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Frame management – Intercultural competence development through conduct of talk

Rahmenmanagement – Interkulturelle Kompetenzentwicklung durch Gesprächsführung

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Abstract (English)

The relevance of conversation as a learning tool to gain intercultural competence has been underestimated so far. This paper reflects on communication as a crucial dimension of intercultural learning processes while focusing in particular on the target group of engineers. It begins by presenting three significant findings on the characteristics of communication in educational settings. These observed regularities reveal a temptation to organize conversations in a fact-oriented and expert-centered true-false logic. I will argue that the unconscious reproduction of this pedagogical structure is not helpful for intercultural learning and show how to use these orientations for a collective intercultural learning process that involves experts of different subcultures (technical and intercultural expert) interacting on equal terms. Hence, four approaches for the conduct of talk of interculturalists or trainers to foster intercultural competences are introduced and illustrated. The paper emphasizes the art of 'frame-work' as a method to evade the risk of purely content-oriented and normatively loaded seminars by using verbal and paraverbal techniques and different interventions.

Keywords: communication, conversation analysis, intercultural engineering competence, frame-work

Abstract (Deutsch)

Die Bedeutung von Gesprächsführung als Instrument zur Vermittlung interkultureller Kompetenzen wurde bisher stark vernachlässigt. Der vorliegende Beitrag reflektiert die Kommunikation im Training als entscheidende Dimension des interkulturellen Lernens speziell mit Blick auf Teilnehmende aus technisch orientierten Kontexten. In einem ersten Schritt werden drei grundlegende Forschungserkenntnisse zu charakteristischen Orientierungen und sozialen Erwartungen in Lernkontexten vorgestellt. Die herauspräparierten regelmäßigen Verhaltensmuster zeigen eine Tendenz, Gespräche themenorientiert und nach einer expertenzentrierten binären Logik von ‚richtig oder falsch‘ zu leiten. Ich werde argumentieren, dass die unreflektierte Reproduktion dieser pädagogischen Struktur nicht hilfreich für interkulturelles Lernen ist, und aufzeigen, wie man diese unhintergehbaren Erwartungen für einen kollektiven interkulturellen Lernprozess nutzen kann. So entsteht eine gleiche Augenhöhe zwischen Experten zweier Subkulturen (technischen und interkulturellen Experten). Daran anknüpfend werden vier Arten von kommunikativen Strategien und Interventionen vorgestellt und illustriert. Diese ermöglichen den Trainern eine Gesprächsführung, welche die Ent-

wicklung von interkultureller Kompetenz bei allen Beteiligten (die Trainer eingeschlossen!) unterstützt. Der Beitrag betont das Rahmenmanagement als Methode zur Vermeidung rein inhaltsbezogener, normativ ausgerichteter Trainings durch die Nutzung verbaler und paraverbaler Techniken und unterschiedlicher Interventionsformen.

Stichworte: Kommunikation, Konversationsanalyse, technische interkulturelle Kompetenz, Rahmenmanagement

1. Conduct of talk as a perspective

An analysis of various approaches in intercultural education shows that in regard to learning targets, trainers mainly trust in materials, methods, and exercises (Nazarkiewicz 2010b). Yet, there is hardly any comment about the most common exercise: the conversation in the training. In the process of training and learning, during the evaluation of exercises or group discussions, insights are acquired and perspectives are broadened through the medium of communication. This kind of interpretative work consists of communicative activities. When analyzing the shifts of meaning that are essential for developing intercultural competence, typical solutions can be described (Nazarkiewicz 2010b). However, comprehension, appreciation and learning difficulties are predominant in the material I analyzed.¹ In the following, this observation will be related to familiar challenges in intercultural training with engineers.² Every trainer can report typical situations in training that are challenging for communication and for competence development. When being asked, trainers often point out the difficulties of using categorizations in general, the dynamics of stereotyping, the utterance of prejudices and different versions of resistance in training.

Moreover, with respect to the target group of engineers, there are additional challenges for the task of developing intercultural competence. One can say that the work environment of engineers requires a special habitus and an attitude which have consequences for the way of conducting intercultural training and for the communication

in these training sessions as they bring along their experiences and needs. Four implications need to be considered:

Firstly, technicians and engineers are specialized in avoiding and finding defaults, bugs, errors, all kinds of mistakes that might lead to problems in the design of systems, machines or other materials and devices. Hence, the questions “what went wrong, what is right and how to...?” are significant and frequent.

Secondly, as in all fields where technology has a high importance, principles and deductions are fundamental. Therefore engineers are used to looking for categories, classifications and ‘if-then-causalities’.

Thirdly, discussions, topics and solutions in their eyes need to be practical and hands-on. All three mentioned aspects lead to the frequently asked question: “What do I do if...?”

Fourthly, perception and comprehension form an obstacle to learning as machines and technology are seen as culture-free, based on universal principles, and therefore the importance as well as the culture-specific characteristics of communication are underestimated. The paradigm of universality of technology does not allow technicians and engineers to entertain the thought of cultural influences in every aspect of their work as this culture-sensitive approach lies outside of the frame of their professional belief system.

