

### Summary in Spanish

## SILENCIO CONVERSACIONAL E IMAGEN SOCIAL EN DOS CONTEXTOS SOCIOCULTURALES

Josefa Contreras Fernández

### 1. Introducción

En este artículo pretendemos buscar la relación que tiene el silencio conversacional con la cortesía y, más en concreto, con la imagen social en un análisis contrastivo de conversaciones españolas y alemanas. Consideramos que en una conversación los deseos de imagen de los hablantes presentan unas características dadas por la comunidad de habla a la que pertenecen, hasta el punto de que los hablantes construyen y afirman sus imágenes sociales según el contexto situacional y sociocultural en el que se encuentran inmersos. En ese sentido, la concepción del silencio varía según el tipo de conversación y según la imagen social de cada comunidad de habla. Para explicar todo ello, en este artículo se repasará primero el concepto de cultura y se contrastarán los factores más relevantes para este análisis de la cultura alemana *versus* la española, con el fin de demostrar cómo estos factores influyen en la imagen social y, por consiguientemente, en la interpretación del silencio. Después del marco teórico, se comentarán los resultados del análisis conversacional y se finalizará este resumen en español con las conclusiones obtenidas.

### 2. Marco teórico

Los intercambios comunicativos surgen dentro de un grupo social o una comunidad de habla, y presentan unos determinados rasgos conductuales y comunicativos. Según Scollon y Scollon (1995), en los estudios sobre comunicación intercultural es imprescindible tener en cuenta que la cultura es definida como sigue:

“[...] culture is any of the customs, worldview, language, kinship system, social organization, and other taken-for-granted day-to-day practices of a people which set that group apart as a distinctive group. By using the anthropological sense of the word “culture”, we mean to consider any aspect of the ideas, communications, or behaviors of a group of people which gives to them a distinctive identity and which is used to organize their internal sense of cohesion and membership” (Scollon y Scollon 1995: 126-7).

Para Göhring (1997), la cultura está, sobre todo, relacionada con el saber entender e interpretar bien los roles que uno tiene que desempeñar en cada situación. Durante una

conversación, los hablantes tratan de mantener una imagen de sí mismos a través de estrategias comunicativas verbales y no verbales, conscientes y no conscientes, pero siempre dependiendo de la clase de interacción y de la clase social y cultural a la que pertenezcan los participantes. Por lo tanto, el tipo de conversación y, sobre todo, el contexto sociocultural son de suma importancia. Presentamos a continuación una breve comparación de los factores más relevantes para nuestro análisis del contexto sociocultural alemán y del español.

En la comunidad cultural alemana se le otorga un gran valor al tiempo libre. En España, en cambio, la importancia recae sobre la familia (De Miguel 1997; Hernández-Flores 2002). Ello se debe al carácter de las personas de cada comunidad cultural: La necesidad de los alemanes de separar lo privado (por ejemplo, el tiempo libre) de lo ajeno o público (por ejemplo, el trabajo). Esta relación entre lo privado y lo público también se puede contrastar, según Althaus y Mog (1996), con otros aspectos de la vida cotidiana, como son las puertas cerradas o la enorme cantidad de verjas para delimitar su propiedad o esfera privada. Esta actitud de reserva que se observa en muchos alemanes, es uno de los motivos por los que los extranjeros los tachan de fríos y distantes. En contraste, los españoles se caracterizan por su forma de actuar extrovertida y abierta. Tales características socioculturales se reflejan también en las conversaciones. En las alemanas existe una mayor tolerancia hacia la idiosincrasia de cada individuo, hacia el respeto y la privacidad. Por ejemplo, la distancia física habitual que mantienen los hablantes entre sí, generalmente, es mucho mayor que la que mantienen los españoles. También, las interrupciones son menores y se interpretan de forma diferente a la sociedad española, donde estas son casi imprescindibles para mantener viva la conversación (Contreras 2004, 2005). Vistas estas diferencias, podemos señalar en términos de Scollon y Scollon (1995) que en la comunidad cultural española hay un predominio de las “ingroup-relationships”, mientras que en la comunidad cultural alemana hay una mayor diferencia entre las relaciones “ingroup – outgroup” y, por ello, los comportamientos comunicativos difieren según el contexto situacional. Estas características socioculturales están en estrecha relación con la imagen social, como veremos en el siguiente apartado.

Como es sabido, la propuesta de Brown y Levinson (1987) ha sido la referencia teórica más importante en los estudios de cortesía y de imagen social de las dos últimas décadas. Tal teoría ha guiado muchas investigaciones, pero también ha cosechado numerosas críticas, tanto por el aspecto pesimista de la interacción humana (cf. Kasper 1990; Held 1992; Kerbrat-Orecchioni 1997) como por su pretensión universalista (cf. Matsumoto 1988; Mao 1994; Bravo 1999; Boretta 2001; Hernández-Flores 2002). Al aplicar los datos de Brown y Levinson a nuestros datos (Contreras 2004), se ha observado que, aunque los conceptos de imagen negativa y positiva se pueden adaptar en parte a los rasgos sociales de las interacciones de nuestro corpus alemán, no se adaptan a los rasgos sociales apreciables en las interacciones españolas. El problema reside en que los aspectos negativo y positivo de la imagen social están acotados socioculturalmente, es decir, son válidos para aplicarlos a algunas comunidades de habla, por ejemplo, la anglosajona, pero no a todas las comunidades de habla. Esto se debe al hecho de que hay valores que aún siendo universales se plasman de forma diferente según la comunidad cultural, como ha sido destacado por varios autores (cf. Fant 1989; Watts, Sachicko y Ehlich 1992; Scollon y Scollon 1995; Bravo 1996, 1999). Bravo (1996, 1999 y en este volumen) retoma todas estas investigaciones y establece sus postulados sobre *autonomía* y *afiliación*, categorías universales relacionadas con las

dimensiones del *ego* y del *alter* que están vacías de contenidos, es decir, no tienen significado cultural. Los contenidos de estas categorías son entonces *rellenados* con significados culturales por las diferentes comunidades según el significado que atribuyen a los comportamientos comunicativos en ese contexto particular. La autonomía es, según Bravo, “verse o ser visto diferente a los otros” y la afiliación: “verse o ser visto en su identificación con el grupo” (Bravo 1999: 157). En la categoría de autonomía, Bravo describe, una de las características que presenta en la comunidad cultural española: “mostrarse original y consciente de las buenas cualidades propias” (Bravo 1999: 157). La categoría de afiliación, para la comunidad española, se manifiesta con el ideal de confianza, “saber a qué atenerse con respecto al otro, y que se puede hablar sin temor a ofensas” (Bravo 1999: 169). Hernández-Flores (2002, 2003, 2004) ha demostrado en sus investigaciones sobre la cortesía en la conversación española, que las características propuestas por Bravo (1996, 1999) han servido para corroborar estos postulados en su corpus basado en conversaciones entre familiares y amigos. Asimismo, nosotros también hemos comprobado que funcionan para nuestro corpus (Contreras 2005), por ello, reconocemos para la imagen social española las características propuestas por Bravo (1996, 1999). En cuanto a la comunidad cultural alemana, el valor que caracteriza a la imagen social también tiene cabida en las categorías de autonomía y afiliación. La categoría de autonomía se caracteriza por el concepto de *autoafirmación*, aunque este se define para la comunidad cultural alemana como “mostrarse orgulloso por tener habilidad crítica y confianza en uno mismo” (Contreras 2005: 142). Respecto a la categoría de afiliación, la comunidad cultural alemana presenta unas características relacionadas con el concepto de privacidad, que se manifiesta por la delimitación de la esfera privada y la pública. Los alemanes diferencian, en términos de Scollon y Scollon (1995), relaciones de “ingroup” y de “outgroup”, como veremos en el análisis posterior de las conversaciones. Previamente al análisis, mostraremos la relación del silencio con la imagen social.

