

GRAMMATICAL ASPECTS OF ROLES IN CULTURALLY
DIVERSE ORAL PRESENTATIONS

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RESUMO: O objetivo deste artigo é oferecer uma descrição da distribuição de papéis interpessoais em apresentações orais. Tal descrição se apóia em conceitos e procedimentos relacionados a uma percepção de linguagem como prática social, em que escolhas lingüísticas são sempre socialmente motivadas. As categorias funcionais através das quais se dão as escolhas de pronomes pessoais - proximidade, distanciamento, vínculo, inclusão, exclusão -, serão discutidas com referência às características culturais, institucionais, políticas e profissionais das apresentações.

Palavras-chave: Apresentações orais; Papéis interpessoais; Análise crítica do discurso; Pronomes.

Key words: Oral presentations; Interpersonal roles; Critical discourse analysis; Pronouns.

0. Introduction

The aim of this paper is to offer a critical account of the distribution of interpersonal roles in oral presentations. The paper starts from basic concepts and procedures related to a perception of language as a type of social practice in which linguistic features are always socially motivated. With this type of approach, linguistic description is the underlying support for discourse analysis.

The paper uses two specific concepts that place the study within the domain of discourse analysis oriented by a critical approach, which has been referred to as Critical Linguistics (Fowler et alii, 1979; Kress & Hodge, 1979; Hodge & Kress, 1993) and more recently as Critical Discourse Analysis (Kress, 1991; 1993).

The first of these concepts is that of 'structurings of power'. The term 'power' is used both as a broad structuring concept and as one possible dimension within relations amongst participants (in contrast with solidarity). Power is taken as an ever-present framework which gives rise to text form and process. An analysis of the interaction between power, text and process can help to "make visible and apparent that which may previously have been invisible and seemingly natural" (Kress, 1991: 85). Revealing these relations may promote "a critical awareness of language and discursive practices," and may make people "...more aware and more self-aware about language and discourse" (Fairclough, 1993: 142).

The second concept is that a critical analysis of language necessarily takes history (here understood as ideologically and politically marked temporal events) into account, whether it is the short, limited history of a spoken interaction or the larger, more complex histories of social, linguistic institutions (Kress, *op. cit.*: 86).

In this paper, the two concepts - power as an underlying influence and the presentations' contrasting histories - will be brought together to cast light on the speakers' choice of personal pronouns for the distribution of roles. More specific functional categories of proximity, detachment, bonding, inclusiveness and exclusiveness, through which these choices seem to emerge, will be discussed with close reference to the contrasting cultural, institutional, political and professional features of the presentations.

1. Background and categories of analysis

The underlying approach influencing the grammatical analysis in this study is a systemic approach to language (Halliday, 1985). From this perspective, language is structured into three macro functions: the ideational, the interpersonal and the textual. According to Halliday, ideational meaning is the representation of experience; it is meaning in the sense of content. Interpersonal meaning is meaning as a form of action and, at the level of the clause, its function is that of exchanging roles in rhetorical interaction. Textual meaning is relevance to the context and has the function of constructing the message (Halliday, 1985: 53).

Within this framework, we intend to consider in some detail a set of features within the interpersonal macro-function. More specifically, we will focus on the interactive functions related to the projection of roles through

choices from the personal pronoun system, and the way that these functions link with two other functions: the personal function of modality (cf. Thompson & Thetela, 1994; for details of a modified proposal of Halliday's interpersonal system) and the function of processes (verbal groups) within the ideational system of transitivity. The personal pronouns to be considered in the analysis are either subjects and therefore constituents of the mood component (Halliday, 1985: 71 ff), which carries the burden of the clause as an interactive event (Halliday, 1985: 77), or part of nominal groups in complements in the structure of the residue.

Brown & Gilman (1960), in their now widely recognised pioneering approach to the subject, classify personal pronouns as signallers of power and solidarity. Considering the power and solidarity semantic from an evolutionary perspective, they discuss the use of pronouns that explicitly signal their class-related function, such as tu and vous in French. The authors assume that the relationship between verbal behaviour and social concepts is determinate, and that the rules governing use are the result of the relationship between speaker and addressee. Their model is clearly normative and projects a view of human behaviour which is strictly governed by features of the context.

Friedrich (1972) extends Brown and Gilman's categories of power and solidarity to a larger set of "cultural principles" or "discriminations" which determine speech usage. Together, the ten discriminations proposed by the author interact in complex ways and generate a very large range of pronoun use in literature. Ervin-Tripp (1972) also proposes a large set of "selectors" which lead to linguistic outcomes. The set, larger than Friedrich's, includes fourteen variables modified by plus and minus values.

These three studies of pronoun use have been severely criticised (cf. Kendall, 1981; for an extended description and criticism of all three models). In fact, in a causal approach to linguistic behaviour, a complete set of explanations for creative, unforeseen meanings would only be possible through the charting of an infinite set of controlling factors:

if behaviour is caused by variables, then unexpected behaviour must be caused by variables heretofore undiscovered, or, alternatively, by some combination of variables heretofore uncharted (Kendall, 1981: 242).

Kendall argues for a theory of meaning formulated with reference to speaker's intent or addressee's interpretation of speaker's intent:

The question not raised is how people apply rules. All these authors assume that people recognise each other's features or attributes, or that they recognise features or attributes of situations. In fact people interpret each other's attributes and evaluate situations. Human beings have the capacity to define and redefine each other, and to negotiate and renegotiate definitions of situations. To recognise human agency in what Crick (1978) calls the 'construction of shared semantic systems', is to reject 'event causality' (Kendall, 1981: 244).