In this article I would like to argue that these legitimate needs can lead to learning hurdles and even more resistance when the trainers fulfill these expectations. The art of intercultural competence development in the conduct of

talk is 'frame-work', a reflection and translation of frames. According to Erving Goffman, frames provide a fundamental means of creating meaning and making sense of a given situation, that is, of determining 'what is actually going on here'. Applied to communication this means that each utterance implies manifold cues as to the way it should be interpreted and related to its context: "Spoken sentences contain examples for most frameworks" (Goffman 1980:53).³

The focus in this paper will be on conversation and communication as a crucial dimension of intercultural learning processes. The findings presented are based on the analysis of utterances and typical sequences from audiotaped training sessions as well as on personal training experiences. First, I will present the findings with respect to the characteristic organization of talk in educational settings. They show the temptation in intercultural training to organize the conversation in a true / false logic and they argue that for intercultural competence development this pedagogical structure is not helpful – especially when the target group expects this logic. Thereafter, I will demonstrate with examples from intercultural training that there are at least four approaches in the conduct of talk to build intercultural competence: (1) teaching and training, (2) moderating and facilitating, (3) solidarity with the participants and (4) culture reflexive interventions. My argument is that these strategies of frameworks are more important than explanations and evaluations of participants' utterances. With this attitude participants as well as trainers will be less tempted to answer questions by resorting to if-then causalities. Thus, instead of sticking to a purely engineering approach, this allows for developing solutions together with all target groups – not only engineers.

2. Educational framework: Learning from a communication perspective

Independent of subjects and topics, communication in a pedagogic situation

can be distinguished from communication in everyday life. Apart from the architecture of the location and the local identities of participants and trainers, the communication has a particular formal structure, which is also different from other institutionalized forms of talk. Findings from the analysis of school lessons that have been presented in conversation analysis publications can also be observed in adult education and intercultural training as well. There are three characteristics participants and trainers anticipate and put into practice: (1) the topic control by the teacher, (2) the pre-allocated turn-taking, and (3) initiation – evaluation as basic orientation. These three characteristics represent the power the trainer has and need to be managed by the facilitator. In the school system, where the regularities have been found, they support the transfer of knowledge. In adult education, especially when the objective is to develop intercultural competence, and moreover, in an engineering context, these orientations should be known by facilitators of intercultural settings. If they are practiced unconsciously, there is a high risk of a competition between the expert role of the engineers and the intercultural expert, of two stocks of knowledge and competences.

2.1. Topic control and framework

Trainers structure their training communication according to their learning targets. In their initiations, trainers explicitly mention the respective framework: they explain the topic and how to talk about it. With the means of frameworks and parentheses, participants indicate in which context the ongoing situation is put or how to interpret their utterance. Thereby, frameworks can be prearranged or transformed during the interaction or even redefined *ex post*. Encapsulated frameworks, that is, the embedding of several reference frames in interaction, are not an exception but the rule. For intercultural training, frameworks are relevant in several respects. Trainers explain topical frames,

but they also use meta-communicative comments to address frameworks.

In addition, the training itself represents an especially modulated frame for the so called “practicing” (Goffman 1980). By talking about situations, problems, and contexts, with the help of the facilitator participants imagine how to change their behavior. By discussing possible ways of dealing with the colleagues, the so called ‘solutions’ to puzzles or challenges, in this particular space beyond the daily routines, evaluations and interpretations are practiced as “cognitive trial runs” (Goffman 1980:72). In the following excerpt, a trainer to be called Leslie in this article precisely focuses the context of meaning in her introduction.⁴ (See: Exh. 1)

The trainer uses a step-by-step approach to narrow down and to delineate and ‘zoom in on’ the space of reflection she wants to establish now. She first presents the overall subject of the training (intercultural communication), then the special focus of the communication (misunderstandings in communication), and finally the current learning target (differing communicative styles) before she addresses Valerie. Thus, by using a series of focusing expressions (“subject is” – “focus shall be” – “what we want to look at more closely are”), she not only announces but also explicitly sets pre-conditions for what is to be discussed next. The addressed participant, Valerie, can expect a question or context that deals with communicative styles.

The excerpt is a good example for an explicit way of conducting the training discourse; however, in most cases the topic control remains implicit. Let us consider, for example, a very typical topic and question of a participant in the engineering context. The test runs of an IT system are outsourced to a subsidiary in India. The participant asks why the German part of the team does not get the results in the quality and according to the process that was agreed. There is a bouquet of assumptions and frames at work in this tiny training situation. What does the questioner mean with “quality”? What are the roles and positions of the participants? What is

1 Les: our subject is intercultural communication
2 and the focus shall be well where do
3 misunderstandings in communication arise and ahm
4 what we want to look at more closely
5 are communicative styles
6 of different ahm foreigners actually
7 and also yes ways of thinking that are behind [these styles]
8 now ahm valerie

Exh. 1: “The focus”. Source: Author’s own work

the professional context of “test runs”? What is the context of “process”? Is this a cultural matter at all? The intercultural trainer, on the other hand, might at this moment be thinking and interpreting what is said within the frame(s) ‘cultural standards’ or ‘intercultural communication’, with an orientation towards specific learning objectives, and she then has to decide if the topic ‘fits’ the learning target. By managing the frames explicitly and intentionally, the facilitator is able to determine the major topic, the outcome of the training situation, the combination and synergy of professional and cultural frames.

Also, in line 8 of the excerpt, one can observe the so called pre-allocated turn-taking. The floor and right to speak or address participants is always with the seminar leader. This is the next basic orientation in seminars.

2.2. Pre-allocated turn-taking

In contrast to daily conversation, pedagogic settings are characterized by a specific exchange system („Only teachers can direct speakership in any creative way“, McHoul 1978:188). Trainers have the platform and can pass on the right to speak to participants. If the persons addressed do not reply, the turn automatically returns to the trainers. Participants’ utterances are directed at the trainers as the primary addressees, who show minimal responses, for example when a story is told. Afterwards, other participants can also contribute, but only have the right to talk as long as the trainers do not make a claim. There are techniques to address participants as members of a learning group, by giving the right to speak to the one who re-

8 Les: now ahm valerie
 9 Val: yes!
 10 Les: well you are not german
 11 how do you feel about the german communicative style
 12 (2,0)
 13 Val: <<*softly, stretched*> hm >
 14 (5,0)
 15 Les: different than the french style

Exh. 2: "The focus" (contin.). Source: Author's own work.

sponds first, or by calling a single name. (See: Exh. 2)

Here, the trainer Leslie calls the participant Valerie by her name. Valerie immediately signals attention with an emphatic "yes". With her question, Leslie only addresses Valerie and her non-German cultural identity. Valerie is asked to describe her feelings regarding the German communicative style. After a two second pause, which normally triggers a turn-taking in German daily conversations, Valerie signals her understanding that it is her turn now with a soft "hm" (line 13). The drawn-out sound expresses the fact that she is busy thinking, and during a pause of another 5 seconds she is not interrupted. The addressed persons do not only have the right but the duty to respond. Not answering would imply a loss of face. Since Valerie has not yet answered, Leslie relaunches the subject with another question. It becomes obvious here that Leslie distributes the right to talk and that the floor returns to her when there is no response.