Por su parte, Tannen (1985) y Saville-Troike (1985) han investigado las funciones y el significado del silencio. Saville-Troike (1985) destaca que el silencio es parte integral del marco cultural de una comunidad de habla, por lo que para una teoría completa de la comunicación ha de tenerse en cuenta tanto el sonido como el silencio. Según Tannen (1985), el significado del silencio conversacional viene dado por dos objetivos comunicativos que califica como conexión o independencia y que se corresponden, a su vez, con lo que Lakoff (1979) denomina distancia *versus* compañerismo, o con lo que Brown y Levinson (1978) llaman imagen negativa e imagen positiva. Esta autora relaciona, a su vez, los estilos comunicativos con la cortesía convencionalizada (cf. Tannen 1985: 107). El silencio, como parte de la cultura de una comunidad, no sólo regula la conversación, sino también las relaciones sociales.

### 3. Resultados del análisis y conclusión

Con el fin de obtener similitudes y/o diferencias de la imagen social española *versus* alemana y del silencio, se han analizado conversaciones reales<sup>1</sup>, grabadas en situaciones

---

<sup>1</sup> El corpus analizado consta de conversaciones transaccionales españolas y alemanas (grabadas y transcritas por mí misma), y de conversaciones coloquiales. La conversación coloquial alemana procede del *Institut für Deutsch Sprache*. (Grabación transliterada ortográficamente y transcrita y revisada por mí misma.) La conversación española forma parte del corpus de Briz y Grupo Val.Es.Co (2002).

comunicativas en las que los hablantes ponen en práctica unas normas o supuestos sociales existentes dentro de su comunidad lingüística y cultural. Aparecen rasgos conversacionales distintivos de cada comunidad de habla y los estilos comunicativos difieren, como podemos apreciar en la siguiente tabla:

|                      | <b>Conversaciones españolas</b>                                                                                                                                               | <b>Conversaciones alemanas</b>                                                                                                                                                |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Transaccional</b> | <b>- silencio</b><br>+ coloquial / - formal<br>+ confianza<br>+ repetición<br>+ secuencias laterales<br>+ interrupciones<br>↓↓<br><b>+ confianza</b>                          | <b>+ silencio</b><br>- coloquial / + formal<br>- confianza<br>- repetición<br>- secuencias laterales<br>- interrupciones<br>↓↓<br><b>+ privacidad</b>                         |
| <b>Coloquial</b>     | <b>- silencio</b><br>- turnos largos<br>+ interrupciones<br>+ <i>retroalimentación</i><br>+ <i>relación de proximidad</i><br>+ <i>solidaridad</i><br>↓↓<br><b>+ confianza</b> | <b>+ silencio</b><br>+ turnos largos<br>- interrupciones<br>+ <i>retroalimentación</i><br>+ <i>relación de proximidad</i><br>+ <i>solidaridad</i><br>↓↓<br><b>+ confianza</b> |

**Tabla 1.** Rasgos conversacionales

De esta tabla se desprende que las conversaciones transaccionales españolas se diferencian de las alemanas en lo que atañe a la imagen social, pues ésta es diversa en cada comunidad cultural. En la cultura española, de solidaridad y confianza, las conversaciones transaccionales (formales) se asemejan mucho, por los rasgos arriba mencionados, a las conversaciones coloquiales (informales). Prueba de ello son las secuencias laterales que se utilizan para hacer comentarios personales e identificarse uno con los demás y, sobre todo, para evitar el silencio. Ejemplificamos esto con la siguiente muestra (1) que procede de la grabación 'Fiordos' (457 líneas). En esta conversación una pareja desea información sobre un viaje a Noruega y a los Fiordos:

(1)

95     A     *y si queréis llevaros tortiillas ↑/// porque luego a*  
 96            *lo mejor (( )) hoy nos vamoos a pues nos vamos*

En el ejemplo (1) el agente de venta hace uso de una secuencia de lateralización interna para ofrecer una aclaración. Les da consejos personales a los clientes, por lo que esta secuencia sería más bien propia de una conversación coloquial y no tanto de una conversación formal y transaccional. Estas características comunicativas confirman la presencia de una imagen social española de afiliación y confianza. En cambio, en las conversaciones alemanas transaccionales no hay esfuerzo por evitar el silencio, ni se utilizan secuencias laterales para hacer comentarios personales, porque no procede en una conversación formal. Esta actuación refleja el valor cultural de la imagen social alemana de privacidad, de separación de las esferas privadas y públicas. Sin embargo, en las conversaciones alemanas coloquiales sí se han encontrado tanto secuencias de

lateralización como de retroalimentación<sup>2</sup>; se trata de dos estrategias discursivas utilizadas para mostrar solidaridad y confianza y, por lo tanto, más parecidas a las características de la imagen social española de afiliación. El ejemplo (2) procede de la conversación alemana ‘Auf Nietzches Spuren’ (684 líneas) que se realiza en una vivienda familiar, donde se reúnen familiares y unos amigos para oír el relato de un viaje que ha realizado un amigo (DM).

(2)

25 DM: teilweise och→ ja→/ und AUSländische↓§  
 en parte también→sí→y extranjeros

26 OM: §wahrscheinlich ähnliche Leute  
 probablemente gente parecida

27 die och nach Weimar fahren →§  
 que también van a Weimar

28?: §hm  
 mhm

En la línea 26 del ejemplo (2), el hablante OM interrumpe a DM para dar su opinión y, a su vez, OM es interrumpido por otro hablante en la línea 28, el cual confirma la opinión de OM, y le ofrece retroalimentación. A diferencia de lo que suele ocurrir en los contextos españoles, como es el caso de la conversación PG.119.A.1. analizada en el artículo, la interrupción de la línea 26 es una intervención sin voluntad de apoderarse del turno, sino de retroalimentación para mostrarle al hablante que se está atento; por tanto se interpreta como una estrategia comunicativa de cortesía. Si bien la confianza y la manifestación de estrecha solidaridad son características identificativas de la imagen social española, también estos rasgos pueden estar presentes en conversaciones coloquiales alemanas, dado que las características de esta modalidad discursiva lo favorecen. En efecto, las situaciones comunicativas informales, donde se suelen desarrollar las conversaciones coloquiales, transcurren en un ambiente familiar y de amistad donde es más frecuente encontrar señales de compañerismo y de identificación con el grupo (cf. Hernández-Flores 2002). Recordemos que la categoría de afiliación propuesta por Bravo (1996, 1999) se plasma en la comunidad de habla alemana con el valor cultural de *privacidad*, la cual se manifiesta en la separación de la esfera privada y la pública o, lo que es lo mismo, en la distinción entre las relaciones “ingroup” y “outgroup” (Scollon y Scollon 1995). Esta conversación entre amigos y familiares pertenece a las relaciones de “ingroup”, al igual que la conversación española PG.119.A.1. De esta forma, se advierte que la imagen social alemana obtiene valor de solidaridad y confianza si el contexto situacional lo favorece. Sin embargo, en contextos situacionales más formales prima la separación entre lo privado o público, característica de la imagen social alemana de privacidad. El concepto de privacidad de los alemanes respecto a las relaciones de “ingroup” y “outgroup” se plasma en los estilos comunicativos, por lo que estos difieren según se trate de un contexto situacional de mayor o menor intimidad. Esa separación no se aprecia en la comunidad cultural española, donde lo importante en las conversaciones, incluso en las transaccionales, es crear un buen ambiente, mostrando solidaridad y confianza. Podemos afirmar que los estilos conversacionales están en estrecha relación con el contexto sociocultural. Así,

<sup>2</sup> Aparecen marcadas en cursiva en el cuadro porque aparecen tanto en la conversación española como en la alemana.

los rasgos que caracterizan el estilo conversacional español, en nuestro corpus, son: Preferencia por contar historias personales, cambios abruptos de tema, turnos cortos, interrupciones y resistencia al silencio. Estos rasgos reflejan la imagen social de *confianza* “saber a qué atenerse con respecto al otro, y que se puede hablar sin temor a ofensas” (Bravo 1999: 169). En cambio, el estilo conversacional característico de la comunidad cultural alemana se caracteriza por: Preferencia por el contenido de la conversación, turnos largos, mínimas interrupciones, pausas largas y uso del silencio, todo lo cual supone un tipo de comportamiento comunicativo que refleja la imagen social de *privacidad* con una manifiesta separación de la esfera privada de la pública.

