Language management in intercultural business networks

Investigating the process of noting

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This paper deals with language management within a transnational business network, with a specific focus on the process of noting. In an analysis of one business encounter involving one Japanese and one Australian business representative, language management is found to occur at the grammatical, (non-grammatical) communicative and also sociocultural/socioeconomic levels. Furthermore, the language management involves not just individual acts but also occurs at the level of the speech event, as seen through an analysis of how the participants perceive the function of the encounter and their respective roles vis-à-vis their own institutional networks. The data consists of a video-tape recording in conjunction with follow-up (stimulated recall) interviews with the two participants.

Keywords: language management, transnational business networks, noting

Introduction

Any contemporary study of language in society must take into account the effect of globalisation on the mobility of people, resulting in a massive expansion of contact between individuals from diverse language and cultural backgrounds (Blommaert, 2010). The emergence of transnational business institutions is another facet of this phenomenon during the last half of the twentieth century, as is the increasing number of transnational business networks involving contact between institutional representatives with diverse backgrounds. Although there are important exceptions (cf. Nekvapil & Nekula, 2006; Nekvapil & Sherman, 2009), sociolinguistic analyses of interactional encounters within these business networks remain limited and as such should constitute a vitally important focus for much more empirical research.

Investigating the language management (LM) found in such intercultural business networks presents one fruitful approach to our understanding of some of

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the interactional processes found within them. In recent times the term language management is sometimes used in a loose manner (cf. Spolsky, 2004, 2009) but here it refers to the specific framework developed by Neustupný and Jernudd (see Jernudd & Neustupný, 1987). The origins go back to Neustupný's theory of correction (Neustupný, 1978) which was then developed into the language management framework (also referred to as a theory or model) (Jernudd & Neustupný, 1987; Neustupný, 1985a). Simultaneously, Neustupný also selected or developed some methodological tools which have enabled scholars to accompany its application (Neustupný, 2004b).

In one of his last theoretical papers, Neustupný summarised the three main components of the Language Management Theory (LMT) as incorporation of both simple and organised management; inclusion of grammatical, (non-grammatical)[1] communicative and sociocultural management; and a process-based model (Neustupný, 2004a: 1). Overlapping with the time when Hymes (1972) was working on his ethnography of communication, in the early years and even later Neustupný frequently drew upon the main factors found in Hymes's model to analyse the principal sociolinguistic features of human interaction. In addition, he extended Hymes's enumeration by adding the significant component of language management. From the outset, the language management framework (LMF) was frequently applied to intercultural contact situations as a means of understanding the corrective, as against the generative, rules of language (Neustupný, 1985a: 44).

Emphasised by Neustupný and incorporated into all of his language education policies and practices was the categorization of grammatical (or linguistic), (non-grammatical) communicative[2] (earlier referred to as sociolinguistic) and sociocultural components (or competence), all of which constituted interaction. At times Neustupný (1989) substituted the term "sociocultural" with "socioeconomic", the latter concept being a sub-set of the former. While attention to the relationship between language and culture is crucial in a number of theories and frameworks, on occasion, constructs like "culture" and "communication" have been used loosely and in quite different ways. Neustupný's categorization was important because of the long-standing historical emphasis upon linguistic components in language education (a strong personal interest of his), and while the boundaries of (non-grammatical) communicative and sociocultural components are not always clear-cut, the simple triadic categorization has been useful.

Also central in this model is an outline of the language management stages or phases. Here, management is said to commence with the noting of any deviation which has been generated in the situation, with the concept of norm deviation being an entirely neutral one. The basic stages of (a) noting, (b) evaluation — which may be positive, neutral or negative, (c) the selection of an adjustment, and (d) implementation of the adjustment allow us to view the different processes found in the interaction (Neustupný, 2004a: 6). Neustupný's interest was thus in the full range of management processes, including noting and evaluation, which were often not pursued in those studies on repair or correction which typically focused upon the final adjustments themselves. In particular, the LMF placed importance on all of these stages, also referred to as processes, and through them we have been able to identify many significant features of contact situation behaviour.