Together with the topic control, the pre-allocated turn taking enables trainers to act as experts, to define what is relevant or not and to share the floor with selected participants or the group. In training sessions with engineers this twofold power is a chance and a risk. It creates the trainer as an expert, but for intercultural matters. Thus, two types of expert status and identities are in the room: technical experts and experts for intercultural competence. The chance is eye height between all participants, the risk is a frame competition between technical and cultural prerequisites.

A solution for this situation is a switch between teaching and moderating activities as this is a form of turn-taking in training. This other type of turn-taking has been described by Mazeland (1983) as initiated self-selection. With phrases like, "I'll pass this on to the group, do you agree with it?", the authorization – and task – to ask questions or express points of view is passed over to the whole learning group, the turn-taking-system is then opened. One of the participants can take the turn by self-selection. Despite the fact that one can find overlaps or that people interrupt each other (like in school, too) there is no doubt about a general orientation towards the special turn-taking organization of arranged learning. The chance for trainers lies in the conscious exchange of roles and communicative activities that are implied in these regularities.

2.3. Initiation – evaluation as basic orientation

The last of the characteristics of pedagogic communication I would like to point out is the particular sequential organization of conversations, which is based on different variants and combinations of double pair-sequences. In conversation analysis the term "adjacency pair sequence" describes patterns like question and answer, whereas the first utterances require an immediate and specific form of reply. Behavior which deviates from this pattern is face-threatening and requires an account. The double adjacency pair sequence in pedagogic communication contains on the one hand the pair question / initiation and response, and on the other hand the pair response and evaluation. (See: Exh. 3)

The first two utterances give no hint about the difference of the sequential organization: between a colloquial conversation and a learning situation. It is not clear until the third turn that there are two differing types of interaction. Instead of a thanking ritual responding to the given information, the answer in the second turn is evaluated. The so called 'asking known information ques-

tion' of a teacher is not characterized by giving the information, which would be expected in a daily conversation, but by the third turn, in which the first speaker evaluates the answer given to his / her question (Mehan 1979, 1982). By evaluating answers successive utterances are influenced, thereby communicatively producing 'correct' knowledge. It is crucial here that all participants anticipate that answers from a different logical level are to be expected as a response to their questions. Even larger interactive parts or processes are ultimately based on the expectation of participants, so that trainers select and evaluate their responses in respect to learning targets. This so called 'initiation-evaluation-sequence' becomes a teaching of knowledge. After the structure 'trainer asks for known question' is established, nobody expects to only exchange information, but to fulfill a learning target. In Mehan's example, Denise not only tells the time, but demonstrates that she knows how to read the clock. From this communicative structure follows, that the fulfillment of the learning target consists in symmetry between the initiation and the accepted answer in regard to the target. Streeck (1979) shows that teachers do not change the topic beforehand. The different strategies, used to minimize the difference between initiation and 'correct' answer, contain at least one of two elements: the acceptance of the utterance (on the content level) and / or the appraisal for performance (on the relationship level).

The following excerpt shows one of these knowledge-generating sequences, which can also be found in intercultural training. The trainer has explained the issue using the example of a TV thriller where a couple of witnesses are present at the scene of the crime. (See: Exh. 4)

After initiating an undirected question, trainer Leslie leaves it to the participants to self-select the turn-taking during a two second pause (line 3). Daniela is the first to answer (line 4). Before another participant can switch the mode of the discussion, which is initiated by laughter (line 6), Leslie affirms Daniela's response with a reformulation. The use of

Question in daily conversation:	A: <i>What time is it, Denise?</i>	B: 2.30	A: <i>Thank you.</i>
Teacher's question:	A: <i>What time is it, Denise?</i>	B: 2.30	A: <i>Very good.</i>
	(initiation)	(reply)	(evaluation)

Exh. 3: Asking known questions. Source: Mehan 1982.

1 Les.: how come there are always misunderstandings
 2 or why is it that people describe things differently
 3 (2,0)
 4 Dan.: one is on the right the other is on the left and sees
 5 it from a different <<short laughter> angle > hehehe
 6 ?: <<laughing> hehehe [heheheh >
 7 Les.: [sure sure] a different angle
 (...)
 15 Dan.: of course one also sees a situation according to
 16 one's own experience which is what perception is somehow
 17 based on and somehow everybody has a different
 18 a different reservoir of experience
 19 (1,0)
 20 Les.: yes
 21 Dan.: of a very personal nature
 22 Les.: yes
 23 Les.: and actually that that's it too [and () >
 24 Dan.: [that means that]
 25 Dan.: somehow [also] somewhere unconscious judgments enter
 26 Les.: [mh]
 27 Dan.: into it that one categorizes things differently and
 28 actually saw things differently
 29 Les.: yes that's very nice <<laughing> cheche > now I
 30 <<laughing> don't need to talk much about it daniela >
 31 that is the core of it so we all perceive selectively
 32 and now ah I'd like to just [mention] one example here

Exh. 4: "Selective perception". Source: Author's own work.