Por otra parte, si bien hay rasgos conversacionales semejantes entre la conversación coloquial española y la alemana, al observarlas con más atención, vemos que no se pueden equiparar. Los interlocutores españoles ofrecen retroalimentación principalmente para participar en la conversación, aunque sea interrumpiéndola y evitando de ese modo el silencio; en cambio, los interlocutores alemanes manifiestan su colaboración e interés en la conversación participando también a través de la retroalimentación, pero respetan tanto los turnos largos como las pausas o los silencios del narrador. Esto se debe a las características culturales, propias de cada comunidad de habla, es decir, a las normas, a los hábitos y, sobre todo, a la visión del mundo. Así, el silencio no se concibe de la misma forma en la cultura española que en la alemana, como tampoco en la cultura inglesa frente a la griega (Sifianou 1995), o, en los países escandinavos, los finlandeses con respecto al resto (Lehtonen y Sajavaara 1985). Consiguientemente, la forma de percibir e interpretar el silencio es diferente en cada comunidad cultural y está relacionada con la imagen social propia de cada una de ellas.

## CONVERSATIONAL SILENCE AND FACE IN TWO SOCIOCULTURAL CONTEXTS

Josefa Contreras Fernández

### Abstract

This article aims to examine the relation between conversational silence and face and to identify communicative behaviour related to silence in Spanish and German. To this end, I will first briefly explain the concepts of conversation, culture and silence, as well as the concept of face. Second, I will analyse verbal and non-verbal activities of silence in transactional and colloquial conversations in Spanish and German conversation. Perceptions and conceptions of conversational silence rely on the situational context and, especially, on the face of each speech community. Therefore, depending on the social context and the characteristics of face in each culture, silence is considered as forming part of conversation.

**Keywords:** Silence; Face; Social and Cultural Context.

### 1. Introduction

For the past two decades, the fundamental theoretical referent in the field of politeness and face studies has been Brown & Levinson (1987). Brown & Levinson's theory has guided many researchers, but it has also been highly criticised for its pessimistic view of human interaction (cf. Kasper 1990; Held 1992; Kerbrat-Orecchioni 1997) as well as for its universalistic claim (cf. Matsumoto 1988; Mao 1994; Bravo 1999; Boretta 2001; Hernández-Flores 2002). These studies indicate that the problem lies in the negative and positive aspects of socioculturally identified face, that is, they can apply to some speech communities, for example, Anglo-Saxon, but not to all speech communities. This is due to the fact that although some values are universal, they are perceived differently depending on the specific culture, as highlighted by the research of several authors (cf. Fant 1989; Watts, Sachicko & Ehlich 1992; Scollon & Scollon 1995). As further described in section 3, Bravo (1996) reviews all these studies and establishes her maxims on autonomy and affiliation<sup>3</sup>, universal and empty categories, that is, categories without original cultural meaning. These categories were filled with cultural meaning depending on the different communities. In other words, the contents are dependent on the speech community itself.

The aim of this paper is to identify the relation between conversational silence and politeness and, more specifically, face, through a contrastive analysis of Spanish and German conversations. The concepts of autonomy and affiliation, as mentioned above, have been studied in relation to different cultures, for example, the Swedish and

---

<sup>3</sup> See Bravo in this volume.

Spanish cultures (Bravo 1996). However, there has been no contrastive research into the German and the Spanish cultures regarding autonomy, affiliation and silence. Thus, this study is significant since other similar studies have highlighted the distinguishing features of Eastern and Western cultures (Scollon & Scollon 1995) and the characteristic distinctions within one supposedly “uniform” society like the North American one (Tannen 1985). In a conversation, the participants’ face wants reveal features imposed by the speech community to which they belong, to the extent that the speakers build and confirm face according to the situational context and their own sociocultural context. In that sense, the concept of silence varies according to the type of conversation and face of each speech community.

In recent decades, Tannen & Saville-Troike (1985) have conducted research into the functions and meanings of silence. Saville-Troike (1985) claimed that silence is an essential part of the cultural framework of a speech community. Tannen (1985) suggested that the meaning of conversational silence comes from two communicative objectives that she calls “connection” and “independence”. According to her, these two communicative objectives correspond, in turn, to what Lakoff (1979) called “camaraderie” *versus* “distance” and to what Brown & Levinson (1987) described as “positive face” and “negative face”. Tannen (1985) analysed the communicative style of New Yorkers of Jewish descent and compared it with the style of non-New York speakers. The most characteristic aspects of the communicative style of Jewish New Yorkers are mainly, few pauses and frequent turn-taking with overlap, because they feel uncomfortable with silence. Silence, as part of the culture of a community, regulates not only the conversation, but also the social relationships. In fact, Lehtonen & Sajavaara (1985) asserted that each culture has its own standards regarding what is acceptable in terms of communicative behaviour, pointing out that proverbs sometimes reflect values referring to appropriate speech behaviour. Thus, in Finland they say “Listen a lot, speak little [...] One mouth, two ears.” (Lehtonen & Sajavaara 1985: 193). Saville-Troike (1985) affirmed that the relative value of speech *versus* silence in different speech communities may also be found in their proverbs: “Silence is golden” (English proverb), “Because of the mouth the fish dies” (Spanish proverb) (Saville-Troike 1985: 10). Jaworski (1993) suggested that silence is subject to interpretation and requires more attention and collaboration from the participants than verbal communication. Therefore, if verbal communication is intentional, so too is silence. Sifianou (1995), in studies relating silence to face threatening acts, concluded that the meaning of silence, rather than the meaning of speech, is determined according to the given sociocultural context and the situational context.

To further examine the meaning of conversational silence and to identify similarities and/or differences between Spanish and German face and silence, real<sup>4</sup> conversations are essential. For this study, conversations were recorded in communicative situations in which the speakers put into practice existing standards or social assumptions within their linguistic and cultural community, since the use of language is directly related to the cultural framework of the speakers (Tannen 1985; Saville-Troike 1989; Gumperz 1990; Pavlidou 1994; Sifianou 1995; Blum-Kulka 1997; Scollon & Scollon 1995; Bravo

---

<sup>4</sup> The corpus analysed consists of transactional conversations in Spanish and German (recorded and transcribed by the author of this paper), as well as colloquial conversations. The German colloquial conversation comes from the *Institut für Deutsch Sprache*. (Recording transliterated orthographically and transcribed and reviewed by the author of this paper.) The Spanish conversation comes from Briz and Grupo Val.Es.Co (2002).

1996; Rathmayr 1999). However, before analysing conversational silence, it is necessary to focus on the concept of culture and to describe concepts related to the German and Spanish sociocultural contexts.

