the verb (and therefore making neither active nor passive tense necessary), and using the qualifier ‘little’ to minimise the seriousness of the evaluation, the teacher mitigates and qualifies his unfavorable evaluation”.

154
Extract 4.10 shows another instance of a negative account preceded by a favourable EA; the teacher is reporting on the lack of proficiency of the child in English (*he is not able to express himself as he would like*, lines 27-28), after commenting on the fact that he, nevertheless, seems to be able to understand (*I believe... that the understanding is there*, line 25).

**[Extract 4.10 – PTM1c]**

25 T2 so I believe from speaking to Ax that (.) the understanding is there

[...]

27 T2 but it's (.) obviously the language that's holding him back he's not able to: (.)

28 express himself as he [would like

The addition of the specification *as he would like* seems to further mitigate the unfavourable evaluation about the lack of ability of the child to express himself fluently in English. Furthermore, the informative account places emphasis on the *language* as the subject of the utterance, thus removing the focus from the child; this construction seems to mitigate the unfavourable report, while providing a sort of justification for the child’s poor performance. Through this move, teachers seem to “avoid direct assignation of blame and mitigate children’s responsibility for the problems and violations that they identified” (Sanchez & Orellana 2006:234). This is also confirmed by Pillet-Shore, who explains that accounts can be paired up with evaluating utterances to “at least in part, neutralize the teacher’s criticism and exculpate the student” (2001:40). The practice of adding EAs acknowledging the difficulty or complexity of the language to partially justify the negative performance of the children is found in a number of extracts from different PTMs, where they contribute to building both reporting and recommending turns (e.g. PTM2g). In extracts 4.11 and 4.12, they deliver reporting turns:

**[Extract 4.11 - PTM1e]**

58 T2 ok so it's quite (.) quite a bit lower (.) the exams are only thirty minutes (.) and

59 they're multiple choice eh and the language is very (.) very difficult for him
Extract 4.12 – PTM1b

14 T2 "let’s just see then" (1.93) right so (.) I would say Ax is doing very very well in science (.) I know that his results aren’t as (.) high (.) as he’d like (xxx) ’d like

[...]

17 T2 ah but in terms of science it’s very difficult with the language the language is very specific

Extract 4.13 shows another possible format for the delivery of unfavourable report, where EAs seem to ‘wrap’ the negative account raising the problem of the child’s lack of ability to write and read properly in Italian. In doing so, the negative report is strongly attenuated.

Extract 4.13 – PTM2d

149 T1 io però vorrei dire che BX è un bambino b:en inserito (.) ha trovato but I would like to say that Bx is a well-integrated child he has found tanti amici all’interno della classe (.) viene a scuola mi sembra volentieri many friends in the classroom it seems to me that he goes to school willingly eh e si è ben inserito insomma cioè questo è molto positivo con i compagni parla and he is well-integrated well I mean this is very positive with his classmates he speaks italiano (.) e: lo capisce lo parla c’è rimasto il problema della Italian and he understands it he speaks it there is still the problem of della d- del saperlo scrivere saperlo leggere però: eh: lo vedo being able to write and read it but I see him bene all’interno della classe (.) ben inserito well in the classroom well integrated

In my corpus, I have found no instances of unfavourable EAs within reporting turns regarding the child’s performance and attitude; when produced, they mainly occur within recommending turns. The only instance of an unfavourable EA within a reporting turn is in extract 4.14, which refers to the family’s attitude; T1 starts her reporting turn by expressing her and her colleague’s need (as indicated by the use of the first person plural) to have more contact with the family; this turn not only represents an instance of unfavourable report, but can be qualified as a complaint towards the family’s attitude. Nevertheless, in line with the argument that teachers tend to consider unfavourable evaluations as dispreferred actions, the formulation chosen to produce this reporting turn is very mitigated. Extract 4.14 shows that, rather than making the family accountable for the lack of contacts, teachers place emphasis on themselves and express their own feelings with regard to the situation, i.e. the fact that they miss having closer
exchanges with the family. This formulation seems to downplay the seriousness of the issue at hand, thus making the action less dispreferred and more acceptable.

[Extract 4.14 - PTM2a]

T1  ecco una cosa che ci manca un pochetti:no è il rapporto con la famig- con la right  what we lack  a bit  is the relationship with the family with the
famiglia (.) gli avvisi non vengono firmati (1.51) ehm::: (.) percui non sappiamo
family  notices are not signed  so we never know
mai se quando deve uscire pri::ma o:: c’è qualco:sa (.) dobbiamo telefonare a
if when he has to leave earlier or there is something  we need to call
casa (.) per essere sicure che poi siano: letti e questo è un po’ un problema
home  to make sure that these are read  and this a bit of a problem

I shall conclude this section with the analysis of a ‘deviant’ case, i.e. an extract in which teachers acknowledge their inability to report on, and thus evaluate, the child due to the fact that he has not followed all the class activities, mainly because of his lack of knowledge of Italian. What the teachers do here is suspend their judgment, so that their report cannot be qualified as either favourable or unfavourable. The teachers start to explain the situation following a question uttered by the mother (and translated by the interpreter), i.e. why on the school report there are no grades (line 177). Only the relevant parts of teacher-produced talk are reproduced in extract 4.15; in the first fragment of the extract (lines 184-189), T2 is explaining the reasons why they have decided not to provide any evaluations of the child’s performance during the first semester.

[Extract 4.15 - PTM2e]

T2  [si perché* è ancora in fase della prima
yes because he is still in the phase of early
alfabetizzazione  magari non ha partecipato a tutte le attività non ha fatto tutti
writing and reading skills so perhaps he has not taken part in all the activities he has not done
i compiti come gli altri perciò era ehm im: impossibile dare una [valutazione
all the homework like the others so it was impossible to give an evaluation
T1  [zione
T1  [impossibile
T1  to evaluate
Following a brief exchange between the two teachers who were present in the meeting, INT intervenes and asks for a clarification about this decision, i.e. whether the lack of evaluation is a good or a bad sign for the child (lines 196-197). T2’s answer (lines 198-201) is fairly vague; she explains the method used to deliver the evaluation, and she accompanies her explanation with a sort of disclaimer, explaining that at the secondary school (where she teaches) they have adopted a different evaluating system based on learning tiers, while at the primary schools her colleagues have decided to wait before giving out grades because they did not have enough information about the child to be able to evaluate his academic performance. By providing this account, T2 seems to distance herself from the decision, without answering INT’s question explicitly.

What follows this fragment is INT’s rendition to M, in which she tries to explain the gist of the decision; M does not provide a clear uptake but limits herself to nodding and saying yes. At this point, the other teacher (T1) intervenes, as reproduced in lines
In this passage, T1 answers INT’s question, and she clearly provides an evaluation in the form of a litote, i.e. a rhetorical device to allow speakers to allude to or hint at a delicate matter without explicit mention of a potentially dispreferred referent (Bergmann 1992). This brief exchange shows that the lack of an evaluation seems to be oriented to by teachers as a potentially dispreferred action, which requires some sort of remedial action to maintain the collaborative frame of PTMs.

To sum up, in my data, as in monolingual PTMs, teachers show a preference for favourable EAs when packaging reporting turns. When the report is positive, EAs mainly seem to function as intensifying devices, possibly in the attempt to display alignment with the mother. When the report is negative, favourable EAs seem to be used to attenuate the impact of the dispreferred action and justify the child’s conduct or performance. It may be argued that the ultimate goal is to reassure the mother and prevent any potential points of conflict from arising. This confirms findings from research on monolingual PTMs, according to which adding favourable EAs to unfavourable evaluations is seen as one of the practices displayed by teachers to avoid conflict and maintain social solidarity. In line with Pillet-Shore (2001), the use of EAs to package unfavourable reporting turns seems to show that teachers treat unfavourable evaluations as dispreferred and have a tendency to combine them with more favourable evaluations, possibly in the attempt to attenuate the negative import of the former. The lack of unmitigated unfavourable reporting turns and the tendency to treat explicit unfavourable evaluations as dispreferred moves confirms the ultimately collaborative nature of these encounters. Section 4.2.2 will introduce some instances of EAs which contribute to building turns accomplishing the second action performed by teachers i.e. recommending.

4.2.2 Recommending

The second environment in which EAs have been identified in my data (though less frequently than in reporting turns, 8 instances in total – see Table 4.2) is in proximity to the formulation of a recommendation. In this study, I will call recommendation a specific action which if often produced by teachers, and which combines advice-giving with formulating a request. In other words, teachers put forward a request which is about (what they believe is) the best thing to do, thus indirectly giving advice to the mothers. These requests are mainly dispreferred, i.e. they deal with delicate matters and may not encounter a positive response from the mother; this could be one of the reason
why they are rarely straightforward. EAs seem to play quite a relevant role in their packaging.

Both favourable and unfavourable EAs are found in this sequential positioning; they seem to act as task-opening devices, as prefatory moves to introduce the action that follows. In particular, they provide an explanation or a justification for what may be heard as a potentially controversial or problematic action performed by the speaker. In doing so, teachers (as was the case for reporting turns embedding EAs) display their epistemic right to evaluate the assessable via EA(s) before (and/or after) making a request which sounds like a recommendation, as it is seemingly produced to suggest the ‘best solution’ to the issue discussed. As anticipated in 4.2.1, instances of unfavourable EAs are mainly found in this sequential environment; in other words, a negative, potentially dispreferred evaluation is often followed by suggestions, in the form of a recommendation, on what ‘should be done’. This is in line with the solution-oriented nature of teachers’ talk (Wine 2007).

Extract 4.16 shows various practices used by the teacher to recommend the same solution, i.e. that the child attends some lunchtime extra hours. Such a solution is dispreferred for the mother, as she does not want her child to be overloaded with work.

[Extract 4.16 – PTM1a]

6  T1  he would benefit from attending some (.) lunchtime sessions
   [...]  
8  T1  he will have difficulty understanding (.) the work (2.34)
9  so (.) he really needs to come back at lunchtime to get that individual help
   [...]  
12 T1  that would be really good help for Ax

* “he” in the utterance above refers to the child, i.e. Ax

The first formulation of the request (line 6) is in a plain format; the verb benefit projects an assessment on the part of the teacher about the value of such a solution, as helping the child overcome, at least partially, his problems. After the interpreter’s rendition (which is not given in the extract), a recommendation follows (he really needs to come back at lunchtime to get that individual help, line 9); this is produced after a negative EA (he will have difficulties understanding the work, line 8). By means of this assessment, the teacher assumes authority in knowing the students’ problems and being able to provide a suitable solution. By producing an unfavourable EA, T1 seems to place emphasis on a negative scenario that may become true if the solution suggested is
not implemented. A third formulation of the same request on the part of T1 is presented as a sequence-closing move (line 12), and aims to persuade M to agree with the request. Finally, extract 4.17 shows the last formulation of the same request, which is performed later in the encounter, and follows M’s request for clarification about these extra hours of art.

[Extract 4.17 – PTM1o]

231 T1 cause really it’s because they’re (.) working (.) independently (.) on (.) she feels
232 that Ax would really benefit (.) from additional help

Extract 4.18 shows another instance of a request put forward by T1 which is prefaced by an account (i compiti vengono fatti non vengono fatti, lines 118-119). Such an account is, however, not devoid of an evaluative import; building on Rasmussen (2010:740), we can consider this account as an instance of an “implicitly accomplished assessment”, i.e. as an action which “may not only proffer a formulated assessment […] [but which] encompass[es] an (implicit) assessment” (ibid.). In extract 4.18, the account could be heard as complaining, as it projects an unfavourable assessment of the child’s conduct, even though it is constructed by T1 in such a way that it is not clear whether it is within the domain of responsibility of the child or of the mother. This seems to justify the subsequent request, while indirectly sanctioning the family’s lack of monitoring of what the child does at home.

[Extract 4.18 – PTM2c]

118 T1 si ehm questo ehm a casa a volte si danno dei compiti eh i compiti vengono fatti
yes this at home sometimes one gives some homework the homework is done
119 non vengono fatti magari DIRE di farli poi non controllarli come: [se sono fatti*
is not done perhaps say to do it then not checking how whether it has been done
120 bene o male ma che siano fatti capitò prova
well or not but that it is done right try

Extract 4.19 shows a different, more mitigated way of constructing a recommendation, i.e. by prefacing the actual request with a positive assessment of the children’s current performance.
The teacher starts off her contribution by means of an assessment of the current situation, i.e. of the children’s level of proficiency in Italian (in italiano...hanno raggiunto un buon livello di comunicazione, lines 274-275). The request follows immediately, and sounds like an imposition due to its sentential packaging with the modal verb devono, i.e. must (devono cominciare a leggere e a studiare, line 276). The request is also further intensified by questo è fondamentale (line 276), which emphasises the necessity of it; it is then followed by the description of a negative scenario (i.e. lack of academic progress) that would occur if the recommendation was not followed (lines 277-279). In contrast to the initial assessment, this account does not contain any explicit person reference forms; on the contrary, it is produced via a zero-person format (se uno...non l'affronta mai, line 278) through which the account is constructed as generic (i.e. applicable to anyone). In doing so, once again teachers present their solution as a condition sine qua non to achieve that goal and distance themselves by mitigating a direct dispreferred action.

Through EAs, teachers display their epistemic knowledge of the assessable; in the case of recommendations, this seems to entitle them to suggest the ‘best solution’ to the issue discussed. In monolingual conversation, such a solution could be achieved interactively by virtue of the mother’s and teachers’ complementary knowledge about the assessable. To succeed in their task, teachers need to establish and maintain a common ground with parents, thus balancing concern and support, criticism and encouragement. For an interpreter, handling this situation may turn into a very complex task, though a crucial one to empower both parties and enable them to communicate efficiently while preventing conflicts and misunderstandings.
To conclude, in line with Mondada’s research (2009:4), it seems plausible to argue that, in both the sequential environments identified in previous sections (reporting and recommending), EAs can be seen as a “resource mobilized for the management of particular episodes of talk”. In other words, assessments seem to contribute to the sentential packaging of the action performed by the utterance in which they are embedded. They may act as intensifiers or mitigating devices, and contribute to modifying the illocutionary force of an utterance and orienting the recipient towards a preferred response, so as to achieve alignment and collaboration. Assessing a referent necessarily requires some kind of access to the referent being assessed; PTMs seem to be characterised by knowledge complementarity rather than asymmetry between primary parties (i.e. teachers and mothers) about the referent (i.e. the child). In triadic encounters, this scenario is further complicated by the fact that mutual access to knowledge and epistemic stance (encouraged by the production of assessments) is mediated by interpreters, who do not have the same epistemic authority about the referent as the party who has produced the source utterance, but are in a privileged position, as they have access to what both parties are saying.

However, stating that interpreters have no epistemic authority at all would be as paradoxical as upholding the model promoting complete neutrality. The extent to which rights and responsibilities related to knowledge and information are affected by the presence of an interpreter can be investigated, as they are indexed within the talk through a series of practices that can be identified and analysed. Several resources which entail shifts and departures from the source utterances can be noticed in the interpreters’ renditions. Using these resources, interpreters may manage claims of epistemic authority by asserting the socioepistemic rights associated with particular social identities, or by deferring to the rights associated with the identities of others (Heritage & Raymond 2005).

The instances analysed so far are out-of-context and serve the purpose of identifying some traits of teacher-produced talk. No preliminary thoughts on their interactional impact can be put forward, as the response of the other participants in the interaction, and the positioning of these utterances within the sequential organisation of talk, has not been taken into account so far. In chapter 5, the analytical focus will be shifted to the interpreters’ behaviour in interaction and, in particular, to some of the discourse practices they display when handling evaluative utterances. As a next step, section 4.3 will highlight some general gaze dynamics which seem to characterise the
encounters collected, before moving on to a more fine-grained analysis of gaze in association with verbal behaviour in selected sequences.

4.3 Gaze as an indicator of the interpreter’s positioning

As noted in 2.4.2, the role of gaze in monitoring and regulating conversational behaviour has long been acknowledged and investigated, especially in monolingual interaction. Studies on mediated interaction have mainly focused on these functions of gaze, with the exception of Bot (2005), who takes into account the role of therapists’ gaze in affecting patterns of interpreter’s engagement/disengagement, inclusion/exclusion and Mason (forthcoming), who focuses on the expressive function of gaze and states that

beyond serving to confirm activity roles that have probably been decided or at least assumed in advance of any particular encounter, gaze seems to play an active role in initiating and responding to positions that are projected, accepted or rejected by each participant in a constant process of recontextualisation.

Gaze is not integrated in my analysis to find a direct correlation between its use and the actual moment where EAs are produced. Building on Mason, I suggest that gaze may be used as an additional resource for triggering and modulating one’s action; combined with verbal behaviour, gaze can prove useful to disambiguate certain conversational moves implemented by interpreters (e.g. the production of RFP assessments) and it may be considered an indicator of the different positionings taken up by the latter, which evolve on a moment-by-moment basis. For instance, in the sequences analysed, constant gaze shift from mother to teacher and vice versa seems to indicate a monitoring function performed by gaze, mainly when in listening mode. Gaze shifts towards the end of an utterance when in speaking mode can be matched with the positioning of interpreters as coordinators. More interesting for the purpose of this study are instances of held, mutual gaze between one of the parties and the interpreter, which seem to confirm that interpreters are treated and act as fully-fledged participants in interaction. Furthermore, held gaze from the interpreter directed to one of the parties who is either looking down or looking away may be seen, in combination with verbal
behaviour, as a way of re-including the party in the communicative framework or of pursuing a response which is perceived as missing.

Before bringing the verbal and non-verbal dimensions together in selected sequences (as will be done in chapter 5), I will focus on the latter exclusively, with a view to characterising some gaze patterns which emerge as specific to the PTMs analysed. Given the interactionist approach adopted, the gaze behaviour of each participant will be accounted for; my findings will then be compared with findings from Mason (forthcoming), who has worked on mediated immigration hearings involving IO (immigration officers) and AS (asylum seekers), and Bot (2005), who has devoted some sections of her doctoral thesis to gaze behaviour in mediated mental healthcare encounters between TH (therapists) and P (patients).

In many settings, interpreters are still perceived as invisible entities and specifically instructed to sit behind one of the parties, as to enable them to look at each other directly (e.g. Wadensjö 2001; Bot 2005). My dataset provides a good example of the opposite scenario, i.e. one where a pronounced involvement is displayed by interpreters. This is also conveyed at the level of gaze, with the interpreters mostly gazing and being gazed at by the other parties-at-talk. Starting from the institutional party, Ts in speaking mode rarely maintain sustained gaze with M; rather, they tend to either constantly shift their gaze from M to INT or, very often, to exclusively address the latter, thus treating him/her as a fully-fledged participant. This may be due to the lack of an established common practice, which, on the contrary, characterises other settings, as will be shown later on in the section. Furthermore, the semi-formal nature of PTMs and the perception of interpreters as mediators in this setting may create the favourable conditions for teachers to naturally address interpreters directly, and treat them as their direct interlocutors. This pattern differs considerably from Mason’s and Bot’s studies, where the IO and TH tend to look at AS and P respectively when speaking; their gaze is only punctuated by looks away or brief glances at INT. This suggests that the institutional parties are willing to display continuous engagement with the ‘laymen’, and disengagement with INT, while in my data the opposite scenario seems more likely to occur.

No mutual gaze is normally established between Ms and Ts when the latter are in listening mode either, namely during M’s turns, while being interpreted and while listening to INT’s rendition of M’s talk. In the first case (i.e. during M’s turns), mutual gaze may be established when M starts talking, but then either Ts constantly shift their gaze from INT to M, or they look away, thus self-excluding (often they engage in
schisms or parallel activities, such as talking to their colleague or reading the school report) until the interpreter restores the participatory framework. While being interpreted, Ts tend to look at INT, possibly waiting for a signal that they can resume the floor, or they look away. These gaze configurations may also be influenced by the fact that Ms, both when speaking and listening to INT’s rendition of Ts’ talk, mainly gaze at INT, thus treating him/her as a privileged interlocutor. This scenario is totally different from Mason’s and Bot’s studies; when in listening mode, the predominant pattern is that IO and TH tend to look at AS and P respectively while listening to their turns and while being interpreted. In the first case, when AS and P are talking, IO’s and TH’s behaviour resembles ordinary monolingual patterns, where listeners focus mainly on the speaker, casting only occasional glances at the other participants. In the second case (i.e. while the institutional representative is being interpreted), the only non-institutional data available is from Bot, who points out that TH ends up gazing at a party who is listening to someone else, given that P mostly looks at INT while the latter is interpreting TH’s talk. Bot (2005:136) suggests that held gaze to a party who is looking at someone else is “unnatural” according to Goodwin’s (1981) observations on gaze patterns in monolingual interaction, and has two main interactional implications. Firstly, TH “treats the interpreter as a disengaged non-participant, different from the other participants in the dialogue” (ibid.); secondly, this gaze pattern may be “felt as an intrusive act” (ibid.), given that TH seems to watch P while the latter is listening to someone else in order to monitor his/her responses and reactions to their words.

Last but not least, in my study, Ts, while listening to INT’s rendition of M’s talk, tend to gaze at the former directly, thus displaying a gaze pattern which is closer to natural, ordinary monolingual conversation, when mutual gaze is normally established between speakers and recipients. This is similar to Mason’s study, where IOs engages more, at least non-verbally, with INTs during their rendition of AS speech, thus ratifying INTs as fully-fledged participants. However, Mason notices that, even though the orientation of the INT’s head is mostly towards IO when either speaking or listening to him/her, direct gaze at him/her is strictly limited. This behavioural pattern is similar to Lang’s (1978:235) finding that his court interpreter “signalled his status as neutral”. Conversely, Bot points out that THs tend not to look at INTs when the latter is addressing them to interpret P’s turns, thus displaying a certain tendency to disengage from INT.
As suggested by Mason’s and Bot’s studies, the IO and TH behaviour in speaking and listening mode may be the result of training guidelines or, more simply, of a regulated behaviour which has gained consensus within their community of practice. This point is also shared by Wadensjö (2001:83), who states that in her study “three interpreters mentioned they had been specifically instructed by the therapist to avoid looking at the patient and to avoid moving their head back and forth between the parties to mark the anticipated exchange of turns”. Conversely, my data shows less mutual engagement between the parties than previous studies, which suggests the lack of a similar regulated behaviour, and a tendency to display a gaze behaviour which is closer to the dynamics of spontaneous multiparty interaction.

Focusing on the non-institutional party, Ms mainly look at INTs when speaking, listening to INTs rendition of Ts’ talk and listening to INT’s interpretation of their own turns (in this case, they may also look away). Instances of Ms gazing at Ts directly are, therefore, very limited in my dataset. This is only partially in line with previous studies; while no data is available for AS behaviour (given that Mason works on what he calls “impoverished data”, where no recordings are available for AS), P in speaking mode sometimes addresses TH, sometimes INT or looks away, especially when talking about stressful issues. Furthermore, P, who normally holds mutual gaze with INT when the latter is rendering TH’s talk, tends not to treat INT as an ordinary speaker when INT is rendering his/her talk, but to focus on the listener, i.e. TH, or to turn their gaze away.

Shifting our focus to INTs, in my data they display very engaged gaze behaviour by looking directly at the party who is talking or whom they are listening to. This seems to support the argument that they play an active role in interaction; it also suggests that their attitude may not be constrained by the institution in which they are working, possibly by virtue of its semi-formal nature. In his study, Mason (forthcoming) shows that such a communicative style displayed by interpreters is an exception to the more general ‘rule’ according to which interpreters, both in listening and speaking mode, tend to look away and avert gaze. As Mason points out, AS especially does not receive much sign of engagement from both IO and INT. In my study, Ms equally do not receive much sign of engagement from Ts, while INTs directly engage with them, thus possibly compensating for the lack of engagement shown by Ts. The element of “relaying by replaying” (Wadensjö 1998:247) pointed out by Mason in the ‘expressiveness’ with which the only interpreter displaying a communicative style renders AS’s talk is applied by interpreters in my study when rendering T’s talk, through the use of specific verbal moves combined with direct, mutual gaze with M. Closeness to mothers is certainly
expressed by direct mutual gaze, which seems to be used to signal affiliation; the interactional impact of the specific verbal behaviour displayed in combination with held gaze will be analysed in 5.3. INT’s engaged way of addressing the parties directly when in speaking or listening mode is closer to Bot’s findings, where INT, when rendering P’s or TH’s talk, mainly gazes at the other primary party, often shifting his/her gaze from TH to P (and vice versa), possibly in the attempt to emphasise that s/he is rendering P’s or TH’s words while maintaining the contact between all the participants.

It is worth noting that, in my data, the gaze patterns highlighted seem to happen regardless of the participants’ seating arrangement (for a schematic representation in my data, see table 3.1). In all the PTMs analysed, the amount of mutual gaze between one of the parties and INT largely exceeds the amount of held mutual gaze between T and M, regardless of whether INT sits between the mother and the teachers (as in PTM1 and PTM3) or next to the mother and opposite the teachers (as in PTM2). It may therefore be suggested that the very engaged attitude may not be due to contingent ‘environmental’ factors, but rather to the way interpreters are perceived in these mediated PTMs. Nevertheless, different seating arrangements made gaze shifts more or less visible markers of turn organisation and monitoring. Shifts from the mother to the teachers and vice versa are more easily pinpointed in PTM1 and PTM3, given that they entail head movement, while in PTM2, gaze shifts from one party to the other are often simply performed by eye movement. This also seems to be the case in Mason’s studies, where the seating arrangement is very similar across the five interviews recorded; Mason explains that INTs are close to the IO desk, their chair is slightly angled and, if they look ahead, they are gazing midway between IO ad AS, while being physically closer to AS and, with the latter sitting opposite IO. On the contrary, Bot’s data presents a different seating arrangement per group of sessions (six sessions in total), thus gaze behaviour may have been more affected by the different configurations. In particular, the seating arrangement of what Bot calls group A is that of an equilateral triangle with P in the middle. Group C is characterised by an equal distance between participants, with, in one case P in the middle, while in another case, INT in the middle. The most different seating arrangement is the one of Group B, where INT sits slightly behind TH, opposite P. Although issue of how seating arrangement may affect gaze patterns is raised in both studies, it is however not explored in any depth. To my knowledge, Wadensjö (2001) is the only study which has focused on this research issue, finally suggesting that “interpreters seem to be more ‘out of the way’ when they are present in
a communicative radius, than if they are present in the room but without access to, and not immediately available in a common, triadic, focused interaction” (ibid.:83).