In this approach, where the focus is placed on the speaker's capacity to evaluate and interpret the situationally-based influencing factors of linguistic behaviour, these factors are not only constitutive of language, but are also constituted by language. The speaker's choices as related to the notion of paradigmatic relations between words presupposes agreement with "a theory of language as choice, (...) as a resource for making meaning by choosing" (Halliday, 1985: XXVII).

The major analytic benefit of recognising the speaker's capacity to interpret and create meaning, rather than simply to react to attributes of the situation, is the possibility of disambiguating meaning conveyed through the use of multifunctional forms like *we* and *you* (cf. Muhlhausler & Harré, 1990). In addition, a descriptive approach to the function of forms in different types of discourse may disclose order and, possibly, regularities that a normative approach cannot reach.

So, on the one hand, we recognise that it is crucial to approach our presenters as speakers who have made their creative choices of pronouns in tune with an understanding of a complex set of influencing features. Whether these choices have been intuitive and automatic or have derived from greater levels of awareness of the contextual forces being played upon them is, itself, a necessary and important topic for research into the processes involved in choice making, though it is beyond the scope of this paper. On the other hand, we maintain that it is essential to investigate the nature and types of features that construct the history of the particular presentations.

In sum, we are interested in discussing the possible meanings that may arise from the interaction between grammar choices, their possible functions,

the social forces influencing them and their potential impact. We believe that such a discussion may contribute to the development of more refined levels of awareness through a greater understanding of discourse and social structure as mutually constitutive, in the particular context investigated:

...discourse is shaped and constrained by social structure in the widest sense and at all levels: by class and other social relations at a societal level, by the relations specific to particular institutions (...), by systems of classification, by various norms and conventions of both a discursive and a non discursive nature...and that discursive practice is socially constitutive in both conventional and creative ways. (Fairclough, 1992: 64-65)

In this study, investigation of pronominal choices focuses on the uses of *I*, *we*, *you* and their related forms (*my*, *your*, *our*, etc.). In the paradigmatic approach here adopted, *I* is taken as an indexical indicator of the presenter, i.e. it "ties what was said, or referred to, to the person who spoke the sentence and to his/her location as an embodied being" (Muhlhausler & Harré, 1990: 10). *I* does not display, in this sense, the ambiguity that characterises *we* forms, for example. High frequencies of *I* indicate presentations as being much more self-oriented than audience-oriented. *We* and *you* forms, on the other hand, can be unfolded into multiple meanings related to both self- and audience-orientation. This potential ambiguity, we believe, makes them worthy of closer attention. In fact, as we shall see later, *we* and *you* forms carry a richer set of functions and will, therefore, receive a more detailed treatment in this paper.

The first paradigm underlying the analysis is, therefore, related to the type of orientation (self- or audience orientation) of the presentation. The second, which applies to the audience-oriented presentations, is proximity. Proximity is linked to the recognition that presenters judge certain uses may bring them closer to the world of representations and/or to the set of expectations about the presentation which they assume the audience may have. The function of proximity will vary along a continuum from proximity to detachment, and is 'fed' by pronoun choices.

A further proposed function, that of bonding, derives from proximity and can, in that sense, be characterised as indirect. We argue that when choices made by the presenter to increase proximity match the expectations of the audience, some degree of bonding is established between both parts. Bonding presupposes that presenters can make specific choices in order to arouse a

variable degree of positive attachment between the audience and themselves and that these choices will be acknowledged as such. In other words, bonding may be associated with interactive success, particularly in public presentations like the ones analysed for this study.

We propose, therefore, that choices made to establish proximity may or may not generate bonding. As an effect which depends on the previous history of the individual listener, the degree of bonding may vary among different groups in an audience or even among different individuals.

We have identified two specific semantic categories in relation to uses of *we* as "feeding" choices of proximity and, possibly, promoting bonding. Inclusiveness is used to characterise a presenter's choice of *we* forms in order to refer to him/herself as part of a group that includes the audience. In other words, the roles of presenter and audience are brought together as sharers of experiences in the context of the event. Exclusiveness is used to describe a presenter's choice of *we* forms in order to refer to him/herself as part of a group which does not include the audience. In other words, the roles of presenter and audience are made quite separate and distinct in relation to experiences in the context of events or experiences in the world of representations reported during the presentations. Inclusiveness and exclusiveness, therefore, seem to be generally oriented towards proximity or detachment. The semantic categories observed in relation to the uses of *you*, however, seem to be generally linked only with proximity, and these will be described in detail later.

Inclusiveness and exclusiveness, proximity and bonding are terms which have in fact been used in previous studies. Muhlhausler & Harré (1990), in a comprehensive study and review of the literature dealing with pronouns, also use the inclusive/exclusive distinction for the second person, unlike other authors who use it primarily for first person plural. They also refer to integrative uses of *we*, where "the social bonding aspect and the establishment of solidarity are of importance" (:174). Before them, Head (1978) had used the principles of social distance, proximity and inclusiveness, amongst a larger set of functions.

However, although these categories are not new and have oriented earlier studies, whether within a similar or different general perspective, there does not seem to have been any explicit attempt to relate different degrees of inclusiveness and exclusiveness to clines of proximity (or detachment) on the one hand and high (or low) bonding on the other. In addition, there appear to have been few efforts to relate functions of pronoun use to uses of modality and

transitivity. In fact, according to Muhlhausler & Harré (1990: 174), such relationships have been largely ignored by linguists.

