

Four properties of speech-in-interaction and the notion of translocutionary act

Alessandro Duranti
University of California at Los Angeles

1. Introduction

In the last decade, within a number of different disciplines, there has been a call for more dialogically oriented and sociohistorically founded approaches to the study of language use. Some of the theoretical intuitions of such diverse authors as Michail Bakhtin, Lev Vygotsky, Hans-Georg Gadamer, and the later Ludwig Wittgenstein have received empirical support by those researchers who have been looking at the actual use of linguistic codes in a variety of sociocultural settings, including dinner conversations, telephone calls, mother-child interaction, political meetings, therapeutic sessions, classroom interactions, ritual encounters.

When we look at the large body of existing literature on such a wide range of verbal exchanges, we find some common themes despite and beyond different methodologies and epistemological assumptions. In particular, in reviewing the literature on (micro-)analyses of speech acts, speech genres, and speech events in different communities around the world, four properties of speech-in-interaction — a term purposely reminiscent of Schegloff's "talk-in-interaction" — emerge as common across sociocultural contexts and analytical traditions:

- (i) *multifunctionality*: The ability of verbal expressions to act simultaneously with potentially multiple meanings and multiple goals;
- (ii) *reflexivity*: The mutually constitutive, reflexive relationship between speech and context;

- (iii) *sequentiality*: The relevance of the utterance-by-utterance/turn-by-turn organization of verbal communication;
- (iv) *interactivity*: The co-construction of linguistic acts by speakers and addressees.

In this paper, I will show how these four properties emerge throughout one narrative segment in a verbal exchange recorded among four Italian female university students in Rome. In particular, I will concentrate on the use of the demonstrative pronoun *questo* 'this (one)' and its relationship to other syntactic and semantic elements within the same narrative. I will show that the use of the demonstrative in suggesting a particular kind of evaluation within the personal narrative exhibits all four properties of speech-in-interaction discussed earlier. I will then propose to reconsider the discussed phenomena as a particular case of a more general interactional construct which I will call "translocutionary act" (TA). A TA is an act whose pragmatic force is realized by conventionally transcending clause as well as traditional speech act boundaries and by thus creating larger discourse frames within which speech and social action can draw upon one another while building (or proposing) a certain version of the world. The very notion of TA implies that the meaning of a given linguistic unit (e.g. expression/turn/act) may not be completely determined at the time of production and that subsequent linguistic units may further develop or ignore potential direction of communication implicit or explicit in prior discourse. TA's are here defined as conventional acts and therefore as different from perlocutionary acts, which, according to Austin (1975) may not follow shared conventions.

Epistemologically, the notion of TA should be seen as compatible with realism. The belief in the power of words to sustain (or undermine) a certain version of the world does not preclude the belief in an external world whose existence is partly independent of our textual construction of it. In fact, without the assumption of the existence of such an external world, it would be difficult to explain the impact that speech has on our lives.

Finally, the notion of TA is particularly compatible with an *anti-personalistic* view of meaning (cf. Vološinov 1973; Holquist 1983; Duranti 1984a, 1988), that is, with a philosophical stance for which meaning is not owned or controlled by the individual speaker and his or her intentions, but instead belongs to both speakers and hearers, performers and audience, actors and supporters. A quite rich body of research within anthropology, linguistics, and other fields (cf. Rosaldo 1982; Kochman 1983; Goodwin

1986; Brenneis 1986; Haviland 1986; Borker 1986; Du Bois 1987; Duranti and Ochs 1986; etc.) gives ethnographic support to this thesis. The notion of TA is an attempt to provide a working notion that might help relate these findings to the philosophical and linguistic literature on speech acts.

In the next section, I will briefly discuss, one by one, the four properties of speech-in-interaction introduced in section 1.