her modal particles "sure sure" (in line 7) signals a certain dissent. Although Daniela's answer seems quite right, it is not yet fitting in regard to the aspired insight and learning target. After a paraphrase of her previous answer (omitted here), Daniela adds another reason for the relevance of different perceptions. Leslie approves this answer (see line 20), though rather with minimal responses than with a particular emphasis. Introduced by "and actually", Leslie announces another explanation, and evaluates

Daniela's answer as correct "too". In doing so, Leslie encourages Daniela to try again (lines 23-24). The expected answer seems to please Leslie, who personally praises Daniela (line 29). This positive evaluation is accompanied by a smile and laughing particles. The last part of Daniela's first answer includes laughter as well (line 5). Although we can only speculate about the reason for this, it might be the case that the classical teacher's question and evaluation represented a face-threat in adult education settings, which was absorbed by laughter. Leslie abstracts the content of Daniela's response as "the core of it" and paraphrases with the technical term for it: 'selective perception' (line 31). Altogether, the structure of question or initiation, answer and evaluation is repeated three times, if Leslie's "prompting" (Mehan 1982) in the lines 1, 7, 23, can be regarded as starting points for new cycles.

These basic patterns, which have been discovered in research on communication in schools, can – as we see here in the excerpts – also be found in adult education, although in a varied and mitigated form. In small adult groups, for example, there is no raising of hands, and the speakers' utterances frequently overlap. Despite the differences, the patterns can be easily identified in adult education as well. Even if trainers do not explicitly praise or evaluate, there is a selection by their emphasis on utterances, which aim at the teaching target (e. g.: "that's very nice [...] that is the core of it", line 29f.). Trainers in intercultural training organize their interpretative work based on these orientations: they focus, select, moderate, and direct the attention as well as the participants' scope of interpretation. It is instructive, to analyze on this basis how the training of intercultural competence is organized, to solve problems which arise in pedagogic communication.

On the one hand, this expectation that utterances will be evaluated is helpful for achieving learning objectives. On the other hand, the problem and didactic hurdle that is connected with this practice is that participants expect

the trainer to tell them what is right or wrong, also when it comes to interacting with people from 'other' cultures. The risk is that the expectation circles of culture and communication and the conversational partners are treated like the logic of a machine: there is only one truth and solution, when I do this, that will happen etc. Also, the main point of ambiguity tolerance and that there are many perspectives to a situation is missed. Hence, the basic orientation, also in adult educational settings, is an unfortunate encounter of legitimate participants' expectations, especially engineers, to get a 'right answer' and a regularity in pedagogic settings: the binary logic of 'true or false'. Engineers have an affinity to binary logic, it is also commonly referred to as machine-logic, because it only defines bipolar solutions, such as 'right-wrong', 'good-bad' etc. Yet, intercultural competence is based on a high-order logic that allows for different solutions to be equally right at the same time ('both'). This is often the case in social systems, like organizations and trainers work hard on fostering the credo that there can be several solutions to one single problem at once – a paradox within itself. 'Either-or' is replaced by 'as well as' or 'both' in viable systems, which brings an ongoing solution to seemingly unsolvable challenges through continued decision-making processing. The consequence is that the initiation-evaluation orientation in pedagogical settings can easily be abused when trainers evaluate contributions of participants.

The challenge for trainers as (inter-)cultural experts is to use all three basic orientations for a collaborative framework on eye height and together with the engineers without falling back on delivering the 'right' knowledge and competing with the technical experts. Only when all participants analyze and assemble many perspectives and establish interactively adjusted frames as an idol for intercultural competence, technical and intercultural expertise converge in a higher logic. Then, for engineers as well as for trainers intercultural engineering competence is like playing chess with dice.

3. Facilitating intercultural competence: Approaches for trainers

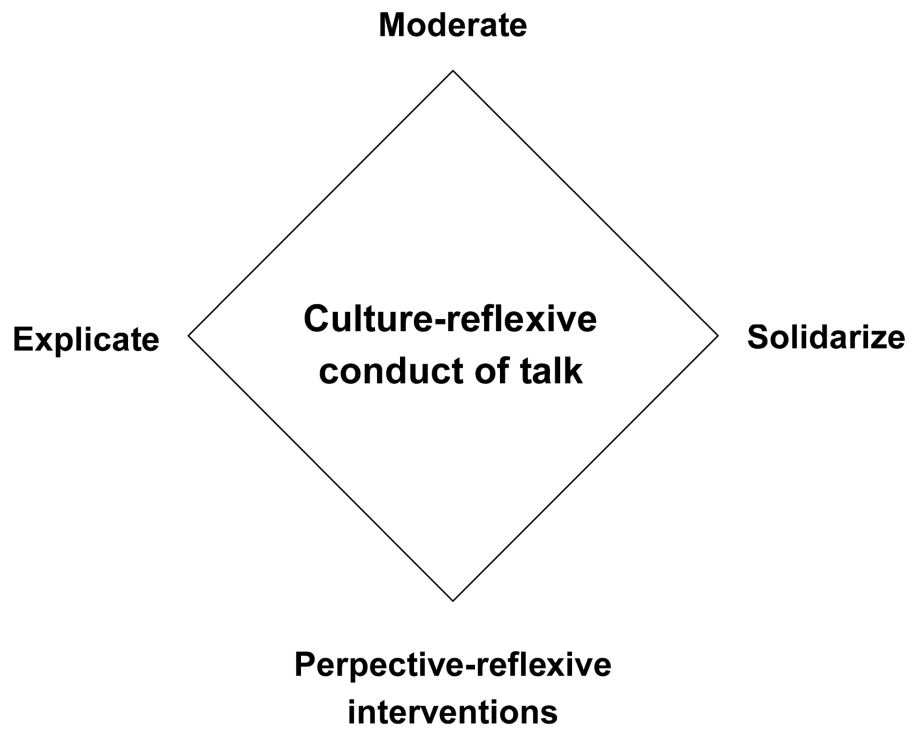
Intercultural competence is considered a soft skill and an ‘on top competence’ with little recognition in technical contexts. Yet, globalized technological cooperation does not require cultural ‘answers’ but a broader scope in thinking, acting, understanding and interpreting. On the other hand, not only engineers need to learn, but the trainers too have to find out about the challenges, contexts and constraints in the technical field. The objective is to train intercultural skills and competences in a way best suited for the respective target groups. It is important to keep in mind that competence-building cannot be additive (learning something about ‘other cultures’) but that it has to be transformative (Mezirow 1991). This means that the actors observe their own practice and reflect their assumptions on which it is based. Additionally, they begin to question and verify their solutions and search for alternatives that can reconcile contradictions. This transformative learning approach holds true for the technical experts as participants as well as for the intercultural expert as a trainer.