## 2. Culture and sociocultural context

Communicative exchanges take place within a social group or speech community; thus, they are characterised by certain behavioural and communicative features common to the particular culture. As a result, an analysis of silence should include a study of the cultural factors and the sociological characteristics of the speakers.

Cultures involve people who live according to some given beliefs and behavioural patterns and who communicate accordingly. Scollon & Scollon (1995) argued that it is essential that studies of intercultural communication take culture into consideration. Culture<sup>5</sup>, in their words, equals “groups of people and what they have in common, from their history and worldview to their language or languages or geographical location” (Scollon & Scollon 1995: 125). Therefore, they think that there are aspects of culture which are significant for the study of intercultural communication, such as ideology, socialisation, discourse type, that is, language functions and non-verbal communication and, finally, the image system and the social organisation. This, they argue, is one of the most important aspects which includes the following: “kinship, the concept of the self, ingroup-outgroup relationships, and what sociologists have sometimes called *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*” (Scollon & Scollon 1995: 129). These authors consider that to avoid problems in professional intercultural communication, one must be aware that there are cultural differences in the image relations and, consequently, in the communicative expectations of the speakers. According to Göhring (1997), culture is related primarily to knowing how to properly understand and interpret the roles to be played in each situation. In conversation, the speakers try to maintain an image of themselves through verbal and non-verbal communicative strategies, even though they may not be fully aware of it. But this image always depends on both the type of interaction and the social and cultural class to which the speakers belong. Therefore, the type of conversation and, above all, the socialcultural context, are of great relevance. Before initiating an analysis of silence and face in the German and Spanish sociocultural context, it is worth comparing the most relevant factors in the two speech communities and their reflection on the two languages.

While the German speech community values its leisure time highly, in Spain, it is the family that is most treasured (De Miguel 1997; Hernández-Flores 2002). This is due to the character of the people in each sociocultural context: The Germans' need to separate what is private (for example, leisure time) from what is public (for example, work). This relation between private and public can also be contrasted, according to Althaus & Mog (1996), with other aspects of everyday life, such as closed doors or the incredible number of fences to mark the boundaries of one's property or one's private sphere. This introverted attitude can be seen in many Germans. This is why they are labelled by foreigners as cold and distant people. In contrast, Spaniards are characterised by their outgoing and open behaviour. Such sociocultural features are also reflected in conversations: In German there is a greater degree of tolerance towards the

---

<sup>5</sup> They use the word “culture” in its anthropological sense, as we do in this paper.

idiosyncrasy of each individual, that is, in terms of respect and privacy. In addition, interruptions are shorter and they are interpreted in a different way than in a Spanish conversation, where they are almost essential to keep the conversation going (Contreras 2004, 2005). Thus, based on these differences, we can say in terms of Scollon & Scollon (1995) that the German speech community emphasises "ingroup-outgroup relationships", whereas this differentiation is almost negligible in the Spanish one; in other words, the communicative behaviour differs according to the situational context. These sociocultural characteristics are closely related to face as illustrated in the following section.

### 3. Face

As inferred from earlier research, the sociocultural context is essential for studies into communicative behaviours and face. Bravo (1999, 2000, 2003, 2004) followed Goffman's concept of image (1959, 1971), as Brown & Levinson (1987) did. However, she added that there are sociocultural contexts that take into account particular representations of the cognitive, emotional and social reality, which become evident in the basic contents of the image with which an individual or group is identified (Bravo 1999: 157). For this author, those basic contents are universal, in the sense that they are empty categories that must be filled by each speech community. For that reason, in order to characterise face, it is necessary to relate the communicative behaviours with the sociocultural contexts. Bravo proposed categories related to the dimension of *the ego* and *alter* which she called "autonomy" and "affiliation"<sup>6</sup>. Generally speaking, the concept of autonomy refers to the notion of independence while the concept of affiliation refers to the notion of solidarity, depending on the relationship with the group. Scollon & Scollon (1995) also considered it necessary to separate the universal aspect of politeness from the cultural one and distinguished two categories: "independence" and "involvement". These authors claimed that depending on the situational context or the cultural context, one category prevails over the other. But Scollon & Scollon (1995) did not emphasise, as Bravo (1999) did, the need to consider them as "empty categories", which depending on the speech community, this same category will appear in one form or another. This is important; otherwise, we could be referring to "independence" cultures and "involvement" cultures, as did Brown & Levinson (1987) in distinguishing between cultures of positive politeness and cultures of negative politeness. In previous research, I applied the postulates of Brown & Levinson (1987) for a pilot study (Contreras 2004) and found that, on the one hand, although these postulates on negative and positive face may be valid for the German speech community, they are not suitable for the Spanish one; on the other hand, this research indicated that these postulates are insufficient for the German culture. The German face cannot be exclusively defined with the concept of negative image, of non-interference alone, since, as we shall soon see, there are other factors that characterise it. Therefore, after analysing the results from my study (Contreras 2005) of a corpus of transactional and colloquial conversations, and contrasting the results of these conversations with data provided by native Spanish speakers and native German speakers (Contreras 2005), I decided to adopt Bravo's postulates (1996, 1999).

---

<sup>6</sup> See Bravo in this volume.

One characteristic of the Spanish speech community in the (empty) category of autonomy, in Bravo's words<sup>7</sup>, is to be original and aware of their own good qualities. The (empty) category of affiliation is characterised by an ideal of a trusted setting knowing what to expect from the other, and the topics to talk about without fear of offending (Bravo 1999). As demonstrated by Hernández-Flores (2002, 2003, 2004) in her corpus of Spanish conversations between relatives and friends, the characteristics for face proposed by Bravo (1996, 1999) were confirmed, as they were for my study of Spanish and German corpora (Contreras 2005). Thus, I recognise the characteristics proposed by Bravo (1996, 1999) for the Spanish face and I adapt her maxims to the German speech community. The cultural value that characterises the German face can be included in the autonomy and affiliation categories. The autonomy category for the German face is also characterised by self-affirmation, but being defined as "being proud for having critical ability and a trusted setting in oneself" (Contreras 2005: 68). With respect to the (empty) category of affiliation, the German speech community presents characteristics related to the concept of privacy, which becomes apparent by the distinction between the private and the public sphere. The Germans distinguish, in the words of Scollon & Scollon (1995), between the relations of "ingroup" and "outgroup"<sup>8</sup>, as we shall see in the following analysis of the conversations.

#### **4. Analysis**

Silence is related more to context than to speech and is subject to interpretation, depending on the situational context and the sociocultural context. Thus, in an analysis of silence, one must consider the cultural factors that determine the speech behaviour. During a conversation, the speakers try to maintain an image of themselves through verbal and non-verbal communicative strategies. The following corpus analysis of silence in conversation aims to identify the communicative behaviours which are dependent on the situational context and, above all, on the sociocultural context, with special emphasis on the different paralinguistic behaviours related to silence. With this in mind, I will first analyse the Spanish and German transactional conversations, and then, the colloquial conversations from both speech communities.

##### **4.1. Transactional conversations**

The conversations analysed below are formal and transactional conversations, recorded in travel agencies<sup>9</sup>, where there is a minimum proximity relation; there may be a relation of social inequality between the speakers; daily topics are not usual and the conversations are more or less planned (Albelda 2004), since clients know, supposedly, the questions they want to ask the agency's staff. On the whole, they are conversations with a transactional purpose, since the clients wish to inquire about trips which interest them, or they want to book a trip<sup>10</sup> directly.

<sup>7</sup> See Bravo in this volume.

<sup>8</sup> Sifianou (1993) made a similar distinction for the Greek culture, although the aspects that she emphasised for the Greek culture are not relevant for the German one.