Over the past two to three decades, Schmidt's (Schmidt & Frota,1986; Schmidt, 1994) concept of "noticing" as briefly described elsewhere in this issue by Nekvapil (2012), Nemoto (2012) and others has clearly assumed great significance in second language acquisition/second language learning and reaching research. Various chapters in the recent *Handbook of Research in Second Language Teaching and Learning* (volume II) (Hinkel, 2011), for instance, reveal that this concept has been incorporated into or is relevant to the "focus-on-form" approach (Loewen, 2011: 582), the conscientiousness-raising model (Ur, 2011: 516), corrective feedback (Sheen & Ellis, 2011: 596), content-based second language teaching and vocabulary learning (Lyster, 2011: 618, 635), intercultural pedagogy (Liddicoat, 2011: 841), and that it has had a role in the development of more explicit grammar-teaching procedures in second language teaching (Ur, 2011: 512) and in studies on working memory (DeKeyser & Koeth, 2011: 402), among other areas. Although its widespread adoption has also been accompanied at times by inconsistent usage and controversies, as outlined by Nekvapil (2012), it remains, nonetheless, a concept of much importance.

Nor has the activity of noticing not gone unacknowledged or untreated in sociolinguistic studies, outside of the work undertaken within the framework of LM and as represented in this issue. One conspicuous recent work deserves mention. In their sociolinguistic-oriented treatment of language in society, particularly as a result of the predominant contemporary characteristic of superdiversity, Blommaert and Rampton (2011) stress the need for ethnographic descriptions of interactions and here they highlight the extent to which normativity (or as they label it, "ought-ness") pervades semiosis and communication (p. 12):

> For much of the time, most of the resources materialized in any communicative action are unnoticed and taken for granted, but it only takes a slight deviation from habitual and expected practice to send recipients into interpretative overdrive, wondering what's going on when a sound, a word, a grammatical pattern, a discourse move or bodily movement doesn't quite fit. There is considerable scope for variation in the norms that individuals orient to, which affects the kinds of thing they notice as discrepant, and there can also be huge variety in the situated indexical interpretations that they bring to bear ('good' or 'bad', 'right' or 'wrong', 'art' or 'error', 'call it out' or 'let it pass', 'indicative or typical of this or

> that'). These normative expectations and explanatory accounts circulate through social networks that range very considerably in scale….

In relation to the selection of terms to be used in the LMF, Jernudd recalls that he and Neustupný did not have any particular reason for selecting the term "noting" rather than "noticing" (Nekvapil, personal communication) when originally formulating the LM model (Jernudd & Neustupný, 1987). On the other hand, Neustupný advised that he employed the notion of "noting" in the LM model in order to avoid problems associated with such terms as "consciousness" and "awareness", because of the way in which the latter terms were used by different scholars working in a variety of fields in different ways in conjunction with the concept of "noticing" (Neustupný, personal communication, 2004). Nevertheless, as Nekvapil (2012) shows, in Neustupný's earlier writings there is variation between these terms descriptively, though in statements outlining the model itself, "noting" appears to be the term used after 1985. On the assumption that the concepts of "noticing" and "noting" share similar semantic meaning (cf. Nekvapil, 2012), and that "noticing" has been the term traditionally used within cognitive and psychological treatments whereas "noting" is the one featured within the LM approach, in this paper I will employ the latter term.

Considerable application of the LMF has already been undertaken by Neustupný (Neustupný 1994, 1996, 2003, 2004a, 2005; Neustupný & Nekvapil 2003) and others, but there still remains much to be explored, including the stage or process of noting which does not appear to have been investigated in any major way prior to the workshop from which the present papers found in this issue arose. Similar to other contributions found here, this paper focuses upon the process of noting. Specifically, I investigate what kind of noting takes place in interaction within a transnational business network, examine how we can identify this noting phenomena and also consider how noting is connected with the other stages of language management. In addition, I will methodologically probe how the follow-up interview can be used to investigate noting and related processes. Finally, a further aim of this paper is to briefly summarize the beginnings of the LMF and particularly Neustupný's contribution to its development.