2. Data

2.1. General characteristics

The data comprise four oral presentations delivered in the native language of the presenters (English), which were audio-recorded and transcribed. Two (TP1 and TP2) were delivered in Brazil at a conference of a technical-professional nature to a large, semi-specialised audience. The other two (AC1 and AC2) were delivered at an academic postgraduate seminar in a British university, to a small specialised audience. All four presentations were delivered as sub-events of thematic sessions conducted on one day. TP1 and TP2 were part of a round table session about environmental problems in urban centres; AC1 and AC2 were delivered as presentations reporting on ongoing research during a postgraduate seminar.

2.2. Detailed histories

The academic presentations (AC1 and AC2) were delivered by two university teachers in the English department of a British university in January 1993, during a research report seminar which was held as part of a regular programme of research presentations and workshops. This programme typically includes different types of presentations by internal or guest speakers and informal research workshops in which researchers invite the audience to work on specific data.

The academic presenters in this study had recently started their doctoral research and therefore played the roles of both teachers and doctoral research students in the department. Their audience included teachers, research fellows and postgraduate students in the department, all of whom were known to them. Their presentations were quite formal, short and were supported by handouts and OHP transparencies.

The aims of this type of presentation may include encouraging an exchange of ideas between researchers within the department, monitoring the progress of the researcher, and allowing newcomers in the department to observe how more experienced researchers carry out their research. At a macro-level, such research presentations can represent a transition ritual for the

researcher/presenter, involving an initial description of the research project and producing recognition of the researcher's changing status in the research community of the department.

As work in progress, the presentations are mainly narrative in style and display a high degree of speaker visibility and close attention to research design, methodology and related problems. The research presentations are therefore representative of a routine, traditional social-academic event, common in most universities and well established through practice over hundreds of years. In the type of institution which demands them and which they help to shape, their function is markedly interpersonal. Apart from the eventual gain of new information/knowledge by the expert members of the institution, they accomplish the task of conferring personal status (and power) to the researchers.

The two technical-professional presentations (TP1 and TP2) were delivered at a round table session that, in turn, was one of the events of a large public conference, SP ECO 92, held in São Paulo, Brazil, in June 1992. This round table offered information about environmental problems in urban centres and included four presentations, two of which were delivered by North Americans.

SP ECO 92 was "a kind of Rio-92 in São Paulo" (*Jornal do Brasil*, June 1st 1992), also referred to as a combination of "ECOBRAZIL-92, an International Exhibition of Environment Technology and an International Seminar bringing together universities, business organisations and communities and their relations with the environment" (*Folha de São Paulo*, June 9th 1992). These characterisations indicate that there had been an expectation that São Paulo would hold the World Conference, and that there was some resentment that Rio was the eventual choice.

At the time of SP ECO 92, every Brazilian newspaper discussed the agenda, the organisation and the political interfaces of Rio-92, especially the implications of Agenda 21 for the developing countries and the refusal by the USA to sign the Biodiversity Agreement. In addition to this, Rio-92 staged an intricate battle between the ideologies (both implicit and explicit) of the powerful first-world nations and developing countries around a new world order concerning the Environment. The themes chosen for SP ECO 92 - Sustainable Development and Biodiversity, among others - were treated with

direct reference to these political issues by many of the presenters and their audiences, who acted as participants in the debates after the presentations.

The ECO presentations are, for all these reasons, fairly singular. If, on the one hand, they can be matched to a broad generic pattern of conferences, on the other hand they were novel in the sense of having been the result, as much as they helped constitute, a new area of international debate over modern issues and problems among institutions holding conflicting forces and policies. Their main function, therefore, seems to be of an ideational nature, where the content of the arguments must reflect or foster (contentious) action. This raises expectations of deliveries carefully balanced between an audience and an argument orientation.

3. Procedures

The organisation and grammatical analysis of the data were conducted through concordances and collocations (Scott & Johns, 1993), and lexical frequencies and keywords in text (Scott, 1996). Initially, lexical frequencies and a list of keywords in each text were obtained for observation of the frequency status of the searched items. The concordancer was then used for the relevant lexical searches in context (text signals of the person system); these items were then analysed in terms of the lexical items they collocated with.

Together, these instruments made it possible to observe the frequency status of the pronouns across presentations, to separate the data into blocks according to the function of the pronouns in their contexts, and to observe these functional blocks as to the nature of their collocations. The organisational and analytical advantages of such instrumental procedures will become clearer as we present and discuss the results of the analysis.

4. Results and discussion

4.1. General

Frequency counts of the pronouns (Table 1) revealed that *we* forms were most frequent in TP2 and *you* forms were most frequent in TP1. While *you* forms in TP1 were only slightly more frequent than in the other presentations, *we* forms in TP2 were considerably more numerous.