<sup>9</sup> The German conversations were recorded in Berlin and Lippstadt, respectively, and the Spanish conversations in Valencia.

<sup>10</sup> In all these transactional conversations 'A' is the travel agent and 'B' and 'C' are the clients.

In the conversation ‘Dalmatien’ (101 lines), the client wants to go on holiday with his family to Dalmatia:

(1)<sup>11</sup>

|                                           |                            |
|-------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 01 A (für) Dalmatien?                     | to Dalmatia                |
| 02 B ja↓ (5»)                             | yes                        |
| 03 A wieviel personen?                    | How many people?           |
| 04 B vier eee vier personen und ein kind↓ | four adults and one child  |
| 05 A vier erWACHSene und ein kind↑        | four adults and one child? |
| 06 B ja↓ (( ))                            | yes                        |
| 07 A (dann müsste es gehen)               | then it may be.            |
| 08 B (gut) (5»)                           | Ok                         |

In both lines 02 and 08, there are silences<sup>12</sup>, which neither the agent nor the client try to avoid. As mentioned previously, a conversation takes place within a society with behaviours specific to each sociocultural context. Therefore, silences are interpreted differently according to the speech community. Regarding the interpretation of these silences opinions differ depending on the researcher’s culture. Thus, for a German like Bergmann (1982), silences are normal in conversation. According to him the silence in (1) would be a *freie Gesprächspause* (free pause), which usually appears when the statement has been completed and, generally before a change of subject. In example (1), the speaker has finished his intervention. However, for a Spanish linguist like Gallardo (1993), such silences are not part of the conversation; the silences in example (1) would be *lapsos* (lapses), that is, a pause between turns. For this author, lapses are silences between exchanges and turn-taking and hence absence of talk during a time, which the conversational norms aim to avoid. According to Bergmann and Gallardo, these cultural differences reflect the characteristics of each culture’s face. It is typical of the face of Spanish speakers in a trusted setting to use pauses and silences for making interventions and thus collaborating and keeping the conversation going, as we will see in the examples of the Spanish conversations. What characterises the German face of privacy, which involves a clear distinction between what is private and what is public, is that the speakers remain more distant in a formal conversation and do not usually violate the formal rules that define the speech situation (Lycan 1977).

A number of long, unfilled, pauses and silences were identified in the German transactional conversations, while the Spanish tended to fill those spaces of silence by participating actively in the conversation. Among the strategies to avoid silence in Spanish conversations are the lateralization sequences<sup>13</sup>. One example is found in the recording ‘Fiordos’ (457 lines). In this conversation a couple asks for information about a trip to Norway and the Fiords. In this extract the agent makes use of a sequence of internal lateralization, through an explanation. The agent offers personal advice;

<sup>11</sup> The examples of my corpus have been translated in a rather literal fashion for the reader; however, given the distinct conversational norms of English and Spanish / German, an exact rendition is not possible.

<sup>12</sup> Silences (5») are marked in bold.

<sup>13</sup> Lateralization sequences cause discontinuity (in the conversation) because they momentarily disrupt the discourse, and they are always established in references to a central sequence, which is taking place.

therefore, this sequence would be more appropriate in a colloquial conversation than in a formal transactional conversation.

(2)

|                                                        |                                         |
|--------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| 92 A claro esa zona <sup>↑</sup> que                   | although that area                      |
| 93 ((es)) de bocata o sea/ con pan yy§                 | is for sandwiches/with bread and        |
| 94 B §con pan <sup>↓</sup>                             | <b>with bread</b>                       |
| 95A y si queréis llevaaros tortiillas <sup>↑</sup> /// | and if you want to take omelettes with  |
| porque luego a                                         | you /// because later on                |
| 96 lo mejor (( )) hoy nos vamoos a pues nos            | perhaps ((...))today we will go then we |
| vamos                                                  | are going                               |

In line 94 (2), the client reinforces his role of listener by repeating what the agent has just said. The client makes use of the linguistic resource of allo-repetition (with bread); therefore, besides offering feedback, he expresses his complete conformity with what the speaker said (Haverkate 2004), and at the same time, encourages him to continue. This behaviour is a common speech strategy in Spanish conversations with polite intentions. It is a communicative politeness strategy (Contreras 2005), typical of the Spanish face in a trusted setting: The agent hopes to identify with the couple and dares, without fear of offending or reproaching, to offer advice and make personal comments. Haverkate characterized this type of strategy as representative of a speech community in which a fundamental value is given to solidarity politeness (Haverkate 2004: 58). Jaworski (1993) also noted that repetition in conversation “seems to be a preferred strategy in speech communities in which greater value is placed on the continuous flow of speech in conversation than on stretches of silence in a communicative interaction” (Jaworski 1993: 51). In the German conversations, on the other hand, allo-repetitions are not very common, in particular, in formal conversations; at most, Germans make use of paraphrases. This discourse strategy, hence, reflects cultural differences: Instead of showing solidarity, the German speaker prefers to refrain from identifying, on a personal level, with the speaker and adopts an attitude that is valid in a culture where interpersonal distancing prevails, especially in transactional conversations.

The following sequence from ‘Friodos’ shows how silence is used and interpreted by Spaniards in contrast to the German communicative behaviour. There is a long pause<sup>14</sup> that leads to an erroneous interpretation of the *transition-relevance place* (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson 1974).

(3)

|                                                            |                                                                   |
|------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 18 B a ver entoonces sí/ vamos a ver→/// [(( ))]           | then, let's see/ let's see                                        |
| 19 A [y luego<br>está <sup>↑</sup> ]                       | and then is                                                       |
| 20 B queremos Friodos// lo que más nos<br>interesa vaya/ o | we would rather the Fjords/ that would be our<br>first choice/ or |

<sup>14</sup> Pauses are marked in the transcript with slashes, long pauses with three slashes. The difference between a long pause (///) and a silence (5») is that a long pause lasts more the one second and a silence over five seconds.

Agent A uses the maintained toneme and long pause of client B (line 18) to take turn (line 19), but she is not very successful, since B goes on speaking. Since a pause is considered as an indication of a *transition-relevance place* (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson 1974), it serves as an incitement to avoid silence and take the turn, which leads to a fluid succession of turns.

In the German conversation ‘Teneriffa’, example (4) a client requests information about a trip to Tenerife (Spain). Although long pauses are indicators of, a priori, a possible transition-relevance place, no speaker uses them (nor the silences) to intervene, unlike what happened in the Spanish example (3).

(4)

|    |   |                                             |                                                            |
|----|---|---------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| 72 | A | genau↓ (tippt) (5») die                     | just (writes) Condor also flies, although                  |
|    |   | CONDor fliegt AUCH/// und zwar              |                                                            |
| 73 |   | die fliegen die alle drei vier              | they fly every three days                                  |
|    |   | TAge→ das wär zum                           |                                                            |
| 74 |   | beispiel im januar↓/ der einundzwanzigste   | for example in January, on the 21 <sup>st</sup> of January |
|    |   | januar                                      |                                                            |
| 75 |   | HIN↓/// und→ zurück/ der                    | back and forth on the 21 <sup>st</sup> of February         |
|    |   | einundzwanzigste FEBruar→                   |                                                            |
| 76 |   | (tippt)(5») (( )) und der preis ist         | (writes) and the price is 278 DM                           |
|    |   | zweihundertacht                             |                                                            |
| 77 |   | -undsiebzig mark↓/// auch inklusive steuern | also including taxes and                                   |
|    |   | und                                         |                                                            |

In addition to the long pauses in lines 72, 75 and 77, there are silences (lines 72 and 76), in which none of the speakers intervene. Obviously, the agent is busy searching for the information requested. But the same could be said about the Spanish agent in (3), where neither the agent nor the clients allow a pause to become silence. This is because Spaniards need support exchanges to establish the social relationship that relates them, intensifying the trust relationship, and maintaining the conversation alive, characteristic of the Spanish face of affiliation. This does not mean that Germans are less social than Spaniards, but that they assign another value to silence and, hence, interpret it differently. For the German linguists Bergmann (1982) and Kotschi (1996), silences are not irregular in a conversation, but they are phenomena that take place frequently in the German interactions and depend on the interpretation of silence and on the communicative requirements.