2.1 Multifunctionality

It is now a commonplace to say that linguistic expressions or utterances do not simply identify or describe reality, but they also affect or try to affect reality (cf. Malinowski 1923, 1935; Austin 1975; Silverstein 1976). Research on language use within the last ten or fifteen years has also repeatedly shown that the same utterance can in fact simultaneously accomplish more than one act. The most obvious and better documented cases of multifunctionality of linguistic expressions have been discussed within two apparently quite different kinds of activities, namely, political oratory (cf. Brenneis & Myers 1984) and conversation. I will give a couple of examples from the latter activity. In a telephone conversation, as shown by Schegloff and Sacks (1973) and Schegloff (1979, 1987), the same turn can accomplish more than one speech act (cf. also Levinson 1983). The first "hello" is both an answer to the summons (telephone rings) and a display of voice quality for recognition by the caller. The second turn also does more than one thing, viz. it is an attempt to identify the recipient, a request for confirmation of that identification, and an offer of voice quality for speaker recognition. The third turn can satisfy the request and do other things, and so on.

The very feature of multifunctionality of language use points towards potentially dangerous effects of speech-in-interaction — Gumperz' work on conversational inference is particularly revealing in this area (cf. Gumperz 1977, 1982). If the same act can both inform and persuade, request and befriend, complain and create enemies, speakers must develop strategies to control or diffuse potentially threatening, even though unintended, acts. As I will discuss below, one such strategy is to indirectly involve other-participation and thus produce acts that are by their very nature choral. This is particularly useful in trying to express an evaluation, whether positive or negative. In other words, given the inherent multifunctional nature of linguistic expressions, their power to index different kinds of alignments vis-à-vis persons, values, and commitments, one of the main tasks of any social actor

involved in interpretation is to reach agreement without threatening others' face and at the same time maintaining a sense of self-respect. These situations and their resolutions have been discussed by Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) in their treatment of politeness phenomena. Some of the strategies they describe for speaker-hearer interactions can also be at work in talking about third parties. Thus, speakers can provide direct evidence of their stance with respect to a given issue or individual (e.g. *he is a jerk, he is great*) or they can more subtly hint at the possibility of a given interpretation or of a given direction (e.g. positive or negative). As I will show below, in the latter case, they often invite other participants to offer their perception or evaluation of the same item. This is a more cooperative strategy for defining the relationship with the world (or to *a* world) and with other participants. It is also the situation in which we can witness the use of the more dynamic features of speech-in-interaction.

2.2 Reflexivity

To say that the relationship between speech and context is reflexive means to say that speech and context entertain a mutually constitutive relationship whereby linguistic forms and extralinguistic context continuously define and shape each other. The notion of *reflexivity* is common in the ethnomethodological tradition (cf. Garfinkel 1967; Heritage 1984; Mehan & Wood 1975), where it refers to the claim that rules are not simply activated or 'caused' by a common understanding among the participants of the situation at hand, but that in fact the situation or activity at hand is partly constituted, defined, and carried on through the use of specific norms that activate certain expectations and possible interpretation of the on-going interaction. This concept, which Garfinkel extended to social action, is also at work in the case of speech-in-interaction (which is but a form of social action). The structural organization of linguistic forms — viz. in terms of syntagmatic and paradigmatic choices that speakers make — is not only used to describe an already existing reality, it is also working at sustaining a particular version of the social world. (cf. Ochs 1987; Cook 1987; Schieffelin 1984).

Such a mutually constitutive relationship between linguistic forms and particular constructions of reality is not as static as we were led to believe by the most popular versions of the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis and their experimental confutations; that is, the relationship between language and

worldview is never simply a question of taxonomies to be understood as directly mirroring or shaping cognitive categories. Rather, as recently shown by a number of studies on conversational interaction, conflict resolution, and language socialization, the evidence on the mutual dependence between sociocultural context and speech must be sought in the daily practices or activities through which speech mediates people's relationships with one another and with their socio-physical world; such practices do not simply reveal a particular understanding of the world but, in subtle and often powerful ways, propose and test the locally appropriate version of reality to be preferred among the many possible ones (cf. Duranti & Goodwin (eds.) n.d.; Myers & Brenneis 1984; Ochs & Schieffelin 1984; Silverstein 1976).