The very low frequencies of *we* and *you* forms in the AC presentations are counterbalanced by the very high frequencies of *I* forms. With a frequency of 4.6% in AC1 and 5.8% in AC2, *I* forms appear as keywords. *I'm* and *I'd* are three and two times more frequent than they are in the rest of the data; similarly, *I'll*, *my*, *I've* and *I* are from four to two times more frequent. This confirms the earlier characterisation of AC1 and AC2 as presenter-oriented deliveries. Comparatively speaking, they show an extraordinarily high level of presenter visibility through the association of *I* to specific processes, as we shall see next.

| presentat. frequenc. | TP1 | TP2 | AC1 | AC2 |
|-------------------------|------|------|--------------|--------------|
| running words | 5264 | 3204 | 2000 | 995 |
| different words | 722 | 581 | 550 | 297 |
| % of <i>I</i> forms | 0.9% | 1.0% | 4.6% (kw) | 5.8% (kw) |
| % of <i>we</i> forms | 0.6% | 3.1% | 0.7% | 0.1% |
| % of <i>you</i> forms | 1.3% | 1.0% | 0.8% | 0.5% |

Table 1: Pronoun frequencies in the presentations

In the historical contexts of the deliveries, both the frequent use of *I* forms in the self-oriented academic reports and the numerous instances of *we* and *you* forms in the audience-oriented ECO presentations make sense.

The academic presenters' tasks are to obtain praise and agreement from their audiences and so keep and possibly develop the professional status they enjoy. In other words, the accomplishment of their tasks seems to be tightly linked to the personal and institutional expectations of the community they are already part of. These expectations are very possibly shared by the vast majority of their audience and could be demonstrated by two implicit questions: How does your research work relate to other research work in our community? What do you have to tell us about your research activities that can support your role in our community? In these circumstances, maintaining the focus on the things "I believe", "have been thinking about", "have been doing", is a natural strategy to meet the expectations of the audience.

The ECO presenters' tasks, on the other hand, are much more complex in nature. These include, among several other factors, the type of audience and the officially recognised politico-economic positions of the interactants. First, there is a double requirement for the presenters: to provide a heterogeneous audience with valuable information and to adopt efficient strategies of personal communication with an unfamiliar audience. Second, there is the need to do both in a politically asymmetric situation, where the ones who speak represent part of the developed world and the ones who listen are, in the main, citizens of an underdeveloped country. In this context, sharing attention between relevant content and a suitable method of address to the audience seems to be part of the difficult task of the presenters. Apart from any evaluation of how successful they may have been, it is possible to say that moving away from a self-oriented presentation may mean moving towards fulfilling the particular expectations in that context.

As a second step in this initial approach to the data, it may be useful to observe the collocates of the pronouns which stand out as particularly frequent in the presentations (Table 2). An integrated view of the choice of pronouns and the processes and/or nouns with which they collocate may give some indication of the types of roles and actions that are being projected by the presenters onto themselves or the audience.

| FREQUENCIES and COLLOCATIONS | TP1 | TP2 | AC1 | AC2 |
|--|-------------------|---|---|---|
| collocates of <i>I</i> forms as keywords | | | I, think, would, really, like, know, have, want, still, looking | I, want, got, have, think, try, going, know, my because |
| collocates of <i>we</i> forms as keywords | | have, area, our, DC, coast, population, enacted | | |
| collocates of <i>you</i> forms as keywords | see, can have, if | | | |

Table 2: Frequent collocates of pronouns

In AC1, *I* forms collocate with *I, think, would, really, like, know, have, want, still, looking* (in order of decreasing frequency). AC1's speaker visibility is displayed through links between *I* forms and processes of cognition (*think, know*), modulations of inclination (*would like, want, looking towards*), and processes of perception (*looking*). The processes with which *I* forms are combined seem to give an orderly development of AC1's research process: the main focus is placed on mental actions, which are followed by modulated inclinations for the future.

In AC2, *I* forms collocate with *I, want, got, have, think, try, going, know, my, because* (in decreasing order of frequency). Showing a somewhat different profile from AC1, AC2 starts with inclination (*want*), goes on to modality metaphors (*think*), modalizers of material and cognitive action (*try - to do, to look at, to take on board*) and ends up with cognition (*know*). The presentation seems to emphasise plans, modalize proposed actions and state knowledge, in that order.

You forms, the most frequent pronominal forms in TP1, collocate with *see, can, have, if*. This means the audience (*you*) is projected as people who perceive (*see*) things, who have the potentiality to do things (*can support, intervene, afford, call*), who are put in the position to have (*possess*) and to have to do things, and who are addressed through deferential conditionals (*if*).

We forms in TP2 collocate with the relational possessive *have*, some thematic nominal referents area, *DC* (initials of the county the presenter comes from), *coast, population* and the modulated form *enacted* (*initiatives* and *laws*), which carries high value within obligation. Whatever referents there may be for the *we* forms chosen by this presenter (see below), these are associated with a limited number of processes and an extended number of nominal groups.

Because of the semantic complexity of *we* and *you* forms, it is impossible, at this stage, to try to offer an explanation for the reasons and purposes for such collocations. The general description presented above, therefore, seems to point towards the need to specify the projection of roles through the use of *we* and *you* forms in greater detail, which we shall do in the next section.

4.2. Projected Roles in the presentations: *We* and *You* Forms

An observation of the function of *we* forms in the light of the notions of degrees of proximity and bonding revealed two main categories: inclusive and non-inclusive role-attributing pronouns. A third category, more marginal in the data, will be referred to as personification. Sub-types of the three categories have been identified, but some have revealed themselves to be present more often in the data than others. In the results presented below, only those which can be adequately exemplified are included. The others will need to be re-examined in the light of more extensive data in the future.

a) Inclusive

As we said above (section II), when the presenters attribute the semantic value of inclusiveness to *we* forms, they bring themselves and audience together as the participants in a process.