To train intercultural competence, juggling with at least four different approaches is necessary. Intercultural learning and competence can be brought forward by different roles and interventions of the trainer. (Nazarkiewicz 2010a). (See: Exh. 5)

The square represents a selection of four possibilities of how a trainer can initiate talk or deal with contributions of participants to foster intercultural competence.

3.1. Explicate: Teaching and training

The most familiar and the most consciously practiced way to speak is to *explicate, teach or train*. Oriented toward the content of statements, the long training socialization within the school system and the focus on the content of



Exh. 5: Intervention Square. Source: Author’s own work.

the seminars, trainers see themselves as experts providing the participants with special knowledge or train competence to adjust to ‘other’ cultures. Trainers make use of their primary right to speak and their monopoly on evaluations, in that they reformulate utterances of participants from a transcultural perspective. That means that intentional ascription or direct attributions are dispreferred activities. The perception of other persons is paraphrased on the basis of ‘our / my perspective’ and their observable behavior is interpreted against the background of an ‘orientation to other cultural norms’. How do trainers teach to make interpretations which reflect culture? The following example will show typical activities of what I called “transcultural talk” (Nazarkiewicz 2010b).

With her comment on issue of time, trainer Leslie takes up a previously discussed behavior of passengers on board of airplanes. A certain behavior is perceived to induce stress, when structured service processes are carried out. Leslie adapts the perspective of stewardesses and stewards, who could consider a cer-

95 Les.: by the way what could be tiresome in respect to time
 96 r̥ too ɹ̥ is that in indian politeness it is ahm very common
 97 Pet.: ʌyes yesʌ
 98 Les.: to decline a few times before saying yes after all
 99 Bar.?: mh
 100 Les.: this is in some [countries] it's also common in belgium
 101 in england it is pretty common too
 102 Pet.: oh r̥yesɹ̥
 103 Les.: ʌahmʌ that is the indirect communication you know
 104 <<in English> r̥would you ɹ̥like a cup of tea oh no >
 105 Pet.: ʌso alwaysʌ
 106 Les.: oh <<in English> go on have a cup of tea >
 107 like that you know? so you let yourself be persuaded
 108 it's a game back and forth

Exh. 6: "Indian politeness". Source: Author's own work.

tain behavior as annoying, but without implying a judgment. Leslie uses the conjunctive in her formulation. First she describes the habit to decline an offer a few times and names the respective value, here politeness. Second, she offers other, more familiar cultures where this kind of behavior can be expected, too. She avoids a generalization by qualifying the occurrence as "pretty common" (line 101). The technical term "indirect communication" (line 103) has already been introduced. This is indicated by the definite article "the" (line 103) that hints at a tacit relative clause "which we have discussed before". In a little scene which is marked by direct speech and code-switching to English Leslie presents a way of declining an offer and repeated offers out of courtesy. The immediate response to the offer shows the ritual-like decline. Also the protest against the decline is expressed ritually by the sound "oh". Leslie then switches to German again and rephrases the pattern from the perspective of the declining person ("so you let yourself be persuaded", line 107).

This method to transfer knowledge of cultural characteristics is typical and is frequently found in my data. The order of activities may vary, single elements can be picked out and elaborated. In order to identify culture as an interpretative resource, trainers regularly:

- a) introduce a value or orientation, which explains the background (here: politeness),

- b) describe or illustrate this value with staged examples ("would you like a cup of tea – oh no – oh go on") or with a story,
- c) show how to recognize the orientation by specific behavior ("it's a game back and forth", line 108),
- d) name the pattern (here: "indirect communication", line 105),
- e) add at least one culture or respective representative as a category (here: India, Belgium and England, line 100/101),
- f) generalize and qualify at the same time („very common", line 96, "pretty common", line 101),
- g) describe effects on or feelings of a person, who does not share this orientation or its interpretation, attribution, perspective („what could be tiresome", line 95),
- h) and illustrate the perspective of these persons, who share the orientation ("so you let yourself be persuaded", line 107).

The practicing of this transcultural talk can also be distributed to different persons. With the means of intermediary questions and other initiations, participants are encouraged to take over single elements. With these elements participants change perspectives, and put their feet into the moccasins of others. However, together with the basic pedagogical orientation mentioned in chapter 2 this teaching approach reproduces the illusion culture would be something similar to a machine and one could simply 'apply' the knowledge.

The teaching mode helps to introduce different world views or ways of doing things and delivers their background. It is exactly the way of training that is expected from most participants in intercultural training, especially from engineers. A typical learning objective is e. g. to 'avoid pitfalls' in intercultural communication. However, as argued in paragraph 2, this approach misses some major points of intercultural

competence like a multivalent notion of truth, picking up emotional resistance of participants and managing different frames and contexts.