#### 4.2. Colloquial conversations

The colloquial conversations analysed below have been recorded in family homes, where intimate family and/or friendship relations prevail. Thus, the interaction is characterized by close relationship and, therefore, contains more features of everyday life. Colloquial conversations reveal lower degree of planning than transactional ones, enhanced interpersonal relationships and, usually, a greater deal of shared knowledge (Briz & Grupo Val.Es.Co. 2000).

The central topic in the German and Spanish conversations is a trip. Describing a trip is, a priori, a means to make a conversation more dynamic; it attracts the attention of the listeners, leaving space for their possible interventions. The Spanish

conversations are a proof of this; the fact that there are many lateral sequences and overlapping shows that the speakers are keen to participate, to keep the conversation alive and, above all, avoid silence.

Examples of interruption are analysed in sequence (5) extracted from conversation PG.119.A.1. (597 lines). This conversation takes place in a family holiday home, where a couple has invited another couple for lunch. Their relationship is friendly. The conversation is mainly about a trip, although lateralization sequences rise from other subjects like in the fragment below, in which the speakers discuss the life of women in small villages:

(5)

|                                                                               |                                              |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| 01 <sup>15</sup> F: aún/aún dices tú/ la vida que llevan las mujeres de allí§ | And you still say that life for women there  |
| 02 P: § están en la                                                           | they live in the                             |
| 03 edad de piedra aún en los pueblos/ y eso que no pa(ra) [salir=]            | stone age in the villages and to leave there |
| 04 M [¿sí?]                                                                   | yes?                                         |
| 05 P: = de allí pocos pueblos que están más escondíos que aún están más       | few other villages are more hidden are       |
| 06 atrasaos/ que por donde pasa[ron eso es de los=]                           | still far behind than those                  |
| 07 F: [la- las mujeres]                                                       | women                                        |
| 08 P: = más adelantaos§                                                       | more advanced                                |
| 09 F: § ell trabajo de la mujer era→el trabajo de la casa y                   | women's work was at home and                 |
| 10 el campo                                                                   | in the fields                                |
| 11 P: y aún van [aa]                                                          | and they still go                            |
| 12 M: [((yo sí/ yo sí))] [(( ))]                                              | I do / I do                                  |
| 13 F: [(( ))]                                                                 |                                              |
| 14 P: [y aún van aa la=]                                                      | and they still go to                         |

Given some contextual motivation, speaker F initiates a lateralization sequence. He begins to speak about the life of women in small villages, but he is interrupted by speakers P and M. Since F wants to continue expressing his opinion, he interrupts P, in line 07, trying to take the turn, but does not succeed until line 09. P also attempts to end his intervention (since he is also interrupted on several occasions) and express his point of view. His interruptions are not considered by the other speakers as an obstacle for the adequate development of the conversation; neither is it seen as an impoliteness strategy nor a threat to the face of the other speakers. It is interpreted, to a certain extent, not only as part of the conversation, but also as a way of 'enhancing the conversational effectiveness'. According to Gallardo (1996) interruptions, which are frequent in conversation, are not impolite, since they do not hinder the development of the conversation; they rather serve a communicative need. According to her, the only

<sup>15</sup> Line 01 corresponds to line 343 in the same conversation reported by Briz y el Grupo Val.Es.Co. (2002).

possible effect is that the overlapped fragment may not be understood, as sometimes happens in this conversation.

In the German conversation fewer interruptions were identified and none with the intention of turn-taking. The speakers let the narrator (DM) talk and, for that reason, the turns are very long, even with relatively long pauses. The German conversation ‘Auf Nietzsches Spuren’ (684 lines), extract (6), is carried out in a family home. The situational context is the following: A couple (MM and GM) has invited their daughter (OM) and her friends (DM and TK) to dinner at their place, and the topic of the conversation is a trip made by DM.

## (6)

|                                                                                           |                                                                    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 25 DM: teilweise och→ ja→/ und<br>AUSländische↓§                                          | especially too, and foreigners                                     |
| 26 OM: §wahrscheinlich ähnliche Leute                                                     | probably similar people                                            |
| 27 die och nach Weimar fahren →§                                                          | who are also going to Weimar                                       |
| 28?: §hm                                                                                  | hum                                                                |
| 29 DM: ne→/ noch→// eigentlich//<br>ABseitiger↓/ ja↓/ weil→/ WEImar ist ja<br>doc         | no, in addition complete strangers, because<br>Weimar is           |
| 30 schon zu beRÜHMT→/ also↓ Naumburg<br>doch ne nur durch den Do den                      | already widely known, well Naumburg, not<br>only for the           |
| 31 DOM→/ aber/ bei meinen WANderungen↓<br>ebend/ da→// ringsum↓ och                       | cathedral but in my excursions right there<br>around too           |
| 32 sehr→// na so Leute teilweise<br>KENNENgelernt↓/// na→/ am                             | very good, I have met people like that, well on                    |
| 33 Sonntagnachmittag/ jedenfalls↓ brachte ich/<br>meinen LIEBen Freund noch               | Sunday afternoon I even took my good friend                        |
| 34 zur Bahn↓ er mußte dann nämlich am<br>MONtag→ wieder/// zur Arbeit                     | to the train because he had to return on<br>Monday to work         |
| 35 gehen→/ und→// ja dann war ich ALLEIN↓/<br>da steht man mal erst vor einer             | and then I was alone, there is one in front of a                   |
| 36 Stadt↓ wenn man allein ist/ und weiß<br>((natürlich nichts zu machen↓))// man          | city when you're lonely and I don't know<br>(naturally what to do) |
| 37 kommt also gut unter↓/// aber ist erst mal<br>doch ein seltsames Gefühl↓               | one goes unnoticed but at first it is a strange<br>situation       |
| 38 ?: (lach[en])                                                                          | laughter                                                           |
| 39 MM: [Donnerwetter]// GANZ allein↓/ in<br>einer/ einer mittleren äh→/ DDR-<br>40 Stadt↓ | (gee) completely alone in a medium sized<br>city of the GDR        |

In line 26 OM interrupts DM to give her opinion and OM is ‘interrupted’, in turn, by another speaker in line 28, who confirms OM's opinion and offers her feedback. Unlike the Spanish speakers in example (5), OM line 26 does not intent to take the turn; what looks like an interruption is a feedback signal that shows that OM is paying attention, which means that, what looks as interrupting constitutes a communicative politeness strategy (Contreras 2005). Another communicative politeness strategy is reflected in line 38, where the speaker ‘interrupts’ with laughter, and thus shows his interest and involvement in the conversation. I consider this intervention as a communicative politeness strategy, because laughter can act as a mechanism of solidarity and affiliation

(Bravo 1996). Trust and close solidarity, which are identifying features of the Spanish face, may also be found in German colloquial conversations, since colloquial conversation favours such features. Informal communicative situations, where colloquial conversations usually take place, develop in a familiar and friendly atmosphere where it is more frequent to find signals of camaraderie and identification with the group. Note that the universal category of affiliation proposed by Bravo (1996) is reflected in the German speech community with the cultural value of privacy, which, as stated earlier, distinguishes between the private and the public sphere or, similarly, between the “ingroup” and “outgroup” relationships. This conversation between friends and relatives belongs to the “ingroup” type, as does the Spanish conversation in (5). Even so, the communicative style of the German colloquial conversation (6) is different from those of the Spanish conversation. The most noteworthy features of this German conversation (6), with long narrative sequences, are long turns of the narrator, long pauses and absence of interruptions. In this conversation, it is worth noticing that the other speakers only participate by providing feedback.