To sum up, this section has focused on the non-verbal dimension of the interaction, highlighting some gaze configurations which emerge as typical in my dataset as opposed to previous studies. Table 4.3 at the end of this section sums up the main findings from Bot’s, Mason’s and my study which have been addressed in this section, thus facilitating comparison and making similarities and differences more clearly identifiable. The claims made so far are based on the observation of the gaze behaviour displayed by all the participants in the sequences selected. This is in line with the interactionist approach embraced in this study, which stresses the importance of accounting for the behaviour of all parties-at-talk in order to gain a comprehensive picture of what is happening in interaction and a better understanding of the interactional impact of specific verbal and non-verbal moves. Furthermore, by comparing the most recurrent gaze patterns highlighted in my data with those identified in other studies which have accounted for the same dimension in the analysis of mediated interaction, I have pointed out some similarities and differences which support the argument that interpreters, in PTMs, display a very engaged attitude. For instance, differently from previous research on interpreter-mediated interaction which focused on gaze as a variable, this section has shown a tendency from primary parties not to look at each other but at the interpreter, thus treating him/her as a fully-fledged participant. In order to explore what positionings are taken up by interpreters on a moment-by-moment basis, the analysis of gaze needs to go hand-in-hand with the analysis of verbal behaviour. Combining these two dimensions can prove successful in achieving a more thorough understanding of the interactional impact of specific interpreters’ moves.
Table 4.3. Comparison between gaze patterns found in Bot (2005), Mason (forthcoming) and my study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>MASON</th>
<th>BOT</th>
<th>MY STUDY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SPEAKING MODE</strong></td>
<td><strong>IO</strong>&lt;br&gt;  &gt; AS (generally held gaze with a few glances at INT or away; one IO spends most of his speaking time looking away)</td>
<td><strong>TH</strong>&lt;br&gt;  &gt; P (generally held gaze, two TH out of three occasionally address a few glances at INT)</td>
<td><strong>T</strong>&lt;br&gt;  &gt; INT (or shifts gaze constantly from INT to M, with final look at INT in proximity to a TRP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>AS</strong>&lt;br&gt;  N/A</td>
<td><strong>P</strong>&lt;br&gt;  INT or TH (or away when talking about stressful matters)</td>
<td><strong>M</strong>&lt;br&gt;  &gt; INT (mostly, with few occasional glances at T)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>INT</strong>&lt;br&gt;  &gt; Away (mostly) (but one INT looks at IO for most of his speaking time)</td>
<td><strong>INT</strong>&lt;br&gt;  &gt; P or TH</td>
<td><strong>INT</strong>&lt;br&gt;  &gt; T or M</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LISTENING MODE</strong></td>
<td><strong>IO</strong>&lt;br&gt;  &gt; AS when being interpreted and when listening to AS turns&lt;br&gt;  &gt; INT when s/he is interpreting AS turns</td>
<td><strong>TH</strong>&lt;br&gt;  &gt; P when being interpreted and when listening to P turns (only occasional looks at INT from one of the TH)&lt;br&gt;  ÷ INT when s/he is addressing them</td>
<td><strong>T</strong>&lt;br&gt;  &gt; INT or away when being interpreted or listening to INT’s rendition&lt;br&gt;  &gt; M initially then away or at INT during M turns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>AS</strong>&lt;br&gt;  N/A</td>
<td><strong>P</strong>&lt;br&gt;  &gt; TH (or looks away) when being interpreted&lt;br&gt;  &gt; INT when the latter renders the TH’s turn</td>
<td><strong>M</strong>&lt;br&gt;  &gt; INT or away (mostly)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>INT</strong>&lt;br&gt;  &gt; Away (mostly) when listening to IO&lt;br&gt;  &gt; AS when listening to AS (one exception of INT mostly looking away)</td>
<td><strong>INT</strong>&lt;br&gt;  &gt; P or TH (depending on who is talking)</td>
<td><strong>INT</strong>&lt;br&gt;  &gt; T or M (depending on who is talking)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Keys:<br> Mason’s study: IO = immigration officer; AS = asylum seeker; INT = interpreter<br> Bot’s study: TH = therapist; P = patient; INT = interpreter<br> Davitti’s study: T = teacher; M = mother; INT = interpreter<br> > = looks at<br> ÷ = does not look at<br> N/A = data not available
4.4 Conclusions

This chapter has laid the foundations for the more fine-grained analysis that will be carried out in chapter 5. Firstly, it has provided a characterisation of teachers’ talk (with respect to monolingual PTMs). In particular, section 4.2 has focused on the way teachers structure their evaluations of children, given that they are the parties who convene the meeting and normally steer its overall structural organisation. Findings from the investigation of the teachers’ way of constructing their evaluations appear to be in line with research on monolingual interaction; in particular, teachers are found to emphasise children’s positive attitudes, results and their future potential, thus they treat favourable evaluations as preferred actions. At the same time, they deploy strategies and practices to mitigate or attenuate unfavourable evaluations, which are considered dispreferred, in their effort to come across as approachable and to maintain a favourable stance towards the parents. The characterisation of teachers’ talk is crucial as it lays the foundations for the analysis of the moves implemented by the interpreters when rendering such instances. Furthermore, it highlights some important features of this type of institutional encounter, i.e. PTMs, which has never been explored by studies on DI.

Secondly, in 4.3 the focus is shifted to the non-verbal dimension, with a view to describing some general gaze dynamics in the data analysed, and highlighting also in this case some similarities and differences vis-à-vis previous studies. The verbal and non-verbal dimensions have been considered separately in this chapter; one observation that can be drawn from the analysis conducted so far is that the ‘verbal’ work done by the teachers to engage with parents (as highlighted in 4.2) does not seem to be supported by visual engagement, given that instances of direct mutual gaze between teachers and parents appear to be very limited (as pointed out in 4.3). This lack of non-verbal engagement on the part of the teachers seems to be, at least partially, compensated by the interpreters’ very pronounced involvement, even though its interactional consequences are still to be investigated.

This separate, orderly approach to both dimensions has paved the way for chapter 5, which highlights some recurring conversational practices displayed by interpreters in interaction with a view to pinpointing their positioning and how it shifts on a moment-by-moment basis. Chapter 6 will then focus on the interactional impact of the conversational practices identified, i.e. it will discuss whether they prove successful in eliciting agreement, achieving mutual understanding and creating a common ground among the parties-at-talk, thus proving an effective way of mediating.
CHAPTER 5

Analysing the interpreter’s positioning

5.1 Introduction

This chapter identifies some tendencies in the way interpreters handle utterances embedding EAs (addressing sub-research question 2) via the analysis of selected extracts from authentic mediated PTMs. Given that, in DI, “primary parties’ and interpreters’ utterances co-exist in sequences of embodied utterances” (Wadensjö 2004:108), the analysis will also account for the use of gaze in interaction, with a view to investigating how it is used by participants as an interactional resource in conjunction with verbal behaviour in the sequences analysed (addressing sub-research question 3). The underlying assumption is that participants’ verbal and non-verbal behaviour play a central role in shaping their positioning; a combined analysis of verbal behaviour and gaze is a first step towards providing empirical evidence of how understanding is achieved, rather than making claims about it. Gaze is considered an additional variable to obtain a more comprehensive and detailed understanding of how the interpreter’s positioning is realised on a moment-by-moment basis via the combination of verbal and non-verbal cues (addressing sub-research question 4).

My analysis shows how a fine-grained investigation of talk can identify shifts in the interpreters’ positioning, how it is shaped in mediated PTMs and the impact of specific choices on the unfolding of the interaction. In particular, the recurrent tendency displayed by interpreters to produce utterances embedding EAs will be explored. This tendency seems to represent a common practice in my data, through which interpreters seem to manage not only the flow of information, but also differential stances, epistemic rights and responsibilities in the passage from source utterance to rendition, thus displaying a pronounced involvement in the interaction. I will also focus on whether and, if so, how their (lack of) intervention promotes and/or restores inclusion, affiliation, collaboration, cooperation between the parties, which seem to frame monolingual PTMs, where it is normally up to the teachers to steer the unfolding interaction and to ensure a smooth and cooperative interaction.
Wadensjö (2004:107-108) clarifies that, in institutional encounters, representatives of the institution normally select the topics and are responsible for how the interaction unfolds and how the participants’ contributions are evaluated. In mediated encounters, these tasks are, at least partially, shifted to the interpreter, who “willingly or unwillingly ends up taking a certain responsibility for the substance and the progression of talk” (ibid.). In this study, I show that the task of creating a common ground seems to be left almost entirely with the interpreters, without any kind of a priori negotiation with the teachers. The crucial question is how this is pursued and realised in practice. As suggested by Wadensjö (2004:108), “scrutinising talk frame-by-frame, one can detect more precisely how participants distribute control between themselves, how topics are selected, turns at talk are organised and so forth”.

Close scrutiny seems to confirm a general tendency on the part of parents to refrain from engaging in a dialogue with teachers; this differs from findings on monolingual PTMs, where, even though in the initial phases of the interaction parents tend to act more as recipients of what is being said, they also actively contribute to the evaluating process, by providing feedback, asking questions, voicing their doubts and concerns and even, at times, disagreeing with teachers. In my data, this is hardly ever the case; mothers tend to limit themselves to back-channels and do not actively contribute to the process of complementing knowledge, which is so crucial to PTMs. The point is not to find out why mothers behave that way, rather what interpreters do (if anything) in these circumstances and the impact of their attitude on the participatory framework. A final discussion linking the micro- and the macro-levels of analysis and dealing with the impact of the findings (addressing sub-research question 5) will follow in chapter 6.

5.2 Establishing a baseline: maintaining the status quo?

As discussed in 1.2, it is now widely agreed that the myth of the interpreter’s invisibility as well as the traditional conduit model no longer hold up in social mediated scenarios. The nature of social exchange is inherently interactive, and interpreters, like any other participants, have agency and bring their selves into the exchange rather than merely act as linguistic ‘robots’. Using a metaphor, interpreters in face-to-face interactions are caught in a dilemma; they are constantly confronted with a difficult balancing act, i.e. to what extent should they identify with or distance themselves from one party or the
other, where is the boundary to be traced, what are their tasks and socio-epistemic rights and responsibilities in interaction.

Interpreting is an inherently selective process, which entails making choices about what to translate, how, and at what point in the interaction. As pointed out in 3.3.1, variation needs to be acknowledged in the way interpreters render participants’ talk, i.e. interpreters may deem different types of contribution appropriate to particular settings and phases or moments of the interaction. Nevertheless, any shifts or departures from a source utterance need to be analysed against a benchmark; this section examines an instance of unmarked rendition, thus providing a baseline against which to compare the ‘marked’ instances presented later in sections 5.3 and 5.4 and to account for the shifts taken by the interpreters’ rendition. Far from being a value judgment, the term (un)marked simply labels specific patterns which result from empirical observation of actual behaviour in interaction.

Firstly, it is necessary to clarify the notion of (un)markedness as I will be using it in this study. Building on the definition of “unmarked first assessments” in monolingual interaction (Heritage & Raymond 2005:19), I consider ‘unmarked renditions’ those renditions which contain no language that either strengthens or weakens the evaluative source utterance produced by one of the parties. The term unmarked also encompasses the non-verbal dimension, in particular gaze patterns which seem to favour direct engagement between teachers and mothers when addressing each other, as is the case in monolingual conversation. This does not mean that this study embraces a view of interpreters as invisible entities; on the contrary, interpreters cannot but be visible. What needs to be further investigated is to what extent they can intervene in interaction and what the impact of such behaviour is.

Extract 5.1 is taken from PTM1; T2, the English teacher, has just started to report on the child’s academic progress. The sequence is reproduced from its onset; the teacher comments on the present condition of the child (i.e. the fact that he is on track), then she mentions some future activities that will be undertaken by the class and finally produces an overall evaluation of the child’s conduct and progress in general.
so ehm he's (.) he's on task for (.) you know he's he's up (.) up to (.) ehm speed with everything that he's got to complete (.) he's completed everything (.)

[ehm: we're about* to start some poetry (.) sorry @@@]

he has finished this

and he has completed everything is up to speed with what he had to do and now

he will start a poem

and we're about to start some (.) poetry work ehm next week  [@@@@]

settimana* (.) inizieranno una poesia

week they will start a poem

mhmm
so at the moment going well ehm and his English is

is communicating it does seem to me to have improved a lot

ehm la sua comunicazione in inglese le sembra essere migliorata

his communication in English seems to her to have improved

and he does ask if he doesn't understand everything

e se non capisce qualcosa chiede

and if he does not understand something he asks

have you got any questions for me?

["domande?"

questions

eh I wanted to ask about the English exam when it will be

eh volevo chiedere dell’esame di inglese quando sarà
Extract 5.1 has been selected as it does not seem to display any particularly marked patterns, either at a verbal or at a non-verbal level. At a verbal level, INT’s rendition could be considered a ‘close’ rendition in the sense that it generally does not seem to alter the original content of the source utterance. Nevertheless, it is not a word-for-word translation of the source utterance; for instance, the EA produced at line 185 (going well) is omitted. It is uttered by T2 while holding mutual gaze with M; the transcript shows that, as soon as T2 delivers her positive evaluation, INT briefly shifts his gaze to M while T2 is uttering a lengthened ehm, i.e. a filler which seems to work as a turn-holding device, possibly giving T2 the time to gather her thoughts and think about what to say next without leaving anyone the possibility to take over. INT’s shift lasts less than a second and it can be described as a monitoring shift, i.e. through it, INT seems to monitor communication to ensure that it does not break down and that understanding is achieved. INT’s gaze shift at this point in interaction seems to be performed by INT to make sure that M is following what is going on, given that her partial knowledge of English enables her to understand simple and short utterances. The favourable, and thus preferred nature of the assessment, combined with a series of contextualisation cues (Gumperz 1982), such as mutual gaze established between M and T2, create an environment in which INT does not feel the need to intervene and provide a rendition of T2’s positive EA. INT’s choice not to intervene at this point preserves the direct link between M and T2, which is rarely established in my data. This also seems to indicate that an apparently more detached attitude is nevertheless accompanied by close monitoring on the part of the interpreter, without however disrupting the opportunities parties have to interact directly.

The analysis of gaze alongside verbal behaviour shows that gaze mainly seems to play a regulatory function, i.e. gaze shifts seem to be produced by INT and M as a turn-management device. For instance, at lines 175-176, INT’s gaze shift from T2 to M is very likely to be linked to the possible transition relevance point projected by T2 at the end of line 175, where her utterance could be considered complete. However, T2 carries on talking, after producing a filled pause (ehm, line 176), which seems to work as a turn-holding device. INT’s gaze then shifts back to T2, whose gaze only shifts to INT after completing her utterance, when she acknowledges INT’s failed attempt at taking the floor by apologising and relinquishes the floor. This negotiation of turn-taking highlights awareness on the part of T2 of the presence of the interpreter, which is made explicit by the sorry uttered at line 176 in mutual gaze with INT. At line 181, T2 shifts gaze to INT towards the end of her utterance, possibly in an attempt to signal that
she is ready to relinquish the floor to the interpreter. INT seems to do the same, i.e. once he has taken the floor, he delivers his rendition and then shifts gaze to T2 once finished. In other words, T2 seems to recognise the interpreter’s presence as a participant in the event, and seems to be adjusting her flow to leave him space to translate. The only time this does not happen is sanctioned by T2’s self-repair (sorry, line 176).

Nevertheless, in extract 5.1, the tasks of establishing shared understanding and a common ground, and of making sure that the interaction can safely move on to the next point on the agenda, are carried out by the teachers, as is normally the case in monolingual PTMs. This clearly emerges at line 191, where INT’s rendition is followed by M uttering the acknowledgment token mhm (Schegloff 1982; Jefferson 1985; Gardner 2001), which seems to show her understanding of what has just been said, even though it does not explicitly signal alignment and/or agreement with it. This is followed by a pause of a few seconds, while mutual gaze is established between T2 and M. This lapse is significant in conversation; because of the format of PTMs, T2 is probably expected to carry on with her reporting activity (as also confirmed by the fact that both INT’s and M’s gaze are addressed to her at this very moment in the interaction). That lapse is not devoid of meaning; the fact that mutual gaze is established at that very moment between T2 and M could also suggest that it was created as an opportunity for M to take the floor. For instance, this might have been a locus for M to complement T2’s knowledge as a response to the favourable assessment produced (when T2 says his English is communicating, it does seem to me to have improved a lot, lines 185-186), to give her point of view or possibly raise any problems, issues or questions she might have. This opportunity, however, is not taken up by M, whose only response is mhm. Likewise, INT does not intervene during this pause, which leads to T2 taking the floor and addressing M directly. The idea that T2 is trying to elicit a response from M is supported by the fact that she explicitly creates an opportunity for M to intervene through the utterance have you got any questions for me? (line 193). At this point, M asks a question about the timing of the English, which is, however, uttered while gazing at the interpreter directly (line 195). Extract 5.1 is an example where one of the main parties-at-talk, T2 in this case, is found to carry out some interactional work to co-construct and display mutual understanding and alignment before moving on to the next task. Creating opportunities for M’s entry into the talk is considered here an “achievement of the talk” (Leiminer & Baker 2000:138) which is not often realised in my data, as the next section will attempt to demonstrate.
Extract 5.1 also shows that gaze can help disambiguate certain pauses or lapse in conversation which might simply be discarded as such if only audio data were available. Secondly, T2 does seem to engage in some sort of interactional work to establish a direct link with M and create opportunities for her to enter the talk and take part in the accomplishment of business together with teachers. Furthermore, if we consider the overall gaze patterns in the sequences analysed, i.e. who the parties tend to look at when talking and listening, extract 5.1 is characterised by a large amount of sustained gaze between M and T2, as would be expected in monolingual interaction. In particular, T2-gaze is mainly directed to M while talking; this is untypical of my dataset, where the most common gaze configuration is mutual gaze between INT and one of the parties, both when in listening and speaking mode, and it is INT who generally establishes when understanding is achieved and when the interaction can move on. Instances of M-gaze addressed to T when the latter is talking and addressing INT are not particularly frequent in my dataset, where during T-talk, Ms often look away and disengage from the participatory framework.

One may expect the unmarked renditions exemplified by extract 5.1 to be the most typical interactive frame across the data, but this is not the case: from the point of view of how they are constructed verbally, 40 instances of interpreter-produced EAs out of 79 can be labelled as close renditions, i.e. they do not either intensify or lower the evaluative bearing of the assessment. The other half falls therefore into the category of marked renditions that will be discussed in the following sections.

5.3 Discourse practices: upgrading renditions

The expression ‘upgrading rendition’ refers to the practice of adding (i.e. independently producing) or intensifying the EA(s) embedded in a source utterance. The definition of upgrading rendition has been tailored in relation to EAs; building on Heritage & Raymond (2005), “grading” refers to how the intensity of assessments changes from source utterance to rendition as well as to the resources displayed to index epistemic rights in evaluative talk. In particular, the terms “upgrading” and “downgrading” are taken from Pomerantz’s (1984) work on the tendencies displayed by interactants in monolingual, face-to-face, ordinary conversation.

Upgrading can be performed through a variety of linguistic and interactional resources, which are not mutually exclusive; I shall focus on renditions upgraded via the production or intensification of EAs. As pointed out in 2.3.4, EAs can have different
shapes, qualities and packaging and they can be found in various sequential positions. By definition, the party who produces an evaluative utterance claims knowledge and epistemic authority over the referent evaluated. The way assessments are dealt with by interpreters in their rendition will also show how epistemic authority is managed by the latter, and the effect that these renditions produce in terms of alignment and affiliation.

Generally speaking, what tends to be upgraded most (but not exclusively) in my data are teachers’ utterances, while mother’s talk is mostly downgraded. As shown in 4.2, I identified 79 instances of interpreter-produced EAs: 59 were produced as a translation of one of the main participants’ talk, while 20 were produced by the interpreter independently. Furthermore, 34 instances of interpreter-produced EAs can be considered as upgrading renditions of an original utterance, which corresponds to 43% of the total number of EAs produced by the interpreter (i.e. 79 instances). It can therefore be claimed that, at least in my data, upgrading via EAs emerges as a noticeable pattern that is worth investigating further.

Focusing on upgrading renditions, assessments can be positioned within the rendition itself; a second, recurring pattern that emerged from the data is the interpreters’ tendency to produce assessments independently in rendition final position, i.e. either as a kind of final tag to their utterances or as a device for sequence expansion. This practice has been identified in some 16 out of 20 instances of independently interpreter-produced EAs. These instances can be considered a sub-category of upgrading renditions; assessments are produced at a point that is dealt with as a possible TRP, treated as satisfactory by the interpreter to achieve mutual understanding and agreement while moving the communication forward. Most of the instances analysed in this chapter fall within this category. A common feature highlighted across them is that the source utterance produced by teachers contains a potentially problematic report or request that could foreshadow a dispreferred response from the mothers. On the basis of their content, I have further grouped the instances into two macro-categories: future-oriented upgrade and justifying upgrade. These labels refer to the interpreter’s rendition, in particular to the function played by the EAs used to perform the upgrade.
5.3.1 Future-oriented upgrading renditions

Extract 5.2 is taken from PTM2; T1 is initiating a new course of action, in particular she is reporting on the child’s behaviour and attitude displayed in class.

[Extract 5.2 – PTM2d]

T1: but I would like to say that Bx is a well-integrated child he has found many friends in the classroom it seems to me that he goes to school willingly and he is well-integrated well I mean this is very positive with his classmates he speaks Italian and he understands it there is still the problem of being able to write it being able to read it but I see him well in the classroom well integrated
(2.13)

155

156  INT  did you get?

157  M  no

158  INT  she said that BX (. ) gets along really well with his mates (. ) he talks with them in

159  Italian (. ) he speaks in Italian he gets along well he’s a happy child and (. ) the only

160  problem with the Italian now that (. ) he doesn’t write (. ) properly yet (. ) and he

161  doesn’t read properly yet but s- he’s starting to speak and he’s speaking better and

162  ⇒ better so little by little he will learn also to wr- how to write and how to read (. ) but

163  he’s he’s well connected with mates (. ) let’s say

164  M  eh: y:es: eh: [BX is a* child (. ) and he’s (connected with) his eh mates (. ) eh

165  classmates and: slowly slowly ehm (da:) da imparare italiano

166  T1  (((cough)))

167  INT  ehm ehm [lo imparerà piano piano

168  M  [poc- si si* piano piano

169  INT  piano piano

170  (1.36)
T1’s initial report (lines 149-154) brings together two sets of information about the child: his in-class behaviour and his problems with reading and writing in Italian. This fragment clearly shows T1’s “tendency to treat unfavourable evaluations as dispreferred, delaying them and positioning them late relative to other, more favourable evaluations in a series” (Pillet-Shore 2001:34 – for a discussion, see 4.2.1). In particular, T1 produces a series of positive EAs (e.g. Bx è un bambino molto inserito, line 149; questo è molto positivo, line 151), which seem to frame the negative report about his problems with the language (c’è rimasto il problema del saperlo scrivere saperlo leggere, lines 152-153), possibly in an attempt to mitigate its dispreferred nature.

At a macro-level, INT’s rendition initially maintains the same information structure as the source utterance; however, at a more micro-level, the interpreter inserts a favourable evaluation of the child’s performance with the language (but he’s starting to speak and he’s speaking better and better, lines 161-162) which was not explicitly formulated by T1. This addition, which is introduced by the conjunction but, is clearly in contrast with the immediately preceding talk, and the content that follows provides an affirmative, favourable ‘spin’ on the previous unfavourable evaluation. This is further
expanded by an instance of positive future-oriented talk (*so little by little he will learn also how to write and how to read*, line 162), which is normally characteristic of teacher’s talk. This second addition by INT does not frame T’s talk as a problem, as it is the case in the source utterance; looking at the fine-grained details of interaction, it is introduced by *so*, which makes it sound like a direct consequence that will soon come to pass.

M’s response (starting at line 164) largely builds on INT’s rendition by repeating the same pieces of information in a mix of English and Italian. In particular, M builds on the instance of future-oriented talk autonomously added by INT (*slowly slowly da imparare italiano*, line 165). At this point, INT repeats the same piece of information in Italian, and both parties display nodding and acknowledgment tokens, signalling that mutual understanding has been achieved during the dyadic sequence between them. T1 displays acceptance and repeatedly displays agreement (*bene si*, line 173; *piano piano si*, line 174; *va bene*, line 175).

The description of verbal behaviour can be complemented with a more thorough description of what happens in terms of gaze patterns. When T1 takes the floor, M almost immediately starts looking away to a “middle-distance” position. M’s behaviour is different from the previous extracts analysed; while in extract 5.1, M tends to look at the party who is talking, here M looks away for most part of T1’s talk, thus displaying disengagement from the participatory framework. Interestingly, there seems to be an initial attempt on the part of T1 to bring M back into the participatory framework; even though T1’s gaze is overall mainly addressed to INT, it shifts to M in proximity to possible TRPs. Mutual gaze between M and T1 is briefly re-established by the end of T1’s rendition; during the 2.13 sec. pause (line 155), M autonomously turns her gaze to INT, who is already looking at her.

INT had been monitoring M’s behaviour throughout T1’s talk, i.e. briefly glancing at M, possibly in the attempt to identify any cues that she is or is not following what is going on. This hypothesis is verified by the explicit question addressed by INT to M at line 156 (*did you get?*). The same gaze configuration can be found throughout INT’s rendition, i.e. mutual gaze between M and INT and T1 looking at INT. Close examination of the data shows that not only is T1’s gaze constantly addressed to INT, but it is also complemented by constant nodding. This suggests that T1, at least

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27 Heath (1986:108) describes the “middle-distance” position in medical contexts as one where “the patient is looking into the middle distance, away from the other, yet at no particular object in the local environment”. Robinson & Stivers (2001) note that this position is often adopted during transitions between different activities.
generally, understands what INT is saying in English, that she also aligns with what she is saying and does not sanction the latter taking up her positioning, at least momentarily. When T1 is in listening mode while M is talking, there is a first attempt by T1 to look at her; nevertheless, this is interspersed with looks-away and gaze is then directed to INT as soon as the latter takes the floor at line 167.

The dyadic sequence between M and INT ends at line 169; it may be argued that, in this case, the upgrade performed by INT has facilitated the achievement, not only of understanding, but also of alignment and of a common ground, given that M reiterates the favourable EA to build her contribution (poco, si piano piano, line 168), which is addressed directly to INT while holding mutual gaze. One can say that mutual understanding has been interactively co-constructed between M and INT via repetition of the same pieces of information, mutual gaze and nodding; T1 is not part of this ‘constructing work’, but limits herself to monitoring INT’s behaviour and displaying agreement. The video also shows T1 uttering va bene (line 175) in Italian, in a very low tone of voice which would probably escape an analysis exclusively based on audio recordings. T1’s behaviour in this extract is typical of teachers in my data, i.e. they hardly ever question or sanction INT’s conduct, but seem to ‘pass the baton’ to him/her and display acceptance of any moves produced (as in line 167, where INT autonomously produces a stretch of talk in Italian – lo imparerà piano piano).

Extract 5.2 is an instance of upgrading rendition through the inclusion of assessments that were not explicitly formulated in the original; in other words, the interpreter establishes a common ground with M by presenting positively the request put forward by T1 via an upgrading rendition. Given that assessing features of something supposes access to the assessable, through the production of such assessments INT seems to claim epistemic rights to evaluate the child. As a consequence, she modifies her positioning, i.e. she identifies with the teachers and carries out what is ultimately supposed to be their task. In this case, the move produced by INT seems to downplay the seriousness of the issue raised by the teacher, as it depicts a scenario which is possibly more positive or more optimistic than the one which emerges from the teacher’s source utterance. INT performs an action which could be described as ‘doing reassuring’, thus taking up a task which would be expected of the institution’s representatives. The extremely engaged positioning of the interpreter is also exemplified by the fact that understanding and agreement are established before bringing the sequence to a close, with both T1 and M looking at INT rather than at each other. The passage to a next phase in the interaction is non-verbally signalled by INT re-
establishing mutual gaze with T1 and M looking away, before T1 takes the floor and moves on to the next point on the agenda.

Extract 5.3 is taken from PTM1 and shows another instance of future-oriented upgrading performed by the interpreter. It is a very short sequence (just 6 seconds) which starts off with T2 talking about the procedure for re-sitting exams. In particular, she is explaining that if the child fails some exams, he won’t be penalised for re-taking the same exams the following year.