3.2. Moderating and facilitating

When a participant e. g. interprets the behavior of an engineer colleague as “bossy” the *teaching* approach would be to inquire about the situational factors and then explain the background and value orientation of the conversational partner. A *moderating* reaction would be to ask open questions, not only addressing the participant who participates but also the group: “*How come that you have this impression?*” (focus on the individual and his interpretation), “*What are the experiences of the others?*” (focus on an exchange of emotions and attributions), “*How do the others see this?*” (focus on the exchange of constructions of “the” colleagues). Moderating means to ask open questions and to be open for the expression of the attitude(s) of the participants. The following extract shows this approach. One of the participants described a scene and evaluated the counterpart as “bossy”. The trainer reacts as follows: (See: Exh. 7)

Besides open questions the trainer practices active listening and tries to find out the explanation patterns of the participants. There are several advantages of the moderating approach. Moderation fosters reflection, opens a discussion, inquires information, arranges a discourse. It helps elicit more similar or different experiences and interpretations. Also, in avoiding an explanation or an evaluation of the utterance, the facilitator’s approach initiates eye height in discourse and includes all participants to speak culture reflexively and to find many interpretations and solutions.

Asking questions and gathering a collection of possible interpretations, frames and approaches changes the role of the trainer to a facilitator but also to a learner and listener. The cultural expert will learn from the technical expert and his logic, all participants can look for

Lau.: where do you infer that from?
 (...)
 I pass it on to the group, do you agree with this?
 (...)
 but where do you infer that from? what gives you the impression?
 (...)
 so you would say they have a lot of things in common with us you see a lot of things in common
 (...)
 mhmhm yes I gladly pass it on to you [*addressing the group*]
 do you primarily see parallels between them and us or do you rather see differences
 (...)
 and otherwise you feel a strong connection to these women so you said I am getting back to that they acted in a bossy way can you pin that down what was the reason Arnika what might have given you the mh
 (...)
 so it legitimizes the behavior also the fact that they have a lot of money that they have a social position?
 (...)
 so the mere fact that they dispose of the financial means and hold a social position is an explanation pattern for their behaving this way or makes it easier for you to accept it

Exh. 7: “Bossy Africans”. Source: Author’s own work.

a combination of frames and possible strategies to solve challenges.

3.3. Culture-reflexive interventions

Interventions that help the participant to overcome a culturally bound perspective is another approach that can be used strategically to train intercultural competence. It simply means that – if appropriate – the trainer adds a comment to the utterances of the participants that helps to reflect the limits of the interpretation or question. For this, the trainer uses the initiation-evaluation-orientation (see 2.3.) and ‘corrects’ the question or contribution to a nearby yet individual or culture bound one. These interventions help to do first things first. It is needless to proceed with background information (training approach) or work on the skill repertoire when the respective participant is in a state of mind that is not open for transcultural perspectives. Let me show this with an example. In the following extract on different attitudes towards time, Helga cites Laura, who had previously explained the mutual perception. (See: Exh. 8)

383 Hel.: because you have said haven't you well
 384 the [one who's] polychronic is also flexible
 385 (0,75)
 386 Hel.: r(that was the) yes
 387 Lau.: he thinks he's flexible (0,25) he thinks that we're
 388 stubborn (0,25) he thinks we're stubborn
 389 (0,75)
 390 Hel.: but you are successful you just have to be
 391 in today's society (0,75)

Exh. 8: "Polychronic – monochronic". Source: Author's own work.

To strengthen her argument, Helga paraphrases a supposedly unframed predication of Laura, which implies that Laura had directly evaluated polychronical-oriented people before. Helga obviously leaves a pause for a confirmation from Laura about the correctness of the citation. Since Laura does not respond right away, Helga starts explaining the context ("that was the", line 386), which shows that she assumes that Laura does not remember the instance. However, the lacking minimal response resulted from a frame disagreement. This is why Laura finally corrects Helga's ascription by adding the missing perspective of a polychronical-oriented person regarding himself ("he thinks he's flexible", line 387) and monochronic culture ("he thinks we're stubborn", line 387/388). The short pauses before the change of perspectives are typical for these instances. Obviously, Helga has understood the change of meaning achieved by the other-correction, because now, she starts her dissent with "but" in line 390 and continues with her argument. Verbal frame controls function as cooperation preserving strategies and are used by trainers to pursue learning targets. Besides this, frame controls are face-saving and allow the possibility to integrate otherwise unacceptable statements made by participants.

According to my experiences, these more indirect strategies need to be explained and framed meta-communicatively when working with engineers. However, the 'mantra' of 'it depends' (on the perspective, the context, the protagonists, the influences of different cultural perspectives) is indispensable learning – also for the intercultural ex-

pert. A purely culture-reflexive perspective will not connect the frames that are needed in intercultural engineering.

3.4. Solidarize

Showing solidarity to the participants is necessary when participants feel insecure, show resistance or emotional judgements. Solidarity is shown when the trainer constructs himself as a co-member of the (cultural) world of the talking participant. Showing solidarity does not mean to agree with the content of statements or to legitimate them. This approach works on the relationship level and acknowledges that it is alright to feel and see the world like that. Showing solidarity holds contact to the participants. Displaying solidarity is especially relevant when evaluation, devaluation and prejudices are uttered. On the one hand, the trainer is not to confirm the content of the judgement, on the other hand, he needs to stay in touch to work on the matter. The face-saving culture reflexive interventions by adding the perspective (e.g. "for us", "he thinks", Exh. 8) is an explicit way of showing solidarity. Besides the verbal perspective management trainers can also alter meaning with paraverbal techniques and changes of performance. To elucidate contexts and achieve subtle "switches of meaning" (Plessner 1961) trainers use intonation, volume, speech rhythm, and different voices. These methods do not only clarify culture-bound thinking and perception, but are also applied to correct utterances. (See: Exh. 9)