2.3 *Interactivity*

While speakers are producing talk, other participants in the interaction — viz. their audience — can shape both the form of what is being communicated and their interpretation (cf. Duranti 1984a, 1988; Duranti & Brenneis (eds.) 1986; Goodwin 1981; Goodwin & Goodwin 1987; Ochs 1982; Streeck 1980; etc.). Even during a single turn/utterance, as shown by Goodwin (1981), the recipients' response — or lack thereof — can constrain, if not determine, the very shape and interpretation of the performed speech acts.

Even when the audience doesn't seem to do anything, it is in fact doing *something*: The audience is always co-author. Thus, for example, even silence can be a very interactive form of behavior. If it is true that in certain kinds of verbal exchanges — what conversation analysts call “conversations” — silence is to be avoided and gaps between turns are to stay as short as possible (cf. Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson 1974; Schegloff & Sacks 1973), it must also be the case that in two party conversations certain, if not all, cases of “self selection” are determined by the other party's unwillingness to take the floor. This means that, when one party does not cooperate at maintaining the ABABAB... sequence, the other party, if he wants to avoid gaps, may find himself entering realms of discourse and topics that he might have otherwise left untouched; from the point of view of social action, it would be a mistake to simply label these exchanges as *phatic communion* — a term that, *pace* Malinowski, has done more damage than anything else to our understanding of the relationship between language and context —, given that a speaker might end up saying things he did not

intend and might later regret. This technique is well known to therapists who often avoid taking the floor as a conscious strategy to force patients to offer more information and engage in further reflections about their problems. It is also a technique used in some cultures in face of a rejection. I experienced it in Samoa a number of times. When someone denies them a favor, rather than accepting the denial or trying to convince their addressee, Samoans often stand by, waiting, in silence. The other party, who seemed so secure in his first refusal, suddenly finds himself in the position of having to further develop his argument. In so doing, he often realizes that, after all, there are also reasons to do what he said earlier he couldn't do and thus complies with the request. In Samoa, this form of "silent request" is ritualized in the traditional custom of waiting, covered with a fine mat, in front of the house of an offended party, until the latter accepts to resume talk and hence negotiate with the party of the offender.¹

There is no question that the interactive, jointly produced and jointly interpreted nature of speech is more clearly recognized in some cultural contexts than in others (e.g. Duranti 1984a; Kochman 1983; Mitchell-Kernan 1972). This variability does not question the universality of this property of speech-in-interaction. Rather, it points to a differentiated awareness of such a property among different speech communities. The impact of such awareness on actual behavior must be assessed within the context of the discussion of the relationship between ideology and praxis.

2.4 *Sequentiality*

In linguistics, the importance of the sequential aspects of linguistic communication has been a central claim in the study of synchronic linguistics at least since Saussure. His notion of *syntagmatic relationships* recognizes the importance of horizontal relations among different parts of a sentence or phrase. Much of modern formal linguistics has exploited this notion within the study of sentence structure and especially within studies of word order patterns. Only recently, however, thanks to discourse analysis (cf. Givón (ed.) 1979, (ed.) 1983; Schiffrin 1987, among others) and conversation analysis (e.g. Atkinson & Heritage 1984; Goodwin 1981; Psathas (ed.) 1979; Schenkein (ed.) 1978), have we started to reconsider the role of sequential organization in the very definition of both form and content of verbal interaction. We have learned that the expectations and inferences associated with certain sequential aspects of language use play an

important role in linguistic communication. The notion of ‘adjacency pair,’ originally introduced by Schegloff and Sacks (1973) is one example of a unit of analysis in which the interpretation of a given strip of talk needs reference to some other typically immediately adjacent part in order to be appropriately interpreted.

3.1 An Italian narrative

The four properties of speech-in-interaction that I have just introduced will be further discussed in this paper within the context of an Italian narrative taken from a conversation audio-recorded and originally transcribed by two of my students at the University of Rome in 1983. The conversation takes place at the dinner table among four female university students.