Although instances of noting may be apparent from the discourse of interactants themselves through their use, for example, of certain checking devices, as argued by Sherman (2012), it is also the case that some noting phenomena may not surface, especially in those instances where no further management is evident on the surface level, or at least not be readily evident to the researcher. Consequently, appropriate methodological procedures must be implemented in our attempt to identify and examine the occurrence or non-occurrence of the noting process. In conjunction with the application of the LMF, Neustupný recommended the use of the follow-up interview (often referred to elsewhere as the stimulated recall interview) as a retrospective method of data collection to extend sociolinguistic inquiry, particularly the study of norms (Neustupný, 1990). His short 1990 paper on the follow-up interview was already written as an appendix for a 1985 publication (Neustupný, 1985b) and used by him and some of his students during the 1980s. For instance, a study in which Neustupný himself employed a follow-up interview to investigate language management was presented at a Singapore conference in 1988 (Neustupný, 1994). The stimulated recall interview was already established in research by this time, especially in disciplines such as psychology, even if its use in sociolinguistics and applied linguistics was rather restricted up until that time and still remains a greatly under-utilized research methodology (cf. Gass and Mackey, 2000).

The data

The data drawn upon for this study consists of a first business encounter between a Japanese representative of a manufacturing company, stationed in Melbourne, and a small Australian cheese manufacturer who set up the meeting for the purpose of selling his cheese to the Japanese company. Although the data was originally gathered as part of a previous larger study of politeness in intercultural business situations employing an ethnographic approach, the two methodological procedures of video tape-recording of the meeting, and follow-up interviews with both participants undertaken separately, subsequently allowed different analyses to be undertaken (cf. Marriott, 1990, 1995).

Regarding the biographical trajectories of the two interactants, the senior Japanese representative was a university graduate and one of two personnel appointed to Melbourne by a large Japanese institutional dairy manufacturer and processor. He had resided in Melbourne for just two and half months at the time of the fieldwork. It was his first period of residence overseas though he had travelled overseas from Japan on business on four previous occasions. At 43 years of age, he had been employed by the company for 20 years and had earlier studied English at school and more recently at an intensive training institute in Japan. The Australian businessman had worked in different positions within the cheese industry for a considerable period and had established his own company 12 months earlier, with the company now employing 12 staff. He had completed Year 11 of secondary school and was 41 years of age. Although his company was in the process of expanding overseas at the time of the meeting, he had experienced minimal previous experience in business networks involving Japanese personnel.

The meeting, which was video tape-recorded, took place in the Melbourne office of the Japanese businessman. The meeting had been initiated by the Australian through a telephone call to arrange a meeting with the Japanese at the latter's office in order to promote his company's cheese product in Japan. Prior to this telephone call, I had visited the same Japanese office and had asked for future opportunities to video tape-record a business meeting between the Japanese representative and an Australian business person. After the above-described business appointment was made, the Japanese invited me to record this meeting, and upon gaining agreement from the Australian businessman (who also obtained his partner's consent), this occurred. Immediately following the end of the meeting, the video tape-recording was re-played on a video screen, first to the Australian businessman who was asked a series of questions during the follow-up interview, after which a follow-up interview took place with the Japanese participant. Both interviews were audio tape-recorded.

The occurrence of noting phenomena

In the study examined here, a number of features relating to noting as conceptualised in the LMF, in conjunction with other integral processes, can be identified. In particular, this interaction between the Australian and Japanese businessmen was characterised by a lot of management activity, including management of a grammatical, (non-grammatical) communicative and sociocultural/socioeconomic nature. During the business encounter, the Japanese participant actually made a large number of grammatical deviations in English, though most of them did not appear to be noted and thus did not proceed to further management, either as a result of management by the speaker himself, that is, self-management, or by the Australian, in this case, constituting other-management. Nevertheless, from an examination of the discourse and the follow-up interview, it is evident that some of the occurrences that were considered to be norm deviations (by at least one of the parties) of (non-grammatical) communicative or sociocultural/socioeconomic norms were followed by one or more of the processes found in the LMF — noting, evaluation, and selection of an adjustment or implementation of an adjustment.