[Extract 5.3 – PTM1]

156  
T2  
there's (.) there's no (.) penalty for (.) having done the exams and then doing

157  
INT

158  
M  
[sicuramente* non c'è una (.) una penale (.) una una surely there is not a penalty a a

159  
M  
punizione per aver (.) fallito all'esame e aver (.) e ridarli l'anno prossimo
punishment for failing the exam and having and trying them again next year

160  
M  
si può ripetere
one can repeat it

161  
INT  
può ripeterli tranquillamente
he can repeat it easily

162  
M  “ah ora capisco”
now I understand
In extract 5.3, T2 phrases her utterance as if she was providing instructions to M; no assessments are produced at lines 156-157, so the whole utterance sounds like a straightforward account of the procedure followed by the school in case of exam failure. A TRP could be placed after next year (line 157); T2 also produces the continuer so, which suggests a possible expansion of the turn. Nevertheless, at this point INT starts his rendition partially in overlap with T2; it is introduced by an adverb (sicuramente, line 158) which puts emphasis on the fact that there is no penalty for re-sitting a previously failed exam and rules out any negative impact that failing could have on the child. Thus, INT places emphasis on something only projected by T2; at the same time, he seems to be reassuring M by depicting a positive scenario for her child (see PTM1i).

This impression is further supported by what happens at lines 160-163. As in extract 5.2, M responds to INT’s rendition by rephrasing its final part, concerning the possibility of re-sitting the exams (si può ripetere, line 160); this is uttered as a statement rather than a question, but it calls for confirmation (or refutation) on behalf of the party who has produced the FPP, in this case T2. Nevertheless, M’s contribution is not translated back to T2 by INT, who expands his initial sequence via two moves.

Firstly, INT confirms M’s statement by means of a repetition (può ripeterli tranquillamente, line 161) which explicitly refers to the child (while M used an impersonal, thus more generic, construction in Italian); furthermore, INT adds the adverb tranquillamente (meaning easily), which was not uttered by T2, through which he positively evaluates the future performance of the child. This is followed by another instance of future-oriented talk, i.e. that the child will succeed in his exams once he re-sits them (poi li passa, line 163). Neither this piece of information was originally uttered by T2; rather, the sequence expansion is autonomously performed by INT who, through the production of EAs, shifts his positioning from that of “relayer” to that of “principal” or “responder” (Wadensjö 1992, 1998; Baraldi & Gavioli 2007). Through such expansion, INT displays epistemic rights of assessing the situation, thus performing the teacher’s task in predicting what will happen while reassuring the
mother (as was the case in extract 5.2). In extract 5.3, the EAs produced can also be qualified as RFP assessments, as they expand the interpreter’s rendition beyond the point where information completeness with respect to the source utterance has been achieved (see PTM1i and PTM2c).

Moving on to the analysis of gaze patterns in the extract, INT is initially holding mutual gaze with T2 (who is talking); he starts turning his head towards M and shifting his gaze away from T2 at the first possible TRP (…them again next year, line 157). Through gaze withdrawal and head movement, INT manages to regulate turn-taking and takes up the floor despite the lack of a clear signal to relinquish it on the part of T2 (as highlighted above, the production of so, on the contrary, seems to project a continuation of the turn). At line 163, while uttering the positive, future-oriented EA, INT starts withdrawing gaze from M and moving it towards T2. While this happens, T2 is looking at INT and nodding, even though she does not know what INT is saying as it has not been translated back to her. Differently from extract 5.2, here T2 has no knowledge of Italian, so she cannot monitor what is going on during the dyadic sequence between M and INT. Nevertheless, T2’s behaviour is the same as in extract 5.2, i.e. she does not sanction INT’s behaviour or asks for any clarifications; on the contrary, she nods while looking at INT and mutual gaze is re-established, followed by a quick glance at M and at her colleague, possibly signalling that she has nothing else to comment on and providing the latter with the opportunity to take the lead. The restoration of mutual gaze performed by INT seems therefore to be perceived by T2 as a cue that the interaction can go on, but without investigating M’s response further.

Extract 5.3 shows a peculiar feature of RFP assessments in my data, i.e. the fact that they are mostly coupled with gaze shift and seem to be used as a closing implicative device to signal transition to the next point while reassuring M and constructing alignment and mutual understanding. In extract 5.3, understanding with M is explicitly achieved (line 162); this is not always the case though, as shown by extract 5.4, which is taken from PTM3.
qui: è questo è quell- (_) praticamente abbiamo de-: detto adesso che è stato inserito
here is this is what practically what we have said now he was included
all’inizio dell’anno che ha instau[rato buoni rapporti* anche con noi: (_) è
at the beginning of the year that he established good relationships also with us he is
sempre molto carino non conoscevi nessuna parola di italiano ma è migliorato
always very nice he did not know any words of Italian but he has improved
ma rimangono difficoltà (_) non accetta di svolgere attività [differ*se dai compagni (_)]
but there are still difficulties he does not accept to do different activities from his mates
eh segue le attività della classe aiutato dalle insegnanti e le sue difficoltà non sono nella
he follows the activities of the class with the help of the teachers and his difficulties are not
comprensione ma nella conosce[nza* quindi una volta [che lui arriverà* a conoscere la
in understanding but in knowledge so once he manages to know the
lingua (_) cioè non ha nel sen- non ha problemi di apprendimento o di comprensione
language I mean he does not have any problems in learning or understanding
perché le cose che già adesso comprende
because the things he already understands
[ah ha "buoni rappor-"
he has good relation-
[ah:
[enza
[ah: arriverà
he will manage to
le fa bene
he does them well
le fa [bene
he does them well
[le fa bene
he does them well
so here it’s written that actually he has been this is the first year he is in Italy and is the first year that he is in this class but he has he gets along really good with his mates and with the teachers as well when he came of course he didn’t know any words of Italian so he had he had difficulties with the language but now the knowledge of the language is getting better [is improving but there are still many difficulties [in the communication]

[m] [si] [si] yes yes

[si]

yes

exactly

mhm: even though he has this kind of problems he doesn’t wanna he doesn’t accept to do different activities from his mates so: the teacher they will help him in a
special way but he will: (.) actually do (.) what the others do (.) with the help of course

of the teachers (.) and (.) their they (.) eh the teacher here she just (.) point out that

his problem (.) is not (.) a comprehension problem in terms of (.) learning (.) but (.)

in communication and (.) language (.) so once he will have overcome the language

problem he won’t have any problem and he will be good (.) the teacher said that he would

catch up with all (.) with th- with the children of his age

T2 is reading and, at the same time, commenting on a record of the child’s attitude and performance in the classroom. The record stresses the progress made by the child, despite some persistent difficulties in following the activities of the class due to his poor knowledge of the language; the source utterance is positively phrased by the teacher. INT’s rendition is a formulation of the source utterance; in terms of interactional content, it could be considered complete at line 197 (…and language), but it is expanded via an independently produced EA in RFP (lines 197-199). Through this assessment, INT shows her own understanding of T2’s utterance and suggests that, in time, the child will become proficient in Italian. In contrast with previous extracts, INT here explicitly attributes the assessment to T2 (by pointing at her while looking at the record), even though the same information does not appear in the source utterance. The
RFP assessment produced by INT falls within the category of summary assessments, i.e. it is a sort of reformulation which refers to the whole sequence and summarises the gist of what has been said by the speaker while, producing a new, conclusive meaning and, in this case, projecting possible future evaluations of the student (hence its categorisation as an instance of future-oriented talk – see PTM3e for an instance of mitigated unfavourable RFP assessment within a reporting turn).

Gaze configuration while T2 is talking clearly shows that all participants initially look at the record, thus they are all seemingly engaged in the same activity, which is typical of PTMs. M does not understand what T2 is saying, but she seems to follow T2’s pointing at the relevant sections that she is reading in the report. At line 172, T2 shifts her gaze to INT when she starts to expand and comment on what is written. Held gaze to INT is maintained until the end of her utterance, when INT shifts her gaze down, possibly gathering her thoughts before starting her rendition. From that point on, until the end of T2’s utterance, M is completely disengaged from the participatory framework; she mainly looks down, seemingly at the report in front of her. This is even more marked than in 5.2 and 5.3, where Ts sometimes glance at M while talking. M’s attitude of self-excluding from the communicative event is similar to the one shown by M in extract 5.2; T2’s gaze behaviour is consistent throughout the extracts, i.e. she looks at INT when in listening mode and held gaze is only rarely interrupted by glances at M or looks away.

Another difference vis-à-vis extracts 5.2 and 5.3 is that T2 builds her report on the child by reading a record, i.e. using a resource that is physically present in the space where all the participants are gathered. This partly explains the frequent instances of gaze down encoded in the transcript. There is no clear uptake from M; here, she simply limits her response to the acknowledgment token *mhm* (line 200), which signals understanding, but not necessarily agreement with what has been said. Nevertheless, as in extract 5.3, the interaction carries on, and the floor goes back to T2, who starts a new sequence; neither INT nor T2 explicitly create an opportunity for M to express her thoughts or opinions.
5.3.2 Preliminary findings

In the extracts analysed so far, the interaction does not unfold in the same fashion as in monolingual PTMs. In particular, phase 3 (for a discussion of the different phases of PTMs, see 1.3.2) is not present, i.e. parents tend not to ask questions of teachers or intervene in the talk unless specifically prompted (e.g. extract 5.1). In other words, differently from monolingual PTMs, in my data mothers tend to refrain from integrating their epistemic knowledge of the child with that of the teachers. From reporting (equivalent to phase 2, initiated by teachers) there seems to be a direct move to phase 5, where agreement is normally established, possibly by virtue of the overall collaborative nature of pedagogical settings. At this point, the possibilities are that either teachers move on to the next point on the agenda or the meeting is brought to a final close. The same regularity has been found across the data, regardless of whether the meetings were recorded in Italy or in the UK. Analysis of the extracts suggests that differences in the overall structural organisation with respect to monolingual PTMs may be due to the interpreter’s way of handling the interaction, both verbally and non-verbally.

The extracts of future-oriented upgrading renditions examined so far have two elements in common: firstly, the source utterance which is rendered by the interpreter is produced by the teacher and performs the action of reporting on the child. Teachers in the data are confronted with fairly delicate scenarios; the children they are evaluating are all problematic, due to their lack of proficiency in the language spoken in the host country. In the case of extracts 5.2 and 5.4 this has led to difficulties in learning and following the activities of the class; in extract 5.3, this has led to failure in one of the final exams. On the basis of the extracts and of other instances analysed in 4.2 (and sub-sections), it seems plausible to argue that also in mediated PTMs teachers’ talk is structured in such a way as to frame potentially delicate reports in a preferred manner, possibly in an attempt to prevent conflicts while winning the mothers’ trust and making them align with their report of the children. By phrasing their reports positively, and trying to mitigate potentially dispreferred actions, teachers seem to display the same verbal attitude as in monolingual PTMs. Nevertheless, the lack of mutual sustained gaze between teachers and mothers possibly makes their approach more indirect and their attempt at establishing a direct link with the mothers less effective than in dyadic interaction. This is shown, for instance, by the fact that teachers tend to address the interpreter when talking, which leads to mother’s frequent looks away and, eventually, to complete disengagement from the participatory framework.
Secondly, the sequences analysed show the interpreters’ tendency to integrate future-oriented EAs in their talk, thus producing instances of upgrading renditions. The rendition would be complete in terms of informative content without future-oriented EAs, which are nevertheless found in two main sequential environments: within the rendition itself (e.g. extract 5.2) and, more commonly, in what I have termed RFP (extracts 5.3 and 5.4). They are generally based on the information imparted by the teachers, even though they are produced independently by interpreters, i.e. the information conveyed by such assessments was not explicitly uttered by teachers in their source utterances but is the result of the interpreter’s own understanding and processing of the information provided by the teacher. The fact that all the instances of future-oriented EAs isolated were found in renditions of a teacher’s reporting turn suggests a possible correlation between the action of reporting by the teacher and the production of future-oriented EAs by the interpreter.

The point investigated here is not whether or not what the interpreter does is attributable to strategic behaviour; rather, my interest is in the impact of such conversational behaviour. It can be considered an explicitating move, i.e. an interactional device used by interpreters to spell things out and make the source content as clear as possible to the mothers.\textsuperscript{28} Explicitation, intended as a process leading to an increased amount of overtly linguistically encoded information, has been long investigated in translation and interpreting studies, and it can be achieved in a number of ways.\textsuperscript{29} Within IS, Pöchhacker (2004:135) expanded on the notion of explicitation by stating that

quite apart from its postulated status as a universal feature of translation, explicitation may be needed as a strategy to circumvent linguistic and sociocultural differences.

Through the additions of EAs, interpreters seem to perform an action that could be described as ‘articulating the unsaid’ and they claim epistemic rights of anticipating future evaluations of the child, thus taking up a task which is usually performed by teachers.

\textsuperscript{28} This may be also due to the fact that in all interactions the mothers use a vehicular language which is not their mother tongue (see 3.3).

\textsuperscript{29} For a critical review of the notions of \textit{explicitness} and \textit{explicitation} in translation and interpreting studies see Baumgarten et al. (2008).
All the instances of future-oriented EAs isolated are favourable assessments, i.e. they place emphasis on the student’s potential for improvement and opportunities for success in the future. Favourable assessments by definition express a positive stance towards the assessable; the situations experienced by these students are generally difficult, so the addition of favourable future-oriented EAs seems to have a reassuring impact on the mother by presenting a positive future scenario for their children. This also supports the idea of interpreters taking up the teacher’s role in trying to create a common ground with the mothers and triggering agreement from them.

Through such moves, interpreters seem to encompass phase 4 (which is normally negotiated between mothers and teachers) into their rendition, and claim epistemic rights to evaluate the child’s future. In monolingual interaction, this phase is considered a transitional, optional phase, which paves the way for the next point on the agenda or the closing of the conference. In my data, the analysis of gaze behaviour alongside verbal behaviour in these sequences seems to strengthen the idea that upgrading future-oriented moves replace phase 4. In other words, future-oriented EAs also seem to serve the function of accomplishing the ongoing course of action, thus acting as sequence-closing device, and facilitating transition to a next phase or point on the agenda. This clearly emerges when they are placed in RFP; interpreters, by default, hold mutual gaze with mothers while uttering their renditions. Gaze configuration starts to change once RFP EAs have been uttered, and interpreters shift their gaze to teachers. This is not always immediate, as is the case in extract 5.2 when the mother decides to provide an SPP after the interpreter’s rendition (lines 164-165), while still holding mutual gaze with the latter. Nevertheless, the interpreter deals with the mother’s response independently, without translating it back to the teacher, but producing a further future-oriented EA independently (lo imparerà piano piano, line 167); the EA consists of a repetition of what the mother has just said, which further supports the idea that this is a reassuring move. The same applies to extract 5.3 and 5.4, where future-oriented EAs clearly work as sequence-closing devices as well as ‘scaffolding actions’, i.e. they seem to be used as a discourse practice to pursue a preferred response from the mother.

By explicitating, reassuring, and moving the interaction further while seeking to elicit agreement from the mother, interpreters seem to be doing a large part of the interactional work that is normally carried out by teachers in monolingual PTMs. Nevertheless, such a conversational move seems to pre-empt any response from the mothers which may lead to sequence expansion and, possibly, encourage the latter to
intervene more and integrate their knowledge about the child with the teacher’s knowledge. In contrast with monolingual interaction, mothers in the PTMs analysed refrain from interacting and often tend to disengage, as shown by the analysis of gaze patterns while in listening mode. Interpreters re-include them in the communicative event, mainly by means of mutual gaze while delivering their renditions, thus showing a much more engaged attitude than teachers.

The combination of verbal upgrades with mutual gaze could be seen as a sort of compensatory move performed by the interpreter to make up for the lack of direct engagement signalled by teachers’ dominant gaze patterns, while boosting the positive nature of the teacher’s report, possibly to facilitate achievement of agreement and mutual understanding. Nevertheless, the analysis of the sequential organisation of talk shows that such a move does not seem to be effective in encouraging the mothers to reply and actively contribute to the communicative event. When some kind of contribution is produced by the mother (e.g. extract 5.2), interpreters tend to deal with them independently through a dyadic sequence, without including the teachers in the co-construction of meaning.

The interpreter’s behaviour does not stem from any a priori negotiation with the teachers on how to conduct the meeting. Nevertheless, teachers do not sanction the interpreter’s conduct in any way or ask for clarification about the dyadic exchange; on the contrary, they often explicitly align with it by producing acknowledgment tokens and nodding (e.g. extract 5.4). This suggests the establishment of a sort of mutual trust between teachers and interpreters which allows interpreters to take up tasks that are traditionally carried out by teachers in monolingual interactions.

The present section has drawn some preliminary conclusions to explain how the micro-analysis conducted so far help us gain insight into the dynamics of mediated PTMs and the positioning of interpreters within this scenario. The argument that the task of creating a common ground seem to be left almost entirely with the interpreter will be taken further in the next section, through the analysis of instances which exemplify the second category of upgrades performed via EAs, namely justifying upgrading renditions.

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This lack of active participation on the part of the mothers may be due to factors like their difficulties in using the vehicular language chosen for the interaction or their powerless position in the triadic exchange. Rather than investigate the reasons why mothers disengage, I focus on whether, and if so how, interpreters act to restore participation and what the impact on the interactional event is.
5.3.3 Justifying upgrading renditions

The second category of interpreter-produced upgrades performed through the addition of one or more EAs has been labelled ‘justifying upgrade’. Like future-oriented upgrades and reporting actions, a correlation may be postulated between the production of recommending actions on the part of teachers and of justifying upgrades on the part of the interpreter. Non-verbal behaviour seems to play an even more distinct role here in triggering INT’s contribution. In extract 5.5, taken from PTM2, the sequence starts with a request produced by T1, i.e. that the mother goes through the child’s diary more often.

[Extract 5.5 – PTM2a]

va bene però spesso se ci sono avvi:si magari sfogliare il diario oppure BX si dimentica
ok but often if there are some notices maybe flick through the diary or Bx forgets
(xxx) di farglieli vedere
to show her

s- so the teacher said maybe EITHER is (...) BXs (...) who sometimes forgets to show
you (.) OR: ehm:: m:- maybe it's you see it but you were busy but she is sug-
suggesting you that sometimes you could just go through have a ru- have a look
( .) through the: diary he has he has a spe[cial

[T1]

[si* si ce l'ha
yes yes he has it

lui ha il quadernino per gli avvisi o il: diario pro[prio?
does he have a little book for communications or a diary

[ha il diario
he has got a diary

ha il dia- the diary he has [when he* when he signs the: ehm the homework
he has a dia-
65  M  [si si si
yes yes yes

66  M  si I will: eh:  see: the homework [on:* diary
yes

67  INT  [yeah:

68  INT  yeah

69  M  and I: eh: sign it

70  INT  yeah right (.) so maybe sometimes you can just go through [have a look

71  T1  [esatto
right

72  T1  si
yes

73  INT  [[even even when BX doesn't tell you maybe you can just go and have a look

74  M  no no no no (the message no)]

75  INT  YEAH maybe you should because sometimes they write things but BX forgets or:

76  M  ah:: yes eh BX is eh now a child eh (.) eh he's forgotten

77  T2  [@@@

78  T1  [@@@ è un bambino si
he is a child he

79  INT  [è un bambino* a volte dimentica
he is a child at times he forgets

80  T1  a volte dimentica [si
at times he forgets yes

198
In extract 5.5, T1 is reiterating a request that had already been put forward in the exchange, i.e. that the mother goes through the child’s diary to check the homework or any notices which may have been left by the teachers for the parents. The way the request is produced and the fact that teachers reiterate it various times throughout the meeting may be perceived as dispreferred, i.e. as a sort of complaint towards M’s conduct, which seems to be implicitly criticised for not being particularly involved in the child’s school life.

At first, M responds that she is already doing what the teachers are asking for (lines 65-69). A dyadic interaction starts at this point between INT and M: the former reiterates the request, while teachers start a parallel conversation (schism at lines 73-74). INT clarifies that M should check the diary also when the child does not show her. Following M’s dispreferred immediate response (line 74), INT starts providing even more reasons why M should do that. During the dyadic interaction, INT is trying to persuade M to accomplish the request, thus overtly pursuing endorsement of the teachers’ position.

Further evidence of INT's engaged behaviour is the emphasised yeah, maybe you should (line 75). It is interesting to notice that the end of schism between Ts and their gaze movement towards the interpreter coincide with the interpreter uttering yeah, in a higher voice pitch (emphasised by capital letters). The timing of the two events suggests that they may be interpreted as an attempt on the part of Ts to keep an eye on the conversation, at a point in which potential tension is perceived and a repairing intervention may be necessary. By doing so, Ts, who had self-excluded from the participatory framework, reengage with it, but without interrupting the ongoing dyadic sequence between M and INT.
Following the sequential development of talk, M produces an EA of the child which seems to account again as a justification for the state of affairs, i.e. the fact that her son is only a child so he forgets things (line 76). INT produces her rendition at line 79; this is accepted by T1, who signals agreement by adding the particle *si* (meaning yes) after repeating the evaluative utterance. At this point, INT autonomously produces an utterance (lines 81-84) in which she upgrades the source assessment (uttered by M) by means of an intensifier (*it’s really normal for a child to forget*, line 82) and reiterates the request once again. INT’s utterance is seemingly understood by T1 without rendition, as shown by the expression of agreement *esatto si* uttered at line 86; the attitude shown by T1 once again upholds INT’s engaged behaviour, which, as in all cases analysed so far, is not the result of an *a priori* negotiation between the parties. In this expansion, INT picks up on M’s talk and upgrades the EA about the child to justify the request put forward by T1. This conversational move seems to aim to reassure the mother and create a common ground while arguing a case for teachers by trying to make the request acceptable to M with a view to eliciting her agreement, which is finally obtained at line 87.

Close investigation of what happens verbally and non-verbally can provide more insights into this stretch of talk. Both T1 and M tend to gaze at INT, and instances of mutual gaze between the two are very limited. INT regulates the flow of talk and addresses the other parties directly. Further evidence that Ts seem to be comfortable with INT’s highly engaged behaviour is the schism produced at lines 73-74, while INT is dyadically interacting with M. This behaviour is consistently observable in other sequences found in the corpus (among the ones transcribed, see PTM2b/c); schisms suggest that, once Ts have delivered their stretch of talk, they then leave the task of negotiating understanding and a common ground with M to INT, without any sanctioning or request for clarification of what goes on during the dyadic exchanges with the mothers. INT’s upgrading move occurs after M’s statement of the fact that sometimes her child forgets to show her the homework. M’s utterance is seemingly understood by Ts, who start laughing in proximity to INT delivering her rendition (line 78); T1 then turns her head to INT and mutual gaze is established. At this point, T1 confirms M’s talk by repeating the justification provided by the latter for his behaviour (*a volte dimentica si*, line 80); T1’s contribution is not rendered by INT, who turns her head to M and produces her independent contribution. The sequential organisation of talk suggests that the combination of verbal and non-verbal cues seems to establish the very praxeological and contextual conditions for INT to take the floor and produce an
expanded upgrading rendition of M’s talk. T1’s confirmation combined with mutual gaze seems to provide a green light for INT to produce that contribution, through which she also claims epistemic primary rights to speak about the assessable. This is further confirmed by the explicit token of understanding and agreement with INT’s behaviour produced by T1 at lines 85 and 86 respectively.

Extract 5.6 is another instance which clearly shows how, through upgrading EAs, interpreters display epistemic rights and authority to evaluate the assessable. The sequence is not reproduced in full, but starting from the moment where INT is delivering his rendition of T1’s talk. T1 has just been talking about a school trip that the class will soon undertake; the request that is reiterated twice by T1 with a peculiar prosodic intonation is that the child is on time.

[Extract 5.6 – PTM3b]

32 T1 ehm "poi aspetta c’era anche* ah a marzo (.) il sedici [marzo* (.) pomeriggio
hold on there was also ah in March on the sixteenth of March in the afternoon
33 faremo un’uscita in biblioteca in Corso della Repubblica (. ) la biblioteca centrale*
we will all visit the library in Corso della Repubblica the central modern library
34 moderna
35 T2 [sedici marzo
[sixteenth of March
36 [...] 04:39-04:48
37 INT il sedici:
the sixteenth
38 T1 il [sedici marzo* pomeriggio quindi il sedici marzo pomeriggio Ex all’una e
on the sixteenth of March in the afternoon so on the sixteenth of March Ex at one
mezzo PUNTUALISSIMO qui:: perché si parte (. ) andiamo in là a piedi
thirty sharp here because we will leave we will walk there

[il sedici marzo
the sixteenth of March

quindi loro (. ) vanno a casa a mangiare
so they go home for lunch

loro a [casa
they at home

[rITORNANO
come back

esatto (. ) ritornano all’una e mezzo puntualissimo tredici e trenta spaccate (. )
exactly they come back at one thirty sharp thirteen thirty sharp

perché dobbiamo partir subito a piedi (. ) poi il ritorno lo faremo invece in autobus
because we have to leave immediately by foot then the return will be by bus

abbiamo l’abbonamento (. ) scolastico che ce l’ha ehm all’inizio dell’anno l’ha
we have a school pass that has been ehm at the beginning of the year it has been

fatto la rappresentante di classe (. ) all’inizio dell’anno la rappresentante di classe
done by the class representative at the beginning of the year the class representative

ha fatto un fondo cassa (. ) e da questo fondo cassa ha tolto (. ) il: il costo
set up a petty cash and from this petty cash she withdrew the money
dell’abbonamento [però* (. ) ha degli orari (. )]all’una* e mezzo non possiamo
for the school pass but it is only valid for specific times at one thirty we cannot

usarlo mentre dopo si può
use it while later we can

[mhm

[ok

ok (. ) and: this is really important because on the sixteenth (. ) of March (. ) the
whole class (. ) will go to visit a l- ehm a lib- ehm library (. ) in: Corso della
Repubblica (.) here in Forlì (.) you know where Corso della Repubblica is?

M no

INT no?

T2 near Piazza Saffi

INT near Piazza Saffi (.) there is* a library

M (ok (.) ok)

INT ok

and they will go and visit (.) but (.) they* will go at (.) one thirty (.) in the afternoon (.) and* Ex (.) really needs to be punctual because it seems that sometimes he’s late (.) or actually* he’s (.) he’s pretty often (.) late

M mhm

INT so (.) he needs to be at one thirty (.) at school (.) back at school (.) here* because they will go walking (.) so it’s really important that they are all together all at the same time [otherwise they will be late and everything will be delayed

M [ok

INT and (.) afterwards (.) once the visit is finished (.) they will be back

they will come back (.) by bus: because they have a monthly (.) ticket (.) the school supplied that (.) did you get everything?

M I did (.) yes

INT ok

INT’s rendition immediately tries to draw M back into the participatory framework (from which she had been excluded during the long utterance produced by T1 as signalled by gaze away) by placing emphasis on the fact that what she is going to say is really important (line 53). After rendering the informative account (interspersed with a brief insert sequence with M (lines 53-63), INT produces the upgrade (it seems that sometimes he’s late or actually he’s pretty often late, lines 63-64); this unfavourable EA of the child’s attitude serves as a justification for T1’s request, even though it was not explicitly uttered by T1 in her source utterance. It is initially mitigated by seems, sometimes, and then intensified by pretty, which strengthens its illocutionary force. This stretch of talk uttered by INT also seems to imply a criticism not only of the child’s conduct, but also, indirectly, of the family, which is supposed to make sure that the child is always on time, given that he is not autonomous and independent. The EA is
uttered in RFP and calls for agreement; M’s response at line 65 (mhm), nevertheless, does not represent a clear uptake. INT reiterates the point at lines 66-68, this time adding an instance of future-oriented talk at lines 68, which clarifies what would happen if the children were not on time (otherwise they will be late and everything will be delayed). The second formulation is less dispreferred than the first one, as it is not directly addressed to the child but to a generic they. This time, M’s response is more explicit; she utters ok at line 69, which signals understanding and, possibly, agreement with what has been said. Last but not least, at line 72, INT finishes off her rendition via a question: did you get everything? Through this question, an opportunity is provided for M to enter the talk and take the floor. However, the formulation of the question is oriented to finding out whether M understood what was said, not necessarily whether she agrees with it. It may be argued that a different formulation, more explicitly asking M to voice her opinions or concerns, may have encouraged the latter to intervene more actively in the talk. Here M’s positive answer I did yes followed by INT’s ok leads to the closure of the sequence.