The use of inclusive pronouns was observed in one presentation from each context, namely TP1 (6 occurrences) and AC1 (9 occurrences). The shared experiences these two presenters refer to are, however, very different in nature. As will be apparent from the examples below, most of the uses of TP1's inclusive pronouns are attached to transitory processes related to perception. AC1, on the other hand, links the use of inclusiveness to the sharing of material processes of a more permanent nature and often introduces them with modal forms.

Inclusive pronouns in TP1

...and we'll be hearing from our friends from Toronto short briefly.

...in fact this man is the gentleman we saw earlier who works for the energy utility...

...what cities can do to address the problems that we've been hearing about today.

Inclusive pronouns in AC1

...when we bring people into what we should be doing with our students who perhaps are...

...and I think we tend to generalise without much many studies to go on...

This paper has proposed that the choice of inclusive pronouns, i.e., the sharing of experiences with the audience, may foster proximity and

possibly a positive degree of bonding between presenter and audience. However, the importance and lasting effect of the experiences shared appears to be greater in AC1 than in TP1. The processes expressed in combination with *we* by TP1 are essentially procedural from the point of view of the presentation as a whole, whereas the (often modalized) processes attached to *we* forms by AC1 are clearly related to the content of the research report.

The combination of the findings discussed so far allows us to say that, in its basic self-orientation, AC1 adopts some strategies which may promote proximity to the audience. TP1, on the other hand, uses inclusive *we* forms only to maintain audience-orientation procedures. More effective interactive strategies emerge through other semantic categories, as we shall see later. As to TP2, the general approach to the data (Table 1) tells us that *we* forms are frequent but that they are not used to promote inclusiveness.

b) Non-inclusive

As we have seen before, non inclusive *we* forms are related to a presenter's decision to refer to him/herself as part of a group which does not include the audience. As the presenter attributes to him/herself roles which highlight the distance between him/her and the audience, some degree of detachment and possibly a lower degree of bonding are promoted on the basis of two main types of distinctions: those related to origin and to status.

b1) detachment related to origin (professional, cultural or geographical)

As is apparent from the examples below, TP2 is the presentation where there is most emphasis on detachment related to origin. The purpose of the presenter is to describe environmental problems which the community to which he belongs has faced, and to report on the solutions found to those problems. This purpose is thematic at the level of discourse, i.e., the geographical area he is going to refer to is explicitly mentioned at the very beginning of the presentation. His choice of including possessives as introducers to so many references to locatives (see examples below) seems to be, therefore, a choice to reinforce himself, his community and his experiences as drastically distinct from his audience, their communities and experiences. References are made to

both problems and solutions, which meets the expectations of the general purposes of the event. If this nucleus of references to the presenter and his background is brought together with the use of non-inclusive pronouns related to status (see next section), it may be understood as a powerful report of personal/institutional success. This interpretation may be particularly attractive in the context of a conference in Brazil, attended by more locals than foreigners, where success in solving urban environmental problems is far from being the rule. For these reasons, TP2 seems to promote a high degree of detachment from his audience and, consequently, very little bonding.

Non-inclusive pronouns related to origin in TP2

...we actually lost all of the sand that covered our beaches.

Our economy in DC is based on growth and development

...which shows why the State of Florida, in our region, is at such great risk...

To give an idea how high the water table is in our region, you only have to dig a hole about a meter deep

The air quality in our community is quite good, the only problem we do have...

we had the sand actually pumped back in from our shore areas to recreate the beach...

...and the underlying rock layer beneath our soil is very poor.

...the fact that we really have no heavy industry in our area.

To our west is found E. Park as I previously mentioned.

...the tankers that through our waters are required to stay well off shore so that...

...because of the dense population that we have on our coast...

...we have to maintain in this area in terms of our fresh water drinking resources.

...in our area there is a tremendous battle for that water

we've enacted a lot of laws in DC to make sure that we don't contaminate that precious drinking water supply...

...projects in the world if not the largest...we do have bits and pieces of natural beach left...

we actually lost all of the sand that covered our beaches...

we're one of the seven communities...

The use of non-inclusive pronouns in AC1 is more natural, since it is attached to external professional actions reported during the presentation.

Non-inclusive pronouns related to origin in AC1

...came out of the needs analysis that I did and how we adjusted that proto-syllabus in an EAP context...

...one of the things that we very much took on board was the need...

b2) detachment related to status (spheres of action, responsibility or leadership)

In contrast with the natural and therefore neutralised effect of exclusive *we* in the academic report discussed above, the force of detachment displayed in the TP presentations seems, as we shall see below, to be greater.

As discussed above, the uses of non-inclusive pronouns related to status in TP2 gear the entire block of non-inclusive uses of the pronouns towards a declaration of difference and success, with consequent detachment and possibly a low degree of bonding. This is particularly evident in the immediate clause contexts surrounding the pronoun, whether due to the impact of some of the material processes (*enact, take steps, do*), or owing to the (highly positive) evaluation of nearby participants (*tremendous investments, very touchy balance*).

Detachment related to status deriving from the spheres of action, responsibility and leadership occupied by the presenter were observed in the TP presentations only. Initially, therefore, it is clear that the TP presenters are more powerful than the AC presenters in relation to their audiences. This asymmetry may derive mainly from personal status and expertise and, additionally, from power in relation to broader cultural issues. We believe that both aspects of the question may be true. In relation to the TP presenters, the AC presenters are less experienced as presenters, are younger, and are working towards a status of high expertise in their professional areas. From the point of view of their relative power over the audience, they are also at a disadvantage, since their presentations were attended by researchers of equal or higher levels of experience. In broader cultural-political terms, the TP presenters were first-world representatives talking to an audience of representatives from an environmentally problematic developing country. The AC presenters and their audiences were culturally homogeneous.