(1) (From “Fuorisede,” original transcript by Caporale & Casaccia, Rome 1983; revised by A. Duranti, Dec. 1987. N.B.: The information between parentheses in the English translation is part of the meaning in the Italian text but is not overtly represented by independent lexical items, e.g. pronouns)

- 1 G; *la sapete la furbata di Adamo oggi?*
‘do (you all) know Adamo’s clever thing today?’
- 2 F; *no.*
‘no.’
- 3 S; *no.*
‘no.’
- 4 G; *sono andata ha detto=*
‘(I) went (he) said’
- 5 F; *=ma perche’ sto morendo di freddo?*
‘but why am (I) dying of cold?’
- 6 (.5)
- 7 G; *dovevo prendere la macchina.*
‘(I) had to take the car.’
- 9 *allora mi ha detto*
‘so (he) said to me’
- 10 *“guarda sai devo andare all’università*
“look (you) know (I) have to go to campus’
- 11 *te l’ho spiegato devo pigliare le frequenze.”*
‘(as I) explained to you (I) must get (proofs of) attendance.’

- 12 *bene (1.) allora io ho pensato viene all'università*
 'good (1.) so I thought (he) comes to campus'
- 13 *ho detto "questo c'avrà la macchina" =*
 '(I) said this one (=he) must have the car'
- 14 *=no signore (.5) sono andata all'università*
 'no sir. (.5) (I) went to campus'
- 15 *ho preso le chiavi della macchina*
 '(I) took (with me) the keys of the car'
- 16 *(.5)*
- 17 *dopodiché m'ha detto*
 'after which (he) said to me'
- 18 *"guarda che la macchina sta sotto casa"*
 "'look, the car is in front of the house'
- 19 *e quindi sono dovuto ritornare indietro.*
 'and therefore (I) had to go back.'
- 20 F; *perche' le poteva benissimo lasciare alle signorine*
 'because (he) could have very well left them (= keys) with the
 young ladies'
- 21 *saliva su Sergio se l'andava a prendere*
 'Sergio could have gone upstairs to get them'
- 22 G; [*oppure a-*
 'or to-'
- 23 *io- scusa io pensavo io non gliel'ho detto*
 'I- excuse (me but) I thought- I didn't tell him'
- 24 *perche' al limite pensavo che lui andasse*
 'because at most (I) thought that he would go
- 25 *all'università con la macchina, (.5)*
 'to campus with the car,'
- 26 *a quel punto*
 'at that point'
- 27 F; [*Adamo::=*
 'Adamo::'
- 28 G; *e` scemo.*
 '(he) is stupid.'
- [

- 30 F; =*rispecchia esattamente la prima*::=
 '(he) gives out exactly the (same) first'
- 31 G; [*e` tonto.*
 '(he) is dumb'
- 32 F; =*impressione che m'ha fatto.*
 'impression (he) made on me.'
- 33 G; *è proprio tonto.*
 '(he) is really dumb.'
- 34 F; (*un tipo dell'insisto sul concetto*)
 '(a kind of/(I) insist on the concept)'

3.2 Narrative structure

This narrative is sequentially structured in a way that is similar to what researchers in conversations analysis have found in studying stories in English conversation. Thus, the sequence starts with a "preface" or "start" (Sacks 1972a, 1972b) of the type "do you know what so-and-so did?" (line 1). In the next two turns, two of the present parties define themselves as recipients and then teller starts with the narrative (lines 2 and 3).

- 1 G; *la sapete la furbata di Adamo oggi?*
 'do you know Adamo's clever thing today?'
- 2 F; *no.*
 'no.'
- 3 S; *no.*
 'no.'

The narrative also exhibits some of the features of the type described by Labov (1972). The first turn (line 1) could be considered as both an *abstract* (it's about the *furbata*, lit. 'the smart or clever thing,' which will turn out to be the 'dumb thing') and an *orientation* (it conveys information about the main character of the story, Adamo, and the time when it took place (*oggi* 'today')). In the subsequent turns there are also several examples of what Labov called *complicating actions* (lines 7-11 and 14-19). And finally a resolution is found in lines 18-19.

- 17 *dopodiche' m'ha detto*
 'after which (he) said to me'

- 18 “*guarda che la macchina sta sotto casa*”
 “‘look, the car is in front of the house’
 19 *e quindi sono dovuta ritornare indietro.*
 ‘and therefore (I) had to go back.’