Gaze behaviour is in line with the other extracts presented so far, i.e. mutual gaze is found between INT and T1 while the latter is talking and between INT and M during the INT’s rendition. No instances of held, mutual gaze between M and T1 are present in the sequence, apart from a short fragment of interaction where T1, while uttering her implicit requests, gazes directly at M (line 38); nevertheless, she then shifts her gaze back to INT, and carries on. M seems to be monitoring at times what INT and T1 are doing, even though her lack of access to Italian does not enable her to follow what is happening; therefore, she sometimes starts looking down or away, and waits for INT to bring her back into the participatory framework.

Extract 5.7 is an instance of upgrading rendition of an unfavourable request uttered by one of the teachers. It is taken from PTM1; participants are talking about some extra hours of art that the child has been recommended to attend by the art teacher, but M does not seem to be happy with the request. The art teacher is not physically present in the meeting, and the head teacher (T1) is acting on her behalf; earlier on in the interaction, she had read aloud a report from the art teacher containing the evaluation of the child’s academic performance and aptitude.\(^{31}\) The topic of the extra

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\(^{31}\) The first time the issue of extra art hours is addressed in the meeting is as follows: T1 he would benefit from attending some (.) lunchtime sessions [...] so that he (.) so that the teacher can ensure (.) that he understands (.) what to do next (the missing part signaled by the square brackets is the interpreter’s rendition, which is not reported here but can be found in PTM1a).
hours is addressed several times during the meeting (see PTM1a); below is the final part of the encounter, when the issue is resumed for the last time following a question produced by the mother about whether the extra art hours will occupy the child’s entire lunch hour. After INT’s rendition of the question, T1 starts off by suggesting that “he” (i.e. the child) negotiates the times directly with the art teacher.

[Extract 5.7 – PTM1o]

217 M per quanto tempo? tutta l’ora del eh
217 INT for how long the whole hour of
218 INT the whole lunchtime (. ) lunch hour?
219 T1 he could go f- (. ) he could negotiate (. ) the times that he went (. ) because often at
220 lunchtime Ax is sitting around (. ) with time to (. ) to spare (. ) mhm
221 INT è ins- è aperto alla negoziazione (. ) [perchè* (. ) spesso Ax (. ) non s- all’ora di
it is open to negotiation because often Ax does not kn- at
222 pranzo non ha niente da fare
lunchtime he has got nothing to do
223 M [mhm
224 (4.65)
225 INT⇒ e allora questo sarebbe un: eh modo (buono) per riempire l’ora
so this would be a good way to fill in that hour
M’s question at line 217 about the extra art hours was triggered by T1’s previous invitation to ask any other questions she may have had before bringing the meeting to a close (*do you have any other questions (.) if you have any other questions that you want (.) to ask about any subject or?*, line 196PTM1o - transcribed in Appendix A). Lines 221-222 provide a very close rendition of the teacher’s SPP (lines 219-220), and elicit a minimal response by M in the form of acknowledgment tokens (*mhm*, line 223) uttered while gazing at INT.

The lack of a clear uptake from M (either preferred or dispreferred) is noticeable; it is difficult to establish whether the acknowledgment tokens simply signal understanding or also agreement with what is being said. In terms of informational content, the rendition can be considered complete at line 222; however, INT chooses to add an assessment (line 225) after a pause; its format is that of a favourable evaluative statement which supports the stance taken by the teachers, even though it was not explicitly uttered by T1 in the source utterance. In terms of content, the assessment supports the solution suggested by the art teacher; by positively assessing the initial recommendation, it seemingly attempts to make it more acceptable to M (whose initial response is not clear), while showing that the school acts in the interest of the child and finds remedial interventions to overcome pupils’ problems. As a conversational move, it may be seen as aimed to avoid conflict and preserve the collaborative nature of the event. However, by favourably supporting the teacher’s suggestion and trying to package it in such a way as to make it acceptable to M, INT seems to take up the teacher’s task. This is also supported by the fact that the assessment is proffered via a zero-person format, through which it is constructed as generic, thus applicable to anyone and calling for agreement as a response.
The action performed by the assessment also seems to work to propose sequence closure, as suggested by the position in which it is produced, i.e. as a sort of extension of INT’s rendition after a 4.65 sec. pause (line 224); the length of this pause is significant in conversation, and no uptake from M is performed during it. This suggests that INT’s upgrading rendition possibly acts as a sequence-closing third (SCT). SCTs have been defined as turns “designed to constitute a minimal expansion after the SPP […] and to move for, or to propose, sequence closing (a move which may be aligned with by recipient or not” (Schegloff 2007:118). SCTs may take a number of formats, one of the most common being assessments. In non-mediated interaction, “an assessment in third position articulates a stance taken up – ordinarily by the first pair part speaker – toward what the SPP speaker has said or done in the prior turn” (Schegloff 2007:124). By definition, SCTs appear after an SPP; technically, the *mhmm* at line 223 could be identified as an SPP. However, as underlined above, it signals understanding of what is being translated, but it is not clear whether it also signals agreement and alignment with T1’s talk. By producing the assessment autonomously, INT takes up the teacher’s task of trying to persuade M to produce an explicit preferred uptake.

In terms of gaze behaviour, mutual gaze is established and maintained with M throughout the INT’s rendition. It may therefore be tentatively suggested that, in the absence of a clear response (either preferred or dispreferred) from M, INT produces an additional turn in the form of an assessment to perform a twofold activity: bringing the sequence to a close (to move on to a different one) while preventing M from producing a dispreferred response. However, the attempt only proves partly successful; no signal of gaze withdrawal appears after the acknowledgment token, but M produces a further question (*quante volte alla settimana?*, line 226) which entails a continuation of the sequence.

Further evidence to support the fact that the assessment was possibly used as a sequence-closing device is provided by some other non-verbal cues produced by INT. The relevant part from extract 5.7 that shows what happens straight after the production of the RFP assessment is reproduced below:
INT e allora questo sarebbe un: eh modo (buono) per riempire l'ora
so this would be a good way to fill in that hour

INT [:h

M quanto tempo (.) [eh quante volte* alla: settimana?
how long how many times a week?

INT how many times a week?

At the start of M’s question in line 226, mutual gaze is still established between M and INT. While M is finishing uttering quanto tempo, INT withdraws his gaze from her and looks away in front of him, in a sort of middle-distance position. This is also accompanied by some gestures: INT has his hands clasped, but while withdrawing his gaze, he starts moving them in a way that suggests that he is trying to find an answer to the question himself, without referring back to T1. The in-breath signalled by the .hh, uttered at a mother’s possible TRP (i.e. after her first formulation of the question) seems to further support this idea that INT is attempting to bring the sequence to a close. Possibly due to his inability to find an answer, INT clasps his hands while turning his gaze to T1 and produces the rendition for her, thus entailing a continuation of the sequence (line 227). If no video were available, it would not have been possible to access this extra layer of analysis, which provides us with further insights into the interactional dynamics.

Extract 5.8 is the final part of the same sequence; once again, an assessment is produced by INT in RFP. T1 is reiterating the need for M to encourage her son to attend these extra hours.
At line 236, T1 autonomously reiterates her request to M; differently from extract 5.7, here the interpreter starts his rendition to M before T1’s utterance completion, at a non-possible TRP. By doing so, INT completes T1’s turn, which is normal practice in conversation. In monolingual encounters, this interactional work to achieve utterance completion is carried out by primary parties; in extract 5.8, this is done by INT. The final EA produced independently by INT (gli farebbe bene, line 238) shows alignment with the stance taken by T1 in evaluating positively and recommending her solution. In other words, what seems to happen here is that INT, while rendering the first teacher-produced TCU into Italian, also acts as a responder and helps collaboratively produce a request that is acceptable to M. At the same time, the fact that the EA is produced in RFP makes it a closing-implicative resource, which proves successful this time: gaze configuration changes while INT produces the EA, i.e. INT shifts his gaze to a middle-position, M concurrently turns her gaze to T1 and mutual gaze is established. M’s

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32 As explained by Lerner (1991): “the if X then Y, while in the first place providing the resources to achieve the features required by turn organisation, concomitantly provides participants with the format of the final component, then Y, and a projected within turn completion place. This within-turn completion place has the dual characteristics of not being a transition-relevance place itself while nevertheless being the place from which a turn can be brought to the next transition relevance place. It is this turn-taking mandated orientation, to these features, that provides the resources for the achievement of a collaboratively constructed utterance. That it, it provides for the sequential possibility of anticipatory completion”.
agreement is expressed more clearly than in the previous extract and is signalled by uttering *la ringrazio* (line 240) and smiling after withdrawing gaze from INT and establishing mutual gaze with T1. The double function of the assessment in that position, i.e. eliciting a preferred response while bringing the sequence to a close, leads to the desired effect.

Extracts 5.7 and 5.8 are part of the same sequence (PTM1o), which is one of the rare sequences where M takes part in the interaction by expressing some doubts or the need for clarifications regarding a request that had been put forward much earlier in the meeting (see PTM1a, line 6). The few questions she asks during the unfolding of the sequence are produced consecutively; it can be argued that they have a dispreferred nature, as they are not accompanied by a clear token of agreement but simply (and not even in all cases) by the acknowledgment token *mhm*. As a consequence, they seem to project the mother’s unhappiness with the request, which is nevertheless not investigated further by either INT or T1. M autonomously intervenes in the talk by formulating such questions; as a response, we notice a collaborative attempt to formulate the questions so as to trigger agreement and move the agenda further, rather than to understand what concerns or doubts M may have towards the recommendation. This is one of those instances where INT could have created more opportunities for M to enter the talk, for example by asking her opinion about the request or by encouraging her to express her own viewpoint.

Extract 5.9 is another example of a justifying upgrade produced via an RFP assessment. It is taken from a different meeting (PTM2), and non-verbal features seem to play a predominant role in triggering this contribution from INT. T2 is commenting on the child’s lack of proficiency in Italian and is putting forward an indirect request, i.e. that the child and his brother (they are both attending the same school) study more at home. The request is potentially problematic given M’s difficulties in supporting her children due to her own lack of proficiency in Italian. The sequence is not transcribed from its onset; to facilitate understanding and provide some context, I have reproduced below only T2’s turns immediately preceding the INT’s rendition, which will however include more information as it represents a formulation of all the previous utterances produced by T2 (for the full transcript, see Appendix A).
il problema è che:: (.) non si devono fermare alla lingua della comunicazione (.)
the problem is that they should not stop at the language of communication

perché:: (.) cioè devono andare un pochino oltre (.) eh:: io capisco (.) cioè io so che
because I mean they need to go a bit beyond I mean I know that

per lui è difficile leggere il libro di storia o il libro di geografia: o:: ovviamente:: ancora di
for him it is difficult to read the history or geography textbook obviously even

più sicuramente l'antologia di italiano (.) però (.) io ho s:: ho anche spiegato lui che
more the Italian anthology but I have also explained to him that

non è necessario (.) se io ho dato tre quattro pagine da studiare lui può anche
it is not necessary if I gave three or four pages to study he can even

studiare due paragrafi (.) o anche solo una pagina (.) però di quella pagina dovrebbe
study two paragraphs or even just a page but of that page he should

riuscire a capire il maggior numero di parole magari anche con un dizionario
manage to understand the highest possible number of words also with a dictionary

(. ) ce:: hai un dizionario di italiano inglese?
do you have an Italian English dictionary?

si: [però:* piccolo
yes but small

T2 [ecco
right

(1.13)

(T2) eh fa lo stesso (.) capito? riuscire a dire qualche cosa di quell'argomento (.) anche (.)
it does not matter right? being able to say something related to that subject even

quattro o cinque frasi che però siano attinenti a un argomento di studio
four or five sentences that are however related to a subject of study

insomma bisogna che acquisisca (.) cioè dovrebbero riuscire a acquisire un po' la
in short he needs to acquire I mean they should manage to acquire a bit of the

lingua da studiare (1.12) che è a un livello superiore (.) cioè capisco però (.) come in
studying language which is of a higher level I understand but as in

tutte le cose bisogna camminare per gradi
anything it is necessary to go step by step

(1.55)

INT did you understand? (1.1) a little [bit

M [poco* poco
little little

(T1) @@

(T2) @@
because she doesn’t (.) of course she knows that he has (.). these problems with
reading and writing

she doesn’t require (.). she doesn’t ask him for (.). reading (.). everything and writing
everything (.). but if she: says to the others that they should read like three or four
pages for her (.). is enough (.). if he just reads one (.). or two paragraphers (.). but he
does need to do the least (.). he could do (.). if he doesn’t do the least (.). a little
bit of an effort (.). then he will never pass (.). to the other level (.). from the
communication (.). language to the studying language (.). because now for him it’s
important that Italian starts to be also (.). a studying language (.). but this he can
do it (.). only if he sits (.). at home (.). reads and writes a little bit (.). if he doesn’t
understand (.). the teacher was suggesting him to use a: dictionary (.). and he
has an Italian English dictionary so he could (.). he could help himself

we know that’s difficult (.). and (.). but the teacher (.). she’s (.). meets him every
day and she knows that he’s smart

he just needs to be pushed a little bit

In extract 5.9, T2 delivers her multiunit utterances gazing at INT, except for a few
moments when she addresses the child, who is off camera (lines 331-333 when T2 says
hai un dizionario di italiano inglese?; gaze at the interpreter is then restored in line 335,
from riuscire a dire qualche cosa di quell’argomento onwards). This is typical across
the data analysed, i.e. participants (both teachers and mothers) tend to look at the
interpreter when talking/listening to a rendition, which suggests that interpreters are
treated as fully ratified participants.
INT’s rendition occupies lines 346-358; in terms of informational content, it could be considered complete at line 358. At this point, M is expected to take the floor to provide a relevant SPP; despite its complex sentential packaging, T2’s action can be considered a request or, better, a recommendation, which therefore makes a response (either agreement or disagreement) conditionally relevant. However, nobody self-selects during the 5.63 sec pause at line 359, which can be considered a significant pause in conversation. Mutual gaze is maintained between M and INT for 0.34 sec. M then gazes away towards an indeterminate middle point; by doing so, she self-excludes from the participatory framework, even though INT is still looking at her, possibly in the attempt to mobilise a response that is perceived as missing. T2 seems to make an attempt to take the floor during the long lapse (as signalled by the in-breath symbol .hh) but then gazes at M without uttering any words. No response is mobilised from M, even after she re-establishes mutual gaze with INT. This seems to prompt INT to pursue a response that is perceived as missing; at this point, INT self-selects and extends her previous turn by means of several assessments which make explicit the concern projected by T2’s source utterance (we know that’s difficult, line 360), but also provide a favourable evaluation of the child’s attitude (she knows that he’s smart, line 361) and of his potential for improvement in the future (he just needs to be pushed a little bit, line 363). The sequence ends with T2 smiling and nodding; no clear uptake is displayed from M, who looks at INT, while the latter slowly withdraws gaze from M to T2 as to signal that it is now possible to move on to the next point on the agenda.

In contrast to all the instances analysed so far, in extract 5.9 INT uses the collective pronoun we when uttering her first assessment (we know it’s difficult). This pronoun is a “marker of in-group solidarity” (Mason 2009), through which INT explicitly promotes a shared and common focus with the teachers, thus seemingly projecting herself as part of the institution. Nevertheless, this sort of ‘identification move’ is immediately counterbalanced by a shift to the third person pronoun “the teacher” to introduce the second assessments, thus clearly attributing the talk to her, even though the EAs are all independently produced by the interpreter. This is followed by a further shift to a third person pronoun (he) referring to the child to introduce the final assessment, which seems future-oriented in nature (he just needs to be pushed a little bit).

It can be argued that, also in extract 5.8, by orienting to and anticipating the mother’s potential concerns generated by the teacher’s recommendation, the interpreter is trying to reassure M, thus preparing the ground for agreement and affiliation. As in
extract 5.8, here there is no attempt at further investigating the reasons for M’s dispreferred silence, which is emphasised by gaze away. On the contrary, the two assessments produced immediately afterwards do not encourage M to take the floor and voice her feelings. Gaze behaviour can be used as an important contextualisation cue, offering potential meanings that may not be taken up by analysing only audio recordings. What happens in terms of gaze during the lapse in conversation cannot be discarded as irrelevant. As in verbal conversation, the way a turn is delivered makes relevant a next response; during this lapse, gaze dynamics prepare the ground for what happens next verbally. By depicting a positive scenario, EAs seem to be produced to shed positive light on the recommendations put forward by the teacher with a view to making them acceptable to the mother and triggering agreement from her while bringing the sequence to a close, as was the case for future-oriented upgrading.

The instances of justifying upgrading moves analysed in the present section, like future-oriented upgrades, pinpoint moments in interaction where the very engaged interpreter’s behaviour is manifested. Pillet-Shore (2001) in her study on the overall structural organisation of monolingual PTMs explains that, if needed, parents and teachers may discuss possible solutions for the student’s problems with the intention of helping the student improve. This component of phase 2 is optional (because not every student needs improvement) and variable.

If this part of Phase 2 does transpire, the teacher and parent engage in a back-and-forth negotiation, during which the teacher states the need for solutions and proposes or recommends candidate solution(s) or plan(s) to help the student improve, including actions both the parent and teacher can take to aid the student. The parent then describes his/her own past and present efforts to help the student as well as current concerns about student. Ultimately, the parent and teacher negotiate until they reach a mutually agreed upon plan to help the student improve.

(Pillet-Shore 2001:19)

While recommendations are put forward by teachers, in mediated PTMs the whole aspect of negotiation of possible solutions with the mothers seems to be missing. The latter are not encouraged to talk about their past and present efforts to help their children or to voice their concerns. When mothers take the floor and express some evaluations of
a referent, often interpreters tend to deal with these contributions independently, thus preventing mothers from engaging in a fruitful exchange with teachers and achieving their own, negotiated solutions.

By virtue of the number of instances found in the data and of the lack of sanctioning on the part of teachers, the upgrading evaluative activity seems to be systematically integrated within the interpreter’s translating activity, to the extent that it could be considered a practice within the data analysed. Nevertheless, not all the instances of EAs found in the transcripts are upgraded by interpreters. The next section is devoted to the analysis of some examples where the opposite seems to happen, i.e. instances of downgrading renditions.

5.4 Downgrading renditions as a counter-example

The term ‘downgrading’ refers to the interpreter’s practice of omitting or softening source utterances embedding EAs. Instances of this type are not as frequent as instances of upgrading: in my data, I have identified 17 instances of downgrading renditions out of a total of 79 interpreter-produced EAs, (i.e. 21%); 5 of these instances are softened or mitigated renditions, while 12 are instances where an original EA has been omitted by INT. Nonetheless, these examples deserve some analysis, especially with regard to the sequential positioning in which they are produced and the impact they seem to have on the unfolding interaction.

In this study, downgrading as a discourse practice is not intended as a synonym of mitigation. As explained by Fraser (2002:342), mitigation is “a modification of only those effects which are unwelcome to the hearer”; evidentials and hedges used by the interpreter to render an unfavourable assessment certainly fall within the broader heading of downgrading. However, my definition of downgrading is broader than that of mitigation; in my study, downgrades may be performed by interpreters also when the assessment embedded in the source utterance is favourable, i.e. to modify effects which would be ‘welcome’ to the hearer. Through the extracts presented in this section I will show that downgrading moves seem to work towards an ‘objectivisation’ of teachers’ talk, which may lead to an increased focus on informative content. In other words, by softening or omitting EAs in the interpreters’ renditions, the personal (positive or negative) stance taken up through assessments seems to be disregarded, with a consequent suppression of interpersonal meaning.
In extract 5.10, T1 is performing a request, i.e. that the child attends some extra hours of art; the request has proven dispreferred to the mother, who is not keen on accepting it.

[Extract 5.10 – PTM1a]

8 T1 he will have difficulty understanding (.) the work (0.71) (0.4) (0.75) (0.48) so (.) he really needs to come back at lunchtime to get that individual help

9 INT se ha difficoltà per la (.) è consigliabile che venga all’ora di pranzo (.) per farsi aiutare if he has difficulties with the it is advisable that he comes at lunchtime to get some help

10 INT se ha difficoltà per la (.) è consigliabile che venga all’ora di pranzo (.) per farsi aiutare

11 M mhm

12 T1 that would be really good help for Ax

13 M va bene (.) glielo dico that is fine I’ll tell him
INT’s rendition is an instance of double downgrade. Firstly, at line 10, INT softens T1’s utterance, which is composed of two TCUs. The first TCU (he will have difficulties understanding the work, line 8) is a negative, unfavourable assessment used to package the request; the assessment depicts a future negative scenario that will possibly become true if the request is not accepted. It is followed by the ‘solution’ to the child’s problems suggested by T1, i.e. attending some lunchtime sessions. The second TCU is introduced by the causal particle so and is performed via the modal verb need strengthened by the intensifier really (line 9). In his rendition at line 10, INT adopts a hypothetical if-construction to render the source utterance. The result is that the rendition has both a favourable and an unfavourable component to it, while being simultaneously mitigated by the fact that it is delivered using a conditional construction, which softens the illocutionary force of the source utterance. There is a clear shift from the realm of ‘certainty’ to that of ‘possibility’ that downgrades the initial recommendation/request. The effect is that the whole picture appears less threatening in INT’s words. The second instance of downgrade is the fact that the recommendation uttered by T1 (that would be really good help for Ax, line 12) is completely omitted by the interpreter.

In extract 5.10, T1 is reading a report prepared by the art teacher, who could not attend the meeting; hence her frequent gaze shifts to the object (i.e. the report) shown by the gaze-encoding symbols added to the transcript. Mutual gaze is established by T1 when she delivers her recommendation at line 8 and maintained until the TRP when INT takes the floor to provide his rendition. At this point, T1 shifts her gaze from the report to INT, possibly waiting for a cue to resume the floor. At line 11, immediately after INT’s rendition, M shifts her gaze to T1 and delivers her acknowledgment token mhm (which signals understanding but not necessarily agreement with what is being said) while gazing at T1 directly. M maintains her gaze fixed on T1, which is possibly one of the reasons why the latter resumes the floor and expands her sequence by means of the assessment that would be really good help for Ax (line 12). This utterance is produced by T1 while addressing M directly, without reading the report; it is responded to by the mother while mutual gaze is established between the two of them. M’s basic knowledge of English probably enables her to understand T1’s utterance to some extent. During the production of this assessment at line 12, INT briefly shifts gaze from T1 to M, possibly to monitor the latter’s reaction and intervene if necessary. However, a preferred response is given; the interpreter does not translate either T1’s contribution or M’s preferred response (va bene glielo dico, line 13). The latter is delivered while nodding and maintaining mutual gaze, so a series of non-verbal cues seem to make clear
that the response is preferred (agreement with a request) and that there is no need to intervene verbally; this may be why the interpreter holds back and lets the interaction unfold.

Extract 5.11 is an example of a downgrade of a positive EA uttered by T2 in the source utterance. T2 is commenting on the child’s performance in science.

[Extract 5.11 – PTM1b]

14 T2 “let’s just see then” (1.93) right so (.) I would say Ax is doing very very well

15 in science (.) I know that his results aren’t as (.) high (.) as he’d like (xxx) ‘d like

16 INT anche se i risultati non sono così (.) buoni come quelli che vorrebbe even if the results are not as good as those he would want

17 T2 ah but in terms of science it’s very difficult with the language the language is very specific

18 (1.12)

20 INT in terms de- la lingua è molto specifica quindi (.) se ha difficoltà di lingua trova più in terms of the language is very specific so if he has language difficulties he find it more
difficile rendere
difficult to render

21 M sta roba qui
this stuff here
T2 starts off by producing a favourable assessment (*I would say Ax is doing very very well in science*, lines 14-15), which performs an action that could be described as ‘doing reassuring’. In other words, the teacher is clarifying her stance with a view to reassuring the mother on the progress that the child has made, despite the poor results obtained so far. This is also confirmed by the utterance at line 15 (*I know that his results aren’t as high as he’d like*), which acts as a sort of justification of the low results obtained so far, thus taking some of the responsibility for that away from child and recognising the difficulties with which he is coping.

In his rendition, INT completely omits the first positive assessment about the child’s performance and starts off by rendering the second TCU. It is interesting to note that, while T2’s report of the child’s concern clearly expresses the unhappiness of the latter with his results (in contrast with her positive initial assessment), INT’s rendition is more ambiguous as it does not clarify who believes the results to be worse than they should be. This ambiguity is seemingly due to the language shift, which suggests a possible dual reading of the rendition. In Italian, the verb *vorrebbe* (inflected form of the verb *volere*, meaning *want*, in the present conditional tense) could refer to a masculine or feminine third person pronoun, so INT’s rendition lends itself to two possible interpretations: on the one hand, *even if the results are not as good as those he (the child) would want*, or on the other hand, *even if the results are not as good as those she (the teacher) would want* if the interpreter was addressing the teacher in the third formal person, with a very different impact. INT’s rendition is therefore ambiguous and the positive personal stance clearly expressed by T1 is completely lost.

In extract 5.11, gaze seems to play mainly a regulatory function; differently from extract 5.10, T2 tends to shift constantly her gaze from M to INT during the production of her utterances, with the effect that INT is treated by T2 as part of the participatory framework. No turn-negotiation strategies have been established beforehand, so INT takes the floor at a moment when mutual gaze is established between him and T2 and the latter has produced a micropause after uttering *...as he’d like* (line 15). Participants show a tendency to look at the party who is talking, the interpreter included, thus treating him as a fully ratified participant.

Differently from upgrading renditions, which mostly applied to teacher-produced source utterances, in my data, downgrading also applies to the few instances
of mothers’ talk. Extract 5.12 starts off with M answering a question produced by T1, i.e. whether the child had already studied the tables in India before moving to Italy. The question is answered directly by M, without the need for the interpreter to translate it. It can be seen that in PTM1, the Indian mother often uses a mix of Italian and English words when she talks; this seems to show an attempt on her part to speak the language of the host country, but often results in rather obscure statements which are difficult to interpret.