Non-inclusive pronouns related to status in TP1

...we were initially focusing our efforts on working with cities in the so called developed world..

...we have this project called the Urban CO2 Reduction Project...

So what we are trying to do with this project, among other goals,...

And in general we found that in the European cities there is a lot more...

I might mention that we're proud to have, eh, the city of Sao Paulo as one of our members...

...in Europe to North America, where we have the highest responsibility for contribution to...

Non-inclusive pronouns related to status in TP2

Our department has a staff of three hundred and fifty...

...to address the environmental problems we have in DC.

...in order to protect the tremendous investments we have in the buildings that lie on the beach today.

So, it's a very touchy balance that we have to maintain in this area in terms of our...

We hope to reduce CO2 emissions by completing...

...and we became aware of that when we started monitoring...

What have we done in DC of locally to address some of these...

...by completing our rapid rail system which we hope will expand throughout the county...

...contrary to a lot of the environmental policy that we are trying to enact locally...

One other thing we need to mention too is we have enacted a law that requires that...

So we've enacted a lot of laws in DC to make sure that...

For that reason we've taken steps to ensure at these areas aren't contaminated...

c) Personification

In addition to the categories of inclusive and non-inclusive *we* forms, whose functions seem to be relatively clear in terms of greater proximity or detachment, a few instances of the use of *we* were observed for purposes of personification of existential processes. Instead of straightforward existential processes like *there is/are* (e.g. *in the 20's there were flocks of birds*), or prepositional phrases (e.g. *the agricultural community in DC*), TP2 uses *we + have* systematically (see examples below). We believe such choices can be seen as instances of non-

inclusive *we*, since they reveal a preferred focus on subjective (exclusive) forms (all in thematic positions), rather than objective (neutral) forms.

Personification of existential processes in TP2

mainly because of the dense population that we have on our coast and the fact that we consume so much...

In the 20's, we had flocks of birds that numbered hundreds of thousands...

...the urban area and the agricultural community we have in DC...

...and we have a population close to two million people...

...so we have quite a bit of leadership in DC that believes...

...due the fact that we really have no heavy industry in our area.

It is important to notice that TP2 is the presentation which most typically exhibits use of exclusive *we* forms. Not only does it display the most instances of exclusiveness related to origin and status, but it is solely responsible for the exclusive semantic value observed in the personification of existential processes. This gives TP2 a different kind of orientation from that observed for the AC presentations. These have been referred to as self- or presenter-oriented, and the use of *I* forms, discussed above, seems to provide evidence for the claim. TP2, however, is not presenter-oriented in the same sense, since it avoids *I* as a preferred, visible, choice. Instead, it chooses *we*, which is naturally ambiguous and potentially an expected marker of proximity in this context, though this is not accomplished. Following this line of reasoning, we would like to suggest that, in its uses of *we* forms, TP2 is oriented by detachment from the audience.

You Forms

Contrary to the use of *we* forms, which may have contrasting functions of promoting greater proximity or detachment, the use of *you* forms assigns roles which seem to vary along the same semantic continuum, with different degrees of proximity and bonding established with the audience. The different degrees of proximity proposed lead towards some hypotheses related to a lesser or greater success of the bonding effect. Formulae, and Direct Address, categories a) and b), discussed and exemplified below, seem to be the least effective; Deference and Assignment of Contextual Roles, categories c) and d) seem to be the most effective.

a) Formulae

Formulaic uses of *you* forms keep interaction with the audience explicit through the use of fillers, or serve as appropriate forms for the initiation and conclusion of presentations. Both TP presentations show manifestations of the latter and none of the former. The AC presentations, on the contrary, display several instances of fillers and no thanking forms. It is, in fact, almost mandatory for presenters who have a low degree of intimacy with their audiences (TPs) to use introductory or finalising "thank you" forms, whereas this would sound out of place in contexts where presenter and audience know each other very well (ACs).

Fillers, however, seem to be connected to other related factors. The degree of planning of the presentations in the two different contexts is different and fillers may give the presenters more time to articulate the following unit, if it has not been strictly planned in advance; planning, in turn, is intimately related to degrees of formality and deference. The TP presentations most certainly went through more careful planning than the AC presentations. The TP presentations would be delivered in a politically sensitive environment to a very large and unknown audience. The AC presentations, on the other hand, though they may have meant more strain for the presenters, were made to a politically willing, relatively homogeneous, very well-known and friendly group. The examples below may support these considerations.

Formulae in TP1

Thank you very much. I'm going to also show some...

Formulae in TP2

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to show...

Formulae in AC1

...this would have less of a value because obviously you know there wouldn't be a set syllabus...

I'm talking about that ideally you know if one had funded research for example

...but I'm really thinking you know it would be better just to forget about...

...separation of work life and private life all these you know I think we can see...

...wouldn't be a set syllabus or that sort of thing you know published information...

Formulae in AC2

...but I think it's more a question of you know informing myself more...

...and obviously you know discourse analysis will be very central when...