3.3 *Evaluation*

What I want to concentrate on is what Labov calls *evaluation*. As he points out for the analysis of narratives by speakers of Black English Vernacular, evaluation “forms a secondary structure which is concentrated in the evaluation section but may be found in various forms throughout the narrative.” (p.369) In the Italian narrative presented here as well, “evaluation devices are distributed throughout the narrative.” (ib. p.369) Thus, for instance, even the preface which introduces the story and is used by G. to get the floor (line 1) contains the term *furbata* ‘clever thing’ which is evaluative. Whether or not this term implies a negative evaluation by the speaker is questionable. Although I am inclined toward a negative interpretation, other Italian native speakers I consulted strongly denied such a preferential reading and claimed that *furbata* does not have a negative connotation. It is perhaps safe at this point to say that, even though a negative evaluation might be perceived by speakers such as myself, the status of such evaluation is still seen by others as deniable.

In what follows, the main difference between Labov’s analysis and mine will emerge in the appreciation of the work that another speaker, F., does throughout the narrative sequence. In Labov’s case, due partly to the nature of his data, viz. interviews, and his theoretical interest, viz. the speech patterns and strategies by one individual speaker at a time, the four properties of speech-in-interaction that I have discussed earlier are underplayed. In my analysis of (1), I will instead focus on them.

What I am interested in is the way in which G. and F. arrive at a negative evaluation of Adamo’s behavior *together*. After starting out with what appears to be an ambiguous evaluation (‘do you know the clever thing that Adamo did today?’), G. uses a subtle and indirect strategy to build up, or “invite” as conversation analysts would say, co-participation by her audience (in this case the preferred recipient, F.). Throughout the conversation F. provides a form of other-support of the direction of evaluation that G. is suggesting. F. does so in lines 20-21 and again in line 27 and in lines 30-31. In lines 20-21, F. provides an alternative solution to the actual course of

events, which is echoed by G.'s explanation of her understanding of Adamo's actions at the time of the narrated events:

- 20 F; *perche' le poteva benissimo lasciare alle signorine*
 'because (he) could have very well left them (=keys) with the
 young ladies'
- 21 *saliva su Sergio se l'andava a prendere*
 'Sergio could have come upstairs to get them'
- 22 G; [*oppure a-*
 'or to-'
- 23 *io- scusa io pensavo io non gliel'ho detto*
 'I- excuse (me but) I thought- I didn't tell him'
- 24 *perche' al limite pensavo che lui andasse*
 'because at most (I) thought that he would go
- 25 *all'università con la macchina, (.5)*
 'to campus with the car,'
- 26 *a quel punto*
 'at that point'

In line 27, F. utters the name *Adamo* with a scolding intonation typically used with children. It's a way of going along with Giusi's opposition. Only then does G. produce an explicit negative evaluation of Adamo's character (line 28), which then escalates along with F.'s further support (lines 30-31), finally culminating in line 33 with the intensifier *proprio* 'really, quite.'

- 26 *a quel punto*
 'at that point'
- 27 F; [*Adamo::=*
 'Adamo::'
- 28 G; *è scemo.*
 '(he) is stupid.'
- 30 F; [*=rispecchia esattamente la prima::=*
 '(he) gives out exactly the (same) first'
- 31 G; [*è tonto.*
 '(he) is dumb'

- 32 F; =*impressione che m'ha fatto*.
'impression (he) made on me.'
- 33 G; è *proprio tonto*.
'(he) is really dumb.'
- 34 F; (*un tipo dell'insisto sul concetto*)
'a type of the/(I) insist on this concept.'