[Extract 5.12 – PTM2b]

92  M  si the table is eh perfect in India [(xxx)* matematica is perfect yes maths

93  T1  [ah ecco right

94  (1.21)

95  INT  [ok

96  M  [si yes

97  T1  ecco infatti right indeed

98  M  ah:

99  (1.55)

100 T1  [eh
101 M  [ah:* but italiano is eh (adesso no) the perfect but Italian is now not perfect (1.78)

103 INT  ehm Italian is diffi[cult

104 M  [(xxx)* ah slowly slow[ly he* (xxx)

105 INT  [[ yeah [he’s

107 INT  dice che matematica: l’aveva già studia[ta
she says that he had already studied maths

108 T1  [in* India e [infatti me ne* sto accor[gendo
in India and indeed I’ve noticed

109 INT  [in India [e poi
and then

111 si * studia bene in India [a quanto pare
it is studied well in India as far as it seems

112 T1  [infatti * ho visto
indeed I’ve seen

113 INT  l’italiano invece piano pia:no
Italian on the contrary slowly slowly

114 M  si si [si
yes yes yes
The sequence in extract 5.12 presents a number of interesting features; I shall focus on the unfavourable assessment produced by M at line 101 (Italian is now not the perfect). Having produced a preferred answer to T1’s question, this assessment possibly shifts the attention to what M perceives as a pressing issue to be dealt with. This is confirmed by the fact that she raises the same point (i.e. her concerns about the child’s difficulties with the language) at different moments in interaction. The unfavourable assessment is independently responded to by INT, who produces an upgraded and more explicit assessment (Italian is difficult, line 103); it is uttered while looking at M directly and smiling and it is not translated back to T1. M then expands on her utterance by saying that the child will slowly learn the language. INT’s rendition of M’s talk is downgraded; firstly, the unfavourable assessment is totally omitted in the rendition, which only preserves the instance of positive future-oriented talk uttered by the mother (piano piano imparerà, line 115), which leads to the closure of the sequence and prevents talk from taking another trajectory and T1 from possibly commenting on the point raised by M. Secondly, the qualification of maths as perfect (line 92) is mitigated by saying that maths is taught well in India, followed by the hedge a quanto pare (line 111), which seems to orient to the greater knowledge and/or epistemic rights of the speaker while reducing the strength of the initial claim, which was produced as universally valid.

In terms of gaze, INT’s behaviour at line 115, when she renders the instance of positive future-oriented talk, deserves some attention: INT starts her rendition by gazing at T1, then shifts her gaze to M when uttering piano piano imparerà. While doing so she smiles and uses a slightly patronising tone; at this point, M shifts her gaze and looks away.
As highlighted earlier in this section, downgrading (and upgrading) moves, by definition, involve a change of the illocutionary force of an evaluative utterance; they also modify (strengthen or weaken) the claim or truth implied in an assertion, thus also the epistemic authority of the speaker. In the case of downgrade, this force is weakened and there is a strong attenuation or cancellation of the stance taken by the speaker. From the excerpts analysed so far, it can be noted that the results of a downgrade may be mitigation or objectivisation, i.e. an increased focus on the informative content of the utterance. When downgrading mothers’ evaluative (mainly unfavourable) assessments (by either ignoring them or dealing with them independently), interpreters leave little room for the parents’ voice and do not seem to promote active participation. This also strengthens the idea that interpreters seem to argue the case for teachers in mediated PTMs.

5.5 Conclusions

The starting point for the analysis carried out in this chapter was the impression, stemming from empirical data, that interpreters display a very engaged attitude in the PTMs analysed. One of the basic assumptions of this study is that interpreters working in face-to-face scenarios have agency, thus they are actively contributing to the unfolding of the interaction. While this is widely agreed within DI studies, research exploring how this engaged behaviour effectively manifests itself and its interactional impact is rather scant. Phenomena like the different types of renditions provided by the interpreters as described by Wadensjö (1998) or the spelling out of implicatures described by Mason (2006) “can be traced back to the specific position of the interpreter as a participant in mediated, triadic interaction” (Baumgarten et al. 2008:183). Through the fine-grained analysis of the specific conversational moves highlighted in the previous sections, this chapter (together with chapters 4 and 6) contributes to a better understanding of the interpreter’s positioning in the context of mediated PTMs, uncharted territory in DI studies. Building on the idea that the interpreter’s positioning is not static, but dynamic, and that it changes on a moment-by-moment basis according to the interactional behaviour of all the participants, I have tried to pinpoint those moments where such an attitude seems to manifest itself more clearly, with a view to establishing whether any similarities in the interpreter’s ‘doing’ with words and gaze could be found across the encounters.
The sequences analysed have been selected by virtue of the presence of upgrading and downgrading renditions produced by the interpreter. Both definitions build on the notion of EA, which is the basic structural unit and starting point for the analysis of the verbal component. EAs are part of larger segments of talk, whose format is normally that of a multiunit utterance produced to translate a teacher’s source utterance to the mother. Their evaluative import can be intensified (or softened) by interpreters in their renditions. When produced in RFP, these EAs extend the interpreter’s turn after a possible transition relevant point which delimits the ‘boundary’ of an utterance containing all the informative content of the source utterance (normally produced by the teacher, at least in the case of upgrading renditions): as a consequence, they seem to act as turn increments (Schegloff 2001). RFP EAs are all independently produced, i.e. they are not originally uttered by the teachers; nevertheless, their content is not randomly chosen, but is based on the information originally imparted by the teachers themselves. Through them, interpreters provide a sort of ‘bottom-line’ understanding and explicit formulation of what they perceive to be the teacher’s stance; such moves heighten the accessibility of the event for the recipient, thus providing a further level of granularity, and access to a more personal dimension through which it is possible to recognise the voice of interpreting in interaction.

In particular, upgrading moves performed via EAs seem to highlight and expand on an aspect of teacher’s talk that the interpreter hears as relevant to explain what the teacher has said. They often seem to clarify a potentially ambiguous or problematic aspect in the source utterance, thus serving the purpose of ‘articulating the unsaid’, and consequently increasing the degree of verbal explicitness of the target utterance. In other words, while mirroring the teacher’s stance, they formulate it more thoroughly and may be used by interpreters to overtly pursue endorsement of the teacher’s position. While doing so, upgrading moves also seem to act as proffering moves, i.e. EAs seem to be used by interpreters as a device for fishing agreement and avoiding complaints or criticisms.

The specific ‘scaffolding’ action that EAs contribute to performing seems to be done either by justifying the acceptability of the teachers’ utterance (mainly when the action is a recommendation) or by providing an instance of positive future-oriented talk (mainly when rendering a report). Through these moves, the interpreter reframes teachers’ reporting and recommending utterances, possibly with a view to making them more appealing, and thus more easily acceptable to the mothers. While upholding teachers’ talk and presenting it positively (thus seemingly aligning with the institution
and arguing its case), this move also seems to orient to unspoken concerns or wishes before they are even formulated by the mothers. As a result, both future-oriented and justifying upgrades function as reassuring moves towards the mothers, possibly in the attempt to create a common ground while trying to elicit understanding and agreement.

The previous observation is also supported by the fact that all the instances of upgrading renditions are found in sequences where participants are generally engaging in delicate actions, which could be heard as dispreferred by the mothers. The production of EAs in this specific sequential environment by the interpreter suggests that their production is sensitive to the context in which they are found. Assessments are highly socialised practices, using the immediate environment for the management of social relations and social interaction. On the one hand, these assessments refocus the attention of the recipient on a specific, topicalised aspect of the assessable. On the other hand, they reorient the ongoing course of talk, providing for a closing of delicate moments and potentially producing an alternative trajectory of talk.

While performing all these functions, upgrading moves often seem to also facilitate transition to the next point on the agenda, thus acting as closing implicative devices for the ongoing sequence. This seems to emerge particularly clearly when they are found in RFP. In other words, they seem to structure the activity by displaying that the explanation is complete; thus they seem to be used to achieve sequence closing and mark the transition to the next course of action (Goodwin & Goodwin 1987; Antaki, Houtkoop-Steenstra & Rapley 2000). Close scrutiny of gaze patterns also seems to reveal this specific function; upgrading EAs uttered by interpreters while looking at the mothers are subsequently followed by the interpreter’s gaze shift from the mother to, usually, the teacher, to signal that the sequence is closed and the interaction can move on. The combination of gaze and RFP EAs, in particular, seems to confirm that, as claimed by Rossano (2005, 2006) and Rossano et al. (2009), gaze in interaction is not organised primarily with reference to turns-at-talk, rather to wider sequences and courses of action. This also confirms that gaze not only plays an important function in the allocation of single turns of talk, but that it is also a crucial resource in signalling and interactively negotiating the beginning, sustaining, and ending of specific courses of action. The last point raised sheds light on the importance of accounting for the verbal and non-verbal dimensions together, as they complement each other in building actions and accomplishing coherent courses of action. This also confirms the conceptualisation of actions as laminated, i.e. as composed of different layers and performed by
combining different resources to display (or fail to display) co-participation and alignment.

Remaining on the topic of gaze patterns, the interactional dynamics which emerge from the sequences analysed differ from those which have been described as typical of monolingual interaction. Two main observations can be drawn: firstly, in conversation, it is expected that a speaker looks at the final addressees of his/her talk. In the triadic encounters analysed, the ultimate addressee of teachers’ talk are the mothers; nevertheless, teachers generally show sustained engagement with the interpreter rather than with the mother when in speaking mode, thus seemingly ratifying the latter as a fully-fledged participant.\textsuperscript{33} Instances of held gaze with interpreters are very frequent and they are only interspersed with glances at mothers. While this happens, the mothers often disengage from the participatory framework by looking away, possibly waiting for the interpreter to take an active role in re-establishing a direct contact (thus bringing them back into the participatory framework), which mainly happens by restoring mutual gaze, taking the floor and explaining what is going on. Held gaze (not necessarily mutual) from teachers to interpreters is also found when the former are in listening mode, mainly when listening to interpreters deliver their renditions; this is possibly done to monitor what the interpreter is saying (especially when there is partial understanding of the target language) or to wait for a signal to carry on. Another option is that, once they deliver their utterance, teachers engage in a schism, thus self-excluding from the participatory framework and leaving the interpreter with the task of interacting with the mothers. Teachers are in listening mode also when mothers are talking; very few instances of this configuration are found in the corpus, given that the latter tend to refrain from actively participating in the communicative event and often limit their contribution to acknowledgment tokens.

Participation frameworks and understanding are negotiated on a moment-by-moment basis by participants; two main communicative axes seem to characterise these sequences, i.e. interpreter-teacher and interpreter-mother. Direct, mutual gaze between mother and teacher is very limited; this signals the lack of mutual engagement between the two, and reliance on the interpreter to make sure the communicative event unfolds smoothly. The leeway granted to the interpreter is confirmed by the analysis of the interactional dynamics during the dyadic sequences. In most cases, teachers do not interrupt the dyadic interactions between mother and interpreter, but simply limit

\textsuperscript{33} This is also confirmed by verbal behaviour, for instance by the fact that teachers often address the interpreters directly, thus ratifying them as their direct interlocutors (e.g. PTM2c, line 120).
themselves to monitoring it, or engage in some concurring activity. Interpreters do not always provide an interpretation of their dyadic exchanges with the mothers. It could therefore be expected that the teachers would request the interpretation when not spontaneously provided by the interpreter, especially when the teacher has no access to the mother’s language. However, this rarely happens in my data; surprisingly, teachers show a tendency not to sanction and sometimes even to confirm, via nodding and facial expressions combined with direct gaze and acknowledgment tokens, their alignment with the interpreter’s conduct and choices, even when no interpretation of the content of the dyadic exchange between the interpreter and the mother is provided. By not intervening in the conversation between the interpreter and the mother, the teacher seems to acknowledge that the activity is unfolding in a ‘routine’ and ‘non-problematic’ fashion. Furthermore, these dynamics are not the result of any a priori negotiations or agreement between the parties; they stem from the observation of how the communicative event is co-constructed on a moment-by-moment basis and are similar across the three meetings analysed.

Through the analysis carried out in this chapter, I have shown how assessments are relevant units of analysis to pinpoint those moments in interaction where the interpreters’ interventions seem to manifest themselves more clearly while being used as a vehicle for other actions. The analysis of the sequences selected shows that the interpreter’s positioning is constantly shifting and that gaze, combined with verbal behaviour, can help us pinpoint these shifts. Gaze shifting from mother to teacher seems to be mainly associated with the interpreter being in reception mode actively monitoring the interaction before deciding whether to act as “recapitulator” (Wadensjö 1992: 124), “responder” (Wadensjö 1998; Baraldi & Gavioli 2007) or to step back and let the interaction flow; gaze is here useful to investigate how turn-taking is regulated. Instances of held gaze help identify alignment and affiliation axes and investigate to what extent interpreters actively take part in the event and work towards the establishment of a direct relationship. The consequences vary on a case by case basis and will be discussed in the following chapter.
CHAPTER 6

Conclusions

6.1 Introduction

Building on the analysis of the specific features of participants’ verbal and non-verbal behaviour explored in chapters 4 and 5, this chapter addresses the implications of the dynamics highlighted at different levels and draws some conclusions to the study as a whole. As explained in 1.3, monolingual literature has shown that PTMs serve a number of purposes; teachers, especially when confronted with delicate or problematic scenarios, seem to consider PTMs as opportunities to provide parents with comments and advice about their children’s conduct or lack of progress and to seek families’ support to bring about changes in the child’s behaviour and attitude (Walker 1998). This corresponds to the goal of transformative mediation, i.e. bringing about changes in social systems and giving a voice to each party-at-talk (see 1.2.2). To achieve this goal in PTMs, parties need to negotiate meaning and expectations among themselves, in a collaborative co-construction of the participatory framework, and find solutions together.

The particular way in which mediated PTMs are co-constructed seems to have interesting consequences on how parties-at-talk participate in the encounter and on the outcome of this specific type of intercultural communicative event, which has never been explored in IS before. Through the fine-grained analysis of specific verbal and non-verbal features carried out in previous analytical chapters, it has been possible to pinpoint some traits of the interpreter’s very engaged behaviour in PTMs which may help us redefine his/her profile and achieve a more thorough and nuanced understanding of the notion of mediation. In particular, chapter 5 describes upgrading as a discourse practice implemented by interpreters via the production of EAs. A micro-analytical CA-based approach to the transcripts has revealed that EAs seem to perform a number of functions in interaction, namely explicitating, closing-implicative, and scaffolding functions. Combined with the analysis of gaze, findings suggest that the production of upgrading moves signals some shifts in the interpreters’ positioning. In particular, at these moments in interaction, interpreters seem to display epistemic authority and entitlement to intervene in the talk via an independent contribution which formulates an evaluation of a referent or state of affairs. Through EAs and gaze directed to the
mothers, interpreters seem to exert ‘pressure’ on the interlocutor (i.e. mainly the mothers), who are implicitly encouraged to simply agree rather than expand on the narrative, so that the specific sequence can be brought to a close. This is particularly evident when the production of RFP assessments is combined with gaze-away moves.

It is not the goal of this chapter to ascertain whether interpreters act this way deliberately and, consequently, to deliver a value or moral judgment on their conduct; rather, the following sections focus on the impact of such moves at various levels. Section 6.2 explores the interactional consequences that interpreter-initiated contributions seem to have on the participatory framework, namely to what extent the way actions are packaged verbally and non-verbally may help pinpoint shifts in the interpreter’s positioning, whether such moves are accepted or rejected by other parties-at-talk and, whether and, if so, to what extent, they contribute to active participation and empowerment. Section 6.3 looks at the socio-cultural impact of the dynamics highlighted; to this end, the main findings emerging from the analysis of transcripts are recontextualised and discussed within the broader picture of IM, with a view to identifying whether they seem to build towards the achievement of transformative mediation or whether they lead to dyadic separation (sub-research question 5).

Sections 6.4, 6.5 and 6.6 aim to draw some general conclusions to the whole thesis. In particular, 6.4 deals with the implications and contributions of this study to various fields, namely DI, study of PTMs, assessments, and non-verbal communication. Linked to the last point are some methodological contributions, namely the way data is processed and encoded to extract the information necessary to the analysis. Particular emphasis is placed on the way non-verbal behaviour is accounted for, which represents one of the novelties of this study vis-à-vis previous research on DI. However, no study is exempt from certain limitations or weaknesses; section 6.5 highlights and critically discusses some shortcomings linked, in particular, to the conceptual design adopted. Finally, section 6.6 looks forward by outlining the potential for expansion of this project and suggesting possible avenues for future research. Particular emphasis is placed on the implications that the analysis conducted in this thesis could have on research and training in the field of DI.
6.2 Implications of the findings for participation

As explained in 1.2.1, mediated interaction is characterised by a particular organisational format, which fundamentally differs from a dyadic, monolingual situation. At a macro-level, for instance, the presence of the interpreters has an impact on turn-taking patterns, which follow different dynamics (cf. Sacks et al. 1974 and Davidson 2002, and section 2.3.1). More relevant to the purpose of this study is the impact that a third agent, acting as a ratified participant, has on the distribution of active participation, thus on the promotion of participants’ voices and self-expression.

The analysis carried out in chapter 5 provides further empirical verbal and non-verbal evidence that interpreters in mediated PTMs are doing more than acting as translators and coordinators (Wadensjö 1998). Findings suggest the existence of a certain degree of overlap between the interpreter’s and teacher’s tasks, which seems to become more evident in the production of upgraded renditions. This, however, does not automatically mean that interpreters are aligning with the institution, thus acting as gatekeepers; the discourse practices isolated seem to reveal an attempt on the part of the interpreter to involve the migrant party, establish a direct contact and a rapport based on mutual trust. The default assumption of interpreters as communication facilitators is nevertheless challenged on the basis of empirical evidence.

Building on the micro-investigation of talk and gaze carried out in chapters 4 and 5, the following section deals with the positioning(s) which seem to be projected by interpreters in mediated PTMs through the discourse practices implemented. It also investigates the relation which seems to exist between the specific types of interpreter-initiated contributions analysed and the uneven distribution of active participation in interaction.

6.2.1 (Re)defining the interpreter’s positioning within mediated PTMs

It is widely acknowledged today that dialogue interpreters necessarily act as intercultural mediators and ratified participants in interaction. Katan (1996:2) states that, with the spread of globalisation and migrations, the interpreting profession has undergone a radical change, i.e. “from inefficient walking dictionaries to what is really necessary: facilitators for mutual understanding between people”. This links back to the idea (questioned in this study) of interpreters as bridges putting the parties into direct contact and helping them work together while creating the grounds for new shared
meaning. In particular, Katan states that mediators are, above all, expected to “allow the interlocutors to cooperate and be seen to cooperate, exactly as they wish to do” (ibid.:253). Along all the different positionings that interpreters may take up in mediated scenarios, Katan’s statement above suggests the idea of interpreters acting as co-operators with the parties-at-talk. In PTMs, this positioning clearly overlaps with that of teachers as described by Wine (2007:88), i.e. the teacher is adept at expressing alignment towards and eliciting alignment from the parents by framing “herself and the parents as co-operators, construct[ing]/ and or appeal[ing] to their common ground (their mutual experience with and interest in interest the children), and pay[ing] careful attention to their face wants”.

Despite the terminology used, which pertains to a different conceptual framework (e.g. face, power, authority), the description of the teacher’s tasks can be easily adjusted to what the interpreter seems to be doing in the interactions analysed. The analysis carried out in chapter 5 provides evidence to support this argument: through the implementation of upgrading moves, interpreters seem to take up what is normally expected to be the teacher’s task as co-operators, i.e. building a common ground for the display of solidarity while making sure that understanding is achieved and moving the agenda further. This happens despite the lack of any negotiations and without being sanctioned by the teachers; it is therefore difficult to establish the extent to which the interpreter’s behaviour is the result of alignment with the institution or of the perception that interpreters have of themselves and of their own tasks and functions in interaction. By foregrounding their competence as intercultural mediators, interpreters in PTMs may indeed encroach upon the territory occupied by teachers, thus confirming the impression that they take up the latter’s tasks in interaction.

On the one hand, it is acknowledged that “as a mediating agent, the interpreter is authorised to take the initiative independently of others, introduce arguments, make comments, give explanations” (Straniero Sergio 1998:155). On the other hand, however, it is not clear what degree of intervention is acceptable in interaction. Using EAs as a starting point for the analysis has proved useful in this respect; firstly, it has highlighted those moments in the data where interpreters display such active participation by expressing their own stance and claiming epistemic rights towards the assessable. Interpreter-produced EAs can therefore be seen as indexes of stance-taking; recognising an evaluative component in the interpreter’s activity clearly supports the argument that interpreters display a very active engagement in PTMs and, at times, position themselves as responders. What remains to be measured is the extent to which
interpreters speak with their ‘own voice’ or identify and align themselves with one party or another and the impact that this has on participation and IM.

Building on the analysis carried out, upgrading moves can be considered a device to recognise the voice of interpreting in its multiple declinations. Through such discourse devices, interpreters certainly guarantee what is regarded as the “interpreters’ general, overarching goal”, i.e. “to promote mutual understanding, at some level, between the primary parties” (Wadensjö 2004:113) or to fulfil the “communicative function of making understanding possible” (Baraldi & Gavioli 2011:206). Furthermore, it could be tentatively argued that the fact that upgrading moves seem to exert an explicitating and reassuring function is an attempt, on the part of the interpreter, to orient to and anticipate the existence of unspoken concerns or implicit worries of the migrant party. However, through upgrades, teachers’ systematic attempts at qualifying and mitigating dispreferred moves also seem to be ‘boosted’ by interpreters. A possible, direct implication of the practice to upgrade utterances embedding EAs could therefore be that they may inadvertently contribute to potential misinterpretations and/or misunderstandings of the full import of specific source utterances on the part of parents. As explained by Straniero Sergio (2007:160):

As a communication facilitator, the interpreter should render the message as clearly and as comprehensibly as possible. On the other hand, too much explanation of a deliberately vague or ambiguous message risks betraying the real performative intentions of the speaker.

Behind the apparent simplicity of teachers’ talk lies the complexity of a nuanced kind of discourse, which needs to maintain closeness with and openness towards the other party even when sanctioning their conduct and encroaching on the private sphere of family life. Pillet-Shore (2001:5) describes the essence of teachers’ discourse by saying that they “seem to work to reconcile this tension between satisfying their institutional duty of reporting trouble and maintaining the sociable character of these conferences”. Through their upgrading formulations, interpreters most often do not appear to register the unfavourable evaluative import embedded within or underlying the teacher’s preceding talk and to promote the visibility of favourable and affirmative evaluations, thus treating them as preferred (as is typical of teachers’ talk). Therefore the rendition often disattends the implications of teachers’ initial formulations (i.e. that there is
concern after all) and seems to disregard the need for the mother to contribute to a change or improvement in the child’s work or class behaviour.

Such moves affect the “lifeworld” component of what I have called the voice of education, i.e. the dimension related to the establishment of mutual trust and the conveyance of empathy which are crucial to the development of a solid rapport between the parties (see 1.2.3). To maintain the parallel with medical consultations (as in 1.3 with monolingual encounters in the healthcare and pedagogical settings), through such moves, interpreters do not seem to act as gatekeepers in the same sense highlighted by Davidson (2000) and Bolden (2000). In particular, research has shown that interpreters in medical consultations tend to focus on verbatim rendition of factual information (e.g. Dysart-Gale 2005; Leanza 2005; Angelelli 2001; Davidson 2000), substantially reduce verbal reinforcement devices, such as repetitions (e.g. Aranguri 2006) and editorialise information which is deemed irrelevant (e.g. Hsieh 2007). This is not the case in my data, where, conversely, interpreters tend to embed their utterances with evaluations, thus expanding on the information provided by teachers. One may argue that such reinforcement produced by verbal upgrading and the display of an engaged non-verbal attitude (as interpreters mostly look at their interlocutors directly when talking) could be perceived as a significant contribution towards the establishment of a solid rapport and the involvement of both parties in the interaction. However, the actual consequence of upgrading seems to be that of setting the discourse on a new trajectory which promotes a unidirectional flow of talk, rather than the exchange of ideas and, ultimately, effective dialogue among the parties.

Through the addition of EAs, turns seem to be designed to instruct mothers on what to do, how to do it and what to think and to constrain mothers’ responses, thus seemingly discouraging them from actively intervening in the talk and, consequently, hindering empowerment of mother’s personal expressions and not allowing for the emergence of conflicting positions. In other words, this sentential packaging does not seem to encourage mothers’ engagement when they appear to be reluctant, inviting them to collaborate, provide alternative accounts and express their concerns; on the contrary, it seems to reassure them while imposing the solution or view provided by the institution. It seems to tell them what they should be thinking or doing, without showing the need to discuss any remedial actions together. This move seems therefore to pursue a teacher-centred type of communication rather than a mother-centred one (according to which, on the contrary, the mother is seen as an active partner in interaction). Likewise, downgrading moves (which could be conceived as a sort of editing move in line with
the gatekeeping phenomena highlighted, among others, by Davidson; see 2.3.1) affect mainly mothers’ talk to the point that the element of empathy that the mother was trying to convey with her words is completely lost.

In this study, upgrading renditions build on the notion of EAs, which by definition express a personal opinion and stance; this reinforcement seemingly entails a significant broadening of the scope of the voice of interpreting, which would “coincide with the voice of a third participant making independent choices between the alternatives available at any one point in the interaction, on the basis of his/her own analysis of the participants’ communicative goals and needs” (Merlini 2009:268). Applying Mondada’s words (2009:343) to the present study, through upgraded renditions the interpreter can be seen as “the teller, the informer, the knowledgeable person and even the expert”. The use of EAs could therefore be included among a repertoire of interactive practices adopted by interpreters to show epistemic stance and project themselves as being competent to foster such understanding, while, at the same time, constructing parents as non-competent conversational members in the talk.

As explained by Davies & Harré (1990:46), identity building is “an open question with a shifting answer depending upon the positions made available within one’s own and others’ discursive practices”. The joint analysis of gaze patterns and verbal behaviour has made it possible to gain more insights and pinpoint these multiple positionings of the interpreter on a moment-by-moment basis. Gaze shifts are available as contextualisation cues (Gumperz 1982), which, each in turn, recontextualise the event, offering new positionings that may be taken up, rejected or ignored by each other participant. Gaze is a crucial variable in that it adds a whole new layer of complexity and suggests new meanings and interpretations which an analysis exclusively focused on participants’ verbal output would not allow. Direct gaze at participants seems to maximise interactional closeness with and reduce the distance between the parties-at-talk; held gaze towards participants while talking suggests that the interpreter is acting as a ratified participants, as is the case in monolingual conversation. By establishing mutual gaze while uttering their renditions, interpreters also attempt to bring mothers back into the participatory framework and maximise proximity with them. By doing so, interpreters seem to compensate partially for the lack of direct engagement generally shown by teachers towards the mothers.

When combined with the analysis of upgrading moves, held gaze seems to do more than display engagement; it also seems to serve the expressive function of reassuring while acting as a device to achieve inclusion (especially when addressing
mothers) and to pursue a favourable response from the mother and enable the interaction to unfold smoothly. Nevertheless, the verbal analysis reveals that interpreters’ upgrading moves seem to be constructed in such a way that does not encourage mothers to express their opinions and voice their expectations or concerns, which are never explicitly raised or made relevant during the encounter. Hence the clash between a use of gaze which conveys closeness, directness and mutual engagement, thus seemingly performing an affiliative function, and a verbal behaviour which displays empathy but also aims to reiterate a specific point until it is accepted by mothers. This argument is further supported by the instances of gaze-away shifts after producing RFP, which seem to confirm the idea that such conversational practices are also adopted as sequence-closing devices.

The analysis shows that there seems to be a very subtle line between teachers’ stance and interpreter’s positioning; EAs provide claims of knowledge, through which interpreters endorse the institution’s stance and act as someone who is able to give the right advice, who is entitled to expand on a source utterance and assess a specific referent. When used to perform recommendations, interpreters show a problem-solving attitude which is in line with the one normally adopted by teachers; this is further evidence of the overlap between the two professional figures. The main effect of such discourse practice seems to be that of constructing interpreters as competent conversational members, who are entitled to display epistemic knowledge of the assessable.