## 5. Conclusion

This paper aimed to identify the relation between silence and face and the way it may be expressed in conversations. To this end, I compared the presence of face in Spanish and German conversations from a sociocultural perspective. Silence can be interpreted as a communicative phenomenon that offers insight into social relationships. When comparing both contexts, the common characteristics of each speech community are identified in the conversations, since the communicative behaviour of the speakers are conditioned by the learned speech habits. This conversational analysis sheds light on the following:

|                      | Spanish conversations                                                                                                                                            | German conversations                                                                                                                                             |
|----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Transactional</b> | <b>- silence</b><br>+ colloquial / - formal<br>+ trusted setting<br>+ repetition<br>+ lateral sequences<br>+ interruptions<br>↓↓<br><b>+ trusted setting</b>     | <b>+ silence</b><br>- colloquial / + formal<br>- trusted setting<br>- repetition<br>- lateral sequences<br>- interruptions<br>↓↓<br><b>+ privacy</b>             |
| <b>Colloquial</b>    | <b>- silence</b><br>- long turns<br>+ interruptions<br>+ <i>feedback</i><br>+ <i>proximity relation</i><br>+ <i>solidarity</i><br>↓↓<br><b>+ trusted setting</b> | <b>+ silence</b><br>+ long turns<br>- interruptions<br>+ <i>feedback</i><br>+ <i>proximity relation</i><br>+ <i>solidarity</i><br>↓↓<br><b>+ trusted setting</b> |

Table 2. Conversational features based on the findings reported herein.

From the table above one may infer that the Spanish transactional conversations are different from the German ones with respect to face. In the Spanish speech

community, where a trusting relationship prevails, transactional (formal) conversations are very similar to colloquial (informal) conversations, especially in terms of the features listed above. One manifestation of this is the use of lateralization sequences to make personal comments, to identify oneself with the others and, above all, to avoid silence. As argued in this paper, these are common characteristics of the Spanish face of affiliation and of the cultural value attached to a trusted setting. However, in the transactional German conversation there is no effort to avoid silence, nor are lateralization sequences used to make personal comments, since this is not regarded as appropriate in a formal conversation. This behaviour reflects the cultural value of the German face of privacy, distinguishing the private and public spheres. In the colloquial German conversation, on the other hand, sequences of lateralization as well as feedback occurred<sup>16</sup>; they are two speech strategies used to show trust and, therefore, more similar to the characteristics of the Spanish face of affiliation. It follows that the German face attains the value of a trusted setting if the situational context favours it. Yet, in more formal situational contexts, the distinction between private and public prevails, which is characteristic of the German face of privacy. The privacy of the Germans with respect to the “ingroup” and “outgroup” relations (cf. Scollon & Scollon 1995), are shown in the communicative styles; therefore, the communicative styles are different depending on the degree of privacy of the particular situational context. This distinction is not seen in the Spanish conversations, where the primary aim, even in transactional conversations, is to create a good atmosphere, revealing a trusted setting.

On the other hand, the similarities between the Spanish and the German conversation described above may lead one believe that German colloquial conversation also features characteristics of the Spanish face, namely a trusted setting. However, when analysed in more detail, we see that the Spanish and German conversations are incomparable: Spanish speakers offer feedback mainly to participate in the conversation, although they must interrupt the flow of the conversation and, thus, avoid silence. The German speakers, too, express their collaboration and interest in the conversation by giving feedback; yet they do respect the other participants’ silence. This is due to the cultural features, representative of the speech community, that is, its norms, customs, and most importantly, its worldview. Thus, silence is not conceived in the same way in the Spanish as in the German culture; nor is it interpreted the same way in the English as in the Greek culture according to Sifianou (1995). And as regards the Scandinavian countries, the Finns conceive silence differently from the rest (Lehtonen & Sajavaara 1985). Consequently, the manner of perceiving and interpreting silence is different in each sociocultural context and is related to the face of each. Further research will surely help to distinguish other features of interest, particularly, in the study of pragmatics and conversational silence.

## References

- Albelda, Marta (2004) Cortesía en diferentes situaciones comunicativas. La conversación coloquial y la entrevista sociológica semiformal. In D. Bravo. & A. Briz (eds.), *Pragmática sociocultural: Estudios sobre el discurso de cortesía en español*. Barcelona: Ariel, pp. 109-134.

---

<sup>16</sup> They are shown in italics in Figure 2 as they appear in both the Spanish and German conversations.

- Althaus, Hans-Joachim, and Paul Mog (1996) *Die Deutschen in ihrer Welt. Tübinger Modell einer integrativen Deutschlandkund.* Berlin: Langenscheidt.
- Bergmann, Jörg (1982) Schweigephases im Gespräch – Aspekte ihrer interaktiven Organisation. En Hans-Georg Soeffner (ed.), *Beiträge zu einer empirischen Sprachsoziologie.* Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag, pp. 143-184.
- Boretti, Susana (2001) Aspectos de la cortesía lingüística en el español coloquial de Argentina. *Oralia* 4: 75-1002.
- Bravo, Diana (1996) *La risa en el regateo: Estudios sobre el estilo comunicativo de negociadores españoles y suecos.* Estocolmo: Stockholms Universitet, Edsbruk Akademi-Tryck AB.
- Bravo, Diana (1999) ¿Imagen 'positiva' vs. imagen 'negativa'? pragmática socio-cultural y componentes de face. *Oralia* 2: 155-184.
- Bravo, Diana (2000) Hacia una semiótica de la identidad social: Gestos en la manifestación de ideales de la personalidad socio-cultural en discursos académicos. *Oralia* 3: 21-51.
- Bravo, Diana (2003) Actividades de cortesía, imagen social y contextos socioculturales: Una introducción. *Actas del Primer Coloquio del programa EDICE. La perspectiva no etnocentrista de la cortesía: Identidad sociocultural de las comunidades hispanohablantes.* Universidad de Estocolmo: www.edice.org., pp. 98-108.
- Bravo, Diana (2004) Tensión entre universalidad y relatividad en las teorías de la cortesía. In D. Bravo. & A. Briz. (eds.), *Pragmática sociocultural: Estudios sobre el discurso de cortesía en español.* Barcelona: Ariel, pp. 15-37.
- Briz, Antonio, and Grupo Val.Es.Co. (2000) *¿Cómo se comenta un texto coloquial?* Barcelona: Ariel.
- Briz, Antonio, and Grupo Val.Es.Co. (2002) *Corpus de conversaciones coloquiales.* Madrid: Arco Libros.
- Briz, Antonio, and Grupo Val.Es.Co. (2003) Un sistema de unidades para el estudio del lenguaje coloquial. *Oralia* 6: 7-61.
- Brown, Penelope, and Stephen Levinson (1987) *Politeness. Some Universals in Language Usage.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Contreras, Josefa (2004) Alternancia de turnos y cortesía. Un análisis contrastivo español/alemán. *Estudios Filológicos Alemanes. Revista del Grupo de Investigación Filología Alemana*, vol. 5. Sevilla: Universidad de Sevilla, pp. 371-382.
- Contreras, Josefa (2005) *El uso de la cortesía y las sobreposiciones en las conversaciones. Un análisis contrastivo alemán-español.* Valencia: Universidad de Valencia.
- De Miguel, Amado ( 1997) *Autobiografía de los españoles. Como nos vemos. ¿Somos así?* Barcelona: Planeta.
- Fant, Lars (1989) Cultural mismatch in conversation: Spanish and Scandinavian communicative behaviour in negotiation settings. *Hermes* 3: 247-265.
- Gallardo Paúls, Beatriz (1993) La transición entre turnos conversacionales: Silencios solapamientos e interrupciones. *Contextos* XI/21-22: 189-220.
- Gallardo Paúls, Beatriz (1996) *Análisis conversacional y pragmática del receptor.* Valencia: Episteme.