Let's reanalyze this sequence once more. G. starts out with an opening sequence that sets the tone of what is about to follow without necessarily committing G. to a particularly negative evaluation of Adamo's actions. In defining themselves as story recipients (cf. Jefferson 1978), F. and S., as typical of first turns in multiparty interaction, do not align themselves with a particular evaluation of the announced events. In line (5) F. actually shows lack of interest in the story by expressing a self-centered speech act that does not seem to be related to any on-going activity ('but why am I so freezing cold?'). S., on the other hand, excludes herself from further comments, at least for the segment here discussed.² In the next several turns, Giusi avoids further negative evaluations and limits herself to giving an apparently objective account of the events. There are several utterances in which G. reports comments she made or thoughts she had at the time of the reported event. In line 12 she says 'I thought "(he) comes to campus"'; in line 13, she reports her own judgment of the situation ('(I) said "this one (=he) must have the car"'). Structurally, these utterances seem examples of what Labov calls *embedded evaluation*: "The first step in embedding the evaluation into the narrative, and preserving dramatic continuity, is for the narrator to quote the sentiment as something occurring to him at the moment rather than addressing it to the listener outside of the narrative" (Labov 1972: 372). However, from the point of view of what is being said, these examples seem quite different from the ones Labov mentions:

- (2) (Labov 1972: 372)

I say, "Calvin, I'm bust your head for that!"

- (3) (ib., p.373)

... But that night the manager, Lloyd Burrows, said, "You better pack up and get out because that son of a bitch never forgives anything once he gets it in his head."

And I did

I packed up and got out

That was two.

In lines 12-27 of the Italian narrative, there is nothing immediately comparable to the “I’m bust your head” in (2) or “that son of a bitch” in (3). In other words, if the Italian examples are evaluations, they seem much more *neutral* than the ones quoted by Labov. However, if we look more carefully, we do find something that is a potential marker for negative affect, namely, the demonstrative *questo* in line 13:

13 *ho detto “questo c’avra’ la macchina”=*
 ‘(I) said THIS ONE (=he) must have the car’

To make this claim plausible, I must provide some background information about the use of pronouns and demonstratives in Italian conversation.

3.3.1 *Italian subject pronouns*

I have elsewhere (cf. Duranti 1984b) discussed how, in Italian conversation, the choice between the pronominal forms *lui*, *lei*, and the demonstratives *questo/quello* ‘this/that (masc.)’ and *questa/quella* ‘this/that (fem.)’ for human referents is correlated with the expression of positive vs. negative affect, respectively.

Figure 1 and Figure 2 illustrate a set of implicational rules that capture a large number of cases that I have audiorecorded and/or observed:

Figure 1

REFERENT	MEANING OF PRONOUN
[+human, +familiar]	anaphoric/deictic
[+human]	main character
[−human]	positive affect

Figure 2

REFERENT	MEANING OF DEMONSTRATIVE
[−human]	anaphoric/deictic
[+human]	minor character
[+human, +familiar]	negative affect

What these tables show is that for third person human referents, when the person talked about is familiar, that is, known to the participants in the speech event, the unmarked pronominal form — which I am calling here the 'anaphoric/deictic' use — for overt subjects is the full personal pronoun (*lui* 'he' or *lei* 'she') — see Fig.1. On the other hand, when the referent is inanimate, the unmarked (viz. anaphoric/deictic) form is the demonstrative (either *questo* 'this one' or *quello* 'that one') — see Fig.2. The use of demonstrative for a familiar human referent is instead marked and tends to coincide with the expression of negative affect (for more details and examples, see Duranti [1984b]).

3.3.2 *Negative evaluation*

When we go back to our narrative and we look at line 13, we realize that the referent *Adamo* has the features for which the use of a demonstrative would tend to convey negative affect.

Adamo is human and is familiar, that is, known to the participants, and therefore the use of the demonstrative is potentially marked with negative affect. These conditions are met, given that G. introduces the story by referring to the main character as *Adamo*, a typical recognitional (cf. Sacks & Schegloff 1979), that is, a description that invites and at the same time assumes recognition by recipients. *Adamo* is also a main character, with G., of the story. Furthermore, in line 24, G. uses the full pronoun *lui* to refer to *Adamo*. This further reinforces the contrast between how *Adamo* should have been referred to and what he deserves, as it were, given the circumstances. Note that *lui* is used after F. has already given her first supportive statement in line 20. (Also note the intensifier *benissimo*). Finally, it should be noted that *questo* is not something G. is likely to have told herself at the time of the narrated events. Rather, it is used for the benefit of the recipient(s). Thus, *questo* is an index that tries to establish a particular relationship between speaker and referent (i.e. *Adamo*) for the audience's benefit.