In many of the LM studies undertaken to date, the analysis of noting has often focused upon individual linguistic acts (cf. Neustupný, 1994; Pasfield-Neofitou, 2012). However, drawing upon the fundamental concepts of speech acts and speech events, as formulated in Hymes's (1972) SPEAKING model, management does not only apply at the level of language but also to the various components of communication, including the speech event itself. In this particular interaction, management was indeed found at the level of individual linguistic acts, but in addition it was also identified in relation to sequences of acts or to the overall speech event at the discourse level. Indeed, one of the most consequential instances of noting undertaken by the Australian participant in this interaction was at the speech event level and was related to the function of the meeting itself.

The example to be outlined here points to the existence of multiple sociocultural/socioeconomic norms being applied in this intercultural business encounter, with the Japanese interactant apparently applying his Japanese norms and the Australian applying his own different Australian norms.[3] Early in the interaction when asked by the Japanese about the purpose of his visit, the Australian described his proposal of wanting to export his company's cheese to Japan or else manufacture it there. Accordingly, the Australian had expected the Japanese to express clearly if the latter was interested in the proposal and if so, he volunteered to bring a set of fresher samples of cheese for the Japanese to forward to Japan. This norm (that is, an expression of interest to proceed with further talks and/action) was clearly explicated in the follow-up interview with the Australian interactant:

(1) Int: Your first proposition to him was that he eat this lot of cheese and that you would bring him another lot. You had to repeat that several times.
A: I didn't want him to send those samples. They'd been out of refrigeration for half a day.
Int: You weren't as direct as that, as to say, "I don't want you to send these".
A: Well I was only trying to emphasise the fact that I'd get him samples to send over IF he decides to proceed.

From the Australian's perspective, the meeting ended inconclusively. Because the response of the Japanese was to agree to forward the information to Japan and to visit the Australian company, strategies that accorded with the latter's own Japanese sociocultural/socioeconomic norms, the Australian interpreted the actions of the Japanese as a norm deviation which was contrary to his own expectation and evaluated it negatively. In other words, discourse from the follow-up interview reveals that the Australian had noted the absence of an explicit commitment of interest of the kind he expected. This claim was further corroborated in another sequence within the follow-up interview, when he declared as follows:

(2) A: Well basically there's no trouble spot except that I don't really know what he's going to do. It finished a bit unconcluded.

Again, at the end of the follow-up interview he repeated his dissatisfaction and apparent frustration about the outcome of the meeting:

(3) Int: Is there anything else you'd like to bring out, either specifically or in general?
A: … just that there wasn't any clear conclusion to the meeting….

The above sequences clearly show conspicuous noting activity on the part of the Australian in relation to his perceptions of the outcome of the meeting, and in conjunction with these, strong negative evaluations. During the actual encounter itself, there is evidence of adjustments being made on the part of this Australian interactant, where he repeats his offer several times to bring fresh new samples of cheese which could be forwarded to Japan (cf. Extract (1)).

On the other hand, it appeared that the language behaviour of the Japanese participant was motivated by different norms and for him the main objective of the first interaction was to obtain details about the Australian company in order to pass these on to the head office in Japan, and accordingly, during the meeting with the Australian he explained the course of action that he would take. As a network member of an extremely large business institution, the role played by this Japanese representative was clearly revealed during his discourse in the encounter itself as well as in the follow-up interview. I was unable to decipher for the Japanese interactant any occurrence of noting or subsequent negative evaluation concerning the outcome of the meeting, either through an analysis of the video-recorded interaction or the follow-up interview, as he appeared to be applying his own routine communicative and socio-economic norms. Furthermore, I found no evidence either in the meeting discourse or in the subsequent interview to indicate that the Japanese was aware of the interpretation placed upon the encounter by the Australian or the latter's accompanying dissatisfaction. In contrast, however, the Australian had noted the absence of the kind of agreement he had anticipated from his business interactant, and not surprisingly, negatively evaluated this conclusion, as already described.