...research and that you know there they were in these conferences...

b) Direct Address

In the same way as the fillers and introductory/concluding remarks discussed above, the use of procedural *you* is here considered to have a weak bonding-promoting influence. It simply means "you listening to me", "you the people I am talking to". It is still a choice towards proximity, of course, since it could always be replaced by impersonal forms, agentless passives or other resources to avoid direct address. But because it is the norm in face-to-face interaction, it seems to lose the bonding effect it might assume in a written communicative event, for example. Of all the four presentations, only AC2 does not present any instances of this common function.

Direct Address in TP1

...to tell you about, a bit about this project.
 ...created separated bicycle paths as the one I showed you earlier...
 ...most of the housing you have here in Sao Paulo...
 ...these are the major culprits and you'll see on the far left...
 On the far right you see Ankara, Turkey.
 ...and there you see the residential, commercial and industrial...

Direct Address in TP2

What I would like to do today is share with you...
 At this time I'd like to go ahead and show you a brief video-tape...
 ...the sandy strip that you see there is all...
 ...that will give you some background of the state...
 It's a pleasure to be here with you today...

Direct Address in AC1

...in medicine or something like this as you can see one of the very interesting questions I was...
 ...so that's where I'm up to at present but obviously you can see how far I...
 ...really where I want to talk to you about today my project as it were it's not yet...
 I think obviously you can see that I'm very much affected by the answers...
 ...of the things I've been telling you here I think the most useful thing...

c) Deference

Deference associated with the use of *you* was only observed in the context of *if*-clauses. Its connection with the present tense makes it less deferential than it could be if combined with past tenses (*could*,

compared, noticed, etc.). As part of a choice that implies a (rhetorical) request for agreement with an opinion or, more normally, a (rhetorically) polite request for action, it is here considered an effective grammatical choice to establish proximity. Occurrences of this use were observed in TP1 and AC2, as exemplified below.

Deference in TP1

this community engaged in a very heated battle, if you can believe it in the USA, to allow...

...this kind of architecture, if you can call it that.

And what it is doing is, if you notice the circles on this picture...

Deference in AC2

I've got a piece of paper for people if you're interested in it with a bibliography...

...in these conferences not being not having if you like a positive role...

d) Assignment of Contextual Roles

Of all cases of proximity promoted through the use of *you*, the category we have named Assignment of Contextual Roles seems to us to be the most effective in establishing proximity. It is also certainly the category which most depends on an assessment of the interpretation of what the addressee may consider "welcome", since here the presenter projects onto the audience unknown, inexperienced roles, which he/she presumes will be welcomed by the audience. If welcome contextual roles in fact increase the degree of bonding, attributing unwelcome contextual roles will be a feature of successful offence or an unsuccessful attempt to use this choice to promote positive bonding.

TP1 is the presentation which uses this feature the most, followed by TP2, with a couple of instances. Neither of the AC presentations show any evidence of this function.

It is interesting to notice that the processes related to the attribution of contextual roles by TP1 (see the examples below), are either processes of doing (*intervene, create, do, support, find, integrate, transport, get (in a car)*) or of sensing (*notice, see*). In other words, they are invitations to share actions and perceptions which, in the real world being described, are performed or experienced by different types of agents: the leader (who intervenes, creates, takes action), the ordinary citizen (who has a home,

gets in a car and drives to the shops), the anonymous observer (who notices the quality of life in H, sees people getting together to play cards). Moreover, many of these invitations are made more emphatic by the use of carefully chosen modals of possibility (*can*) or obligation (*have to*), which are carefully suited to the importance of or strain involved in the process.

Assignment of Contextual Roles in TP1

...amount of carbon, eh, emitted by each city and where you can best intervene to reduce that carbon, those

...and it's also through these densities that you can afford to create district heating systems.

So, what can you do? Municipalities can take action...

And it's through these densities that you can support public transit systems...

...but is now owned again by people, you find at all parts of the day large congregations...

...as the one I showed you earlier or in areas where you have to integrate or cross...

...or you have to transport yourself by car to get...So in order to go shopping in this neighbourhood you have to get in a car and drive...

...used to be the street level pedestrian area. And you'll notice that the quality of life...

...citizens getting together to play cards, you see groups of forty, fifty, sixty people...

Assignment of Contextual Roles in TP2

...have to dig a hole about a meter deep until you hit the ground water...

...you only have to dig a hole about a meter deep until you...

...we have the same symptomatic problems that you find anywhere.

Today you are lucky if you see a flock...

As we have seen, *you* as a choice which may promote proximity and, possibly, bonding, is shared by all four presentations. This is expected and conforms nicely to the face-to-face nature of the communicative events in focus. However, different degrees of proximity have been attributed to the choice of *you*. Those regarded as most effective, deference and assignment of contextual roles, are exhibited to the greatest degree by TP1.