3.3.3 *Explicit evaluation*

G's explicitly negative evaluation actually appears in line 28 and only after F. has given feedback and reinforcement of G.'s stance. F. provides further arguments in favor of G.'s argument against *Adamo* (i) in line 20 she says '(he) could have left (the keys) with someone else,' which has some of the reproaching connotation of the English *he could have told me*; (ii) in

line 27 F uses the one word utterance *Adamo*:: said with a scolding intonation typically used with children (an example of what Labov calls “expressive phonology”); and finally (iii) in lines 30-32 she alludes to a “first impression,” that at this point is clearly meant to be negative. The adverbs in 20 (*benissimo* ‘very well’) and 30 (*esattamente* ‘exactly’) work as intensifiers that seem to help providing a perspective on the events. The important point here is that, along with F.’s feedback, G. gets more and more confident and hence explicit in her stance vis-à-vis Adamo’s actions. In the last five lines, she openly criticizes him by labelling him *scemo* ‘stupid’ and *tonto* ‘dumb, clumsy.’

Thus, what I am suggesting here is that the use of *questo* earlier on in the G’s narrative marks an important discourse point where framing or re-framing of a particular event or series of events takes place: It displays potential disapproval or negative affect and seems to work as a clue to let the recipients know how they should take the story and in particular how they should align themselves with respect to Adamo’s doings (cf. Goodwin 1986).

In other words, the negative assessment of Adamo’s behavior is negotiated across turns and speakers with the use of particular lexical choices whose multifunctionality — in this case their ability to identify a referent and display affect towards it — is also defined sequentially and interactively, viz. cooperatively. In this way, I would like to suggest, responsibility for the evaluation of a particular person and his actions is shared.

The meaning of a stretch of discourse is never simply the sum of its parts. Each segment and each of its elements lives over against the background of (in contraposition to) the other elements explicitly mentioned or implicitly evoked. The impact of the narrative I analyzed earlier goes beyond G’s evaluation and F’s support. Their joint activity at coming up with a shared view, an acceptable alignment, of the events and Adamo’s (and G.’s) part in them is a choral condemnation whose value has meaning and potential consequences for both of them. There is, in other words, joint responsibility in the act of condemnation. In a sense, G.’s explicit negative evaluations (in lines 28, 30, 33) is not simply supported but co-constructed by F.’s earlier remarks.

3.4 *Properties of the demonstrative*

If we consider the use of the demonstrative *questo* (in line 13) within the context of the entire narrative, we realize that it displays the four properties of speech-in-interaction mentioned above, that is,

- (i) the use of the demonstrative is *multifunctional*, viz. it identifies a referent in a narrative and at the same time it provides a perspective on it by hinting the possibility of a negative evaluation;
- (ii) as part of its multifunctional nature, the use of a demonstrative also helps redefine the world it is referring to; its use is then *reflexive*; in other words, one could say that the meaning of the Italian pronominal forms must be interpreted within the context that they themselves have been evoking; Adamo's character, his being a certain kind of person in the world, is affected by the way he is being referred to;
- (iii) the affective meaning of the demonstrative (*questo*) is partly constituted *sequentially* by the speaker's use, within the same narrative, of other alternative forms such as the proper name (earlier: Line 1) and the full pronoun *lui* (later: Line 24);
- (iv) the use of the pronominal forms within the narrative helps bring about a certain version of the world and produces a stance toward a given character and his doings through the *interactive* participation of another speaker. The final act of condemnation against the referent Adamo is accomplished through the active cooperation of another speaker.