Not uncommonly, empirical research on interaction in contact situations has tended to focus on one of the participants in the dyadic interaction. Traditionally, it is the sociolinguistic norm of the base language (in the case examined here, English) against which deviations are seen, yet to claim that one of these perspectives is more privileged than the other in the contact situation can be regarded as problematic. It is through application of the LMF and in particular the role of noting and evaluation that enables us to see how two interactants can differ in their noting, evaluative and/or adjustment behaviour in the same context, and in turn, we can understand the reasons for the tensions that were expressed by one of the parties in the data of the follow-up interview.

Examination of the meeting discourse thus shows that the Japanese businessman had explicitly agreed to a reasonable course of action but this was not adequately decoded by the Australian, whose norm, as he explained in the interview, required an explicit expression of interest by the other party to the proposal he advanced. This instance reveals that some messages are not comprehended by the other party in the contact situation when there is some incongruity between the participants' communicative or sociocultural norms (Marriott, 1990: 47). Analysis of this discourse on the surface level may suggest that it is the largish amount of grammatical and (non-grammatical) communicative deviations of the Japanese speaker's English that detract from the Australian clearly comprehending the message of the former. However, when the Australian summarized his evaluation of the outcome of the encounter, as seen in Extracts (2) and (3) above, it was clearly the lack of a verbal expression of interest or agreement by the Japanese to proceed further which formed the basis of his judgement.

The issue of what constitutes a norm deviation and how noting (or the absence of noting) proceeds in interaction is of theoretical importance. In this encounter, both participants appear to be following their own individual native norms in interpreting and evaluating the outcome of the meeting and in their setting out of a course of action to subsequently pursue. In other words, there appear to be multiple norms arising from the Australian and Japanese sociocultural/socioeconomic norms as presented by these two individuals in this particular context. From the perspective of the Australian, the behaviour of the Japanese did not concur with his own expectations and hence he proceeded through the noting and evaluation stages of LM. For the Japanese individual, there was no norm deviation and hence no LM in this regard.

There is further evidence that allows us to identify the absence of noting by one of the interactants in the business encounter. Connected with the above-mentioned issue of the function of an interaction, is the role of personnel in business networks. In this context, different norms seemed to be held by the two participants, with the Australian expecting the Japanese businessman to act as the initial decision-maker (see Extracts (1)–(3)), who would then contact the head office if a favourable decision was made. On the contrary, several times during the interaction, the Japanese had informed the Australian of his intention to report to head office. This was further confirmed by the Japanese in the follow-up interview:

(4) Int: Yes, so what made you finish the meeting?
J: Ah because I got enough ah information from him so that I can make a report to head office so that I finished.

There is thus evidence both through the encounter discourse and confirmed in the follow-up interview, that the Japanese interactant was satisfied with the meeting outcome and that his course of subsequent action (to report to head office) was clear.

The Japanese thus viewed his prime role as conveying the information to Japan, while the Australian saw the Japanese as possessing the power of initial decision-making. This lack of shared interpretations of the function of the initial encounter, in conjunction with the roles of network personnel, thus contributed to the noting and negative evaluations by the Australian.

During the interaction, two matters of significance to the Japanese participant concerned whether the Australian company possessed a patent and the proposal for the sharing arrangements between partners. These, particularly the possession of a patent, were vital socioeconomic issues for the Japanese. The positioning of these topics in the discourse was also of significance. The Japanese positioned the topic of patents early in the interaction and the sharing arrangements a little latter, but the same speaker re-introduced and repeated both of these topics during the course of the interaction. Other than the positioning of these items, coupled with their repetition, there were few clues for the Australian to decode the importance of these items. The Japanese businessman explained his position in the follow-up interview as follows:

(5) Int: What sort of general result did you expect from today's meeting?
J: Ah today's meeting result? Yes, one is that we request him to have ah for us to have sample such a many variety of such, and they agree to send this cheese, variety of cheese and another is
Int: They agree? He agrees?
J: Yeh he agrees yes. Then another agreement is that he, I request to visit you their plant and they agree, the next month. And third is they call me again what's the date is suitable.
Int: So before the meeting was that what you expected?
J: Ah yes ah those cheese is a very unique cheese for us. But in Japan the those kind of cheese is still small market in size. So that for the first, if, so that I I wondered they have a lot of knowledge about how to make a cheese, for instance yeh propriety or
Int: This company?
J: Umm have a propriety or patent.
Int: Did you find that out today?
J: No, they they I didn't find it. They have only have a knowledge, know-how… if yeh they have the right of patent it's very easy to report to our head office.
…
Yes. He doesn't have it, only know-how so very difficult to introduce my so that I didn't
Int: You didn't explain that to him. You didn't say to him it was difficult
J: Umm no.
Int: So what was the reason? Any particular reason for not explaining?
J: Oh not, yes, not any particular reason I had. But I eh, today's meeting was first meeting so that I had I'd like to have JUST information what the company is and what sort of company and what what they intended to, so that I

…
So ah as I mentioned still such like cheese market in japan is very small so that not profitable for them so we just only information we would like to have.
…
Ah yeh, if they have a patent I am very enthusiastic to have such a so expect to have a patent but

Int: Do you think he understood the problem or not?

J: Problem, no she don't he don't understand. I didn't explain that because just information for me and report to head office yes.

Clearly, the Japanese had identified the lack of a patent (an important socioeconomic norm) on the side of the Australian manufacturer and following this noting, awarded it a strong negative evaluation. His only adjustment was to confirm his understanding by re-cycling the topic later. At no stage did he explicitly convey to the Australian the problem which this absence of a patent meant for the possibility (or rather lack of possibility) of a future business relationship. On the other hand, there is no evidence in the discourse data or in the follow-up to show that the Australian recognised the significance of these sets of sequences concerning the patent and the sharing arrangement. In other words, he did not note the different socioeconomic norm which underlay the communicative behaviour of the Japanese and hence there was no evidence of LM on the part of the Australian in this regard.

There also appear to be some occurrences of noting and evaluative behaviour by the Australian when he was producing explanations of the Japanese participants' behaviour. The meeting between the two businessmen included discourse on numerous issues relating to the product and company. In the follow-up interview, the Australian revealed his perception that during the meeting he had provided details of his proposal for a cooperative arrangement in response to specific solicitations from the Japanese:

(6) Int: Were there many points that you felt you have to go over more than once to get across?

A: No more than when dealing with any non-Australian. He didn't ask me many questions.

Int: He DIDN'T ask many questions? You could have expected more?

A: I volunteered the price. I didn't think he was going to ask.

Int: Why might you have felt that?

A: That's one of the first things any buyer asks," How much?"

Int: And he didn't?

A: No, I told him half-way through. As a rule it's price first, quality second. "Is it saleable within the price range that I can operate on?"

Int: So he took a different approach then?
A: Yeh, well as you said, "Did I have to volunteer anything?", well that was one.
Int: Anything else?
A: No, he didn't ask a lot of questions. He didn't ask about the packaging, how many in a container, how we ship them and fly or ship it. A lot of things that you'd normally expect, perhaps in the second meeting.
Int: That comes up in the second meeting?
A: Well maybe with him, but with normal people, well say at a normal meeting introducing a line there's virtually a check list of things they need to know.

The above claims indicated that the Australian noted and negatively evaluated the Japanese businessman for not having solicited as many details as would be the norm (for him), and furthermore, that the Japanese did not ask some questions that would normally be asked early in any similar business encounter. However, if we analyse the Australian's perceptions against the actual questioning behaviour of the Japanese, we find contradictory evidence as the Japanese actually raised nearly twice the number of individual issues raised by the Australian and these included crucial issues: overseas expansion, patent, quality, pricing, sharing arrangement, equipment, use of chemicals in the production, the range of cheese varieties, selling period, uses of the cheese and size availability (Marriott, 1990: 52). What I think this finding reveals is not that the follow-up interview produces unreliable data but that the Australian was reacting to the overall situation, and making a general interpretation on the basis of what he considered as normative behaviour for a buyer. Candlin, Coleman and Burton (1983) have suggested that participants' perceptions of what happens in discourse may be quite contrary to actual language use, due to the different situational parties holding disparate discoursal sets. Perhaps in this case, the Australian's misinterpretation was due to confusion that arose when some of his expectations were not met and so he mis-judged what had actually taken place in the communication. Blommaert and Rampton (2011: 8) also reflect upon the issue of unshared knowledge in the following manner:

> When shared knowledge is problematized and creativity and incomprehension are both at issue, people reflect on their own and others' communication, assessing the manner and extent to which this matches established standards and scripts for 'normal' and expected expression.