During the discussion on communication and selective perception of signals, the group debates the sense of beauty in other cultures. In this instance Thailand is used as an example. With "they" Yvonne refers to Thai people, and then further specifies this with the category "men". She had noticed long hairs on their faces (often growing in warts), which is thought to be for good luck. Obviously, neither Yvonne nor Helga know about the meaning of this custom. The formulation of "such" produces a distance, as well as the emphasis on "hairs". The utterance is interpreted by

Helga as an evaluation as her own statement shows (“I also find that strange”, line 6). Helga’s description of the failure to cut facial hairs indirectly demonstrates her standards. Her stretched predicative “strange” (line 10) ranges from irritation to debasement. Yvonne’s comment is not clearly audible, but the intonation of her minimal responses does not hint at dissent to Helga. The situation is well suited to start moralizing, for example to list further odd or absurd details and to end in communication of stereotypes. But Laura intervenes, although she does not explain the phenomenon or comment on the previous statements as culture-bound evaluations. Instead, Laura repeats the predication “really beautiful” twice (line 11, 13). Since the predication follows a negative evaluation, there is irony to the semantically positive statement. In a study of applied discourse analysis, Hartung (1998) describes more than thirty forms of irony in daily communication. Hartung shows that irony is used as an indirect communicative means for negative evaluations, especially when confirmation or disassociation of common standards are involved. Irony serves the face-saving constitution and contextualization of so-called “we-communities”. Laura’s ironic move is part of the category of “recipient evaluating feedback”, which positively or negatively comments on a previous point of view (Hartung 1998:124ff.). Laura’s ironic comment admits on the one hand that facial hairs are not beautiful. But the intonation of both ironic predications is especially noteworthy. They are spoken with a smile and are accompanied by laughter. Thereby a fun mode is introduced, which on the other hand dissociates Laura from the evaluation of Helga and Yvonne. An ironic utterance gains impact by its dry reversal of the content. What does this fun modality mean here? The character of frame correction, which is used by Laura, becomes more evident in the next paragraphs. A solution to the mysterious meaning of facial hairs is not carried out. Instead, Laura refers to an interior, not exterior reality. In reference to something, which is obviously visualized to the participants,

2 Yv.: sometimes they have these men here
 3 such hairs in their face (this long)]
 4 Hel.: hm hm!]
 5 Yv.: ()]
 6 Hel.: right I also find that strange]
 7 Yv.: ()]
 8 Hel.: they don't cut them do they?]
 9 Yv.: hm hm ()]
 10 Hel.: <<stretched> strange >]
 11 Lau.: <<smile voice> yes really beautiful] >
 12 Hel.: yes]
 13 Lau.: <<laughing, high> really beautiful >

Exh. 9: “Really beautiful”. Source: Author’s own work.

Laura speaks about interpretations of participants and their underlying emotions (“that is not exactly what confuses us about others”, line 15f., “where we really experience problems”, line 18f.). In her opinion, “sorites” (line 19, which means that premises are arranged so that intermediate conclusions are omitted) are the problem. Although Laura uses the personal pronoun “we”, she abruptly breaks off the utterance, a verb is missing. She avoids saying that the group has prejudices. This could be a reason for the several breaking offs (see line 14 and 15), where it is not clear what she wants to say. Instead of characterizing utterances of participants as prejudices or stereotypes, she presents an inner monologue of deductions with a clearly changed intonation (line 21ff.). The formulation “someone who”, which normally has a moral character (Ayaß 1996), is embedded in this form of introspective talk. The droning voice with the singsong intonation represents the returning cliché as the final conclusion (of the story) and clearly demonstrates the citation character. With a different voice, Laura stresses the “value”, which serves as a basis for the conclusions: “cleanliness” (line 23). By means of this modulation, Laura distinguishes the knowledge of the overriding value from the presented interior monologue. In a second round the introspective talk is repeated, simply marked by a changed pitch of voice (see line 25ff.). This time it takes place without a frame switch to the underlying value. Laura finally formulates a rehabilitation, which contains a double meaning: on the one hand the phrasing “must be a poor devil” (line

13 Lau.: <<laughing, high> really beautiful >
 14 but ah that is exactly in this in these you know (0.25)
 15 really strong (.)that's why (0.25) that is not exactly
 16 what confuses us about others here we get
 17 a lot closer to what really confuses us
 18 I mean where we really experience problems
 19 because (we) then sorites you know
 20 Hel.: ʃhehehehehheʃ
 21 Lau.: L so J someone who <<singsong intonation> who does
 22 Lau.: not brush his teeth and who doesn't clean his fingernails >
 23 so for us cleanliness is really of central value
 24 ahm yes ah th' this one
 25 <<singsong intonation> obviously lacks necessary insight too
 26 ahm most likely he doesn't have a proper upbringing
 27 and of course no education > and ahm isn't well that's
 28 he can't do anything he's irresponsible for god's sake
 29 I keep well clear of him must be a poor devil

Exh. 10: "Really beautiful" (contin.). Source: Author's own work.

29) semantically remains an ascription of the inner monologue; on the other hand the modulation of voices returns to official talk. Apart from this switch to official talk, the rehabilitation of a victim of attributions implies pity and cites a less face-threatening statement. Thereby, the ones who share the attribution are rehabilitated. This strategy, which is carried out by a change to fun modality and marked transits to a serious mode at the end, is a returning element. It is this pattern that helps to answer the question what was achieved by Laura's predication with the fun modulation in the first sequence.

Fun modalities and paraverbal interventions allow ambiguities, several contradictory frames at the same time and help to share the perspectives of the conversational partner(s) without endorsing the content or strategies. Starting an intercultural training session for engineers with the winking introduction that the program will be like explaining for a few hours how women 'function' and then find the best strategies to deal with 'them' explains more about the limits of linking technical and cultural frames than many explanations.