6.2.2 (Re)defining mothers’ and teachers’ participation in mediated PTMs

Having examined what interpreters do in interaction, this section shifts the focus to the way teachers and mothers participate in the communicative event. In line with Schegloff (1995a), one of the basic assumptions of this study is that recipients’ responses are crucial to explain how participants attend and take up each other’s actions. As underlined by Baraldi & Gavioli (2011:206), it is particularly “interesting to see how this takes place in interpreter-mediated talk, where not all participants speak the same language and direct uptakes show particular configurations”.

In my data, teachers tend to deliver their utterances while addressing the interpreter and then leave the latter with the task of rendering it in the mother’s language and dealing with any sort of variables or issues which may arise. This is reflected both verbally and non-verbally. For instance, at a verbal level, teachers never
question or sanction the interpreters’ conduct; in line with Baraldi & Gavioli (2011:226-227), this state of affairs may lead the institutional representatives to blindly trust the IM [interpreter-mediator]’s understanding of the situation and decline to take responsibility for it. This, in turn, leads the IMs to de-emphasise the importance of interpreting and to take the responsibility of the institution upon themselves, so that they may be regarded as its “representatives” in talk and, in assuming the role of gatekeepers, may lose not only the role of “interpreter,” but also that of “mediator”.

At a non-verbal level, teachers tend to look at the interpreter throughout the latter’s rendition, seemingly waiting for a signal that they can resume the floor. By doing so, teachers potentially miss out on some important contextual cues which may be produced by the mothers while, at the same time, reducing mutual, direct engagement with the latter. In more explicit cases, teachers even engage in schisms, i.e. in parallel conversations (which are made possible by the presence of two teachers in each interaction), thus totally self-excluding from the participatory framework and waiting for the interpreter to get back to them. To sum up, the data shows the teachers’ tendency to rely heavily on the interpreter, even to the point of self-excluding from the participatory framework and leaving the interpreter alone to conduct the interaction.

Shifting our focus to the mothers, my data seems to confirm a general attitude on the part of parents to refrain from engaging in a dialogue with teachers and intervening in the interaction by asking for explanations or complementing their knowledge with the teachers’ one. This is one of the main differences found vis-à-vis monolingual PTMs, where parents tend to interact more and even to explicitly disagree with teachers. In my study, mothers tend to display a very peripheral engagement, which makes it very difficult to understand what they expect from the meeting and what their personal views are on the issues raised during the encounter (hence the idea of using triangulation to explore the mothers’ perception of these events as an interesting avenue for future research – see 6.6). The lack of intervention on the part of the mothers is understandable considering the complex situation with which they are confronted and the high degree of emotional distress they may be experiencing. It could be argued that this tendency may be caused by a number of reasons such as, among others, their lack of proficiency in the language of the host country, the use of a vehicular language in the encounters,
and the unfamiliarity with the institutions and procedures. While these factors may certainly play a role (even though it is difficult to evaluate to what extent until more studies are carried out), one could also argue that the presence of an interpreter should make mothers feel at ease and encourage them to open up more, given that they can rely on someone to translate what they want to say and facilitate communication. Should this not be the case, some sort of ‘remedial’ action might be expected from the interpreter acting as a mediator to make sure that mothers become active participants in the talk and contribute to the process of knowledge integration, which is so crucial in PTMs. However, in my data, the interpreters’ attitude does not encourage mothers to intervene further, despite or due to the partly reassuring effect that the EAs embedded in the utterances produced seem to have.

Interpreter-produced utterances embedding EAs are never rejected by mothers, but it can only be assumed that agreement has been achieved in most cases; acknowledgment tokens are the most frequent type of response provided by mothers and only clearly indicate understanding of what has been said, not necessarily agreement or alignment with it. In other words, mothers’ response shows that transfer and receipt of information is successfully achieved; what remains to be established is whether this display of understanding also signals agreement with what is being reported or recommended, especially when the teacher’s source utterance ultimately bears a dispreferred value. This is in line with a study by Dysart-Gale (2005), who adopts a completely different methodology to investigate what interpreters felt and did when, during a medical encounter, they rendered something which could be potentially dispreferred to the patients. In this cases, the interpreters interviewed expressed their frustration about whether to verbalise questions or voice concerns that patients would not pose themselves but that would be made relevant by their non-verbal behaviour: “You can see from their body language that they don't understand, but they just nod, and all I can do is stand there” (ibid.:98). A similar phenomenon can be observed in my data; by doing so, mothers meet their obligations as a next speaker while giving the illusion of jointly accomplishing the business at talk, even though they actually very rarely question teachers or contribute to generating ‘new’ knowledge. Interpreters’ upgrading moves, by trying to elicit understanding in a context of already persistent minimal or no uptake from the mother, do not create any effective opportunities for the latter to express their thoughts and opinions.
As anticipated in 6.3.1, the impact of such moves in terms of participation seems to be that mothers are constructed as less competent conversational members; they refrain from intervening in the talk, rarely challenge teachers’ accounts but position themselves as recipients of the evaluative utterances. Even when they try to respond and express their opinion, the data reveals that they are not encouraged to do so (see 5.4); their knowledge, though fundamental, given the specific knowledge configuration of PTMs, is not complemented with that of teachers, and they are granted very little opportunity to produce their own narrative.

6.3 Implications of the findings for intercultural mediation

Section 1.2.2 stressed the importance of considering DI and IM as two sides of the same coin, and lays out the various forms that the latter can take, namely transformative mediation as opposed to dyadic separation, thus providing a conceptual frame of reference to understand how the interpreters’ moves (explored in chapter 5) may affect the ongoing interaction and what the implications may be in terms of IM.

Through their contributions, interpreters are normally expected to achieve transformative mediation, which happens through active participation and empathy, and is built through specific communicative strategies which aim to facilitate the understanding of each other’s actions, like “perception checking, active listening, […] [providing] feedback aiming at clarifying the effects of actions, the utterance of non-aggressive and non-evaluative assertions” (Baraldi 2006b:62). The last passage of this quotation is particularly relevant to this study, as the author refers to the need to produce non-evaluative assertions to bring about dialogue. However, in mediated PTMs, evaluations are a crucial component of talk, which cannot be avoided; interpreters, therefore, need to be very careful when producing assessments, and package them in such a way that they trigger a response, which could be preferred or not, with a view to giving voice to both parties and empowering them.

Findings from the micro-analysis carried out in chapter 5 suggest that despite their highly engaged role, which involves clarifying, reassuring, trying to elicit agreement and contributing to the progress of the interaction, interpreters, through the upgrading and downgrading moves implemented, do not seem to effectively act as bridges and communication facilitators. On the one hand, there seems to be an attempt to address mothers and establish a direct contact with them; however, contributions from the mothers tend to be pre-empted or dealt with independently by the interpreters,
who, by so doing, seem to substitute themselves for the teachers and carry out their tasks. Transformative mediation aims to achieve integration; to better understand the implication of the findings from the analysis, it seems necessary to highlight two possible interpretations of this term.

It could refer to integration as assimilation, i.e. migrants’ adaptation to the host society’s culture and habits, or to integration as empowerment, i.e. offering migrants real options to become active members of the host society. Integration as assimilation serves the purpose of confirming and maintaining the ‘power’ of the institution. It may be seen as a way of easing social problems and avoiding conflicts, without, nevertheless, bringing about any effective change in society. It can also be seen as a tool for self-protection implemented by the institution, so that it cannot be held accountable for any case of miscommunication or misunderstanding. Transformative mediation promoting integration in this first sense seems to have some limitations, mainly with regard to the fact that it does not seem to work towards effective, mutual understanding between the parties; rather, it seems to promote a unidirectional flow of information, going, in the case of the data analysed in this study, from the institution to the mothers. The underlying expectation seems to be that the latter understands the message and adjusts their behaviour accordingly, rather than mutually negotiate a shared meaning and jointly achieve some solutions together.

In contrast, integration can also be conceived as a process leading to the active participation and empowerment of migrants; to this end, interpreters need to perform specific actions and take active part in the encounter. This seems to be more easily achieved when the institution involved does not have great power to sanction and when the knowledge gap between the parties is narrower. This is the case for PTMs, where the knowledge of parties needs to be integrated with each other to gain a comprehensive view of the child’s situation. Mediation, in this case, involves more than the pure transfer and acknowledgment of information from the institution to the migrant participant; in the context of PTMs, for instance, if it is to be explained to the migrant parents how they can effectively help their children succeed academically, they need to be informed in detail, on an ongoing basis, and with the help of interpreters acting as intercultural mediators, about how the school functions, their duties and rights as parents and their child’s progress. Likewise, the institutional representatives need to be informed of the child’s attitude and behaviour at home. In other words, PTMs are expected to be meetings during which teachers voice their opinions and concerns while, at the same time, allowing parents a voice. This integrated set of information and
knowledge would provide a solid basis to start a fruitful discussion on the child’s performance and, when there are problems, to seek solutions together.

To sum up, transformative mediation can be seen as a cline; it may lead to integration as empowerment or to integration as assimilation. If we consider the purpose of mediation as that of producing agreement and assimilation, the moves analysed in this thesis may be described as effective. However, they do not seem to effectively contribute to achieving integration through empowerment, which would be the desired outcome. As the analysis shows, the interpreters’ moves isolated produce the effect of checking the mothers’ understanding and triggering agreement, without, nevertheless, encouraging them to actively enrich the talk with their own knowledge and voice their feelings and concerns. While this may be seen as potentially dangerous for a smooth unfolding of the interaction, this study builds on the idea, already explained in 1.2.2, that diverging viewpoints are not necessarily detrimental to communication; on the contrary, in PTMs, by virtue of their specific knowledge configuration, expressing own thoughts and feelings, albeit conflicting, may help achieve a better understanding of the referent, i.e. the child, and, possibly, develop better, concerted solution that can help him/her overcome problems and difficulties inside and outside the classroom.

The present section (and related sub-sections) has discussed the implications of the findings at the micro- and macro- levels of investigation defined in this study, namely participation and intercultural communication. Having highlighted some conclusions from the analysis carried out, the next section will enlarge the scope and present some conclusions to the thesis, namely its contributions to various fields of enquiry, limitations and avenues for further research.

6.4 Contributions of this study

This study contributes to the field of IS in general, and to current research on DI in particular, in a number of ways; it responds to the call for empirical research in IS by analysing authentic data from a setting which has never been explored before in DI, namely PTMs. Over the last decade, considerable emphasis has been placed on the analysis of real data in IS; access to transcripts has confuted traditional beliefs about the passive and mechanical tasks performed by interpreters and has helped researchers gain insights into the complex dynamics of mediated interaction. This study follows the line of enquiry which builds on the assumption that dialogue interpreters necessarily act as ratified participants; therefore, what needs to be investigated is the extent to which they
can actively take part in the interaction and the consequences of such interventions. To sum up, I have tried to gain a better understanding of how the highly engaged participation of dialogue interpreters in PTMs manifests itself, and what the impact of such an attitude is. To this end, the issue of the interpreter’s shifting positioning in interaction has been analysed. In particular, empirical evidence has shown that interpreters often tend to act as co-operator, thus taking up the positioning which is described as typical of teachers in PTMs. Furthermore, the study has highlighted that a very active participation, which is generally expected of interpreters acting as mediators, does not necessarily facilitate communication and the achievement of integration intended as empowerment. The adoption of a comprehensive approach combining a micro-analytical focus on talk-in-interaction with a macro-level of investigation has contributed to reaching a more nuanced understanding of mediation, which is considered an integral part of DI.

Although the interpreters’ active participation is acknowledged in the literature about interpreter-mediated interaction, the multiple forms it can take in interaction have not been widely investigated in their multimodal and interactional dimensions. This is linked to another crucial issue for IS and research on intercultural communication, i.e. observing ways in which both the translational and non-translational activities performed by interpreters allow for active involvement of participants in the interaction (Gavioli & Baraldi 2005). This study contributes to research on DI not only by building on real data, but also by suggesting a methodology to systematically account for participants’ gaze in the analysis of verbal interaction, namely through the use of the ELAN software and the development of a gaze-encoding system for triadic exchanges. The analysis of gaze dynamics has also highlighted interesting patterns which differ from those found by the few studies which encompass this dimension. For instance, the fact that the amount of mutual gaze between each party and the interpreter is much higher than the amount of mutual gaze between parties is, in itself, an interesting finding which indicates that gaze dynamics in mediated PTMs are similar to those in monolingual conversation and supports the argument that interpreters tend to act as ratified participants.

The methodology adopted is not perfect and some of the practical difficulties encountered have been pointed out in chapter 3. Nevertheless, it represents a first attempt, which can be elaborated upon and further expanded to encompass more non-verbal traits. Furthermore, it points towards greater interdisciplinarity in DI, as it builds on a well-established body of non-verbal communication and multimodal research on
monolingual interaction, which provides a set of tools to investigate how various
semiotic resources are integrated with verbal ones in interaction. A similar stance is
shared by Pasquandrea (2011:477), who, in a recent study, points out two main reasons
why interpreter-mediated interaction can be fruitfully investigated using multimodal
analysis tools. Firstly, interpreter-mediated encounters are, by definition, a type of
multiparty interaction characterised by a complex participation format, which “is likely
to be managed multimodally, rather than merely verbally” (ibid.). Secondly, interpreter-
mediated interactions are inherently multilingual, therefore “the asymmetrical access of
the participants to each other’s language limits the amount of verbal communication
they are able to employ” (ibid.).

A more inclusive, comprehensive and multifaceted approach to research on DI,
like the one advocated in this study, certainly leads to an enhanced understanding of such
a practice. This new understanding could also have implications for training, which
needs to promote this increased awareness among interpreting students, so that they
acknowledge the complexity of their tasks, and realise that there are no do’s and don’ts
or rules to be ‘the perfect interpreter’. Interpreters could be instead trained to think
ahead about the potential consequences of their behaviour on a moment-by-moment
basis; they could be encouraged to recognise interpreting as primarily an act of
communication which is not rigidly anchored to standard taxonomies, and,
consequently, to think critically about their profession and acknowledge its complexity,
rather than look for pre-determined models of interpreting. Townsend (2002) suggests
some principles to be applied to the training of these professional figures, among which
is what he calls inquisitiveness, intended as the will to know at any time the ‘why’ and
‘how’ of the parties’ behaviour. This is perfectly in line with the overarching question
of CA, “why that now”, which is one of the key questions interpreters acting as
intercultural mediators could be encouraged to ask themselves on a moment-by-moment
basis. As Van Lier (1996:73) puts it, being aware “means the organising, controlling
and evaluating of experience”. In order to raise interpreting students’ awareness, greater
emphasis could be placed on communication mechanisms in both their verbal and non-
verbal components, which can greatly affect the outcome of interpreter-mediated
encounters. Awareness could also be raised by focusing on the range of options
available to the speaker in interaction and by accounting for any verbal and non-verbal
moves in terms of interactional impact, thus highlighting whether they lead to
inclusion/exclusion, whether they encourage active participation and involvement.
A practical way of achieving this goal could be through the use of authentic material into the classroom. In particular, Zorzi (2007) highlights the benefits of looking at transcripts from audio-recorded data and discussing it with students. Building on this idea, introducing videos of real data, where available, as part and parcel of training activities, and discussing specific sequences with the students would be extremely beneficial on several fronts. Through the analysis of video-recorded, authentic interaction and the development of activities which reflect what happens in real-life scenarios more closely, all the issues addressed in the present study, from positioning to interactional impact, from non-verbal behaviour to mediation, can be raised in the classroom. Firstly, this approach would contribute to further increasing awareness of interpreters’ own performance and of the implications on the unfolding event. Focusing on real data and analysing various ways of dealing with the same scenario could help interpreters think of the range of options available in specific circumstances and of the interactional impact of the specific choices and behaviour adopted. Secondly, it could draw the attention of prospective interpreters to how real interactions unfold, so that they can devise their own set of strategies to handle verbal and, as suggested in this study, non-verbal challenges in interaction. As underlined by Iglesias (2010:223):

Adopting a more global approach to the encounter could help interpreters better decide how best they can take an active role in deciding what is relevant and important for the ongoing activity and relationship and how it is displayed verbally and nonverbally.

In addition to research on DI and non-verbal communication (in particular gaze), this study also has implications for research on parent-teacher communication and assessments. To date, studies have only been restricted to monolingual interaction; furthermore, only a limited number has adopted an interactionist and descriptive approach to its investigation. Not only does my study shed light on issues related to interpreters and their participation in the event, but it also highlights some similarities and differences of mediated PTMs vis-à-vis monolingual ones. This is a first contribution towards answering the call for further, empirical research launched by Wine (2007:180) on “the way that not sharing a language affects parent-teacher meetings”. My findings show that monolingual and mediated PTMs seem to have a similar overall structural organisation, where teachers’ turns are predominantly FPPs of sequences, through which they launch courses of action and solicit responses, while
parents’ turns are predominantly SPPs (or third triplet parts, if we consider the triadic nature of mediated PTMs).

My study also suggests that it would not be accurate to talk about asymmetrical configuration when referring to PTMs, at least in terms of knowledge. Nevertheless, a different attitude with respect to monolingual PTMs is shown by parents, who, in my data, appear more reticent to contradict teachers and integrate their knowledge with that of the latter, as explained in 6.2.2. These observations, however limited to a restricted dataset, are based on authentic material, thus they contribute to a better understanding of this type of institutional meeting as well as to enriching a field of enquiry which is growing.

The analysis of upgrading (and downgrading) moves, which has helped to pinpoint shifts in the interpreters’ positioning, has been possible thanks to the use of assessments as a basic unit of analysis. This choice has helped gain further insights into the production and interactional organisation of assessments, which remains underresearched in institutional contexts (e.g. Lindström & Mondada 2009), particularly in mediated interaction. Assessments have proven to be a fruitful starting point for the analysis of interactional dynamics and of those moments in interaction where the voice of interpreting can be heard; they could therefore be used by future studies as a starting point to investigate the interpreter’s positioning and the projection of identities in different settings.

6.5 Limits and shortcomings

This research is certainly not exempt from weaknesses, and identifying them is an important step towards preparing the ground for future research on the topic. One of the main criticisms which could be raised relates to the conceptual design chosen to carry out the analysis, which is heavily reliant on CA. The issues of positioning and interactional impact of specific actions can be investigated from different angles. CA’s micro-analytic focus on formal technicalities could be seen as a sort of ‘straight jacket’, i.e. as too restrictive and selective. However, as highlighted in 2.2.1, the CA-based approach adopted does not purport to be exhaustive or an end in itself. On the contrary, formal analysis can be seen as laying solid foundations for subsequent macro-analysis that could include more information and socio-cultural variables. In other words, a CA-led analysis is helpful to study recurring patterns or potentially interesting phenomena,
which could be then bound up with macro-contextual information with a view to obtaining a more comprehensive picture of what happens in mediated interaction.

Advocating a less rigid application of CA by combining the micro- and macro-levels of investigation is possible; CA seems to have, at least partially, lost the strict character that it used to have in the past, as shown by studies which have started to encompass non-verbal features or to explore issues like affectivity or the display of emotions in interaction. A particularly relevant example is Pasquandrea’s (2011) CA-based and multimodal analysis of mediated doctor-patient interaction, where the author suggests that the interpreter’s tendency to position him/herself as a member of staff may be also explained by virtue of the good relationship between the latter and the doctors. In the case of Pasquandrea’s study, the interpreter works in primary care centre on a regular basis and has gained a good understanding of the problems and main features of those specific events; a CA-based approach would encourage researchers to focus on the sequential, verbal and multimodal components of talk, without considering any background information. Nevertheless taking into account such contextual information could prove useful to support or challenge micro-analytical findings, as in the case of Pasquandrea’s study. This research confirms that there are no grounds to claim that the conduct of interpreters may be influenced by their previous affiliation with one party or another. On the one hand, there is no reason to claim that interpreters may align with the institution by virtue of the long-established professional relationship between them. In two out of three meetings, the interpreter had been recruited only a few days before the actual meeting took place, and did not know either the family or the teachers. Only in one case (PTM 2) had the interpreter already worked with one of the children, so she was familiar with the problems the latter was confronted with. Nevertheless, she had never met either the family or the teachers, so she came in contact with them for the first time during the meeting. On the other hand, being part of the same ethnic group as the non-institutional party is not a pre-requisite for interpreters to work in mediated scenarios. None of the meetings recorded for this study features an interpreter coming

34 Pasquandrea’s and my findings (which show that interpreters’ activities largely overlap with those that are normally taken up by doctors and teachers respectively) are also interesting in the light of previous literature on the figure of the intercultural mediator (for references see 1.2.2). Such studies have often pointed out how intercultural mediators, supposedly, represent the ‘most vulnerable’ party (usually immigrants), especially when they share the same cultural and linguistic background. Despite the underlying assumption of a neutral stance, with a view to favouring a more effective interaction between parties, the mediator’s tasks are often described as advocate, cultural broker, etc. Although neutrality and cultural belonging are potentially contradictory, this issue has not been widely investigated; furthermore, these studies are generally not based on the empirical analysis of mediation in interaction.
from the same linguistic and cultural background as the mothers, thus also excluding the possibility of alignment with the latter on those grounds.

This study has partly attempted to provide such an enriched approach by integrating non-verbal features in the CA-led analysis of verbal traits, and placing the findings from a micro-analysis of transcripts within the macro-picture of IM. This approach fosters cross-fertilization among different disciplines, and helps to maintain the inherently interdisciplinary character of DI while encouraging the opening up of CA to new directions of research. A more comprehensive approach would certainly lead CA to enriching itself as a discipline while providing the right set of tools and notions to ‘read’ the world and systematically describe what most practitioners experience on a daily basis but find it hard to put into words.

Another delicate issue which characterises CA is the fact of working with real data. This represents an asset, given that authentic material is certainly unique, but presents complexities and variables which cannot always be controlled and make it not always fully comparable or ideal in its nature. For instance, in the case of the present study, the interactions characterised by the fact that all the mothers speak English as a lingua franca. As explained in chapter 3, interpreters for the rare native language of the migrant parties could not be found, hence the uniqueness of the data, where English is used as a vehicular language. This feature certainly needs to be pointed out, as it represents a challenging aspect of the data; however, it could also be considered an interesting starting point for comparative future analysis with datasets where the migrant parties speak their own native language, with a view to testing my findings and pointing out similarities and differences in the way interactions are co-constructed.

On the one hand, as noted above, the tendency seems to be to broaden the analysis as to gain a more comprehensive and multifaceted view of interactional dynamics; on the other hand, however, there is scope for even further granularity, both at a verbal and non-verbal level. I have already addressed the issue of selected gaze in my study, namely the rationale for accounting exclusively for instances of held gaze (see 3.3.3). Despite the inevitable limitations that are entailed by such a selective approach, this study represents the first attempt at carrying out a systematic analysis of gaze in mediated interaction, alongside verbal behaviour. I have also explained the potential for further expansion of my gaze encoding system; this naturally opens up questions about integrating further non-verbal features, thus increasing the level of detail that could be reached in the analysis. Two consequences of this choice need to be carefully evaluated.
Firstly, the more details are included, the smaller the dataset can be in order to be able to use it efficiently and productively, especially when carrying out research individually. Therefore, the gains resulting from a more fine-grained analysis could be offset by the losses deriving from having to further reduce the size of the dataset. Secondly, another obstacle is certainly represented by the amount of effort that needs to be put into the encoding phase. The procedures ranging from sequence selection to transcription to encoding can be considered preparatory phases to the actual analysis. One may argue (as suggested in this study) that such procedures represent a first, mandatory level of analysis themselves; the time and effort required to complete them, however, may take time away from what is the most important phase of all, i.e. the analysis.

A more efficient way of processing the data so that it lends itself to a fine-grained investigation while remaining manageable within the timescale available could be reached by spreading the tasks among a few researchers. This could not be done in this study, due to the individual nature of PhD research. However, looking beyond the boundaries of this project, adopting a more collaborative approach to future studies could be beneficial in many respects: firstly, in terms of efficiency, as it would certainly speed up the whole process. Secondly, a better level of detail could be reached, given that each component of the team could focus on a different feature, thus widening the scope of the analysis. Thirdly, the accuracy of the encoded transcripts could be improved, while sometimes, especially when undertaken by a single individual, it could suffer from inconsistencies due to the cognitive effort required by such operations. Working in a team would enable the same transcript to be checked and, if necessary, edited by more than one person, thus reducing the risk of error and increasing the level of accuracy. As a consequence, I believe that the quality of research undertaken in DI could greatly benefit from this ‘multiparty’ approach, which is the one normally undertaken in the social sciences when investigating verbal and non-verbal aspects of human interaction. As already stressed in 3.4, this *modus operandi* characterises the CA approach, especially at the analytical stage. I believe that more synergy with social sciences and computer sciences could be advocated even earlier, during the preparatory phase, given that these fields seem to rely on more up-to-date, fine-tuned and effective techniques to approach the analysis of human interaction.
I conclude this section by stressing, once again, that I am aware of the limits of relying on a heavily data-driven approach to a relatively small-scale study; certain patterns which may seem typical in a restricted dataset may reveal themselves as atypical when tested on a larger scale. Furthermore, working on the data individually limits its scope. A balance needs to be struck between the macro- and micro- levels, also depending on the research questions and objectives of the project carried out. No claims are made in this study for universal validity and they are not interpreted as a value judgment of the interpreters’ conduct but simply as the result of the observation and analysis of authentic data. However limited, this study provides insights into what happens in a set of real life scenarios where interpreters enjoy considerable leeway and it calls into question the idea that interpreters acting as intercultural mediators necessarily function as communication facilitators. Furthermore, it represent a first attempts at systematically accounting for gaze in the analysis and raises interesting questions which are ultimately linked to how integration and active participation can be supported in today’s plural society.

6.6 Looking forward: avenues for future research

As highlighted in previous sections, one of the main and most innovative points of my study is the attempt to integrate the verbal and non-verbal dimensions in the investigation of DI. My conviction is that research should work in the direction of encompassing the non-verbal dimension systematically, as it can disclose new meanings and provide us with a different, much richer understanding of participants’ attitudes and behaviours. The adoption of a research design combining an accurate multimodal analysis of what actually happens in real data with a sociological focus can lead to a deeper understanding of DI as IM, meet the need for increasing interdisciplinarity in the field and further our understanding of how interpreters manage the complex spoken and embodied activity in which they engage. In terms of research, this implies revisiting the notion of interdisciplinarity with a view to including input from a number of disciplines which can help us understand whether and, if so, how the non-verbal dimension of interaction can, at least partly, make up for the challenges involved in the relaying and replaying of talk (Wadensjö 1998). The findings resulting from this revisited interdisciplinary approach should then inform the training of interpreters, providers, and the codes of ethics that develop guidelines to daily practice in pedagogical settings.
To this end, action needs to be taken with a view to making more video-recorded material available for research purposes; access to it is still extremely limited to date, due to a series of external constraints and obstacles like confidentiality and privacy. In the world of Web 2.0, of pooling and sharing resources there must, however, be a way of collaboratively creating a large corpus of interpreter-mediated video-recorded interactions, which could be used by researchers and practitioners to increase awareness of DI. To my knowledge, a few attempts have been made, among others the corpus of mediated interaction which is being collected at the University of Macerata and at the University of Modena. Such initiatives remain, however, isolated and do not lead to a radical change in the way research in this field is conducted. These corpora could be a fruitful resource for future research, both on individual settings or comparative, with a view to gaining a broader understanding of the range of situations and variables with which interpreters may be confronted. These corpora of mediated interaction developed for research purposes could also, in time, be turned into useful training resources and inform the various activities carried out with prospective interpreters; for instance, role plays could be adjusted and modified so that they respond better to the challenges and variables which characterise real interactions, as opposed to didactic ones.