Different socioeconomic norms concerning the amount of profit margin also triggered some language management in this encounter. The Australian's positive rating of the high profit margin that his product could achieve was not shared by the Japanese businessman and the former even evaluated the lack of the latter's enthusiasm in high margins as due to grammatical inadequacies in comprehension of the message. This phenomenon of sociocultural or socioeconomic norms being misinterpreted as grammatical problems seems to be a common characteristic of intercultural contact situations. Indeed there were grammatical problems evident in the interaction; for instance, at one stage during this same segment, the Japanese experienced a problem understanding the term "sterling" and a long corrective sequence followed, revealing the existence of much noting, evaluation and adjustment activity at the grammatical level. Such sequences as this, however, which displayed extensive grammatical management, were relatively few. Furthermore, in terms of seriousness of the issues being managed, those of a communicative and sociocultural/socioeconomic nature seemed to be of far higher importance to the interactants themselves.

Methodological issues

The analysis on management reported above was facilitated by the employment of a follow-up interview in conjunction with a video-tape recording of the business encounter. Here, the follow-up interview as a research method has allowed the uncovering of certain processes that are not necessarily obvious on the surface level and because of this we can undertake a much wider range of observations about behaviour in contact situations (Fan, 2002; Neustupny & Miyazaki, 2002). While it is quite common for researchers to select in advance the units of analysis that they will investigate and then come to conclusions about these variables on the basis of data, an ethnographic approach to studying LM used in conjunction with follow-up interview here has allowed us to see the perspectives of the participants themselves, including their reflections on their own and the other participant's behaviour in relation to their own goals and expectations, including the times when there was conflict between these, among other phenomena. This research technique has also enabled us to observe the ways in which noting occurs and where, in some critically important instances, it occurs on only one side. This methodology used in conjunction with employment of the LMF has also enabled us to see the relative importance of various grammatical, (non-grammatical) communicative and sociocultural/socioeconomic variables to the participants themselves. In this regard, there appeared to be little concern with grammatical deviations on the part of either participant overall.

Despite the value of employment of the follow-up interview technique, as argued strongly in this paper, in a follow-up interview, the interviewer's role is encourage interviewees to distinguish the thoughts that occurred to them at the time of the initial interaction in contrast to those that occurred during the follow-up interview (Neustupny, 1990: 33; cf. Gass & Mackey, 2000). While the latter are not to be ignored, primarily it is the original thoughts that were considered to be most valuable. While no further treatment can be given to this issue in the current paper, I wonder whether such separation is possible for the interviewee and if it is how the researcher can be sure of the reliability of the data. Furthermore, the findings from my study suggest that some management is of a cumulative nature, and hence this stress on thoughts at a particular time within the interaction may not be as important, at least for the participants themselves, as those remaining at the end of the interaction, which at times may take on more of an accumulated characteristic.

In follow-up interviews, Neustupný warns the researcher to be ready for stereotypical talk, not rely upon the sincerity of the interviewee and to be aware of interviewees' problems with accuracy of their memory (Neustupný, 1990). While I have identified these kinds of problems with the reports of informants in another study where a follow-up interview was used in conjunction with a recording of interview discourse (Marriott 2009), I have no evidence for concern with regard to the current data. This might be due to the nature of the situation covered here, a business meeting where the participants possessed clear socioeconomic goals (including very specific goals for that particular interaction) and thus had a strong investment in the encounter. These may be very different from other kinds of intercultural contact situations involving language learners where at least one main objective is language practice (cf. Kurata, 2012; Pasfield-Neofitou, 2012 or on those situations where the focus of the data collection is on language or communication (cf. Marriott, 2009). This, too, remains a topic which deserves further attention in the future.