The biggest challenge of using the different approaches and juggling with them is the micro-management of conversation in the training. We trainers have to be constantly aware of the multitude of frames we are working in. In every mo-

ment the awareness of the frames (from broad frame to ongoing frame) is necessary: What is the goal of the training? What is the objective of this module or unit, what is my personal objective in it? What is the state of the collective discourse of the group (ethnocentric or ethnorelative, Bennett 1986)? What is the personal challenge with respect to the topic and targets for the speaker's personality and learning at the moment, just to name some of the frames. The answer to these questions we need at cyberspeed to decide what is the best next communicative step to foster intercultural learning and competence. The good news is, the four approaches are already used in intercultural training and only have to be practiced consciously. The benefit is that they enable an emic perspective, so that trainers and participants in the technical field can and must cooperate and share perspectives to generate multiple perspectives and intercultural competent answers.

4. Conclusion

It is a basic insight regarding intercultural competence development that there is no right or wrong when dealing with cultural peculiarities. At best, there may be more or less appropriate approaches. This also holds true for the conduct of training. However, participants – and in particular but not exclusively engineers – expect true-false evaluations, practical tips, hands-on 'how-to' knowledge etc. when attending an intercultural training session. This leads to contradiction between the technical requirements on the one hand and culture and communication on the other. Sooner or later in the training there is a treacherous resistance when participants realize that the 'true-false' and the 'how-to' questions are not being answered easily. Training that aspires to go beyond a binary logic requires further didactical refinement. Cultural experts know a lot about cultural differences, specific cultures and the challenges of cross-cultural cooperation. Moreover, intercultural training programs usually aim at 'better' understanding, 'less' prejudices, 'more effective' collaboration. Four risks for

the trainers in these content oriented and normatively loaded seminars can be identified:

- I. concentrating solely on the content level, i. e. giving information, explaining, arguing, 'enlightening' stereotypic interpretations of behavior, teaching etc.;
- II. evaluating the contributions of the participants as 'right' or 'wrong', politically correct or not – in line with the objectives of the seminar etc. but not in line with the practical problems of the target group;
- III. discussing and arguing ("yes, but...") when resistance arises, and when the participants recognize that there are no easy to find 'right or wrong'-answers to their challenges;
- IV. ending in a confrontation of cultural and technical perspectives.

As the examples of educational interpretative work show, intercultural teaching and learning is a complex production of frame relations in communication by means of verbal and paraverbal techniques. A shift of meaning, achieved by rephrasing utterances or the use of different voices, helps to bridge delicate situations in which participants remain in culture-bound interpretation patterns, and it thus prepares the perception of multiple perspectives. This way, trainers stay cooperative and can pursue their learning targets. These practiced methods are neither consciously known nor systematically used. According to my observations and experiences, argumentations on the content level and the instructional and 'politically correct' method are a lot more common. So far, results from applied discourse analysis are hardly used for consulting or train-the-trainer seminars. When using them consciously, trainers and facilitators may act as co-members and find answers together with the participants. Cultural and technical competence can then mingle to achieve a synergetic solution process.

Taking over this attitude and consciously practicing a multivalent approach has several consequences for us professional trainers: Firstly, intercultural learning also concerns the trainer (who normally lacks technical expertise) and means to learn to anticipate frames which are commonly used in the professional subculture of engineers. Secondly, we need helpful models (like the square presented above) for self reflection as well as metaphors for a dynamic notion of culture and intercultural competence (Nazarkiewicz 2011). Thirdly, the two latter requirements are not restricted to the field of engineering. The expectation and desire to learn what is 'right or wrong' when working internationally is not exclusive to engineers but is shared by many other target groups as well. The ideas introduced in this contribution in view of an interactive learning process that involves trainers and participants as partners at eye-level might be a helpful model for many contexts and target groups.

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Endnotes

1. The interactive strategies of trainers in intercultural learning can be shown through conversation analysis. The special contribution of conversation analysis to the practice is its orientation to practiced solutions, conversational patterns, which we permanently use, but do not necessarily (consciously) know of (Bergmann 1994).

2. In line with the definition of the editors, with engineering I mean "any intercultural social or corporate field that is characterized by a high importance of technology and specialized knowledge of those working with this technology" (Mahadevan/ Mayer 2012:1).

3. Also see Tannen: "People approach the world not as naive, blank-slate receptacles (...), but rather as (...) veterans of perception who have stored their prior experiences as 'an organized mass', and who see events and objects in the worlds in relation to each other and in relation to their prior experience. This prior experience or organized knowledge then takes the form of expectations about the world, and in the vast majority of cases, the world, being a systematic place, confirms these expectations, saving the individual the trouble of figuring things out anew all the time." (Tannen 1993:20f.).

4. The data presented here stem from several audio recorded culture-general training events in a service context in Germany. As research results from conversation analysis describe regularities the findings can be generalized to other training contexts. All transcript extracts have been translated into English by the author and have been simplified to a maximum for better readability. For more information about the data and methodology see Nazarkiewicz 2010b. Insofar as they are relevant for the analyses presented here, some special paraverbal phenomena have been indicated in the transcript extracts according to the following transcription conventions:

Text cues that have been added for better understanding of the translated text are enclosed in square brackets: the [one who's] polychronic

Overlapping passages within utterances are indicated by special brackets:

A: [so ʃ

B: [we]

Pauses in conversation are indicated in seconds in round brackets: (1,0) = 1 second, (0,25) = quarter of a second etc. break offs are indicated by (.)

Paraverbal descriptors for indicating how something is said apply to the text between the opening tag (<<paraverbal descriptor>) and the closing tag (>): <<stretched> strange >

Unintelligible passages are represented by empty round parentheses: (), uncertain transcription is indicated by enclosing the text in question in round brackets: (and)