Another avenue for future research that could be complementary to the approach taken in this study is to investigate whether the same meanings that the micro-analysis has highlighted are effectively received and perceived in the same way by participants who use an interpreting service, in this case mothers and teachers. This is closely linked to the CA’s idea of uptake, which is still an underresearched area in IS. In particular, it would be interesting to apply a different methodology, such as interviews, to understand the expectations of mothers (and teachers) before the event and their impressions after it. This could test whether the results of the analysis of transcripts correlate with participants’ perceptions. Conducting focus groups with interpreters would also be an interesting avenue for future research; it could help verify their understanding of their own positioning and how it is shifting during the encounter and see whether these match the findings from this kind of analysis. Furthermore, triangulation could shed light on the inner, personal reasons behind a certain attitude or behaviour, which cannot be investigated by CA alone. As suggested above, carrying out an analysis adopting the same starting points but in different settings would highlight some interesting similarities or differences with mediated PTMs; replicating studies is indeed crucial to challenge findings from previous research.
To conclude, despite inevitable shortcomings, I believe that this study has the merit of departing from tradition and pointing into the direction of an effective, increased interdisciplinarity that enables us to think of the verbal and non-verbal dimensions as a single, multifaceted one. It offers a set of theoretical notions and methodological tools that can be useful to explore a new, almost uncharted territory, and some considerations based on empirical evidence, which do not aim to remain abstract, but have a strong potential for application in research and training. The question, therefore, is: where do we go from here? Among the avenues to pursue, for instance, is the investigation of the interpreters’ multiple identities, how they manifest themselves in interaction, and what verbal and non-verbal cues can be identified in different settings to pinpoint such shifts. Another avenue for future research is that of epistemicity, and how it is realised in DI, how it evolves during the interactional sequences, how it is responded to, negotiated and co-constructed by parties-at-talk, using assessments or other basic units of analysis for its investigation. This point of departure for the analysis can be approached from both a verbal (e.g. using assessments as a basic unit of analysis) and non-verbal communication standpoint. Multimodality remains a very broad field of analysis, which has the potential of hugely enriching DI, and whose exploration in mediated exchanges is still in its infancy. These are just some of the issues that can be raised, which can extend this project beyond its actual scope, across settings, languages and different methods, thus contributing to various research strands.
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Appendix A

Transcript of relevant sequences from the data

Transcripts are not complete but the sequences presented are shown in their chronological development. The table below provides the following set of meta-information:

- meeting where the sequences are taken from (PTM1/2/3)
- exact starting and finishing time of the sequence
- participants (relevant acronym is shown next to the utterance that s/he produces)

For a description of the transcription conventions used, please see 3.3.1. Evaluative assessments are shown within the utterance in which they are produced.

**Keys:**

**Meeting**

PTM 1 = interaction held in the UK (Manchester)
PTM 2 = interaction held in Italy (Castrocaro)
PTM 3 = interaction held in Italy (Forlì)

**Participants**

T = teacher (1/2/3 added to show that utterances produced from different teachers have been considered for the analysis)
M = mother
INT = interpreter
CHI = child
PTM 1

[PTM1a] 01:30-03:57

1. T1 the next one is his (. .) eh art work (. .) and he is making progress (. .) and is
2. currently working on a grade C
3. INT in arte sta migliorando (. .) ha avuto C
   *in art he is improving    he got a C*
4. M mhm
5. (1.69)
6. T1 he would benefit from attending some (. .) lunchtime sessions
7. INT avrebbe un vantaggio se (. .) partecipasse a delle sessioni durante l’ora di pranzo
   *he would have an advantage if he attended some sessions during lunchtime*
6. T1 he will have difficulty understanding (. .) the work (2.34)
7. INT se ha difficoltà per la (. .) è consigliabile che venga all’ora di pranzo (. .) per farsi aiutare
   *if he has difficulties with the  it is advisable that he comes at lunchtime to get some help*
8. M mhm
9. T1 that would be really good help for Ax
10. M va bene (. .) glielo dico
    *that is fine  I’ll tell him*

* The stretch of talk 1:52-03:36 has not been reproduced as it is about some instructions given by the teacher to the mother on how to prepare the exam (when the child will receive the paper, how long he will have to research on the topic and carry out the assignment, etc). The sequence starts again at the moment where T is reiterates the request made at line 8, i.e. that the child attends some lunchtime sessions.

[PTM1b] 07:08-07:38

14. T2 “let’s just see then” (1.93) right so (. .) I would say Ax is doing very very well
15. in science (. .) I know that his results aren’t as (. .) high (. .) as he’d like (xxx) ’d like
16. INT anche se i risultati non sono così (. .) buoni come quelli ch- che vorrebbe
   *even if the results are not as good as those he would want*
17. T2 ah but in terms of science it’s very difficult with the language the language is very
18. specific
19. (1.12)
20. INT in* termini de- la lingua è molto specifca quindi (. .) se ha difficoltà di lingua trova più
   *in terms of the language is very specific so if he has language difficulties he find it more*
21. difficile rendere
difficult to render
22. M sta roba qui
   *this stuff here*
23. INT scienze
   *science*
24. M mhm
so I believe from speaking to Ax that (. .) the understanding is there
but talking to Ax her impression is that he understands
but it's (. .) obviously the language that's holding him back he's not able to: (. .)
express himself as he [would like]

but talking to Ax his impression is that he understands
[. . .]

but it's [.] obviously the language that's holding him back he's not able to: (. .)
express himself as he [would like]

[.] but talking to Ax her impression is that he understands
[. . .]

but it's (. .) obviously the language that's holding him back he's not able to: (. .)
express himself as he [would like]

but talking to Ax his impression is that he understands
[. . .]

but it's (. .) obviously the language that's holding him back he's not able to: (. .)
express himself as he [would like]

[.] but talking to Ax her impression is that he understands
[. . .]

but it's (. .) obviously the language that's holding him back he's not able to: (. .)
express himself as he [would like]

but talking to Ax his impression is that he understands
[. . .]

but it's (. .) obviously the language that's holding him back he's not able to: (. .)
express himself as he [would like]

but talking to Ax her impression is that he understands
[. . .]

but it's (. .) obviously the language that's holding him back he's not able to: (. .)
express himself as he [would like]

but talking to Ax his impression is that he understands
[. . .]

but it's (. .) obviously the language that's holding him back he's not able to: (. .)
express himself as he [would like]

but talking to Ax her impression is that he understands
[. . .]

but it's (. .) obviously the language that's holding him back he's not able to: (. .)
express himself as he [would like]


[PTM1c] 07:39-07:57

25 T2 so I believe from speaking to Ax that (. .) the understanding is there
26 INT ma parlando con Ax (. .) la sua impressione è che lui capisce
  but talking to Ax her impression is that he understands
27 T2 but it's (. .) obviously the language that's holding him back he's not able to: (. .)
28 express himself as he [would like]
29 INT [mhm* attualmente non è in grado di esprimersi come
  he is not currently able to express himself as
30 vorrebbe
  he would like
31 (2.75)
32 M mhm

[PTM1d] 07:58-08:24

33 T2 ehm (. .) he's very very eager in lessons to become involved (. .) [which is great
34 INT [c'e molto un* (. )]

35 desiderio di coinvolgersi nella lezione
desire to get involved in the lesson
36 T2 so he's (. .) he's always putting up his hand and trying to get involved in class
37 discussions
38 INT alza la mano spesso ha voglia di (. ) partecipare
  he often raises his hand he is eager to participate
39 T2 he does a very good job in that make notunder the pressure of (. .) timings of
40 exams
41 INT ((clearing throat)) e va m- molto bene quando non è sotto pressione per i: (. .) i
  and he does very well when he is not under pressure for the
timings of the exams
42 tempi (. .) degli esami
  timings of the exams
43 M mhm
44 INT quando è più rilassato va molto bene
  when he is more relaxed he does very well

[PTM1e] 08:25-09:22

45 T2 so on his first (. .) ehm set of exams so the official one from the AQA exam board (. .)
46 ehm he received an F (. .) on B1A which is the first Biology exam
47 INT nel suo primo esame di biologia ha avuto una F
  in his first Biology exam he got an F
48 M mhm
49 T2 and a G (. .) on the second [one
50 INT [e G* nel suo secondo
  and G in his second
51 (1.45)
52 M che: sono sufficienti sono non sufficienti no?
  which are sufficient are not sufficient no
53 INT are they are they sufficient are they pass marks?
54 T2 they're not a C is a pass
55 INT C è il pass C è il pa- è la (. .) [sufficienza* (. .) si
  C is the pass is sufficient yes
56 M [(xxx)
57 M sufficienza
  sufficient
T2: ok so it's quite (.) quite a bit lower (.) the exams are only thirty minutes (.) and
they're multiple choice eh and the language is very [very (.)] very difficult for him

INT: [mhm]

1.46

INT: perché nella loro lingua è difficile sono trenta minuti è una scelta multipla perciò
because in their language it is difficult it is thirty minutes it is a multiple choice so
c'è la pressione del tempo adesso lui non riesce a
there is the pressure of time now he is not able to

M: eh si ho capito il tempo: [per lui
yes I understand the time for him

INT: [per il- (.) il* la pressione del tempo e p- eh con la
for the the pressure of time and with the
difficoltà della lingua (. ) eh (. ) trova difficile rispondere
difficulty of the language he finds it difficult to answer

M: mhm

[PTM1f] 09:23-10:48

T2: so the exam were (.) only allowed to him a ten per cent extra time (.) plus the use
of his Italian and English dictionary

INT: gli è co- gli è consentito solo dieci per cen- dieci minuti di ( .) tempo supplementare
he is only allowed ten per cent ten minutes extra time
(.) e l'uso del dizionario (. ) [è tutto* quello che possono fare
and the use of the dictionary it is all they can do

M: [mhm]

T2: ok so that's that's their decision it has nothing to do with us so: ( .) he's put in a:-
another area ( .) eh which is eh you know not ( .) where everyone else is just to give
him a little quiet that he [needs* and that extra time so that he's not disturbed
ehm: (1.35) now ( .) I know he's quite frustrated with that ( .) but ( .) I'm quite happy
(.) especially with the ( .) with the F for a first attempt ( .) when he came in ( .) a little
bit after everyone else he's done very well to do that

INT: [mhm]

M: [mhm]

T2: [xxx]

M: [i voti* iniziano dalla A
grades start from A

INT: scusi?
sorry

M: eh i voti (. ) [che* danno in Scienzi iniziano dalla A
the grades that they give in science start from A

INT: [si
yes

INT: dalla A si [in pratica C
from A yes in practice C

M: [e F sarebbe* o G?
and F would be or G

INT: F è [più
F is more

M: [quale* è meglio prendere?
which one is it better to get

INT: F è migliore (. ) la signora dice che è molto contenta di questo F perché (. ) essendo
F is better and the lady says that she is very happy with this F because being it
la pri- il suo primo (. ) esame (. ) ehm dopo (. ) essendo arrivato (. ) dopo gli altri (. )
his first exam after having arrived after all the others

con le difficoltà della lingua
with the difficulties of the language
92 M mhm
93 INT una volta che la lingua si risolve (.) vede che c'è questo (.) [dato* l'entusiasmo (.)
94 c'è questo
95 M [xxx]
96 M si [(xxx]
97 INT [vede un:* progresso ecco
98 M e però sono esami e: il pros- la prossima settimana eh: ef- ef- effettuerà ehm
99 quaranta minuti? (.3) non trenta (.3) vero? (.3)è così?
100 INT [si quaranta* minuti si all-
101 quaranta minuti e un e un luo- un posto solo per sè (.) per non essere disturbato (.)
102 [ok ?
103 M [ho capito
104 INT [ah::
105 INT [eccco*
106 quello che ha fatto ieri
107 INT [ah::
108 M mhm
109 INT (cioè vede)* un miglioramento
110 INT (aha)
111 M mhm
112 INT [mhm
113 T2 ok ehm so that's (.) that's exams (.) but in terms of classwork Ax is doing very well
114 (.3) his book is (.) you know very well laid out (.) very neat (.) he does his homework
115 and hands [it in on time
116 INT [è mo-* è molto ordinato fa i tutti i c- compiti a casa (.) consegnati a
117 tempo (.3) [lei* è molto contenta
118 M [mhm
119 T2 eh where possible in lesson he will use (.3) my computer and use googletranslator if
120 there's [anything* he doesn’t understand so [he's* (.3) he's taking the initiative to
121 (.3) to help himself
122 INT [mhm
123 INT (2.2)
124 INT prende iniziative spesso usa il suo computer (.3) va su google (.3) e fa la traduzione
125 INT [mhm
126 INT he often takes the initiative he uses her computer he uses google and does the automatic
292

instantanea del [del testo]

translation of the text

[12:43-14:00]

so: I think () in terms of what I have to say that’s about it did you have any () questions?

I want to know if  for his level now he is ready for next week

for the exam of

judging from the his eh actual level would he be ready for the () next exam () the exam next week?

ah: () it’s sort of () it it’s an improvement on what he’d done () [in* November

so he’s making progress () ah: () I feel that part of the process is () just doing the exams () going through () the () habit of () you know have the pressure of having
to revise () [go* into the whole process of actually filling in the () exam papers

so there is one can see already the improvement from November up to now right

and the lady is saying that part of the process is that of                 doing the exam

without worrying about the result                                    going through the procedure of

filling in these                      multiple choices       and and getting used to let’s say this

exam system                and this is already is is is encouraging right

therefore there is there is a progression anyway

he has already improved therefore so even if the result next week won’t

be beautiful but one can see the progression which is important

improved

(1.92)

ok
there's no penalty for having done the exams and then doing them again next year. Surely there is not a penalty for failing the exam and trying them again next year. One can repeat it easily.

I've been pleased with the way Ax has worked on it most of the time. Sometimes a little bit of a lack of focus. She sees a lack of focus and concentration. Right also because they have typed up in the room of the computers and there is the temptation to do something else so this is the problem.

so he's on task for you know he's up to speed with everything that he's got to complete he's completed everything. He has finished this. And he has completed everything is up to speed with what he had to do and now he will start a poem. He is communicating it does seem to me to have improved a lot.

week they will start a poem
and he does ask if he doesn't understand everything

and if he does not understand something he asks

and if he does not understand something he asks

eh volevo chiedere dell'esame di inglese (. ) quando sarà
eh I wanted to ask about the English exam when it will be

[PTM1o] 20:49-22:49

do you have any other questions (. ) if you have any other questions that you want

do you have any other questions that you want

dof you have any other questions on any other subjects

no everything is ok thank you

no everything is ok thank you

the only thing that I have not understood for the hour of the lunchtime of

when he has lunch what do they do for him does he have to stay longer or

when he has lunch what do they do for him does he have to stay longer or

for how long the whole hour of

the whole lunchtime (. ) lunch hour?

the whole lunchtime (. ) lunch hour?

he could go f- (. ) he could negotiate (. ) the times that he went (. ) because often at

he could go f- (. ) he could negotiate (. ) the times that he went (. ) because often at

lunchtime Ax is sitting around (. ) with time to (. ) to spare (. ) mhm

lunchtime Ax is sitting around (. ) with time to (. ) to spare (. ) mhm

it is open to negotiation because often Ax does not kn- at

it is open to negotiation because often Ax does not kn- at

pranzo non ha niente da fare

pranzo non ha niente da fare

lunchtime he has got nothing to do

lunchtime he has got nothing to do

so this would be a good way to fill in that hour

so this would be a good way to fill in that hour

how many times a week

how many times a week?
T1 it will be up to the teacher and to Ax to work out the time

INT dipende da Ax e da dall’insegnante di: di negoziare i tempi

it depends on Ax and on the teacher to negotiate the times

M mhm

T1 cause really it’s because they’re working independently on she feels

that Ax would really benefit from additional help

INT in questo momento stanno lavorando indipendentemente percui eh Ax

in this moment they are working independently so Ax

trarrebbe dei vantaggi dei benefici a da questo extra lavoro extra

would get some advantages some benefits from this extra work

M mhm

T1 so that was art so if you could encourage Ax to go to those [additional

INT [se lei potesse* encourage Ax a andarci in queste ore aggiuntive *gli farebbe bene *

if you could encourage Ax to go there to these extra hours it would do him good

T1 anything else?

M (la ringrazio) thank you
[PTM2a] 01:35-05:25

1 T1  ecco una cosa che ci manca un pochetti:no è il rapporto con la famiglia
2 famiglia gli avvisi non vengono firmati (1.51) ehm::: (. ) perciò non sappiamo
3 mai se quando deve uscire pri::ma o:: c’è qualco:sa ( ) dobbiamo telefonare a
4 casa ( ) per essere sicure che poi siano: letti e questo è un po’ un problema
5 M  non lo so: (xxx)
6 INT  you didn’t understand
7 T1  non capisce per me non lo [sa davvero
8 INT  [so
9 M  ah:: you are better [@@@
10 INT  [ok
11 T1  per [me comunque
12 INT  [I will speak* REAL[LY]* slow [ok?
13 T1  [si
14 M  [ah (è)* superb
15 INT  ok ( ) so she said that with BK it’s ok ( ) but ( ) th- the problem they have is when
16 they want to communicate with you with the parents (. ) because for example
17 when they send som::e ehm::: notice home to be: signed
18 (1.53)
19 M  si (xxx)
20 INT  you never sign ( . ) this is a problem because there ar:e for example some meetings
21 with the teacher
22 T1  ((cough))
23 INT  they NEED to be signed
24 M  no I (will signed) it ( ) [ehm:::^ (. ) that’s ehm them sends me la: la: car- folio
25 the paper- sheet
26 INT  [ok
27 INT  yes
28 M  send me casa ( . ) and I will (signed) ( . ) I see that I will sign it
29 INT  [ok
30 T1  [mhm
31 M  si
32 T1  perc-eh quind- lei dice che quando lei riceve un avviso* e lo vede questo foglio [con
33 so she is saying that when she receives a notice and she actually sees the sheet with
34 l’avviso* lei (. ) lo firma
35 the notice she signs it
36 T1  [si
37 T1  [ecc
ah::

M: ah::* ehm I will: n- not attend meetings in school
(2.48)

INT: sorry?

M: ah: m- meetings is I I will not attend (.) in s- school

INT: yeah there was a meeting

M: ah: [si no no no* meetings is not attend

yes

INT: [(there was a meeting)

INT: but you didn’t go

M: eh: [because: I* don’t know italiano

INT: [quando c’era (la riunione)?

when was the meeting

INT: ok

M: ehm: si eh

INT: la eh: quando ci sono gli incontri [co:* genitori lei in realtà non viene non è venuta

when there are meetings with the other parents she actually does not come she did not

[perché non parla* l’italiano [perché dice io* non capisco l’italiano

come because she cannot speak Italian because she says I cannot understand Italian

T1: [si

yes

T1: [si si yes

T1: va bene però spesso se ci sono avvisi:si magari sfogliare il diario oppure BX si dimentica

ok but often if there are some notices maybe flick through the diary or Bx forgets

(xxx) di farglieli vedere
to show her

INT: s- so the teacher said maybe EITHER is (.) BXs (.) who sometimes forgets to show

you (.) OR: ehm:: m- maybe it’s you see it but you were busy but she is sug-
suggesting you that sometimes you could just go through have a ru- have a look

(.) through the: diary he has he has a spe[cial

M: [si si si

yes

M: no no no no (the message no)]]
INT YEAH maybe you should because sometimes they write things but BX forgets or:

M ah: yes eh BX is eh now a child eh (.) eh he's forgetted

T2 [@@@]

T1 [@@@] è un bambino si

he is a child yes

INT [è un bambino a* volte dimentica

he is a child yes at times he forgets

T1 a volte dimentica [si

at times he forgets yes

INT [yes for* this reason just because he is a child and he forgets and

it's n- it's [really* normal for a child to forget that maybe you can go and have a look

sometimes just to be sure (.) that the tc- [teacher didn't write* anything

IMPORTANT for you to know

T1 [mhm

T1 [esatto si

right yes

M si si si

yes yes yes

* lines 5 to 14 represent an insert sequence which refers back to a previous dyadic exchange between the interpreter and the mother during the opening phase of the encounter, in which the former asked the latter whether she wanted her to translate everything that was said by teachers or only the most difficult parts, given that the mother had lived in Italy for almost six months at the moment of the meeting and the interpreter had not had the time to ascertain her proficiency in Italian.

[PTM2b] 05:26-06:13

T1 e poi un’altra cosa lui eh in matematica va bene sa contare sa benissimo le

and then one more thing in maths he is doing well he can count he knows the tables

tabelline io volevo chiedere se le aveva studiate in India o se le ha imparate qua

perfectly well I wanted to ask whether he studied them in India or whether he learnt them here

INT mhm

(2.32)

M si the table is eh perfect in India [(xxx)* matematica is perfect

yes

T1 [ah ecco

right

(1.21)

INT [ok

M [si

yes

T1 ecco infatti

right indeed

ah:

T1 [eh

M [ah:* but italiano is eh (adesso no) the perfect

but Italian is now not perfect

(1.55)

M ah:

(1.78)

INT eh:: Italian is diff[i]cult

M [(xxx)* ah slowly slowly he* (xxx)

INT [(yeah [he's

M (1.13))]

INT dice che matematica: l’aveva già studia[t]

she is saying that he had already studied maths
[in India and indeed I've noticed]

[In India

and then

it is studied well in India as far as it seems

Indeed I've seen

Italian on the contrary slowly slowly

yes yes yes

slowly slowly he will learn

yes

slowly slow he will learn

yes

[PTM2c] 06:14-07:49

yes this at home sometimes one gives some homework the homework is done

non vengono fatti magari DIRE di farli poi non controllarli come: se sono fatti* is not done perhaps say to do it then not checking how whether it has been done

bene o male ma che siano fatti capito? prova well or not but that it is done right try

(4.45)

perché:: adesso io no:: eh molto italiano imparare eh: eh io no:: imparare con (BX)

mhm

si eh::: (1.94) VX is (.) perfect [in: italiano* but he's not not help him

[(cough)]

no

no

but t- the thing is that BX he will learn Italian by himself

si

t- the thing is sometimes when the teacher (..) assign him to do some homework

he doesn't do the homework (.). that's not important if he* does it well [or if

he does it* not so well as he should (.)][this is not important (.).] the most important

thing is BX should TRY to do the homework

[esatto exactly]

[esatto si si si exactly yes yes yes

(2.13)

ok::: ay

[so* maybe y- you shouldn't (check) if (.) he does well or not you should just tell

him have you done your homework? (. you should do the homework]] because (.)

if he does the hom- the homework then he will study: a little bit quicker Italian

(1.23)

ok I will::: try::: it

ah: [va bene all right
[PTM2d] 07:50-08:58

149 T1 io però vorrei dire che BX è un bambino ben inserito ha trovato
but I would like to say that Bx is a well-integrated child he has found
150 tanti amici all'interno della classe viene a scuola mi sembra volentieri
many friends in the classroom it seems to me that he goes to school willingly
151 eh e si è ben inserito insomma cioè questo è molto positivo con i compagni parla
and he is well-integrated well I mean this is very positive with his classmates he speaks
152 italiano e lo capisce lo parla c'è rimasto il problema della
Italian and he understands it he speaks it there is still the problem of
della d- del saperlo scrivere saperlo leggere però: eh: lo vedo
of being able to write it being able to read it but I see him
153 bene all'interno della classe(.) ben inserito
well in the classroom well integrated
155 (2.13)
156 INT did you get?
157 M no
158 INT she said that BX(.) gets along really well with his mates(.) he talks with them in
Italian(.) he speaks in Italian he gets along well he's a happy child and(.) the only
159 problem with the Italian now that(.) he doesn't write(.) properly yet(.) and he
doesn't read properly yet but s-he's starting to speak and he's speaking better and
160 better so little by little he will learn also to wr- how to write and how to read(.) but
161 he's he's well connected with mates(.) let's say
162 M eh: yes: eh: [BX is a* child(.) and he's (connected with) his eh mates(.) eh
classmates(.) and: slowly slowly ehm (da:) .) da imparare italiano
learn Italian
166 T1 [((cough))
167 INT eh eh [lo imparerà piano piano
he will learn it slowly slowly
168 M [poc- si si* piano piano
a bit yes slowly slowly
169 INT piano piano
slowly slowly
170 (1.36)
171 INT allora lei ha detto che: si: l- lo lo sa che comunque BX (.) ha buoni rapporti co:n
so she said that yes she knows that anyway Bx has good relationships with
172 [con i compagni* però: l'italiano piano pia[no lo imparerà* l'italiano
with his mates but Italian slowly slowly he will learn Italian
173 T1 [bene si
right yes
174 T1 "va bene* ((nodding))
that's fine
175 T1 piano piano si
slowly slowly yes
176 M ah ah
italiano è zero?

come mai [cioè no-

non abbiamo* messo nessun tipo di valutazione perché abbiamo
we have not given any type of evaluations because we have

stabilito una: scala è così che è: eh:[m Cx?
established a range is it a sit is Cx

[non abbiamo*] [impossibile
[non è*] [impossible

valutare

[impossibile

valutare
to evaluate

ah:::

anche qui ci siamo un po' accordate   [(anche perché è alle medie)
here as well we reached some kind of agreement also because he is at the secondary school

[impossibile

no è* una prima alfabetizzazione è veramente: eh: si eh: io ad esempio in:
no it's a phase of early writing and reading skills it really is yes I for example in:

alle medie li ho valutati in base ai livelli di apprendimento ad esempio A1 A2 e
at the secondary school have evaluated them according to a tiered system of learning for

(tutti) [quelli che* abbiamo descritto evidentemente: magari altri colleghi invece
instance A1 A2 and all the ones we have described apparently maybe other colleagues instead

hanno scelto di aspettare magari il secondo [quadri*mestre per potere:
have decided to wait perhaps the second semester to be able to

[mhm

si

yes

ok[ay

[esatto* noi abbiamo scelto
exactly we have chosen

mhm

questa strada qui
this way here

did you [get what they said?
[questo subject* is italiano?  
* this subject Italian

eh?  

(al.27)

anche (xxx) questo subject is italiano?  
* this subject is Italian

yeah [right

no (xxx) come scusa ah:  
* sorry what

this is because (. ) in these subjects he might (. ) use particularly (. ) especially Italian language

esatto

[si* now he's learning Italian so he's in the first phase of eh: learning a language (. ) they didn't feel like giving him a ju- a judgement any evaluation (. ) because they couldn't because he didn't do the same things as the other students did (1.65) [and* in the second semester

[si  
* yes

they will give hi- give him an evaluation because he has already passed (the first of: eh: getting used to the language getting used to the environment so now their (vote isn't bad)

[PARLARE BENE ehm* (but not) ]] deeply understand Italian  
* speak good

right

adesso no  
* not now

esatto

[si  
* yes

[sicuro questo non compromette niente cioè voglio dire spiegagli- l'hai spiegato

mi sembra [vero si*  
* I think right yes

[si io adesso glielo* ripeto ]per essere [yes i will now repeat it to be

[eh ripetiglielo* meglio ma non è che  
* repeat it better but it's not that a

una non valutazione [comporti* delle cose nega[tive  
* non evaluation entails negative things

[(xxx)* but he's not deeply understand

yeah eh I mean the teacher just said (. ) this doesn't mean that the- eh that this is a- a bad score or anything no it's just it means that there were not appropriate base to give him a score

mhm

this doesn't mean anything in it's not bad

mhm

ok?

he's a good guy he's [a good guy*  @ @

si si si  
* yes yes yes
22:45-26:56:43

T1 questa è la parte finale ella scheda se vuoi leggere se vuole firmare
this is the final part of the report if you want to read it if she wants to sign it

INT instead this is the evaluation they write about him a kind of summarising of what
he does and how he behaves and how he is in class (. ) ehmm* let’s see what they:

wrote

M [ok

22:59 - 23:19

SCHISM T1-T2 and INT-M-report: INT reads in a low voice the report that she has never seen before (only partially audible due to the background noise). Both INT’s and M’s gaze are directed to the report. T1 and T2 engage in a parallel conversation.