Goffman, Erving (1959) *The presentation of self in everyday life*. New York: Doubleday.

Goffman, Erving (1971) *Presentación de la persona en la vida pública*. Buenos Aires: Amorrortu.

Göhring, Heinz (1997) Interkulturelle Kommunikation: Die Überwindung der Trennung von Fremdsprachen- und Landesunterricht durch einen integrierten Fremdverhaltensunterricht. In: *Kongressberichte der 8. Jahrestagung der Gesellschaft für Angewandte Linguistik Gal.e.V.*, vol. IV. Mainz, pp. 9-13.

Grice, Paul (1975) Logic and conversation. In P. Cole & J.L. Morgan (eds.), *Syntax and Semantics*, vol. 3. New York: Academic Press, pp. 41-58.

Haverkate, Henk (2004) El análisis de la cortesía comunicativa: Categorización pragmlingüística de la cultura española. In D. Bravo & A. Briz (eds.), *Pragmática sociocultural: Estudios sobre el discurso de cortesía en español*. Barcelona: Ariel, pp. 55-65.

Held, Gudrun (1992) Politeness in linguistic research. In R. Watts, S. Ide & K. Ehlich (eds.), *Politeness in Language. Studies in its History, Theory and Practice*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, pp. 131-153.

Hernández-Flores, Nieves (2002) La cortesía en la conversación española de familiares y amigos; la búsqueda del equilibrio entre la imagen del hablante y la imagen del destinatario. Aalborg: Institut for Sprog Internationale Kulturstudier, Aalborg Universitet, vol. 37.

Hernández-Flores, Nieves (2003) Cortesía y contextos socioculturales en la conversación española de familiares y amigos. *Actas del Primer Coloquio del programa EDICE. La perspectiva no etnocentrista de la cortesía: Identidad sociocultural de las comunidades hispanohablantes*. Universidad de Estocolmo: www.edice.org., pp. 121-127.

Hernández-Flores, Nieves (2004) Politeness as face enhancement. An analysis of Spanish conversations between friends and family. In R. Márquez Reiter & M.E. Placencia (eds.), *Current Trends in the Pragmatics of Spanish*. Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, pp. 265-284.

Ide, Sachiko, et al. (1992) The concept of politeness: An empirical study of American English and Japanese. In E. Watts, S. Ide, & K. Ehlich (eds.), *Politeness in Language. Studies in its History, Theory and Practice*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, pp. 281-297.

Jaworski, Adam (1993) *The power of silence: Social and pragmatic perspectives*. California, London: Sage Publications.

Kasper, Gabriele (1990) Linguistic politeness: Current research issues. *Journal of Pragmatics* 14: 193-219.

Kerbrat-Orecchioni, Catherine (1997) A multilevel approach in the study of talk-in interaction. *Pragmatics* 7.1: 1-20.

Kotschi, Thomas (1996) Procedimientos de producción y estructura informacional en el lenguaje hablado. In T. Kotschi, W. Oesterreicher & K. Zimmermann (eds.), *El español hablado y la cultura oral en España e Hispanoamérica*. Frankfurt: Vervuert, pp. 185-206.

Lehtonen, Jaakko, and Kari Sajavaara (1985) The silent Finn. In D. Tannen & M. Saville-Troike (eds.), *Perspectives on silence*. New Jersey, Ablex Publishing Corporation, pp. 193-201.

Lycan, William (1977) Conversation, politeness and interruption. *Papers in Linguistics* 10: 23-53.

Mao, LuMing (1994) Beyond politeness theory: Face' revisited and renewed. *Journal of Pragmatics* 21: 451-486.

- Matsumoto, Yoshiko (1988) Reexamination of the universality of face: Politeness phenomena in Japanese. *Journal of Pragmatics* 12.4: 403-426.
- Meier, Ardith (1995) Passages of politeness. *Journal of Pragmatics* 24.4: 391-392.
- Pavlidou, Theodessia (1994) Contrasting German-Greek politeness and the consequences. *Journal of Pragmatics* 21: 487-511.
- Poyatos, Fernando (1994) *La comunicación no verbal. Cultura lenguaje y conversación*. Vol. 1, Madrid: Istmo.
- Rathmayr, Renate (1999) Métadiscours et réalité linguistique: l'exemple de la politesse russe. *Pragmatics* 9.1: 75-95.
- Sacks, Harvey, Emanuel Schegloff, and Gail Jefferson (1974) A simplest systematics for the organisation of turn-taking for conversation. *Language* 50: 696-735.
- Saville-Troike, Muriel (1985) The place of silence in an integrated theory of communication. In D. Tannen & M. Saville-Troike (eds.), *Perspectives on silence*. New Jersey, Ablex Publishing Corporation, pp. 3-18.
- Scollon, Ron, and Suzanne Scollon (1995) *Intercultural communication: A discourse approach*. Cambridge, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd.
- Sifianou, Maria (1995) Do we need to be silent to be extremely polite? Silence and FTAs. *International Journal of Applied Linguists* 5.1: 95-110.
- Tannen, Deborah, and Muriel Saville-Troike (eds.) (1985) *Perspectives on silence*. New Jersey, Ablex Publishing Corporation.
- Tannen, Deborah (1985) Silence: Anything but. In D. Tannen & M. Saville-Troike (eds.), *Perspectives on silence*. New Jersey, Ablex Publishing Corporation, pp. 93-111.
- Thomas, Jenny (1995) Theories of politeness. *Meaning in interaction: An introduction to pragmatics*. London: Longman, pp. 149-182.
- Watts, Richard, Sachiko Ide, and Konrad Ehlich (eds.) (1992) *Politeness in Language*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

## Transcription system <sup>17</sup>

|    |                                                                                               |
|----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| A: | Intervention of an speaker identified as A.                                                   |
| ?: | Speaker not recognized.                                                                       |
| ↑  | Ascending intonation.                                                                         |
| ↓  | Descending intonation.                                                                        |
| →  | Maintained or suspended intonation.                                                           |
| §  | Immediate succession, without appreciable pause, between two emissions of different speakers. |
| [  | Place where an overlapping or superposition begins.                                           |
| ]  | End of simultaneous speech.                                                                   |
| /  | Short pause, less than half second.                                                           |

<sup>17</sup> Partially taken from Briz and group Val.Es.Co. (2002).

|            |                                                                             |
|------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| //         | Pause between half second and one second.                                   |
| ///        | Long pause, more than one second.                                           |
| (5»)       | Silence (lapse or interval) over five seconds.                              |
| (( ))      | Indecipherable fragment.                                                    |
| ((si))     | Uncertain transcription.                                                    |
| (tippt)    | Nonlinguistic sounds.                                                       |
| (se ríe)   | Reproduction of nonlinguistic emissions.                                    |
| PESAdo     | Noticeable or emphatic pronunciation.                                       |
| Aa         | Vocalic lengthening.                                                        |
| Footnotes: | Annotations that offer information on the circumstances of the enunciation. |