Thus, I would like to suggest that the demonstrative *questo* helps constitute a subtle and complex act whereby in the course of several utterances and turns, across more than one speakers, certain acts, in particular the act of condemnation, are accomplished. This conclusion seems at first to be partly contradicted by the scheme in Fig.2. But in fact the contradiction only arises if we interpret the relational implications between types of referents and descriptors (viz. pronouns, demonstratives) as a context-independent rule. Only in that case we would be tempted to conclude that *questo* used for a familiar human referent always has a negative connotation and therefore the rest of the narrative in (1) is but a reiteration of that initial assessment. But this would be an oversimplification. The relationships illustrated in Fig.1 and Fig.2 refer to regularities found within and across dis-

course sequences. Thus, the negative affect linked to a particular referent is not simply carried by the demonstrative alone but by the co-occurrence of several discourse elements of which the demonstrative is but one (cf. Ervin-Tripp 1972). The affective value of a demonstrative, in other words, is typically communicated within a larger discourse frame, either within the same utterance (e.g. *questo è matto* 'this (guy) is crazy') or within an entire narrative, as illustrated in this paper. Such connotations are by their very nature always in and by themselves deniable. They provide a shading on a character and their affective work must be completed by other elements (and speakers) within the same narrative.³

4. Translocutionary acts

A question I would like to address at this point is whether it is possible to propose an analytical notion that could capture the four properties of speech-in-interaction discussed above while remaining sufficiently flexible to inspire communication rather than diffidence across theoretical frameworks and methodological commitments. I will propose that a possible candidate for such a notion is what I call *translocutionary act* (TA), that is, an act whose pragmatic force — its ability to have an impact on our physical, psychological, or sociocultural universe — is realized by transcending clause as well as individual speech act boundaries and thus creating or trying to sustain larger discourse frames within which speech and social action can draw upon one another in building (or challenging) a certain version of the world.

The very notion of TA also tries to account for a view of linguistic communication as not simply consisting of a series of individual intentions that are realized through conventional linguistic acts (cf. Searle 1983), but as a complex activity that involves mutually constituted and sequentially sustained units that defy a characterization of meaning as primarily originated in one speaker's mind. What we would like to allow instead is for a definition of meaning as something existing *between* speakers (cf. Vološinov 1973).

In the case illustrated earlier, the use of the demonstrative *questo* seems connected to a series of prior and subsequent meaningful units and it is further sustained, ratified by such units. Its force, its *pragmatic* force, that is, is precisely achieved by its ability to evoke and connect to other elements in the context. I am thus proposing that the use of *questo* in (1) is part of a TA.

Whether or not the participants in the interaction will choose to recognize or further exploit the joint nature of this evaluation is dependent upon sociocultural conditions that must be assessed vis-à-vis our (actually their) understanding of the social situation and its cultural framing. Speech communities and different contexts within the same speech community may vary with respect to such recognition of the nature of this type of acts. What we can say, however, as linguists, is whether the structural conditions for such interpretations and its consequences are possible and on which grounds. This is what I have attempted to do in this paper with respect to one particular stretch of discourse.

NOTES

- * Earlier versions of this paper were delivered at the 1987 International Pragmatics Conference in Antwerp, 18-22 August 1987 and at the 1987 Annual Meeting of the Linguistic Society of America, San Francisco, Dec.27-30. I would like to thank the participants at those meetings who provided comments and criticism on issues either discussed or implied in this paper. In particular, I have benefited from comments by Don Brenneis, Chuck Goodwin, Ron Macaulay, Neal Norrick, Elinor Ochs, and Deborah Tannen.
- 1. I am grateful to Ken Cook for having reminded me of this Samoan custom, called *ifoga*, and its relevance to the present discussion, cf. Shore (1982).
- 2. S. does in fact take the floor after the segment in (1) and when she speaks, she is critical of G.'s evaluation of Adamo.
- 3. It should be noted here that the sensitivity to these elements of discourse may increase once we subject them to scrupulous analysis. Once involved in this type of work, researchers may find themselves in a situation similar to that of those who, while undergoing intensive psychoanalytical treatment, become more sensitive to the subtext of everyday conversational interaction and start seeing conflict and manipulation where others might see harmless exchanges. I think that I am now more conscious of the potential impact of a demonstrative like *questo* than other Italian native speakers.