Another important issue for LM research concerns individuals' awareness or consciousness or norms (cf. Nekvapil, this issue). Neustupný claims that the follow-up interview can only reveal aware norms, and thus cannot report on processes which are unconscious to them.

> In a follow-up interview participants in an encounter are asked a set of questions which help to establish their awareness of various process (sic processes) taking place in the encounter. It is, therefore, only natural that a follow-up interview can only reveal aware norms: participants in speech acts cannot be expected to report on processes which remain for them unconscious (Neustupný, 1990: 31).

As a result, Neustupný suggests the utilization of other methods as well to compensate for this problem. However, in the study reported here, the identification of a lack of awareness of particular norms or norm deviations on the part of one participant, which could be identified upon analysis of the main recording in conjunction with the two follow-up interviews, constitutes an important finding in itself and clearly contrasted with the absence of a similar interpretation made by the other interactant.

Importantly, employment of a follow-up interview enables the situational participants to provide their interpretations of the event by commenting upon their own interaction at the time, and their interpretation of their partner's behaviour as well. In so doing, the process of noting and subsequent processes, the lack of noting, or the occurrence of misinterpretation (which can actually relate to any of the language management phases) can be identified, where, for instance, a participant interprets his partner's misunderstanding as due to grammatical difficulties (as found in at least one instance in the follow-up interview with the Australian), rather than to different socioeconomic norms (as was apparent from the discourse of the Japanese interactant). There is a tendency in some recent research to avoid privileging the researchers' interpretation of data over participants' own interpretations. Nevertheless, the interpretations of multiple participants, in conjunction with that of the researcher whose function is to synthesize what is said as well as what is not said, remains important.

Despite the above-mentioned issues concerning the nature and implementation of the follow-up interview, it is a valuable method to be used in conjunction with discourse recordings and has many benefits over a general interview when investigating LM, especially processes like noting.

Concluding discussion

In this paper I have introduced one interaction involving an Australian manufacturer and a Japanese company representative, with no intention to generalize the findings beyond this, even if the participants themselves do make generalizations on the basis of their own experiences. Of importance is the fact that these two individuals have very different biographical trajectories, and come from very different socioeconomic sectors within their institutional networks. On the one hand, the Japanese participant is from a very large Japanese company, whereas the Australian represents a small Australian concern. It is perhaps because of differences between the business sectors they belong to (a very large organization versus a very small unit) rather than to sociocultural/socioeconomic differences across the two business cultures of Japan and Australia which results in two very different decision-making styles. Nevertheless, in addition to this factor, as shown above, one (the Japanese) of the two interactants possessed greater expertise in socioeconomic matters, including international negotiations, and also had more experience in intercultural contact situations of a business nature than the other.

This study has revealed how the LMF can be successfully utilized in analyses of interaction within transnational business encounters. The analysis has shown how business interactants engaged in different sorts of management — grammatical, (non-grammatical) communicative and socioeconomic. Various instances were given of how management proceeded, including how interactants displayed their noting behaviour. Given the increasing intensification of globalization and increasing amounts of contacts between individuals in transnational business networks, the ways in which the lack of shared communicative and socioeconomic norms enfolds in sequences of ongoing interaction should be of great interest to researchers and even more particularly for those who engage in such interaction.

Notes

1. The brackets here are my own.

2. In his earlier writings, Neustupný grouped linguistic and sociolinguistic management under the category of "communicative". He later dropped the label of "sociolinguistic" due to people's lack of understanding of this term (Neustupný, personal communication).

3. To generalise the norms apparent in the behaviour of these two individuals as "Japanese" and "Australian" is problematic, but this is an individual case study and further analysis cannot be undertaken here; subsequent inquiry into the range of norms found in business interaction will be necessary.

Transcription code:

Capitals for emphasis

Int	interviewer
A	Australian interactant
B	Japanese interactant

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