M scritto in italiano?
written in Italian

INT yes ( . ) scritto in italiano ( . ) now I will tell you in English ( . ) ok?
written in Italian

M ((nod))

INT ok ( . ) eh:: the teacher said that he’s ( . ) he gets along well with his mates in class ( . )
with his classmates ( . ) and he has good relationships both with the classmates and
with the teachers ( . ) he knows well the rules of the classrooms and he respects
those rules ( . ) and: he is always interested in what they do ( . ) and he does a lot of efforts in order to overcome the difficulties he meets ( . ) he faces a lot of
difficulties because above all beca- because of the language ( . ) of the problems
with the Italian language ( . ) that’s it

(4.28)

INT do you wanna read it by yourself ?

T1 [@@

T2 [@@

INT if you don’t understand I can help you

24:27-24:39

INT passes the report to M and they start reading it and translating the same passage word-by-word. Teachers are listening to what is happening in interaction.

24:40-26:39

SCHISM T1-T2: INT and M are involved in the same activity ( i.e. reading the report) when T1 and T2 start a parallel conversation that goes on until INT self-selects and takes the floor.

INT I think now you should sign ( . ) have you signed already ( . ) qual era la scheda da ( . )
what was the report to
dove deve firmare? (T1 pointing to the point in the report where M has to sign)
where does she have to sign

here

(3.63)

T1 va bene per cui abbiamo detto tutto quello che c’era da dire
right so we’ve said all that had to be said
poi c’è il discorso dei compiti
then there is the question of the homework

allora la situazione è questa che la loro in italiano come hai visto hanno
so the situation is this that the they in Italian as you have seen have
raggiunto un buon livello di comunicazione (1.45) quindi a questo punto
reached a good level of communication so at this point
devono cominciare a leggere e a studiare questo è fondamentale
they must start reading and studying this is fundamental
altrimenti si fermano perché comunque la lingua dello studio dei libri è un pochino
otherwise they stop because anyway the language of studying of books is a little bit
più complessa della lingua parlata se uno ehm non ci si non l'affronta mai
more complex than the spoken language if one does not never faces it
nè la lettura nè lo studio non può proseguire
neither reading not studying he cannot go on

so now she is talking about him and the little brother well here the
problem is the homework

ok I understand
because they don’t do so much their homework
mhm "capito"
understood

even though the teacher has been telling them they should do more the
thing is that
both him and his brother now have reached a good Italian
speaking level they can speak good but if they want to improve
they should also start writing and reading because as you might
know sometimes the speaking language the spoken language and the written
language are a little bit different stile-wise
speaking is:: bene: but no deeply eh ah ah Italian words no deeply
good

io no: non lo so io no so io no capito:
I don't know I don't know I don't understand

deeply what no:: no capito che cosa che cosa dire maestra
no no understand what what teacher says

dice che è come se lui
she says that it is as if he he

conversation is bene but not when he reads
good

[when he reads

parlo bene* io però quello che è scritto nel libro non capisco
I speak well but what is written in the book I don't understand

it's because the problem is this that anyway he is into
terza media e quindi il livello di italiano di una terza media è comunque molto più
a third grade class so the level of Italian of a third grade class is anyway much
alto del livello della comunicazione che ha raggiunto
higher than the level of communication he has achieved

[so they they say that* if he does his homework

M

mhm

T2 è un po’ il anche il problema di Kx tutti e due (. ) questo problema magari (. ) eh d-
this is also partly the problem of KN both of them this problem perhaps
comunque c’è già anche per il più piccolo però partendo da un livello più: basso
anyway there is already but starting from a lower level
come insomma: da un’età anche i:nferiore è ovvio che col tempo potrà insomma
as I mean also from a lower age it is obvious that in time he will be able to I mean
migliorare (. ) invece recuperare questo::

improve while bridging this

INT
gap

T2 questo gap si da: ( .) invece per loro è: più difficile
this gap yes from instead for them is more difficult
(1.23)

INT
mhm

T2 e quindi anzi: (. ) a- anche per questo motivo probabilmente verranno bocciati ma
and so also for this reason they will probably fail but
( .) ovviamente per dare la possibilità di (. ) recuperare (. ) però eh questo poi
It is obviously to give them the possibility to catch up but this then
dovremo deciderlo con con calma nel secondo quadrimestre (1.39)
we will decide with calm in the second quarter
il problema è che:: (. ) non si devono fermare al- alla lingua della comunicazione (.)
the problem is that they should not stop at the language of communication
perché:: (. ) cioè devono andare un pochino oltre (. eh: io capisco (. ) cioè io so che
because I mean they need to go a bit beyond I understand I mean I know that
per lui è difficile leggere il libro di storia o il libro di geografia: o: ovviam- ancora di
for him it is difficult to read the history or geography textbook obv- even
più sicuramente l’antologia di italiano (. ) però (. ) io ho s- ho anche spiegato lui che
more the Italian anthology but I have also explained to him that
non è necess- (. ) se io ho dato tre quattro pagine da studiare lui può anche
it is not necess- if I gave three or four pages to study he can even
studiare due paragrafi (. ) o anche solo una pagina (. ) però di quella pagina dovrebbe
study two paragraphs or even just a page but of that page he should
riuscire a capire il maggior numero di parole (. ) magari anche con un dizionario
manage to understand the highest possible number of words possibly also with a dictionary
(.) ce- hai un dizionario di italiano inglese?
do you have an Italian English dictionary?

CHI
si: [però:* piccolo
yes but small

T2 [ecco right

(1.13)

T2 eh fa lo stesso (. ) capito? riuscire a dire qualche cosa di quell’argomento (. ) anche (. )
it does not matter right? being able to say something related to that subject even
quattro o cinque frasi che però siano attinenti a un argomento di studio
four or five sentences that are however related to a subject of study
insomma bisogna che acquisisca (. ) cioè dovrebbero riuscire a acquisire un po’ la
in short he needs to acquire I mean they should manage to acquire a bit of the
lingua da studiare (1.12) che è a un livello superiore (. ) c- capisco però (. ) come in
studying language which is of a higher level I understand but as in
tutte le cose bisogna camminare per gradi
anything it is necessary to go step by step
did you understand? (1.1) a little bit

because she doesn't, of course, she knows that he has these problems with reading and writing

she doesn't require, she doesn't ask him for reading, everything and writing, everything, but if she says to the others that they should read like three or four pages for her is enough, if he just reads one or two paragraphs, but he does need to do the least, he could do, if he doesn't do the least, a little bit of effort, then he will never pass to the other level, from the communication language to the studying language, because now for him it's important that Italian starts to be also a studying language, but this he can do it only if he sits at home reads and writes a little bit if he doesn't understand, the teacher was suggesting him to use a dictionary, and he has an Italian English dictionary so he could he could help himself

we know that's difficult and but the teacher, she's meets him every day and she knows that he's smart

he just needs to be pushed a little bit

the thing is that in these small groups they work really well

the problem is that when they are on their own, they don't do anything I mean the issue of doing the homework at home they are not autonomous on their own

sure, but this is also normal

yes

because he is anyway in the Italian course he does things that he does not know

quindi c'è qualcuno che lo guida nell'apprendimento di quello che lui non sa, so there is someone who guides him throughout the learning process of what he does not know, ma quando si trova in una classe dove ci sono altri ventitré studenti che, but when he is in a classroom with twenty-three more students who, comunque fanno delle cose per loro relativamente: misurate, comunque un bit more difficult for them it is easier to get distracted or

and then

and obviously in a classroom I cannot follow them individually because
adesso nella terza un pochino di più perché comunque c’è un sostegno e poi sono
now in the third grade a little bit more because anyway there is a support and then there are
un pochino di meno in prima sono ventisei senza sostegno quindi è [un po più*
slightly fewer in the first grade there are twenty-six without support so it is a bit more
cioè Kx con Kx ho un po’ più difficoltà perché è in una classe numerosa e poi
I mean Kx with Kx I have a bit more difficulties because he is in a numerous class and then
dove non ci sono non c’è nessun tipo di aiuto e: comunque anche Kx sta
where there are not where there is not any kind of help and anyway Kx as well is
gliorando: anche se è un po’ distrauto però
improving even if he gets a bit distracted but
[mhm]
INT ah:

T2 un progressivo graduale miglioramento un po’ distrauto ma si impegna fa
a progressive gradual improvement a bit distracted but he is working hard
fatica a lavorare da solo si avvicina al fratello ma se è lontano si impegna
he finds it hard to work on his own he gets close to the brother but if they are apart he works
molto e dimostra di aver acquisito le strutture studiate in classe è un pochino più
hard and he shows that he has acquired all the structures studies in class he is a bit more
timido il fratello* piccolo invece lui è più estr- estroverso
shy his little brother on the contrary he is more extrovert
nella verifica ha lavorato da solo dimostrando attenzione impegno e
in the exam he worked on his own showing attention and hard work and
concentrazione
focus
[mhm]
INT mh this is about Kx it says it says here that he’s also improving but
but sometimes he doesn’t focus on what he does and sometimes he: ehm
he doesn’t seem really willing to work by himself so he asks for his brother’s help but it’s not that that he’s not able to do it in fact the teacher ehm:
tries tried to have him work by himself and he did it actually in the final exam
in the final test he did he did the test by himself and he did well focusing on it
(3.40)

[PMT2i] 01:12:07-01:13:03

ora dobbiamo iscriverlo in una scuola superiore tutti si iscrivono anche
now we need to enrol him on a secondary school everyone enrolls even
quelli che poi andranno ai corsi professionali perché è un modo per prevenire la
those who will then attend some vocational courses because it is a way to prevent children
dispersione scolastica poi dopo sceglieranno quelli che hanno un anno in
from dropping out then they will choose those who are one year older
più che sono stati bocciati potranno scegliere a settembre se vogliono
who had to repeat the year will be able to choose in September if they want to
frequentare veramente oppure no lui avendo un anno in meno deve
really attend or not given that he is one year younger
comeunque frequentare un a- un altro anno di scuola o qui o capisco che è
either here or I understand that it is
difficile da spiegare [però
difficult to explain but
[so* now we will have to fill that form

INT mh ((shaking head))

M we have to ok but then later you can decide and he can decide which in
whic- to which school he wants to go

M ok

307
ok[this is important* because since he is fourteen (.) he needs to attend he needs
(.) to attend (.) a year more (.) of school

M [(xxx)

M mhm

INT that’s it (.) it seems complicated but it’s not (.) it’s [just bureaucratic papers

T1 [@@@

T2 [@@@

* This sequence is the final part of a much longer stretch of talk (approximately ten minutes) during which the teachers and the interpreter try to explain a procedure which is typical of Italian schools, i.e. children need to pre-register with the higher secondary school that they will attend the following year in case they pass the lower secondary school exam. Then they proceed to filling in the actual form, a procedure which takes most of the rest of the meeting (approximately the following half an hour, until the end of the encounter).
Ehm noi come attività ehm facciamo adesso un progetto di: ehm arte among our activities at the moment we are working on an art project in which a painter is helping us and the children will work on a painting

Chagall
by Chagall

Among our activities at the moment we are working on an art project in which a painter is helping us and the children will work on a painting by Chagall.

In our project, a painter is helping us and the children will work on a painting by Chagall.

What is this project about?

The children reproduce a painting by Chagall, each child has a part of the painting, and they will work on it as well as he can and by the way Ex is very good at drawing.

He is very good at drawing parts which are then put together and they create the big picture.

The children reproduce a painting by Chagall. each child has a part of the painting, and they will work on it as well as he can and by the way Ex is very good at drawing.

He is very good at drawing parts which are then put together and they create the big picture.

Ah: ok they th-th- the art project is like this ehm:: the children they will have, they will have a paint

And then they will have to: draw by themselves this a part of the paint

And then: all the parts all the children painted will be put together

They actually said that Ex is really really good in painting you know

((true)*

(. thank you
hold on there was also ah in March on the sixteenth of March in the afternoon
we will all visit the library in Corso della Repubblica the central modern library

we will go there for a lab activity on prehistory
so they go home for lunch
they at home

exactly they come back at one thirty sharp thirteen thirty sharp
because we have to leave immediately by foot then the return will be by bus
we have e a school pass that has been ehm at the beginning of the year it has been
set up a petty cash and from this petty cash she withdrew the money
dell’abbonamento [però* (.) ha degli orari (.) all’una* e mezzo non possiamo
for the school pass but it is only valid for specific times at one thirty we cannot

use it while later we can

ok and this is really important because on the sixteenth (.) of March (.) the whole class (.) will go to visit a l- ehm a lib- ehm library (.) in: Corso della Repubblica (.) here in Forlì (.) you know where Corso della Repubblica is?
no

near Piazza Saffi

near Piazza Saffi (.) there is* a library

ok (.) ok

and they will go and visit (.) but (.) they* will go at (.) one thirty (.) in the afternoon (.) and* Ex (.) really needs to be punctual because it seems that sometimes he’s late (.) or actually* he’s (.) he’s pretty often (.) late

mhm

so (.) he needs to be at one thirty (.) at school (.) back at school (.) here* because
they will go walking so it’s really important that they are all together all at the
time [otherwise they will be late and everything will be delayed
M ok
INT and afterwards on- once the visit is finished they will be back
they will come back by bus: because they have a monthly ticket the
school supplied that did you get everything?
M I did yes
INT ok

* The stretch of talk 04:39-04:48 has not been reproduced as it involves a dyadic exchange between INT and T about which library the class will be going to (given that there are two libraries in the town where the meeting is taking place).


T2 allora ehm (.) quindi qui (.) il discorso per Ex è legato solo ed esclusivamente alla
comprensione della lingua (.) di conseguenza il sei in italiano in storia geografia
under standing of the language as a consequence the six in Italian History Geography
matematica anche se in matematica adesso (.) diciamo (.) questo si riferisce (.) al
maths even if in maths now let’s say this refers to the
primo quadrimestre quindi (.) entro il trentun gennaio (.) ma Ex già adesso in
first semester so up until the thirty first of January but Ex already now in
matematica maths
INT è migliorato
he has improved
T2 [sta già andando più in su del sei (.) però questi sei si giustificano (.)
he is already going above six but these six can be justified
insomma sono legati al discorso della comprensione della lingua perché una volta
I mean they are linked to the issue of understanding the language because once
che lui comprende il significato (.) le parole(.) lui lavora: (.) bene (.). anche in
he understands the meaning of the words he works well even in
italiano::
Italian
INT ehm
T2 chiaramente finché non acq- non acquisisce una padronanza sufficiente della
obviously unless he acquires a sufficient proficiency of
lingua fa fatica (.) a essere autonomo (.) insomma però i- io insegnvo matematica
the language he will find it hard to be independent I mean but I teach maths
(.) per quello che riguarda matematica le operazioni (.) le attività coi numeri (.) le
as far as maths is concerned the operations the activities with numbers
fa (.) praticamente come tutti i suoi compagni (.) un po’ più di difficoltà ce le ha
he does almost everything like his classmates he encounters a few more difficulties
nelle divisioni perché il meccanismo (.) non lo conosceva quindi lo sta
with divisions because he did not know the procedure so he is
apprendendo adesso (.) e: per quel che riguarda i problemi adesso ha cominciato a
learning it now and as far as problems are concerned now he has started to
fare anche quelli (.) semplici (.) magari non quelli più complessi che fanno gli altri
do them as well simple ones perhaps not the most complex ones that the others do
(.) glieli semplifico ma gli semplifico quelli che fanno gli altri perché altrimenti lui
I simplify them for him but I simplify the ones that the others to otherwise he
non lo accetta (.)
does not accept it
INT ahh:
assolutamente (.) e comincia a fare anche quelli quindi da solo riesce già a leggere

absolutely and he starts doing them as well so on his own he already manages to read

To understand to understand what operations to use so I mean the whole
question is linked to the understanding of the language

infatti io in italiano storia e geografia ho messo sei anche se non era assolutamente
indeed in Italian History and Geography I put six even if the knowledge was absolutely

sufficiente la conoscenza (.) però ho messo sei per rilevare i progressi che ha fatto
not sufficient but I put six to point out the progress he has made

da settembre che è arrivato senza parlare una mezza parola di italiano (.) a gennaio (.)
since September when he arrived without speaking a word of Italian in January

logicamente se andiamo a vedere i suoi lavori (.) non sono da sei (.) ovvio (.) però
obviously if we take a look at his work it does not deserve a six obviously but

per una valutazione: [proprio
for a sound evaluation

Italian of what we say in History and Geography five obviously

for a sound evaluation of the way he speaks

Itali..o di cosa diciamo in storia e geografia (.) cinque (.) ovvio

but if I think about exactly

[se consideriamo lo sforzo
If we consider the effort

certo (.) se penso a come è arrivato a settembre che non aveva la più vaga idea
certainly if I think about how he was when he arrived in September when he did not have the
della lingua italiana (.) io non me la sono sentita di mettergli cinque (.) anche se: (.)
faintest idea of the Italian language I did not feel like giving him five even if

oggettivamente è cinque
objectively it would be a five

considering (.) what he does (.) maybe he might not be a six in s- in some topics (.)
in some subjects like (.) ita- Italian History Geography [ehm

tech..y but (.) considering that he’s actually not Italian (.) he came not

knowing at all (.) anything (.) here (.) I mean it was something completely new for
him (.) the teachers can actually see and appreciate his effort (.) because he’s

doing pretty much (.) trying to catch up (.) especially in maths the teacher said that
now he’s doing much better (.) because he actually wants to do what his: mates (.)
do (.) the thing is he has problems with the language (.) so if they:: try to solve a
problem (.) he has the problem of the understanding of the language (.) but (.) if
the teacher makes the problem short (.) and simplifies it (.) he can actually
understand it and do it because he really likes doing the same things as his mates

so from an objective perspective (.) he might not be actually a six (.) but (.)
considering that he’s not Italian (.) he comes from a different background (.) he’s

doing pretty well (.) so the teachers appreciate this and gave him a six (.) six and

seven

(1.80)
**[PTM3d] 24:24-24:53 REPORT**

132  T2   English (.) in inglese; (.) sette perché: (.) è bravo
    *English in English seven because he is good*
133  INT  in English he’s really good
134  T2   musica gli piace molto
    *he likes music very much*
135  INT  he likes very much music
136  T2   e: (.) ginnastica anche (.) [anche se bisogna* tenerlo calmo perchè è un po’ vivace
    *and PE also* even if we need to keep him calm because he is a bit lively
137  INT  [he likes very much gymnastic
138  INT  [maybe
139  T2   [comunque* dopo l’abbiamo scritto @@@
    *anyway we have written it below*
140  INT  maybe sometimes he’s too much active @@@
141  T2   e disegno chiaramente otto perché è davvero bravissimo
    *and art obviously eight because he is really good*
142  INT  he has an eight (.) in arts (.) because he’s really really good (.) in drawing
143  M   thank you

**[PTM3e] 24:54-25:59 REPORT**

144  T2   e nel comportamento abbiamo scritto generalmente adeguato (.) va a volte richiamato
    *and in the behaviour we wrote generally appropriate sometimes he needs to be rebuked*
145  INT  perché tende a imporre ai compagni la sua volontà [cioè è* [mol*to: (.)ehm: cerca
    *because he tends to impose his will on his mates I mean he’s very he tries
146  INT  proprio di: (.) vuole far fare agli altri quello che vuole [lui* (.) devono stare zitti quando
    *he wants to make the others do what he wants to do they must be silent when
147  INT  lo dice lui (.) poi a lui dà molto fastidio la confusione perché probabilmente in Nigeria
    *he says so then he is very annoyed by confusion because probably in Nigeria
148  INT  non era abituato
    *he was not used to*
149  INT  [@ah:@
150  T1   [si
    *yes*
151  INT  ah::
152  T2   e quindi: è sempre un continuo silenzio silenzio (.) lui lo dice [@@@
    *and so it is always a continuous silence silence he says so*
153  INT  [ah si:
    *yes*
154  T1   @si@ perché con sto vocione BASTA (xxx)
    *yes because with his deep voice stop it*
155  INT  it seems like usually he is really quiet (.) he is ok but sometimes he wants to make
156  INT  other people do what he wants to do (.) so if: (.) he doesn’t like (.) ehm: a noisy
157  INT  environment (.) so every time there is somebody talking or (.) shouting in in class a
158  INT  little bit more (.) he gets really annoyed and he (.) it seems like he has got a deep
159  INT  voice and with this deep voice he starts to shout SILENT please SILENT @@@ so:
160  INT  the teachers say that sometimes his behaviour is: (.) a little bit too strong for the
161  INT  others
162  M    mhm
163  (1.92)
164  T1   se vuole firmare
    *if she wants to sign*
165  T2   eh si
    *yes*
qui: è questo è quell' praticamente abbiamo de- detto adesso che è stato inserito
all'inizio dell'anno che ha instau[rato buoni rapporti* anche con noi: (:) è
sempre molto carino non conosceva nessuna parola di italiano ma è migliorato
ma rimangono difficoltà (:) non accetta di svolgere attività [diver*se dai compagni (:
he follows the activities of the classroom with the help of teachers his difficulties are not
comprensione ma nella conoscenza* quindi una volta [che lui arriverà* a conoscere la
lingua (:) cioè non ha nel sen-
non ha problemi di apprendimento o di comprensione
because the things that he already understand
le fa bene
[le fa bene
so here it’s (:) written that actually he has been (:)this is the first year he is in Italy and is
the first year that he is in this class but he has (:) he gets along (:)really good with his
mates (:) and (:) with the teachers as well (:) when he came of course he didn’t know (:
any words (:) of Italian so he had (:) he had difficulties with the language but now (:) the
knowledge of the language is getting better (:) [is improving* (:)but there are still many
difficulties [in the* communication
[si (:) si
yes yes
exactly
(1.49)
mhm: even though he has this kind of problems he doesn’t wanna (:) he doesn’t accept
to do (:) different activities from his mates (:) so: the teachers (:) they will help him in a
special way but he will: (:) actually do (:) what the others do (:)with the help of course
of the teachers (:) and (:) their they (:) eh the teacher here she just (:) point out that
his problem (:) is not (:) a comprehension problem in terms of (:) learning (:)but (:
in communication and (:) language (:) so once he will have overcome the language
problem he won’t have any problem and he will be good (:) the teachers said he would
catch up with all (:) with th- with the children of his age
mhm
Appendix B

Gaze encoding symbols

Seating arrangement I (PTM 1 and PTM3):

- = M/T mutual gaze, INT looking at T
- = M/T mutual gaze, INT looking at M
- = M/T mutual gaze, INT looking down
- = M/T mutual gaze, INT looking away
- = M/T mutual gaze, INT eyes closed
- = INT/T mutual gaze, M looking at INT
- = INT/T mutual gaze, M looking at T
- = INT/T mutual gaze, M looking away
- = INT/T mutual gaze, M looking at object
- = INT/T mutual gaze, M looking down
- = INT/T mutual gaze, M eyes closed
= INT/M mutual gaze, T looking at M

= INT/M mutual gaze, T looking at INT

= INT/M mutual gaze, T looking away

= INT/M mutual gaze, T looking at object

= INT/M mutual gaze, T looking down

= INT/M mutual gaze, T eyes closed

= INT looking at T, M looking at T, T looking down

= M/T1 mutual gaze, INT looking at object

= M looking at T, INT and M looking at object

= INT/T looking down at object, M looking at INT

= INT/M/T looking down at object

= INT/M/T looking down at object

= M/T looking down at object, INT looking at T

= M/T looking down at object, INT looking at M
= M looking at T, INT looking at M, T looking down at object

= M/INT looking at T, T looking down at object

= M looking at T, T looking at INT, INT looking away

= M looking at INT, INT looking at T, T looking down

= M looking at INT, T looking at M, INT looking away

= T/M looking at INT, INT looking away

= M looking at INT, T looking at M, INT looking away

= INT/M looking at T, T looking away

= INT/M looking at T, T looking down

= INT/T looking at M, M looking down

= M looking down, T looking at M, INT looking away

= M/INT looking down, T looking at M

= M looking down, T looking at INT, INT looking away
= INT/M/T looking down

= M looking down, INT looking at T, T looking away

= M/INT looking down, T looking away

= M/T looking down, INT looking at T

= INT/T looking down, M looking away

= INT/T looking down, M looking at T

= INT looking at T, T looking at M, M looking at object

= M looking at T, INT looking at M, T looking down

= INT/T looking down, M looking at INT

= M looking at INT, INT looking at T, T looking down

= INT looking at M, M looking at T, T looking at INT

= M and INT looking at object, T looking at INT

= M looking at INT, INT looking at object, T looking down

= INT and M looking at object, T looking down
Seating arrangement II (PTM2):

= T/INT mutual gaze, M looking at INT

= T/INT mutual gaze, M looking at T

= T/INT mutual gaze, M looking down

= T/INT mutual gaze, M looking away

= T/INT mutual gaze, M eyes closed

= M/INT mutual gaze, T looking at M

= M/INT mutual gaze, T looking at INT

= M/INT mutual gaze, T looking away

= M/INT mutual gaze, T looking at object
= M/INT mutual gaze, T looking down

= M/INT mutual gaze, T eyes closed

= T/M mutual gaze, INT looking at M

= T/M mutual gaze, INT looking at T

= T/M mutual gaze, INT looking away

= T/M mutual gaze, INT looking at object

= T/M mutual gaze, INT looking down

= T/M mutual gaze, INT eyes closed

= M/T looking at INT, INT looking down

= T/INT mutual gaze, M looking at object

= T looking at INT, M and INT looking at object

= T looking at M, M and INT looking at object

= T/M/INT looking down at object
= T/INT looking down at object, M looking at INT

= T/INT looking down at object, M looking at T

= M looking at T, T looking at INT, INT looking down at object

= M/T looking at INT, INT looking down at object

= T looking at INT, INT looking at M, M looking away

= T looking at M, M looking at INT, INT looking down

= T looking at INT, INT looking at T, M looking down

= T/INT looking at M, M looking away

= T looking at M, INT looking at T, M looking away

= T/M looking at INT, INT looking away

= T looking at INT, M looking at INT, INT looking down

= M/INT looking at T, T looking down

= T looking down, INT looking at T, M looking away
= M/T looking down, INT looking at T

= T looking down, INT looking at M, M looking away

= INT/M/T looking down

= T looking down, M looking at T, INT looking away

= T/M looking down, INT looking away

= T/INT looking down, M looking at INT

= M/INT looking down, T looking away

= M/INT looking down, T looking at INT

= M looking at INT, INT looking at T, T looking at object

= T looking at INT, M looking at T, INT looking down

= M/INT looking down, T looking at M

= T looking at M, M looking at INT, INT looking down

= T looking at INT, M looking at T, INT looking down

= T looking at INT, M looking at T, INT looking at M

= T and M looking at object, INT looking at M
= T looking at M, M looking at object, INT looking down

= INT and M looking at object, INT looking down

= INT looking at M, M looking at T, T looking at object

= T and INT looking at M, M looking at object

= INT looking at M, M looking at T, T looking down