If we add this last point to our previous discussion, it is now possible to say that TP1 accomplishes the address to the audience through particularly creative interactive strategies, whereas TP2 fails to display the type of interaction expected in the context of the ECO presentations. The academic presentations, in turn, seem to remain within expected levels of interaction of presenter-oriented academic reports.

| | TYPE OF ORIENTATION | AUDIENCE ORIENT. | | PRESENTER ORIENT. | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------|------|-------------------|------|
| | | TP1 | TP2 | AC1 | AC2 |
| | % of I forms | 0.9% | 1.0% | 4.6% | 5.8% |
| | % of we forms | 0.6% | 3.1% | 0.7% | 0.1% |
| | % of you forms | 1.3% | 1.0% | 0.8% | 0.5% |
| IMPACT | FUNCTIONS | TP1 | TP2 | AC1 | AC2 |
| +Detachment -Bonding | Detachment related to origin (we) | 0 | 28 | 3 | 0 |
| | Detachment related to status (we) | 8 | 15 | 0 | 0 |
| | Personification (we) | 0 | 8 | 0 | 0 |
| +Proximity +Bonding | Formulae (you) | 3 | 1 | 5 | 3 |
| | Direct Address (you) | 13 | 9 | 10 | 0 |
| | Inclusive (we) | 6 | 0 | 9 | 0 |
| | Deference (you) | 4 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| | Assignment of Contextual Roles (you) | | | | |
| | | 11 | 5 | 0 | 0 |

Table 3: *I*, *WE* and *YOU* forms: A quantitative summary of functions across the data

At this point, it may be helpful to give a summary of the uses of *I*, *we* and *you* forms across the data. In Table 3, above, the presentations are first identified as presenter- or audience-oriented. The use of *I*, *we* and *you* forms is shown in percentages across the presentations. Figures in bold type indicate frequency status: *I* forms are keywords in AC1 and AC2, i.e. significantly more frequent there than in the rest of the data, whereas *we* and *you* forms are most frequent in TP2 and TP1, although no statistical significance has been found.

The second paradigm observed across the presentations includes the semantic values of inclusiveness and exclusiveness, which may emerge through choices of *we* and *you*. These are shown on the table under the most specific category label which the values were placed under. So for example, exclusive *we* is detailed as detachment related to origin, detachment related to status and personification (of existential processes), the three specific categories formerly proposed. The figures for each of the specific category labels refer to the number of occurrences of a pronominal form with that function in context. The arrangement of the specific categories, in turn, follows a cline proposed for the third paradigm, the one related to impact.

Degrees of Proximity and Bonding, varying along a continuum, are attributed to the pronominal choices on the basis of a certain internal logic, arising from the patterning of the results, as well as the details of the histories of the presentations. Detachment related to origin, status and personification of

existential processes are proposed as a cluster somewhere near the +detachment/-bonding end, whereas inclusive *we*, deference and assignment of contextual roles are proposed as a cluster near the +proximity/+bonding end. The mid-categories should be understood as relatively neutral in impact, i.e. as expected features in oral presentations, and shared by at least three of the presentations in this study. Although the differences in the number of occurrences within them are not always easy to explain, some seem to reinforce the main features of the presentations as they are revealed in relation to the other categories. So, for example, the zero occurrence of direct address in AC2 seems to be the counterpart of the highest number of occurrences of *I* forms in that presentation. Likewise, a high number of occurrences of the same category in TP1 seems to match the interactive strategies used by the presenter.

To conclude our discussion, we would like to propose an evaluative profile of the presentations. In other words, we would like to draw some conclusions about the interactive styles of the presenters, as they are revealed through the functional-grammatical choices of pronouns, in the complex contexts where the presentations were delivered.

Along the paradigm of proximity and bonding, AC2 seems to be the most extreme example of an absence of interactive strategies, whereas TP1 displays the most creative and abundant use of such strategies. We need, however, to balance this judgment against the context and purposes of the presentations.

As a research report, neither AC1 nor AC2 was expected to be highly interactive. As explained above, both presenters were required to report on the content of the research and on the processes which they were going through. In this sense, the relatively higher level of interaction in AC1 may have struck the audience as a feature of a possibly more friendly style built into the presentation.

As an ECO presentation, TP1 seems to have managed to creatively combine the need for content with the need to cater for a number of complex political and cultural variables. TP2, in turn, seems to have been quite inadequate in this respect. Although the analysis here conducted is restricted to only one set of features, it suggests that very little provision was made for the audience to feel that they were important participants in the world created by the presenter. TP2 seems to have presented the information on his agenda in spite of the audience. In this sense, he may be said to have oriented his presentation by strategies of detachment and thus, possibly, to have promoted a low degree of bonding with the audience (see Thompson & Collins, 1994 for an evaluation of

the presentations from a pragmatic perspective, and Collins, 1994 for another evaluation based on the modal profiles of two of these presentations).

5. Conclusion

Our aim in this paper has been to observe the distribution of roles across two sets of culturally diverse oral presentations. Our proposal was to do this through an analysis of the pronominal choices the presenters made on the basis of the needs and purposes which the authors were able to derive from the presentations' detailed histories.

We understand that this is only a small step towards a better understanding of the several issues we have touched upon. In particular, we realise that the evaluative aspect of the analysis, i.e., the judgements made on the type of impact the presentations may have had on their audiences, would require a complementary study based on the reactions of the audiences involved, and/or on the judgement of other skilful presenters in similar communities. Although the interpretations made have been based on the analysis of the presentations as socially-placed discourse and display internal coherence, the reactions of the analysts as members of the audiences may be strengthened through validation to be obtained through further research.

We trust, however, that the discussions conducted may have thrown some light on the intricacies of some methodological procedures in critical discourse analysis, especially the difficulties related to the necessary critical dialogue between the analysis of the presentations as texts and as discourse. We believe this paper has achieved the aim of making more explicit that which was implicit, to defamiliarise that which was natural and familiar (Fowler, 1986), to bring to better levels of awareness that which was automatic. Above all, we hope that the paper may have provided fruitful insights into parts of the possible interactive profiles of presentations.

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